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Review of *Faces of the Frontier: Photographic Portraits from the American West, 1845-1924* by Frank H. Goodyear III, with an essay by Richard White and contributions by Maya E. Foo and Amy L. Baskette

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Faces of the Frontier: Photographic Portraits from the American West, 1845–1924. By Frank H. Goodyear III, with an essay by Richard White and contributions by Maya E. Foo and Amy L. Baskette. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press; Washington, DC: National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 2009. x + 181 pp. Photographs, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$45.00.

The rise of photography in the United States coincided with the spread of Manifest Destiny, and this handsome exhibit catalogue presents a veritable photographic who's who of the men (and a few women) who were pivotal actors in both the conquest and representation of the American West. The National Portrait Gallery organized the exhibition, *Faces of the Frontier*, in 2009, with travels to the San Diego Historical Society and the Gilcrease Museum in 2010. The book consists of essays by curator Frank H. Goodyear III and Richard White and the portraits themselves, accompanied by biographical captions.

Four thematic sections divide the images: land, exploration, discord, and possibilities. The first image, fittingly, is of President James K. Polk, architect of midcentury expansion; the last is of Karl Struss, a Hollywood cinematographer who worked for Cecil B. DeMille. For the most part, these are well-known figures and often well-known photographs: the stereograph of George Armstrong Custer with a dead grizzly bear or very familiar prints of Sarah Winnemucca and Annie Oakley. But there are also some arresting, unusual photographs: a portrait of John Brown looking like an elderly history professor; photographer F. Jay Haynes, swaddled in fur clothing, icicles hanging from his moustache, phlegmatically taking notes on the wonders of Yellowstone; on facing pages a sober-visaged Sam Houston in an exuberant checked waistcoat and William Walker in a velvet-collared coat looking meek as milquetoast.

As Richard White notes in his essay, what we want to know about these people is impossible to know from these photographs. Many of the photos are studio portraits—from the waist up, facing slightly away from the camera, seated in front of a plain backdrop. If you came across them, unlabeled, in the miscellaneous photo bin of an antique store,

you could easily dismiss them as pictures of the thousands of mysterious inhabitants of the nineteenth century whose stories we will never know. Yet other portraits include props indicative of their subjects' careers: Thomas Moran posed with a palette and brushes or Clarence King and companions with surveying equipment. Indeed, it is fascinating to speculate on why subjects chose the clothing and accoutrements they did. I couldn't help but wonder if Olive Oatman deliberately picked her dress because the striking trim on her sleeves mimicked the chin tattoo she bore from her days with the Mohaves.

This volume puts faces on many of the most intriguing characters of the American West and whets the appetite to learn more about them.

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