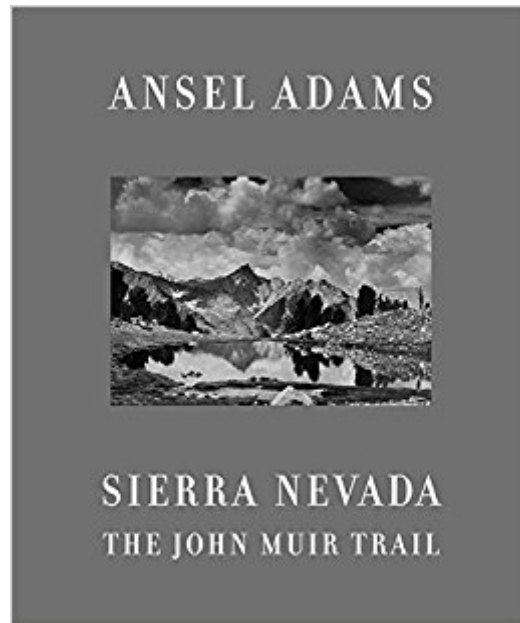




The book was found

Sierra Nevada: The John Muir Trail



Synopsis

Originally published in 1936 and limited to only 500 copies, this is a stunningly beautiful collection of Ansel Adams' photographs of the Sierra made early in his legendary career.

Book Information

Hardcover: 128 pages

Publisher: Ansel Adams; 1st Little, Brown and Co. Ed edition (October 25, 2006)

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Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars 10 customer reviews

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Customer Reviews

Ansel Adams was the most honored American photographer of the twentieth century. Renowned for his photographs of the natural world, he photographed chiefly in his beloved Sierra Nevada. William A. Turnage is managing trustee of The Ansel Adams Publishing Rights Trust. From 1978 to 1985, Turnage served as president of The Wilderness Society. He worked closely with Ansel Adams as a business manager and environmental associate for many years.

I just expected more from an Ansel Adams photography book. The images are mostly dull, lacking in contrast, and the image print quality is about as poor as a newspaper. The images are also very small -- perhaps not even as large as the original negatives were --and so they appear to drown and almost be forgotten in the middle of large white otherwise empty pages..

This book is not bad because how can anything of Ansel Adams' nature work be bad - but I've seen many better prints in other books. I did not feel the quality of the photos was impressive or did great justice to his work. This was a man who spent hours in the dark room to perfect his images. I don't think that came across at all.

Well Ansel Adams was just marvellous, wasn't he. I believe anyone who is interested in the history of American photography, should have this great book.

The deluxe edition is exceptionally nice. The large format begins to do justice to these legendary photos.

Absolutely fabulous.

It is always told that AA put enormous energy and care in producing his 1938 edition of "Sierra Nevada: The John Muir Trail", originally published in only 500 copies and a fine art book of highest quality at the time. I never saw a copy of the original edition and my comment is purely on what I see in this 2006 standard edition. I don't know how this book is made from the original edition. It says tri-tone but the printing quality is so-so. Some images are a little vague, some losing details in shadow or highlight. The book is pale in comparison with some great AA books published by Bulfinch in the past, such as "California" or "Yosemite and the High Sierra". You can find some images from this book in other AA books and in better quality. Overall, it would make AA uneasy to stamp his famous AA Authorized Edition to the book. If it were not for its historical value, I'd skip this book. Now Bulfinch also offers a 2006 deluxe edition at \$1,200. Again I haven't seen a copy but perhaps the pricier version can live up to the standard of the original edition. The trend looks a little worrisome recently in AA books published by Bulfinch. The printing quality goes down from "California (1997)" to "Ansel Adams at 100 (hardcover 2001)". "Trees (2004)" rebounds just a little but "Sierra Nevada: The John Muir Trail (2006)" is a little disappointing. I would hope the next AA book by Bulfinch can rejuvenate the printing quality, even if doing so means a higher price tag.

Gave this as a gift, and it was very well received. The person we gave this to was really happy!

The original version of this book was published in 1938 in a limited edition of only 500 copies. Ansel's other well known work of this early period include his portfolio entitled Parmelian Prints of the High Sierras (1927) and his other early books include Taos Pueblo (published in a limited edition of about 100 copies around 1930), and the relatively common instructional book "Making a Photograph" (1935). I have seen all of these works in their original form and was grateful to see this book reprinted making it accessible to modern Ansel Adams fans of modest means such as

myself. Ansel's printing style changed over the course of his life. For instance, the Monolith (face of Half Dome) print included with the Parmelian Prints looks completely different than the much more familiar and frequently reproduced prints from this negative made in the 1970s. Several other examples can be found of this change in printing style. Most books currently on the market and prints that are frequently shown focus on the dramatic Wagnerian style of printing Ansel adopted in his later years. Modern Ansel Adams publications which seem to include several new books every year focus on already well known images as Ansel printed them in the final decades of his life. This book is refreshing in that it focuses on Ansel's early images and printing style. The book is also focused on the John Muir trail rather than being a "greatest hits" collection. Printing technology has also changed and improved a lot since the original version of the book was published in 1938, and has improved significantly even since 1984 when Ansel died. Of course not every book is printed with the best technology of an era. I have not seen original prints of all of many of the images reproduced in this book, but I believe the printing to be in the spirit of this era and to the original edition. Plate #49 in the book, "Lake and cliffs, Kaweah Gap" has been reproduced in several other books as "Frozen Lake and Cliffs" including as plate XIII in the 1935 "Making a Photograph" and on page 10 of the 1983 printing of "Examples the Making of 40 photographs." I have taken the opportunity to compare these three reproductions side by side. The 1935 reproduction is clearly the worst of the three to my eye - likely because of the printing technology of that era. The 1983 book and the current book are much closer. The blacks are deeper in this book. There is more contrast in the cliff in the current "John Muir Trail" reproduction at the expense of a slight amount of shadow detail which is present in the "Examples" book. In "Examples" Ansel mentions that the negative was processed in nearly exhausted developer and lacks density in the shadows making it difficult to print. He goes on to say in "Examples" (which he wrote in the early 1980s), that it was "Only within the past year or so have I been able to get a nearly satisfactory print..." This implies to me that the loss of shadow detail in the John Muir Trail reproduction of this image is due to the way Ansel printed this image in that era and not due to the quality of printing in the book as another reviewer suggested. This is one of the few books currently available which focuses on Ansel's early photography career, and I would highly recommend it to anyone with a serious interest in his work. Having seen and read the 1938 edition, I believe this new printing does justice to the original as well as makes this body of work accessible to the current generation Ansel Adams enthusiasts.

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