

# Work / Cited

*Episode 3: Starting from Scratch with  
the Photography of Walker Evans*

*Wednesday, December 9, 1pm*



SVETLANA ALPERS

Walker  
Evans  
Starting  
from Scratch

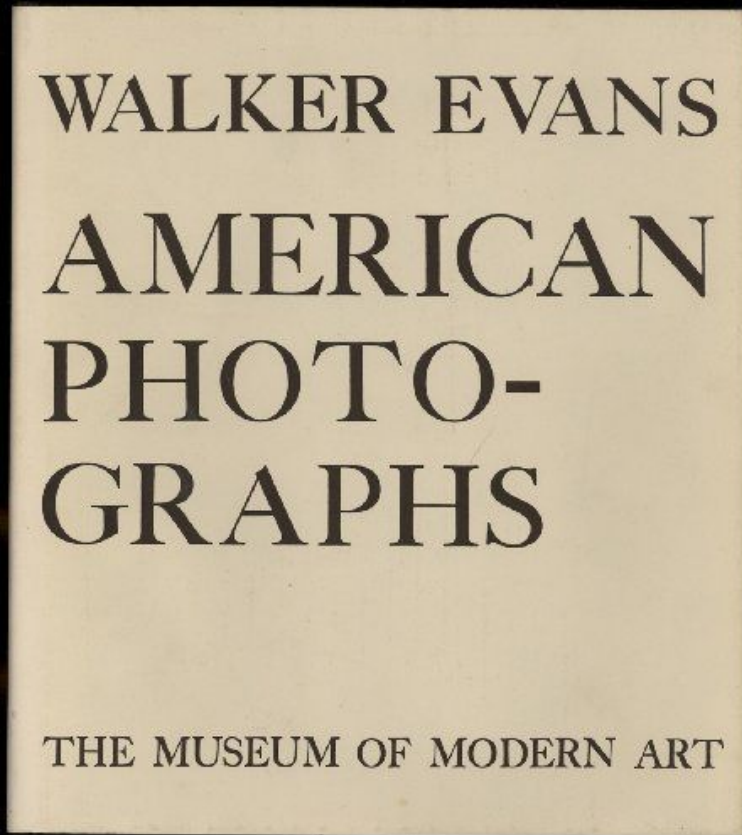
**Svetlana Alpers**

Author of *Walker Evans:  
Starting from Scratch*

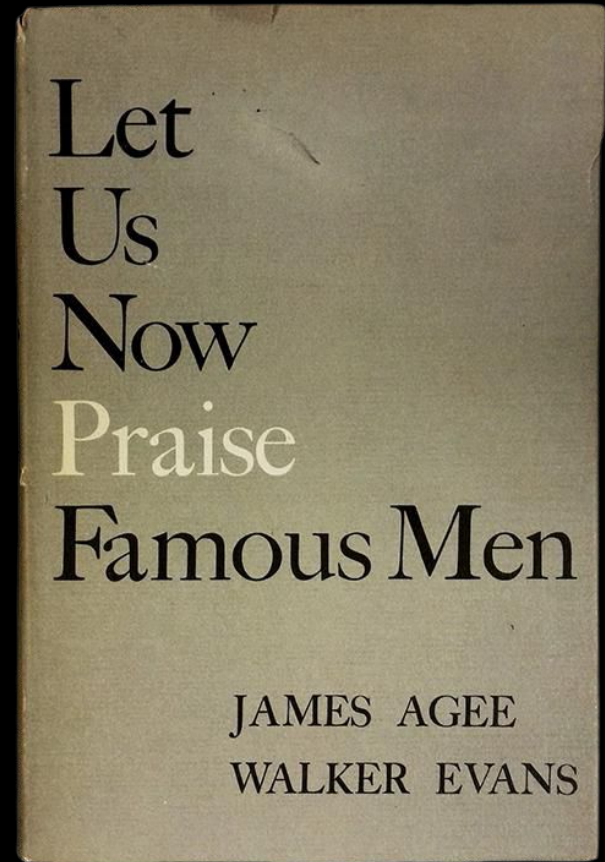


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Public  
Library

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1938



1960 (2nd ed.)



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MEMORANDUM

The New York Public Library

RE: Walker Evans

DATE: February 19, 1991

To:

FROM: Francine Tyler

The following information is taken from the New York Public Library personnel records and concerns the employment of Walker Evans, who in this period lived at 7 W. 92nd Street.

Evans employment began March 1, 1924. From that date to March 16, 1924 he worked in the stacks for the wage of \$75.00 a month.

Evans transferred to the Map Room on March 17, where he worked until September 30, 1924 and earned \$85.00 a month. The Map Room was a subdivision of the Department of American History.

Evans was reappointed as a temporary employee to the Map Room on December 1, 1924 and worked until January 10, 1925. He earned \$90.00 a month

Reappointed again, Evans worked a 32 hour week from February 1, until December 31, 1925, at \$80.00 per month.

It is not clear what work title Evans held but I enclose the 1925 annual report about the Map Room which may provide you with some details of the workings of the department.

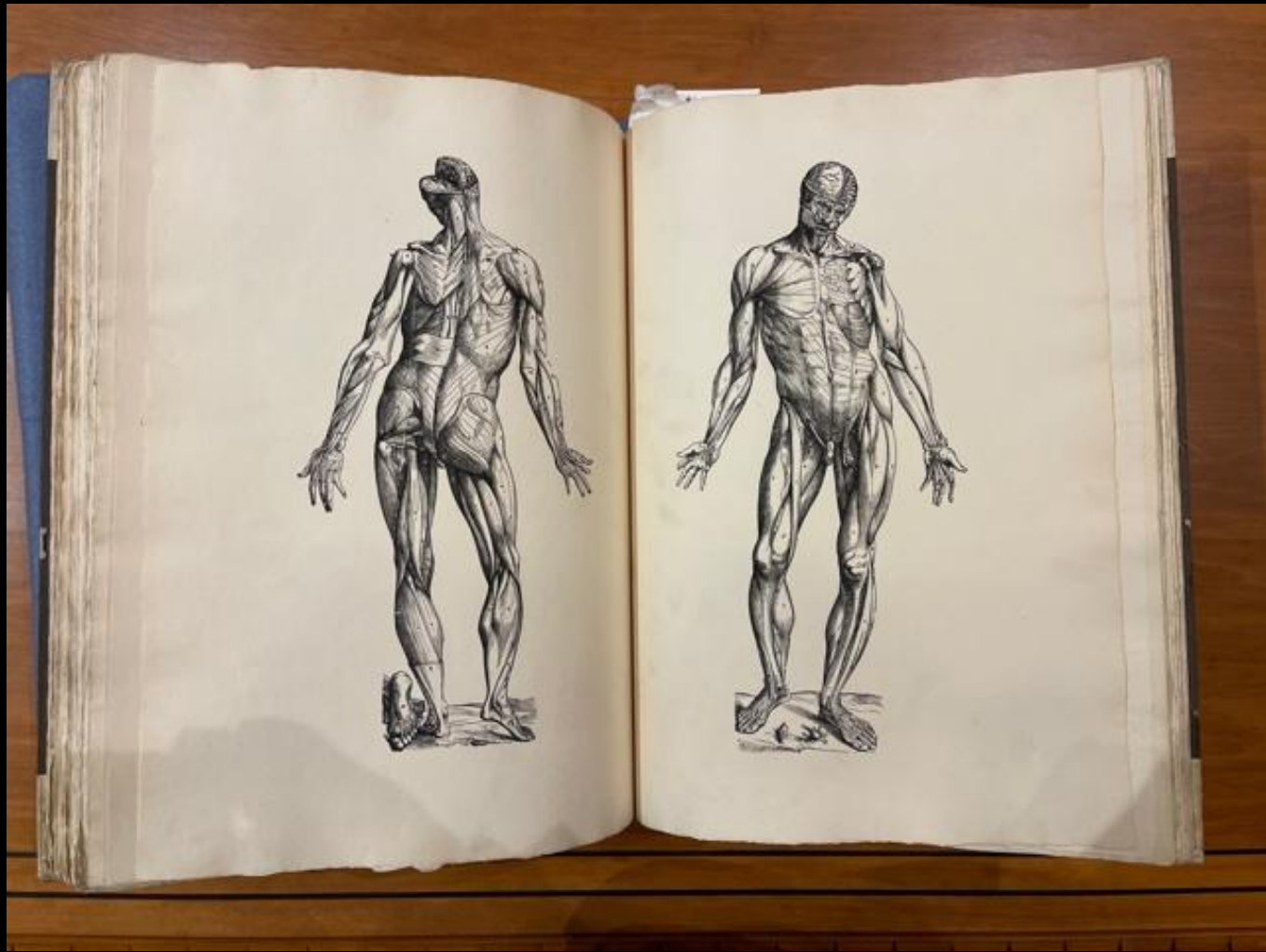
Evans, Walker.

Assistant. [c. 1923?]



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57



50



16



15



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MUSEUM EXHIBIT



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*Walker Evans, MoMA, 1971 exhibition installation view*



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*Walker Evans, MoMA, 1971 exhibition installation view*



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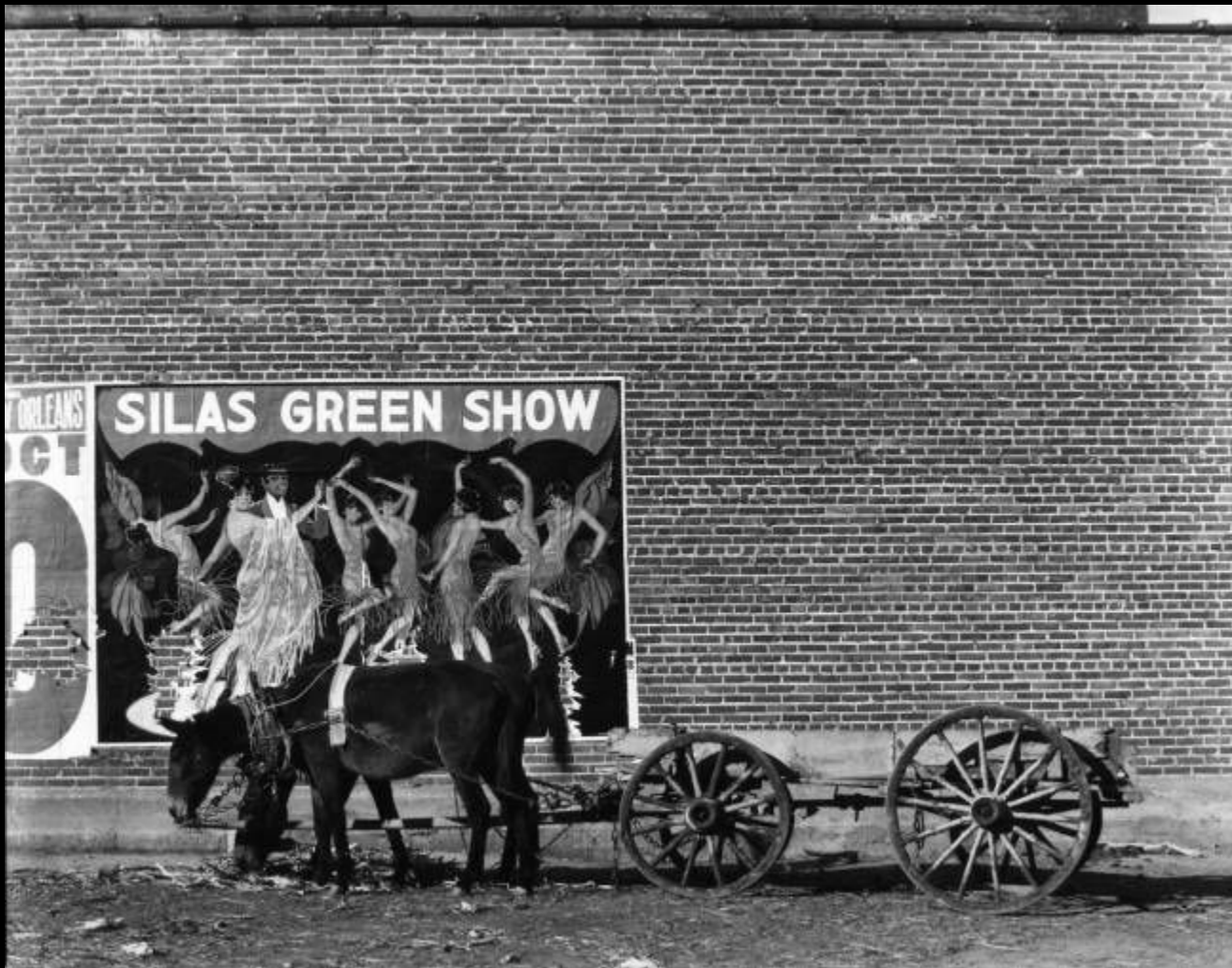
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LIBRARY FACADE



CRAP BOOK, 1795



"THE NEW-ENGLAND PRIMER," 1722



THE STACKS



WHEN WENT YOU WENT TO SEE MOTHER TO KNOW THE LOCATION OF HIS FEET



LETTER FROM GARDNER (1882) IN BABYLONIA ANNOUNCING HIS BIRTHDAY TO THE NEW WORLD

# THE PRIVATE LIVES OF PUBLIC BOOKS

The New York Public Library celebrates its 100th anniversary

BY ALICE S. MORRIS

*"Fundamentally our public libraries are sources of unlimited information of all kinds, for any and all persons. In our country of many freedoms, where government has never banned libraries or decreed what books should go on library shelves, this function is taken for granted. Yet it stands as the guarantee of one of the most fundamental values of democracy—the right to knowledge, to the truth of any matter so far as it can be known."*

—RALPH S. BEAL, Director, the New York Public Library

If one enters the New York Public Library, not in search of a book to read or a fact to find, but in search, so to speak, of the library itself, one enters a world in which the boundaries are altered and the discoveries not what one expected. Like Alice, one finds oneself on the other side of the looking glass.

Halls through which one may have passed a dozen times are suddenly apprehended in terms of sheer size and



THE MAIN READING ROOM, TWO BLOCKS LONG

vista, of the marble underfoot, of the heroic scale of arches, pilasters, and leaping stairways. Dots whose designations one had perhaps dimly noted now overwhelm the attention, announcing such a diversity of reference divisions, reading rooms, special collections, exhibitions, and services as one hardly hopes to follow.

Statistics extend this paralyzing prospect: five million books on eighty miles of shelves on seven floors of stacks; six million pictures in the Picture Collec-

FOUR, SEVENTY A, 1910



FOUR, SEVENTY A, 1910

tion; sixty thousand prints in the Print Room; two hundred thousand sheet maps; thirty thousand music scores; files of forty thousand newspapers and magazines; millions of letters and manuscripts; and other resources too numerous to mention. The collections include materials in three thousand languages and dialects from Swahili, Eskimo, and Babylonian cuneiform to Basic English, recorded on everything portable from clay tablets to microfilm, and in bound volumes from one inch to five feet tall.

Twenty million file cards in twenty-nine catalogue systems make these records accessible, at no charge, to an average of nine thousand visitors every day.

Faced everywhere by so much of a richness, one becomes a minor sibling at a moment. One has to go a little further to restore the view to life-size, and to find one's own stature. One has to come a little closer to see how the single human being, his dignity and worth *per se*, is reflected in every facet of the library's life. How behind every

library door, his discoveries, deeds, and hazards over the centuries have been trapped and tamed to meet his present quests, down to the pizzazz. How behind the integers of every statistic, the single human need of whom looks out.

For instance: three thousand questions are answered daily by the library staff. This might be three thousand apples until one sees that each describes its own circle: Were steel pins used in Warsaw in 1837? Have you pictures at the edges of (Continued on page 97)

FOUR, SEVENTY A, 1910



New York Public Library

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# To see many of these images and more

Search “Walker Evans” in **[digitalcollections.nypl.org](https://digitalcollections.nypl.org)**



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