

Below the Line: Living Poor in America

Eugene Richards, Christiane Bird, Janine Altongy
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#1291673 in Books 1987-08 Original language: English PDF # 1 11.50 x 9.50 x .751, #File Name: 0890430616218 pages | File size: 34.Mb

Eugene Richards, Christiane Bird, Janine Altongy : Below the Line: Living Poor in America before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Below the Line: Living Poor in America*:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By anthony elmore great book and in good condition as i wanted 2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Pfau, Matthias just perfect 6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Sadly, this book is still so relevant today By R. A. Frauenglas Sadly, although this book was published some 25 years ago, it is still relevant today. In the once richest nation on earth, poverty has not only not been eradicated, but it has been exacerbated with more people falling below the poverty line each day. This book reminds me of Walker Evans's photos taken during the Great Depression of the late 1920's the 1930's. Evans traveled across America, taking photos of regular folks just struggling to stay afloat. Five decades later, Richards has done the same thing. In the Autumn of 1985, Consumer Union, the publisher of CONSUMER REPORTS, asked Richards to work on a photo-documentary book for them which would express what it meant to be poor in then present-day America. In early 1986, he was officially commissioned by the CU. For several months in 1986, he criss-crossed America with his camera tape player. He traveled alone, without an accompanying writer. Richards wanted the people to be able to tell their own stories, unfiltered. He would interview them print their answers. The photos would be raw unretouched as would be the interviews. His trip began in South Dakota and included stops in the border town of Brownsville, Texas; Philadelphia, PA; East Orange, NJ; NYC; Still House Hollow, TN; Chicago, IL; Ortanna, PA; Boston, MA; and Douglas, WY. He met with farmers trying to hold onto their heavily mortgaged three-generation

family farms, in which much of the financial damage had been done to them by the banks the federal farm watchdog agencies. He met with hopeless urban youth, such as a young 15-year old girl who already had given birth to two babies. He met with homeless vets, such as a Korean War vet living in a shelter in Boston. He met with struggling migrant farm workers, such as Mexican laborers living in Brownsville, Texas. He met with small businessmen forced to close their stores lose their livelihoods. He writes of people trying to live on government assistance of less than \$300 a month. He met with families which had to separate, so that the government would give the sick one medical assistance. In 14 moving essays interviews, in 144 evocative photos; Richards opens the reader's eyes to the horrid disparity of wealth in our nation in 1986. Sadly, so much of what he documented is the same or worse today AND the disparity of wealth has grown even more outlandish in today's America.

From Publishers Weekly In 144 stunning black-and-white photographs (which won the 1987 International Center of Photography Journalism Award for "outstanding accomplishment in photographic reportage") and 14 first-person narratives, this disturbing book demonstrates the pervasiveness of poverty in America. The starkly eloquent text, edited by Bird, conveys the bravery and pathos of the subjects' lives in their own words. For example, readers learn that a Tennessee man has to pull his own teeth because he can't afford a dentist and that migrant workers who pick vegetables are often brutalized. Help for the poor didn't come until *How the Other Half Lives* (1901) shocked the public a few generations ago; one hopes that this book will have the same effect. Copyright 1987 Reed Business Information, Inc.