On Common Ground:
Grant Wood and the Photography of the Farm Security Administration

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Grant Wood, *American Gothic*. 1930
Gordon Parks, *American Gothic*, 1942
Wood

Benton

Curry
Adrian Dornbush seated to the right of Grant Wood (in overalls)
Dorothea Lange, *Migrant Mother, Nipomo California.* March, 1936*
Giovanni Bellini, *Christ Supported by Two Angels*, c. 1480

Dorothea Lange, *Migrant Mother, Nipomo* California. March, 1936
Grant Wood, *American Gothic*. 1930

Dorothea Lange, *Migrant Mother*, Nipomo California. March, 1936
Grant Wood, *Fall Plowing*, 1931
Arthur Rothstein, *The Plow that Broke the Plains, Look at it Now, Cimarron County*, 1936
Doris Lee, *Thanksgiving Diner*, 1935
Grant Wood, Overmantel Decoration, 1930
Russell Lee, *Picture of their farm home in Oklahoma. Hanging in living room of the George Huttons, Pie Town, New Mexico. 1939*
Russell Lee, *Primitive painted tray in house of Fred Morgenflash, farmer near Marseilles, Illinois, Jan. 1937*
Russell Lee, *Early American chair on farm of Fred Rowe, south of Estherville, Iowa, Dec. 1936*
Russell Lee, Wall painting and decoration by local artist in a cafe in Onawa, Iowa, December 1936
Russell Lee, Family portrait in home of Fred Rowe, farmer near Estherville, Iowa, Dec. 1936
Russell Lee, *Family portrait in home of Fred Rowe, farmer near Estherville, Iowa, December 1936*
Drought Counties of Iowa Dec. 1936.

Legend:
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Russell Lee, Edgar Allen and his wife at the rear of house on farm near Milford, Iowa, December 1936
Russell Lee, Mr. and Mrs. Marcus Miller and dog, Spencer, Iowa, Dec. 1936
Russell Lee, Mr. and Mrs. Bert Aldrich, tenant farmers on farm owned by an absentee landlord near Ruthven, Iowa, December 1936
Russell Lee, Mike Maloney and wife on farm near Denison, Iowa. They are buying groceries on credit, with no reserve of resources, December, 1936.
Russell Lee, Mr. Rauhauser, wife and one of his seven children, Ruthven, Iowa. He works as a farm hand. At present he is out of work. He has made application for direct relief, December 1936.
Russell Lee, Mr. and Mrs. Roy Merriott on rented farm of 160 acres near Estherville, Iowa. Until recently owned by loan company; it has been sold to a private party. It is the third farm Merriott has lost in the past ten years, December 1936
Russell Lee, Mr. & Mrs. Austin Fretty on their farm near Armstrong, Iowa. The land is rented from a loan company, and they have started farming with the help of a resettlement loan, December 1936.
Russell Lee, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Banta, farmers near Anthon, Iowa. They have groceries to last for only ten days unless they sell some of their livestock which is most essential for farming next spring. They hardly have a ton of wheat straw, and all the WPA money has been spent for livestock feed, December 1936.
Russell Lee, [Untitled photo, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Banta, farmers near Anthon, Iowa. December 1936]
Russell Lee, Closeup of Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Ostermeyer, homesteaders, Miller Township, Woodbury County, Iowa. They have lost their farm to a loan company, December 1936.
Russell Lee, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Ostermeyer, homesteaders, Miller Township, Woodbury County, Iowa. They have lost their farm to a loan company, December 1936
Russell Lee, *The hands of Mrs. Andrew Ostermeyer, wife of a homesteader, Woodbury County, Iowa December 1936*
Russell Lee, Christmas dinner in home of Earl Pauley. Near Smithfield, Iowa. Dinner consisted of potatoes, cabbage and pie, December 1936
Grant Wood, *Dinner for the Threshers*, 1935
Russell Lee, William Rall, FSA Client, standing amidst Kaffir Corn on his farm in Sheridan County, Kansas, August 1939
Grant Wood, *Farmer and Farmer’s Wife*, 1932
Gordon Parks, *American Gothic*, 1942
Gordon Parks, *American Gothic*, 1942

Grant Wood, *American Gothic*, 1930
Gordon Parks, *American Gothic*, 1942
GORDON PARKS
How the Photographer Captured Black and White America

Carole Boston Weatherford

illustrations by Jamey Christoph
Boiling mad, Parks vows to lay bare racism with his lens. He shares his vision with his boss, who points him toward his subject.

Talk to her.
She knows struggle.

She is Ella Watson, a cleaning lady in the building where Parks works. She supports five children on just over one thousand dollars a year.
But Gordon’s most famous shot will be American Gothic.

In the newspaper, the photo exposed to the nation the unfairness of segregation. Standing before the flag of freedom, cleaning lady Ella Watson holds the tools of her trade and the hopes of her grandchildren.
She knows all too well that the opportunities the flag symbolizes are denied her because of skin color.

Yet, she dares to dream of—and strive for—better. Through Gordon’s lens, her struggle gained a voice. You don’t have to hear her story to know her prayer.
Thank You.

Jack Delano, Mr. Colson, tobacco farmer near Suffield, Connecticut hanging tobacco up in his barn for curing, Sept. 1940