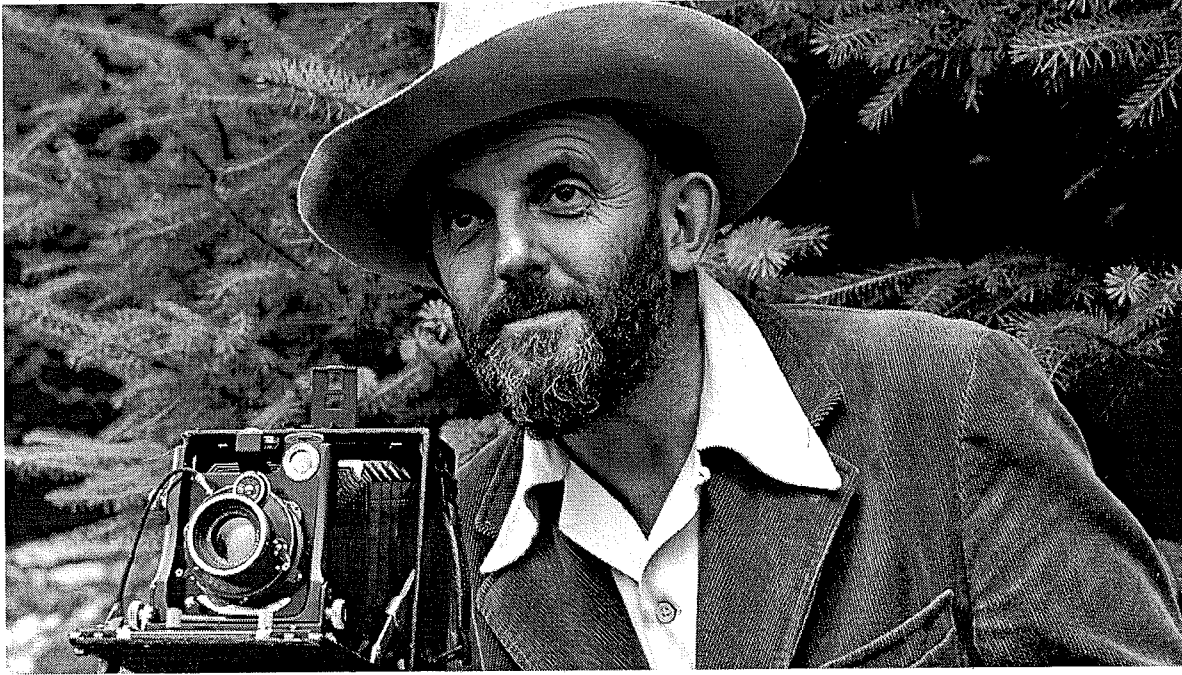


# Artists: Ansel Adams

By National Park Service, adapted by Newsela staff on 03.07.17

Word Count **689**

Level **820L**



TOP: This portrait of nature photographer Ansel Adams first appeared in the 1950 Yosemite Field School yearbook. Photo from: Wikimedia. SECOND: An Adams photo taken in 1942 of Taos Pueblo (or Pueblo de Taos) an ancient pueblo belonging to a Tiwa-speaking Native American tribe of Puebloan people in New Mexico. Front view of entrance to a church built by the Spanish there against the wishes of the native populations. BOTTOM: The Tetons And Snake River, taken by Adams (1942) at Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming. Photo from the National Park Service.

When Ansel Adams looked through his camera, he saw more than the rocks, trees and rivers of Yosemite National Park. He saw art. He became famous for his photos of Yosemite.

Born in San Francisco in 1902, Adams came from a rich family. Unfortunately, most of the family's money was lost after a 1906 earthquake.

Adams was an only child. When he was in the eighth grade, his father saw that Adams was having difficulty fitting in at school. Young Ansel may have also suffered from a learning disability. His father decided that it would be more productive if he was tutored at home. He set up an education plan for Ansel that included lessons in piano and Greek.

While sick with a cold at age 14, Adams read a book that would eventually change his life. James Mason Hutchings' "In the Heart of the Sierras" caught Adams' imagination. It was about Yosemite National Park. Adams soon convinced his parents to vacation there. By this time, he had already developed a love of nature. He enjoyed walking among sand dunes

outside his home near the Golden Gate. Carrying a simple Kodak camera his parents gave him in 1916, the young visitor tramped through Yosemite's mountains. He snapped the first photos of what would become a lifetime of artwork.

## **Outdoors Were A Place Of Healing**

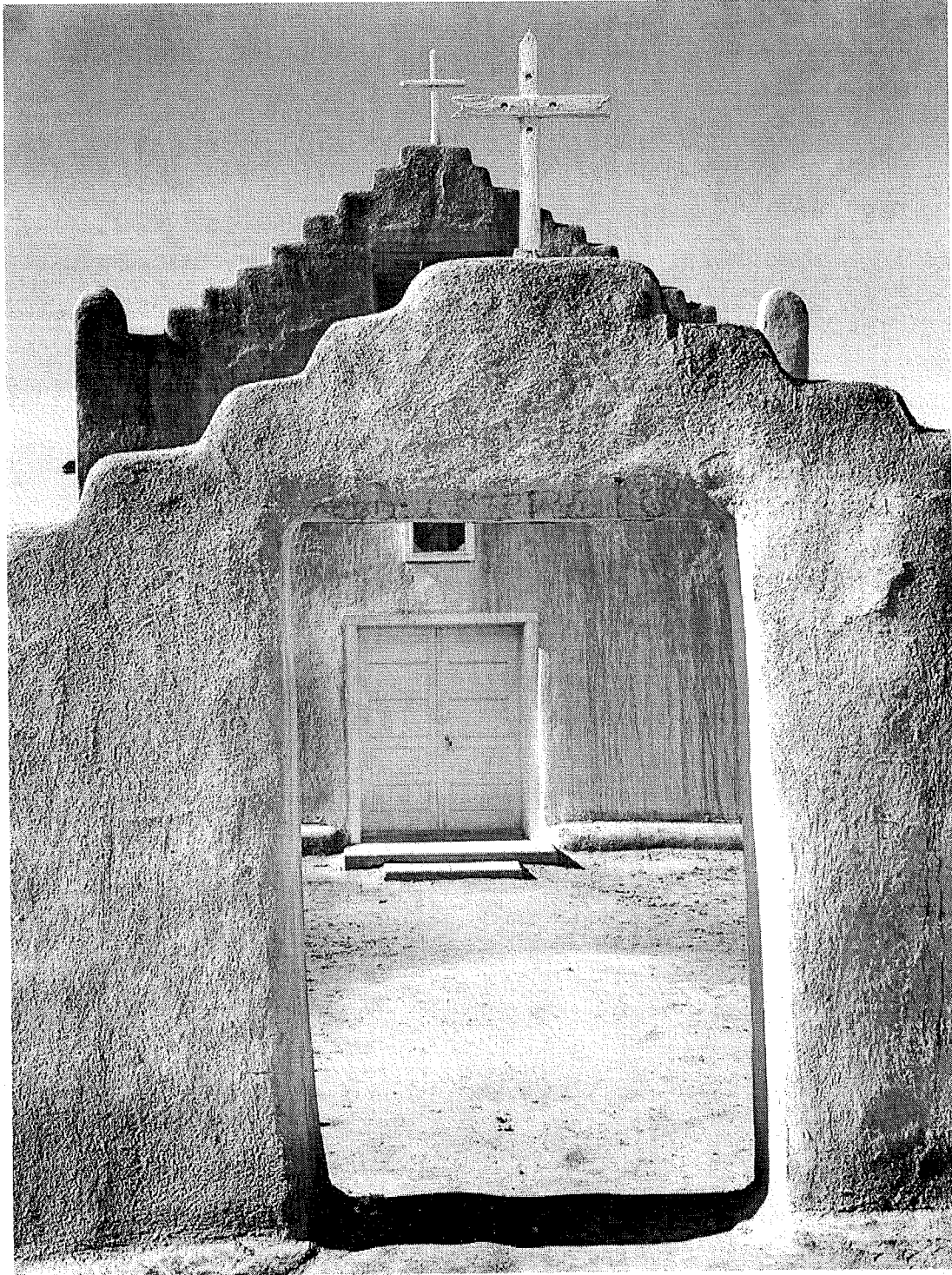
Yosemite was a place of healing for Adams, who survived the Spanish flu in 1919. That year, he joined the Sierra Club. He then spent six summers with High Sierra tour groups as trip photographer. For several years, Adams took care of the Sierra Club's lodge in Yosemite Valley. He shared the group's love of nature. His first printed photos appeared in the club's 1922 newsletter.

In 1927, Adams received praise for his startling photo of a Yosemite favorite. Shot in fading light, his photo of the Half Dome rock form was unusual. For the rest of his life, Adams would be known for this photo and the ways he made it.

## **Black-And-White Images Made In A Darkroom**

Adams worked in a time before digital photography. He developed photos on paper in a darkroom. His photos were stunning black-and-white pictures. In spite of his success as a photographer, Adams lived in two worlds. He worked for years shooting photos and playing piano.

Adams married Virginia Best in 1928. Virginia was a singer, and Adams shared her love of music. She also was the daughter of painter Harry Cassie Best. Best's Studio in Yosemite Valley was a nice place for Adams to show his photography. Virginia later became owner of the business. The couple had two children, Michael and Anne, who later became involved in the family business too. They renamed it the Ansel Adams Gallery and passed it on to their children.



## **A Working Photographer**

Adams worked his whole life as a photographer. He got jobs from the National Park Service and companies such as Kodak, Zeiss, IBM, AT&T, and Life and Fortune magazines.

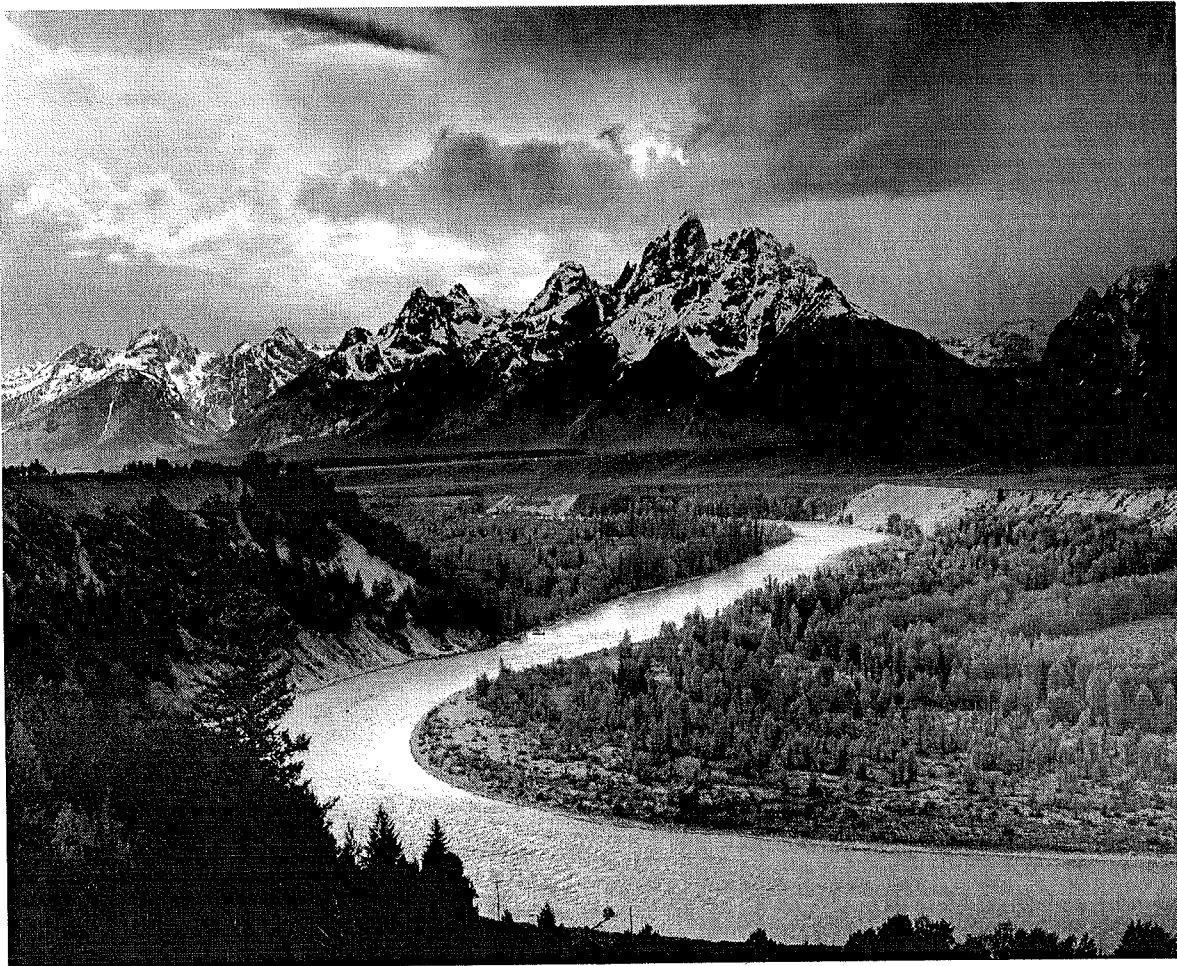
Adams joined other famous photographers like Edward Weston in the Group f/64 club. Together they helped people to see photography as its own art form.

Later, Adams' photos were used for causes he supported. With the Sierra Club, in 1936, he sought to establish Kings Canyon as a national park. His photos of the Kings and Kern rivers were used in Washington D.C. during talks. In 1940, a law was made founding Kings Canyon National Park. In 1943, Adams boldly photographed a Japanese-American internment camp. The government had forced Japanese-Americans to move to internment camps after the Pearl Harbor attack. When Adams took photos of this internment camp, it was an act of protest. He wanted to show something he thought was unfair.

## **Adams' Later Years**

Adams received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1980. His friend, President Jimmy Carter, gave it to him.

Adams died in 1984, in Monterey, California. Shortly after his death, the Minarets Wilderness south of Yosemite National Park was renamed the Ansel Adams Wilderness in his honor. The following year a peak on the edge of Yosemite was named Mount Ansel Adams.





**Quiz**

- 1 Based on the information in the introduction [paragraphs 1-4], which of these statements is TRUE?
- (A) Adams had an easy and trouble-free childhood.
  - (B) Adams grew up extremely wealthy and privileged.
  - (C) Adams was drawn to national parks as a teenager.
  - (D) Adams was recognized as a top student at his school.
- 2 Select the sentence from the section "Outdoors Were A Place Of Healing" that BEST shows why Yosemite was personally important to Adams.
- (A) Yosemite was a place of healing for Adams, who survived the Spanish flu in 1919.
  - (B) He then spent six summers with High Sierra tour groups as trip photographer.
  - (C) For several years, Adams took care of the Sierra Club's lodge in Yosemite Valley.
  - (D) In 1927, Adams received praise for his startling photo of a Yosemite favorite.
- 3 According to the article, what effect did Adams have on parks in the United States?
- (A) He helped establish a national park and also had landmarks named after him.
  - (B) He established the first national park and took many pictures of its mountains.
  - (C) His photography inspired many more people to visit the national parks in person.
  - (D) His photography made people interested in rivers and trees in national parks.
- 4 Which section of the article explains how Adams used photography to tell about situations he felt were wrong?
- (A) "Outdoors Were A Place Of Healing"
  - (B) "Black-And-White Images Made In A Darkroom"
  - (C) "A Working Photographer"
  - (D) "Adams' Later Years"