

## **Restless Spirit in a Troubled Time: Bringing Dorothea Lange's Photography of the 1930s and 1940s to the Classroom**

The nineteen thirties often suffers from historical neglect, a result of its unfortunate position between the glamorous 1920s and patriotic 1940s. And at first glance, the thirties and forties might seem to have little in common. But a closer look reveals that the Dust Bowl, Great Depression, and World War II are all fascinating events that can engage students and invigorate the study of history. Photography is an essential medium of that time, and Dorothea Lange is a master of that medium. How did Lange use image to shape our understanding of the despair of the Great Depression, the grim poverty of the Dust Bowl, the injustice of Japanese American incarceration? And how did she use image to transform those events into immediate, relatable, *human* experience from which viewers could not turn away?

Elizabeth Partridge's biography *Restless Spirit* elucidates the ways in which Lange used her art to humanize the suffering and struggle of ordinary people. Equally important, Partridge's text demonstrates how writers can honor their commitment to tell the truth while entertaining readers and offers teachers a resource to humanize history for their students. In this presentation, I'll discuss several strategies for incorporating Lange's art and Partridge's biography into the broader study of children's literature.