Spring 2011

Review of Life at the Kiowa, Comanche, and Wichita Agency: The Photographs of Annette Ross Hume by Kristina L. Southwell and John R. Lovett

Joanna Cohan Scherer
Smithsonian Institution

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsquarterly

Part of the American Studies Commons, Cultural History Commons, and the United States History Commons

http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsquarterly/2664

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Great Plains Studies, Center for at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Great Plains Quarterly by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.
BOOK REVIEWS


This book presents the photographs of Annette Ross Hume (1858–1933), a pioneer of Oklahoma and one of many amateur women photographers historians have neglected who took important photos documenting the life and times of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century America. The Annette Hume collection, part of the Western History collection at the University of Oklahoma Library, consists of 738 images, including many glass plate negatives. It is gratifying to see this collection of her work published with such care by the authors and the University of Oklahoma Press.

The well-written introduction includes a brief biography of the photographer, a description of her camera equipment, samples of other photographers' work taken in the area, and a history of the Anadarko Agency (inhabited by Kiowas, Comanches, Wichitas, and various other tribes) in the 1890s. Hume photographed women performing their daily activities, the beef issue, clothing styles of various tribes, reservation schools, structures, Indian leisure activities (including gambling), and important headmen such as Quanah Parker (Comanche), Grant Richards (Tonkawa), Towakoni Jim (Wichita), and Geronimo (Apache). A biography of the agency doctor, Annette's husband Charles Robinson Hume, and discussion of the opening of this part of Oklahoma territory to Euro-American settlers, completes the historical narrative. The authors provide a concise statement of their methodology, which included identification of the individuals depicted by discussion with members of the tribes.

The book is an important contribution presenting many new Kiowa, Comanche, Plains Apache, Delaware, Tonkawa, and Wichita images during 1898–1902, the period of the allotment of land to the Indian population and the opening of "surplus" reservation lands to non-Indian settlement in 1901. As the authors write, "the photographs Annette took of the days surrounding the opening of Anadarko are some of the most historically significant among her collection." The 178 photos, reproduced on top-quality paper, are well captioned and a pleasure to view.

Two problems related to illustrations mar this otherwise exemplary book. First, images are discussed in the introduction without referring to their location in the book. For example, on page 34, the portrait of George and Etta Mopope (Kiowa) shows clothing also worn by Annette's son George in a photo taken on the same day; there is no cross reference, however, to alert readers that the images discussed appear on pp. 207–8. (Inexplicably, a duplicate of the image of the Mopopes also appears in the introduction on p. 15.) This is just poor editing. Secondly, instead of duplicating images in the introduction from the plates section of the volume (77 percent of the book consists of full-page plates), it would have been preferable to have used other images, thereby reproducing a larger number of Hume's photographs.

Life at the Kiowa, Comanche, and Wichita Agency will interest western historians, especially scholars of Oklahoma, women's history, history of photography, as well as researchers of North American Indian studies. It is a beautiful book and I recommend it for anyone interested in Great Plains photography.

JOANNA COHAN SCHERER
Department of Anthropology, Emerita
Smithsonian Institution