A BRIEF LOOK

AMERICAN LIVES

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American Lives: A Brief Look consists of a series of photo essays illustrating the diverse life stages Americans may experience.
CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 2

INNOCENCE AT HOME 4
American Children

LEARNING AND LIVING 12
Adolescents and Education

GOING INTO THE WORLD 20
College and Career

FREEDOM OF RELIGION 28
Reason to Believe

PATCHWORK QUILT 36
Diversity and Community

ON THE JOB 44
Work and Opportunity

AT PLAY 52
Vacation and Leisure

RETIREMENT AND AFTER 60
Older Adults and Seniors
It may be impossible to capture the essence of a typical American in a few sentences. Possibly images can bring us closer. The vivid photographs selected here depict people from across the United States. These individuals represent many ages, backgrounds, ethnicities, and religions. Their diversity is a central and defining part of our nation.

This book presents Americans at every stage of life. There are toddlers entering the world, children starting school, young adults going to college, people working and senior citizens in retirement. The photographs illustrate the freedom of religion Americans enjoy, and how they spend their free time. They also display the tight community bonds that Americans form in every part of the country.

An American life can be many things. It is a group of children playing sports and gaining confidence. It is a Native American preserving her culture. It is a senior citizen volunteering in his community. It is the freedom of expression all Americans enjoy.

The people you see in the book are bound together by common values and experiences.
The pictures speak for themselves. The lives, experiences, and interactions they depict need no translation. There is a saying that “a picture is worth a thousand words.” The photos in this book express the stories of Americans “from sea to shining sea.” These are not the images one sees in movies or on TV but rather authentic portraits of American daily life.

Diversity is a common theme. Chapter 5 is titled, “Patchwork Quilt: Diversity and Community.” Like a quilt, American lives are sewn together. Each individual possesses his or her own story and experiences, but together these American lives form a colorful and varied national identity.

The pictures show us America as lived by individuals, families, and communities. Hopefully the pictures also reflect universal values and experiences. Like people all over the world, Americans build families, get an education, strive to be productive members of society, and form vibrant communities. We are glad to introduce you to these Americans.
American Children

INNOCENCE AT HOME
“Children are our most valuable natural resource.”

— Herbert Hoover
Adolescents and Education
“An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest.”

— Benjamin Franklin
College and Career
“The purpose of life is to live it, to taste experience to the utmost, to reach out eagerly and without fear for newer and richer experience.”

— Eleanor Roosevelt
Reason to Believe
“The constitutional freedom of religion [is] the most inalienable and sacred of all human rights.”

— Thomas Jefferson
Diversity and Community
“We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter what their color.”

— Maya Angelou
Work and Opportunity

ON THE JOB
“I long to accomplish a great and noble task, but it is my chief duty to accomplish humble tasks as though they were great and noble. The world is moved along, not only by the mighty shoves of its heroes, but also by the aggregate of the tiny pushes of each honest worker.”

— Helen Keller
Vacation and Leisure
“Whenever you are sincerely pleased, you are nourished.”

— Ralph Waldo Emerson
“And in the end, it’s not the years in your life that count. It’s the life in your years.”

— Abraham Lincoln
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