

recreate physically the city itself as a home through building these vernacular spaces. It is in this physical recreation of the city that Spain sees these women "saving the city." These new buildings—which she calls "redemptive" spaces—were "the theaters in which critical issues of the day were negotiated" (xii), places that "produced social order at a critical moment in the nation's development" (237) because they brought together in common spaces the diverse residents of the city. Scholars might quibble that dividing women into "builders" and "non-builders" does not adequately appreciate the ways in which activist women were all part of a broader movement that helped save the city in this time period. Nevertheless, Spain's point is well taken that the concrete spaces were as important to this work of making the U.S. city a livable place as were the women's movements to clean up the city, eliminate smoke and noise pollution, design better public school systems, and end political corruption.

The Plains Indian Photographs of Edward S. Curtis, by Martha H. Kennedy et al. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001. viii, 186 pp. Illustrations, notes. \$50.00 cloth.

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History, the saying goes, is written by the winners. Scholars engaged in the study of American Indians and their cultures know the meaning of this axiom all too well. A dominant Anglo perspective colors our understanding of Indian culture, in no small part because most written documentation of the history of indigenous people comes from European-American sources. The work of Edward Curtis (1868–1952), a photographer who devoted his career to documenting Indian life, illustrates that even the supposedly neutral medium of photography can convey a cultural perspective. In his multi-volume *North American Indians*, which he began to publish in 1904, Curtis endeavored to create a photographic record of the "primitive conditions and traditions" (3) of the people of the first nations. Active at a time when most Americans believed that Indians were a vanishing race, the photographer is known for his striking portraits of such individuals as the Oglala chief Red Cloud. Recently, Curtis and his team of assistants have come under much criticism for their method of using props, clothing, and twentieth-century Indian "models" to recreate stereotypical scenes of nineteenth-century aboriginal life for the camera.

The Plains Indian Photographs of Edward S. Curtis brings together 91 of the photographer's images with his original captions and four scholarly essays. Contributors Martha H. Kennedy, Martha A. Sandweiss, Mick Gidley, and Duane Niatum encourage readers to look beyond the image of Curtis as a manipulative artist who exploited hapless Indians. Instead, they urge us to explore the complexities of the artist, his mission, and the historical context in which he worked. Niatum portrays the photographer as a would-be ethnographer whose desire to create accurate documents was often compromised by his need for self-expression. Through strict control of composition, tone, and contrast, Curtis produced romantic images that expressed his generation's nostalgia for the vanishing natural world. Curtis also sought to control the messages his images conveyed through the use of didactic captions that were as carefully composed as his photographs. Gidley points out, however, that the sheer magnitude of Curtis's project, which included teams of photographers, ethnographers, and assistants working over a period of several decades, makes it subject to a variety of interpretations. Both Sandweiss and Gidley attribute part of this ambiguity to the fact that Curtis's Indian subjects sometimes moved beyond the role of mere willing models to become active collaborators. The resulting photographs sometimes supplied Indians with powerful images to which they could affix their own narratives and occasionally helped individuals attain a status from which they could present their stories to the broader American culture.

Unfortunately, the impact of these insightful essays is compromised by the poor quality of the book's photo reproductions. Many of Curtis's artful compositions appear to have been "squeezed" and "stretched" to fit into the format of the book's pages, making them appear laughably like panoramic scenes from a "B" western movie that have been shown on a narrow television screen. This casts another—albeit unintentional—layer of meaning on the artist's work and mars what is otherwise a very worthwhile publication.

Homeless, Friendless, and Penniless: The WPA Interviews with Former Slaves Living in Indiana, by Ronald L. Baker. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000. xx, 341 pp. Illustration, appendixes, index. \$29.95 cloth.

Reviewer Valerie Grim is associate professor of African American Studies at Indiana University–Bloomington. Her research interests concern the rural and agricultural experiences of African Americans in the twentieth century.

In *Homeless, Friendless, and Penniless*, Ronald Baker has assembled testimonies of former slaves whose accounts of their lives give readers

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