



ANSEL ADAMS

I am very enthusiastic about The Photography Associates, and I am pleased to cooperate in this program by making available to Charter Members of The Associates my photograph, "Moonrise, Hernandez, New Mexico," in a fine lithographic reproduction. I have often been asked if this well-known photograph is my favorite. It may be, in part because it so poignantly expresses what I saw and felt at the time I made it. It remains for me the "equivalent" of an important experience.

We were returning to Santa Fe from a long picture day in the Chama River Valley in northern New Mexico. We passed the little Hispano-American hamlet of Hernandez, and this incredible vista was before us. The moon was about two days before full, and the buildings and crosses were illuminated by a gentle diffuse sunlight coming through the clouds of a clearing storm. I almost drove my car into a ditch and emerged in a state of intense excitement, commanding my companions to get me my tripod, my camera case, etc. The light was going while I was frantically trying to place myself and my camera in the right spot.

When everything was set up and I was ready to take the picture, we could not find the exposure meter! I was desperate, until I remembered that the moon reflected about 250 candles-per-square foot. With a short mental effort I calculated the correct exposure (placing the moon on Zone VII of the exposure scale). I made one 8 x 10, and while turning and replacing the film holder in the camera for a second "security" exposure, the light failed completely and the magical quality of the scene was gone forever.

Had I been a little early, or a little late, or had I been looking out of the other side of the car, I would have missed this opportunity. Had I not been prepared to estimate the exposure without the meter, I would have probably failed. Perhaps, to paraphrase Pasteur: "Chance favors the prepared mind!"

I have agreed to supervise proofs of the "Moonrise" reproductions and to be certain the press-work simulates, to maximum extent, the tonal qualities of the original print. I shall authorize the imprint of my initials -- AA -- on each reproduction, signifying my approval of the result. I hope you will be pleased with this image in every respect.