

Ansel Adams

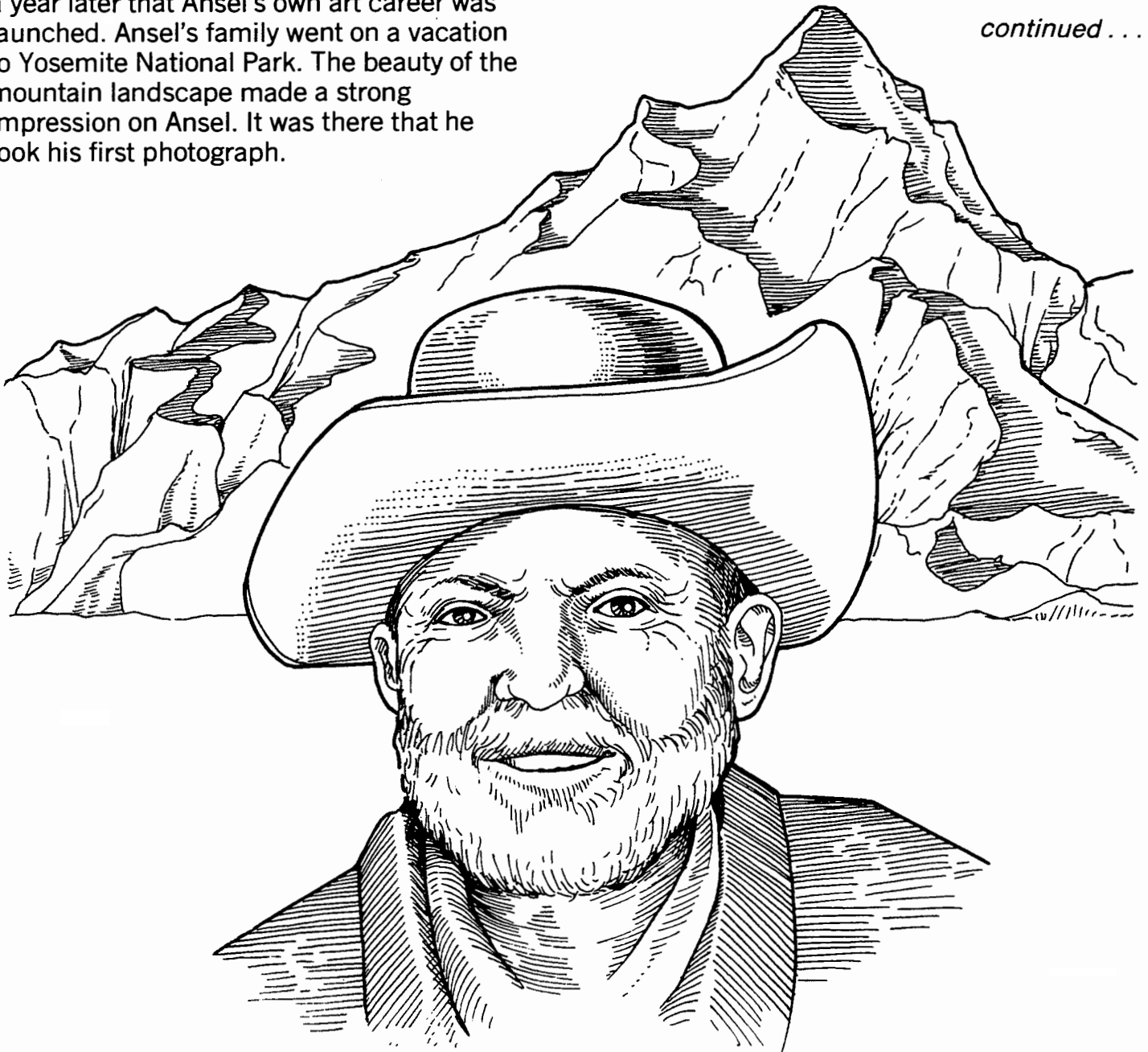
Ansel Easton Adams is considered one of the best photographers of the American West. Ansel didn't just take photographs, he "made" them. That was the key to Ansel's success. To him, a photograph was not just a snapshot; it was a true expression of something.

When Ansel was a young boy in San Francisco, his father bought him a pass to the Panama-Pacific World's Fair. Ansel went to the fair every day. He was fascinated by the exhibits of modern art. But it wasn't until a year later that Ansel's own art career was launched. Ansel's family went on a vacation to Yosemite National Park. The beauty of the mountain landscape made a strong impression on Ansel. It was there that he took his first photograph.

After that trip, Ansel returned to Yosemite Valley every year. He wanted to make a "visual diary" that would show nature's beauty unspoiled by man.

From the start, Ansel's black and white photographs were very good. It wasn't long before his pictures were recognized by other artists and photographers. With the help of these artists, Ansel's photographs were published in books and displayed in art galleries.

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Ansel became known for his “straight photography” approach. He didn’t like other photographers who used trick lighting, fancy props, and retouching in their pictures. He liked to make pictures of things exactly as they were. Ansel used the natural lighting of the sun to help him get interesting effects in his photos. Sometimes Ansel would get up at sunrise to make a picture of a mountain or waterfall. Then he would wait all day until the sun was almost about to set, and make the same picture again. The difference in the sun’s angle would make the same scene look completely different.

It was this use of light in photography that made Ansel famous. Many art students tried to copy his techniques. Ansel helped these students by writing books and teaching classes on lighting in photography. He started the first department of photography at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Later, he did the same at the California School of Fine Arts in San Francisco.

Ansel felt that his pictures helped people to understand and appreciate nature and their environment. Making these sharp,

detailed, and dramatic photographs was Ansel’s way of preserving America’s wilderness.



Main Idea

1. Ansel Adams was a
 - a. photographer.
 - b. young boy.
 - c. film maker.

Significant Details

2. What made Ansel’s work famous?
 - a. retouching techniques
 - b. pictures of beautiful mountains
 - c. use of natural light in photography

Context Clues

3. Ansel Adam’s *visual diary* was
 - a. a diary he wrote in every day.
 - b. pictures he took of his surroundings.
 - c. a record of how many mountains he climbed.

Inference

4. Would Ansel prefer to take pictures indoors or outdoors? Explain.

Drawing Conclusions

5. Ansel was different from other photographers because
 - a. of his straight photography approach.
 - b. of his trick photography.
 - c. his pictures were displayed in art galleries.

Following Through

6. Get some photography books by Ansel Adams. Try to see what made his pictures unique. Some of his books are *Born Free and Equal*, *The Islands of Hawaii*, *Ansel Adams, Images 1923-1974*, and *The Portfolios of Ansel Adams*.

Mickey Mouse Gardening

At Disney World, you are likely to see a Minnie Mouse bush or a Pluto tree. Each has been carefully shaped to look like the Disney characters. Animals, dinosaurs, monsters, and other cartoon favorites are formed from plants and trees.

Disney World hires the best horticulturists and landscapers to work in their gardens. Topiary plants are probably the hardest to grow. Topiary gardening is a way of training trees and bushes to grow in certain shapes. It takes a long time for a topiary plant to take shape. It is not unusual for a bush to take three to five years to grow into its planned shape. A tall giraffe tree might take ten years to reach its proper size. While the bush is growing gardeners must carefully cut and trim the branches to fit the shape of a certain character.

An easier way of getting a plant to take shape is by using chicken wire. The wire is bent into a shape and then filled with a plant called moss. Next, vines are planted in the moss. Vines are perfect for this kind of



gardening because they grow quickly. They can also be trained to go in any direction. They follow the chicken wire form, and soon a whole plant shape is ready. The wire forms look very much like Mickey and Minnie do in cartoons because they are planned by the same artists who draw the cartoons. The gardens at Disney World are filled with plant-like cartoon characters!

Main Idea

1. Topiary gardening is a
 - a. way to grow animals.
 - b. way of training plants.
 - c. way of growing tall trees.

Significant Details

2. At Disney World, you might see a plant shaped like a
 - a. monster.
 - b. car.
 - c. chicken.
3. A quick-growing plant used in topiary gardening is
 - a. moss.
 - b. a shrub.
 - c. a vine.
4. In topiary gardening, most plants grow into their planned shape in
 - a. 3 to 5 weeks.
 - b. 3 to 5 months.
 - c. 3 to 5 years.

5. The chicken-wire plants really look like Disney characters because
 - a. Walt Disney planned them.
 - b. the TV characters posed for them.
 - c. they were planned by the Disney artists.

Context Clues

6. A *horticulturist* is
 - a. someone who draws cartoon characters.
 - b. someone who works with plants.
 - c. the person who runs Disney World.

Drawing Conclusions

7. Why might Pinnochio be a good choice as a Disney topiary plant?
 - a. He is a very small character.
 - b. He is a puppet made of wood and would do well outdoors.
 - c. His nose could grow quickly or be cut at will.

Edgar Allan Poe

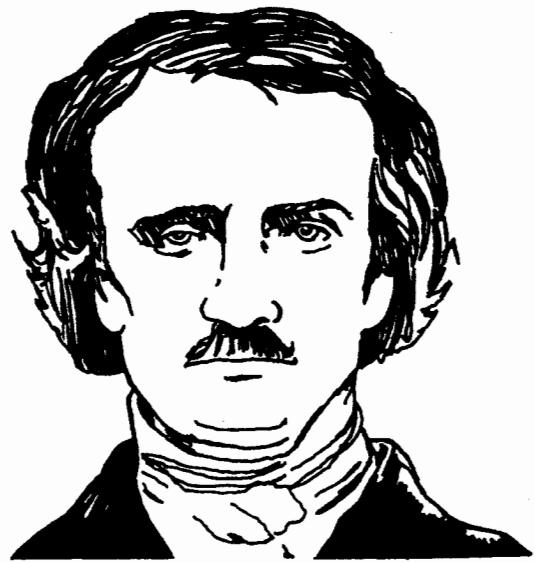
Edgar Allan Poe was born in Boston in 1809. His parents were both actors and probably expected Edgar to join them on the stage. But the course of Edgar's life changed when his father left the family and his mother died before Edgar reached the age of three.

Young Edgar was taken in by a businessman from Virginia, John Allan, and his wife. The Allans raised Edgar and sent him to private schools. When he was old enough, they enrolled him in college at the University of Virginia. Instead of studying at college, Edgar began drinking and gambling. John Allan was disappointed in Edgar and refused to pay his debts. Edgar was forced to drop out of school.

Edgar left Virginia and the Allan family and moved back to his hometown, Boston. There he published his first piece of writing, *Tamerlane and Other Poems*, in 1827. It was then that Poe knew he had a talent for writing.

Edgar soon married, but his young wife became very ill. In order to pay for his wife's doctor bills, Edgar took several jobs as an editor of newspapers and magazines, but continued to write. He published several volumes of poetry and earned recognition as a skilled poet. His descriptive images and perfect meter made his poems outstanding pieces of writing that are still read today.

Although Poe loved poetry, he realized that publishing short stories would earn him more money. Poe became the first writer to publish detective stories. "The Gold Bug" was a story



about searching for buried treasure. Poe's mystery and horror stories were very popular, too. "The Fall of the House of Usher," "The Tell-Tale Heart," and "Pit and the Pendulum" both frightened and excited readers. "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" and "The Mystery of Marie Roget" are examples of Poe's well-developed plots with unusual twists that keep the reader in suspense until the end of the story.

Poe's work is still enjoyed today. Even though Edgar Allan Poe's life seemed to be filled with sadness, his writing reflects some of the more human aspects of life. He was able to go deep into his characters' minds and make them realistic for the reader. Perhaps it is this realistic quality mixed with excitement that gives Poe's stories their longevity and lasting interest.

Main Idea

1. Edgar Allan Poe is known for his
 - a. work as an editor.
 - b. life as an actor.
 - c. stories and poems.

Significant Details

2. Poe preferred to write
 - a. poetry.
 - b. mysteries.
 - c. short stories.

Context Clues

3. Poe's stories have *longevity*.
 - a. They are very long.

- b. Their appeal lasts a long time.
- c. They are written about tall people.

Inferences

4. Poe's unusual childhood probably
 - a. influenced his writing.
 - b. made him refuse to marry.
 - c. kept him from becoming famous.

Drawing Conclusions

5. If Poe became an actor, he probably would have starred in
 - a. comedies.
 - b. Broadway musicals.
 - c. murder mysteries.