

- 3 In her college years, Margaret went from school to school and switched from one subject to another, finally settling at Cornell University. Her father's death forced her to earn money in order to stay in school, so she bought a used camera and took pictures of Cornell's stately buildings to sell to other students. This was the first time she showed her talent for making pictures like no one else's, and it helped her graduate from Cornell.
- 4 Margaret's Cornell photos led her into the world of professional photography. Her first studio was in Cleveland, Ohio, where she worked mostly as an architectural photographer. When she was hired to photograph a steel mill, she could not have been more excited. An overhead crane lifted her high above the steelworks so she could shoot down into the molten steel. Though she was blasted by smoke and icy winter weather, Margaret was in her element. She lit the ladles and steel molds so as to highlight their huge, rounded forms. She captured the sparks that flew off the hot metal. Her pictures brought steelmaking to life.
- 5 The customer liked her dramatic pictures so much that he asked her to make even more for a book, *The Story of Steel*. Henry Luce, publisher of *Time* magazine, was also impressed with her steel pictures. He hired the young woman as the first staff photographer for *Fortune*, Luce's new magazine devoted to the glory of business.
- 6 In February 1930, Bourke-White's photos of the Chicago stockyards led *Fortune's* first issue. She went on to photograph bridges, paper mills, banks, and all sorts of factories for *Fortune*. While on assignment in Germany, she launched her groundbreaking trip to Russia. These photos appeared in her first book, *Eyes on Russia*.
- 7 In 1934, the magazine sent her to the western United States on an assignment that changed her views—and her work. A severe drought had spread through many western states, and the magazine editor asked her to cover what was happening. "I had never seen people caught helpless like this in total tragedy," she wrote. Their suffering moved her, and she began to photograph people as well as machines.
- 8 This newfound interest in photographing people led Bourke-White to search out a collaborator, and she found one in writer Erskine Caldwell. He was famous at the time for his novel *Tobacco Road*, which was about poverty in the South. They traveled the South together, researching and photographing for their book *You Have Seen Their Faces* (1937), a powerful record of poverty during the Depression. Margaret soon married Caldwell, and they produced several more books during their five years together. She also never stopped doing her magazine work.