

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Great Plains Quarterly

Great Plains Studies, Center for

Winter 2007

Review of *L. A. Huffman: Photographer of the American West* By Larry Len Peterson

Carl Mautz

Carl Mautz Publishing

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



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

Mautz, Carl, "Review of *L. A. Huffman: Photographer of the American West* By Larry Len Peterson" (2007).
Great Plains Quarterly. 1522.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsquarterly/1522>

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.

L. A. Huffman: Photographer of the American West.
By Larry Len Peterson. Missoula, MT: Mountain
Press Publishing Company, 2005. xi + 296 pp.
Photographs, index. \$45.00 paper.

Visual history is gaining respect as a portal to
the past, and one individual who stands out in

depicting life on the northern Great Plains of the American West is Laton Alton Huffman. This book is a splendid celebration of Huffman's life work, first as post photographer at Fort Keogh in 1879 where he made portraits of Indians near the end of the Indian Wars, and later as a professional photographer in Miles City, Montana, where he recorded life on the frontier, including buffalo, cattle ranching, hunting, small town life, western personalities, reservation life, and the beginning of the end of the old West with the arrival of the railroad, farmers, and fences.

Huffman inspired several of the great western painters including Ed Borein, Frederick Remington, and his good friend Charley Russell. His photographs were also used for many years by authors and editors to illustrate magazines, books, pamphlets, and calenders, among them *Harper's Weekly*, Roycroft publications, and *Century Magazine*.

The book addresses one of the difficult issues surrounding the authorship of nineteenth-century photography, since it was customary then to print a photographer's work under another photographer's imprint. For example, Huffman published Stanley Morrow's views of the Custer battlefield under his own name, while William Hook published Huffman's images under the Hook imprint.

Huffman used many formats of photography and image reproduction in carrying out his business, leaving to today's collector and researcher a rich and varied archive of albumen prints made with the wet plate process, dry plate silver prints, and rich photo-mechanical collotype prints and postcards, many of which were hand colored. Stereoviews, postcards, cabinet cards, panoramas, and a wide variety of larger prints are reproduced in the book from the impressive collection of rare book dealers Gene and Bev Allen.

To explain fully the power of this presentation of Huffman's body of work, one notes that no cost was spared in printing the illustrations in full color on a heavy, coated paper that brings out the detail and charm of the images and formats of expression Huffman used to share his experience and vision of life on the Great Plains.

This book stands with the very best pictorial histories of life in the Old West, delivering its information with quality book design, illustrations, and production.

CARL MAUTZ
Carl Mautz Publishing
Nevada City, CA