

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Great Plains Quarterly

Great Plains Studies, Center for

Fall 2007

Review of *A Northern Cheyenne Album* Photographs by Thomas B. Marquis. Edited by Margot Liberty

Jerry Mader
Carnation, Washington

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsquarterly>



Part of the [Other International and Area Studies Commons](#)

Mader, Jerry, "Review of *A Northern Cheyenne Album* Photographs by Thomas B. Marquis. Edited by Margot Liberty" (2007). *Great Plains Quarterly*. 1442.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsquarterly/1442>

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

A Northern Cheyenne Album. Photographs by Thomas B. Marquis. Edited by Margot Liberty. Commentary by John Woodenlegs. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006. xiv + 286 pp. Photographs, references, index. \$34.95 cloth, \$29.95 paper.

When my copy of *A Northern Cheyenne Album* arrived, I was immediately taken back to a day more than thirty years ago when John Woodenlegs handed a dirty shoebox filled with 497 negatives to me and Tom Weist and said, "Will you take care of these? I don't know what to do with old pictures." The collection, made by Thomas B. Marquis between 1926 and 1935, came to John as a gift for the Cheyenne people from Marquis's daughters. Soon thereafter it became my privilege to restore the collection for the Northern Cheyenne Research and Human Development Association. Over the next three years John, Tom, I, and the committee viewed photographs not seen for forty years and began a process now partially completed by the publication of this book. As I look through this beautiful edition, I can hear Woodenlegs's voice as he talked about the people in the pictures—talk echoed in his commentaries printed here.

Edited by Margot Liberty, *A Northern Cheyenne Album* is indeed a "family album," but one with enormous historical significance. The 142 photographs and commentaries Liberty selected provide an intimate portrait of the Northern Cheyenne at a critical point in their history. Here are many who lived the Cheyenne way of life on the Great Plains before it was destroyed by the final Indian Wars. We see survivors of the Custer fight, the Battle of the Rosebud, the March North, and the Fort Robinson Outbreak. With them are their children and grandchildren, the first generations born into the reservation system.

Together, they present a people in transition, their double life artfully recorded by Marquis's photographs. Moreover, as people surviving in the wake of catastrophe, their character and integrity are visible in every picture. Through it all, they kept the "Cheyenne Way." This book is an invaluable reference for reservation life in the early twentieth century.

Thirty years ago we hoped for a book and a permanent archive on the reservation. The book has arrived; a bit tardy, but here at last. And yet, despite the intent of Marquis's daughters or efforts by John Woodenlegs, Dr. Richard Littlebear and me, the complete collection hasn't found its way back to the reservation where it would be housed, appropriately, at the John Woodenlegs Memorial Library. It is currently archived at the Buffalo Bill Museum in Cody, Wyoming. Perhaps this publication will spur its long promised return to the Northern Cheyenne.

JERRY MADER
Writer/Photographer
Carnation, Washington