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Review of *Lanterns on the Prairie: The Blackfeet Photographs of Walter McClintock* edited by Steven L. Grafe, with contributions by William E. Farr, Sherry L. Smith, and Darrell Robes Kipp

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Lanterns on the Prairie: The Blackfeet Photographs of Walter McClintock. Edited by Steven L. Grafe, with contributions by William E. Farr, Sherry L. Smith, and Darrell Robes Kipp. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009. xi + 323 pp. Photographs, plates, notes, bibliography, index. \$60.00 cloth, \$34.95 paper.

Walter McClintock (1870–1949) is principally known for two books, *The Old North Trail; or Life, Legends and Religion of the Blackfeet Indians* (1910) and *Old Indian Trails* (1923). Both are illustrated with McClintock's photographs, *The Old North Trail* generously so. They convey an idealized vision of the traditional Blackfeet culture that captivated McClintock when, as a Yale graduate aspiring to a career in forestry, he visited the Blackfeet reservation in Montana in 1896. On subsequent visits through 1912 his collection grew to over 2,000 photographs, and he established himself as an authority on the tribe, delivering lectures in America and Europe illustrated with hand-colored lantern slides.

McClintock can be grouped with the photographers who in the early twentieth century focused on western Indians—notably Edward S. Curtis, Roland Reed, Carl Moon, and Joseph K. Dixon. The pioneering painter George Catlin and his Indian Gallery of portraits and scenes served as their inspiration, and they shared his conviction that America's distinctive Native cultures were fated to disappear. Where McClintock differed from the others was in concentrating on a single tribe over a sustained period

of time. He was adopted by Mad Wolf, a respected Blackfeet elder, in 1898, and could thereafter claim a privileged insider's view of tribal life while ignoring contemporary reservation realities in order to evoke a timeless world of tipis, horses, and traditional dress. Modernity was minimized or excluded in his pictures; wagons, for example, were often scrubbed from prints. Nevertheless, like Curtis, McClintock aspired to be taken seriously as a student of Indian culture. This ambition has confused later generations, as artists and photographers who championed an intensely romantic vision of the American Indian have been judged as scientists and found wanting.

Lanterns on the Prairie includes substantial essays by Steven Grafe, William Farr, and Sherry Smith, and a shorter essay by Darrell Robes Kipp that presents a Blackfeet perspective on McClintock's photographs. It qualifies the modern tendency to judge artists from the past by their cultural convictions. They left a visual record still valued by the descendants of those they portrayed, happily incorrectly, as a vanishing race. Grafe contributes an informative biography of McClintock and an introduction to his photographs. Farr is tarter in interrogating his tendency to parade himself as the lone white intimate of the Blackfeet in order to claim a singular expertise, while Smith contextualizes his romantic preoccupations—and perhaps his self-promotion—by placing him within the cultural framework of an antimodernism pervasive at the turn of the twentieth century. The authors' multifaceted approach to McClintock's legacy serves the reader well in evaluating, and enjoying, his photographs as both documents and art.

Lanterns on the Prairie is volume 6 in the Western Legacies Series, a joint venture of the University of Oklahoma Press—now the leading publisher in the field of Western American art and photography—and the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum. Attractively designed, with a readable, authoritative text and superb reproductions of a selection of McClintock's photographs in color and black and white, it makes the case for print on paper over trendier alternatives.

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