



Faces of the Frontier: Photographic Portraits from the American West, 1845–1924

Frank H. Goodyear III

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Their faces look out across a chasm of time. Stern and often stiff, they wear the high collars and hoop skirts, buckskins and ceremonial feathers of another era. The names of some are familiar—Teddy Roosevelt, Mark Twain, Sitting Bull, Annie Oakley. The names of others may be less well known, but they played a significant role in re-creating the American West. These are all people of the West, and their portraits give us a unique glimpse into a lost time and place.

Faces of the Frontier showcases more than 120 photographic portraits of leaders, statesmen, soldiers, laborers, activists, criminals, and others, all posed before the cameras that made their way to nearly every mining shanty-town and frontier outpost on the prairie. Drawing primarily on the collection of the National Portrait Gallery, this book depicts many of the people who helped transform the West between the end of the Mexican War and passage of the Indian Citizenship Act.

Accompanying the portraits are an introduction and two essays that provide historical context and help frame their interpretation. Frank Goodyear explores how photography influenced Americans' understanding of the West by giving the region a face and by shaping public responses to western issues. Richard White questions the notion that these photographs accurately represent individuals and argues that the portraits' subjects participated in a process that idealized them as types.

This handsome volume is not only a record of the people we associate with the West during a remarkably formative eighty years but also a key to understanding what Americans then saw in the West, and how they saw themselves.

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