

Spring 2008

## Constructing a Home on the Range: Homemaking in Early Twentieth Century Plains Photograph Albums

Christina E. Dando

University of Nebraska at Omaha, [cdando@unomaha.edu](mailto:cdando@unomaha.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/geoggeolfacpub>

 Part of the [Geography Commons](#)

Please take our feedback survey at: [https://unomaha.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_8cchtFmpDyGfBLE](https://unomaha.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8cchtFmpDyGfBLE)

---

### Recommended Citation

Dando, Christina E., "Constructing a Home on the Range: Homemaking in Early Twentieth Century Plains Photograph Albums" (2008). *Geography and Geology Faculty Publications*. 24.  
<https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/geoggeolfacpub/24>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Department of Geography and Geology at DigitalCommons@UNO. It has been accepted for inclusion in Geography and Geology Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UNO. For more information, please contact [unodigitalcommons@unomaha.edu](mailto:unodigitalcommons@unomaha.edu).

# Constructing a Home on the Range: Homemaking in Early Twentieth Century Plains Photograph Albums

Christina E. Dando  
*University of Nebraska at Omaha*

**Key Words:** home, landscape, Montana, North Dakota, photograph albums, photography, visual culture

*Oh, give me a home where the buffalo roam,  
Where the deer and the antelope play,  
Where seldom is heard a discouraging word  
And the skies are not cloudy all day.<sup>1</sup>*

These lyrics capture a yearning for a place to call home. But what landscape is associated with this longing? For people living near the coasts or mountains of America, it must be hard to imagine longing for a "home on the plains"-but many Americans have had, and still have, a home on the Plains. The stereotypical American image of the Plains is flatness, austerity, emptiness. Not all would consider this an ideal landscape for home. So how did the people who settled on the Plains "view" this landscape? What did they see? How did this land come to be recognized as that of home? In Walter Prescott Webb's *The Great Plains* (1931), Webb argues that when the Plains settlers had to adapt to their new environment, "they were compelled to make a radical readjustment in their way of life."<sup>2</sup>

In particular, Webb focused on the "treeless, flat, and semiaridity" of the Plains and the key developments of railroads, barbed wire, windmills, and improved farm machinery and methods.<sup>3</sup> But another technology was key to the transformation of the Plains: photography. I argue that photography was central to Plains settlers' "radically readjusting" to living on the Plains and conceptually recognizing the Plains as home.

Photographs taken during the settlement process reveal how Plains settlers were "placing themselves" into the landscape as they were constructing their homes on the Plains. More significantly, photographing the Plains aided settlers in learning "Plains-viewing," that is, in learning the "new ways of seeing" that would transform the Plains from an unfamiliar landscape to home. Photograph albums capture the physical as well as conceptual "place-making" of the Plains, constructed as they were by individuals to reflect their particular view of the Plains and their lives.

To explore place-making in Plains photograph albums, I begin with an overview of photograph albums and photographic analysis. Next, I provide an overview of place-making, specifically "homemaking" in the Great Plains context. Finally, I examine a representative sample of photograph albums created on the Plains for evidence of place-making through images. Plains people took great pride in their transformation of the landscape and documented the process with photographs. By taking and keeping photographs of this process, the photographers are claiming as their own this landscape and acknowledging their roles as creators and shapers of landscape, as if to say "I made this."<sup>4</sup>

## ANALYZING PHOTOGRAPH ALBUMS

The subject of amateur Plains photography, the snapshots and albums created by nonprofessional photographers for their own use, has not been systematically addressed to date. Amateur visual culture has been increasingly explored in the social sciences, led by the groundbreaking work of Richard Chalfen.<sup>5</sup> Much recent work on amateur photography focuses on fairly recent photographs; seldom are historic works explored, but there are a few noteworthy studies, particularly the work of Marilyn Motz.<sup>6</sup> Chalfen writes:

Important questions fundamental to the social sciences and the humanities lie buried in our home media. What are ordinary people saying about themselves and their conditions of human existence? What can we learn about ourselves as social and cultural beings through studies of photographs we make about and for ourselves? ... On a broader scale, how important are such variables as historical period, technological developments, regional and cultural variations to what appears in these portraits of family life and in snapshot photography in general?<sup>7</sup>

Billions of amateur photographs have been taken since photography's development. They are a tremendous potential source for researchers interested in exploring the experiences of common people and can be explored using a range of methodologies, from content analysis to narrative analysis.

At the turn of the twentieth century, there was a boom in photography and Plains images. The twentieth century brought easier, more accessible cameras, promoting amateur photography, particularly through Kodak's point-and-shoot cameras, first introduced in 1889.<sup>8</sup> By 1896 Kodak had sold an estimated one hundred thousand cameras. Kodak's point-and-shoot cameras revolutionized photography, taking it from an expensive practice to something almost anyone could both afford and do. Individuals could now take their own photographs rather than rely on professional photographers. At the same time, the Plains were being settled by Americans and Europeans who were documenting their experiences with their new Kodaks. But what did they do with the images once they were developed? Some photographic prints were passed around at family or social gatherings; others were sent to family and friends as postcards or utilized to decorate parlors (note photographs on the wall, Fig. 1). Some photographs were formed into photograph albums.

Photograph albums can be created by anyone for a range of purposes. When created by individuals to document their lives and interests, albums allow people to construct their life stories as they want to see them and as they want others to see them.<sup>9</sup> Albums can be carefully constructed narratives designed to reveal as much as they conceal, to be selective about moments, events, people, and places, not unlike a diary.<sup>10</sup> Even if the album was just "slapped together," with seemingly little thought to its organization, it is still an act of preservation, made with the intent to keep the photographs in a formal manner. Albums can be revealing sources about the photographers and their subjects. As albums are usually created to be shared, they have the potential to shape or reshape their audience's perceptions of people and places.<sup>11</sup> Further, they are a form of "personal document" and serve a recordkeeping function, as well as guiding and structuring memory "of a specific collection of people *for* a specific collection of people."

For this study, I used simple criteria to identify photograph albums in archives: albums created in the period from about 1880 to approximately 1920 that had a strong landscape component to them. Photography was widely practiced on the plains during this time, a time that also represents a great

boom in Plains settlement. The qualifier “strong landscape component” was essential to my interest in human perception of landscape: I was attempting to winnow out the “portrait albums” from the photograph albums that would have landscape photographs in them. By specifying “albums,” I was focusing on constructed collections of photographs, usually with some additional information available. There are thousands of Plains photographs available from this period, with many of the photographs unidentified loose images.<sup>13</sup> The researcher is faced with the task of making sense out of thousands of images floating in time, having no date, no caption, no sense of authorship. Albums have images presented in context, retaining some sense of their original usage and meaning. We are, however, missing a significant portion of the album: the verbal narrative that its creator would have provided. Half the story is provided; it is up to the researcher to investigate the creator, the place, and the people, and to flesh out the storyline. With my broad search parameters, I was able to locate seventeen albums in four state historical societies.<sup>14</sup> For an overview of the albums utilized in this study, see Table 1.

We can learn much by “unpacking” photographs, but how might we go about this task? Recognizing photographs as a form of text, and drawing from literary analysis, it is possible to excavate various levels of meaning captured on film. Photographic analysis is a well-established qualitative field in the social sciences.<sup>15</sup> If we were to encounter Figure 2 randomly, in an antique store or in a box of miscellaneous photographs, we would be free to interpret it any way we wish. There is nothing to fix its meaning. When an image is given a caption, on its back or under it in a photograph album or magazine, it fixes or guides the image’s meaning and interpretation. Without a caption, it is just an old picture of a woman holding onto her hat in a breeze. It could be any woman, virtually anywhere. Include the caption to Figure 2, “Grace Binks Price,” and it suddenly becomes someone. We still do not know much except that she has a name.

The placement of photographs onto a page and/or assembled into an album further shapes and refines their interpretation. A carefully created album, complete with captions, has boundaries placed on its interpretation. It presents stories to its viewers, stories scripted by its creator and imbued with their creator’s perceptions, preferences, and own take on reality. The page on which it is situated, its context, may give us clues to its meaning and interpretation, while restricting the possible ways the reader can interpret the image. The placement of images, the juxtaposition of images, their captions, and the number of images on a page impact the interpretation of the images. We can go a step further and say that the entire context, whether an album or a book, defines the interpretation of the image.

The snapshot of Grace is in fact from her photograph album, appearing on page 5 of the album (Fig. 3). In the corners of the page are placed four images, three of which are labeled “Grace’s Land,” and one “Grace’s House” (outhouse?). The placement of these images in the corner of the page, along with the “compass rose” on the bottom of the page, suggests that the four directions (corners?) are being represented or invoked on this page and in the images. While one label may have sufficed, Grace has labeled each to make it perfectly clear that this is all her land. At the center, surrounded by “Grace’s Land,” is a photograph of Grace herself on the Plains, “placing” her, surrounding her, with her land. She is labeled, too. Are we being shown “Grace’s Land” through Grace’s eyes? (And if so, who took the photograph of Grace?) Also on this page is a newspaper clipping describing how Grace was homesteading in Montana, providing an authoritative voice that explains where Grace is and the significance of “Grace’s Land.” While Grace’s snapshot may have been unimpressive as an isolated image, in the context of its page, it takes on a richer, fuller meaning and narrative tone. The repetitious

images and labeling drive the message home that Grace owns her own land. The newspaper clipping lets the viewer know that Grace's homesteading experience is notable.

Photograph albums can be created by anyone for a range of purposes, reflecting a common human desire to document lives and interests. In general, these photographs tend to represent material assets, achievements, and "snippets of satisfaction (parties, picnics, and holidays)."<sup>16</sup> Traditional albums are usually constructed around a central subject, such as trips or vacations, a theme or hobby, a major event like a wedding, or they can be autobiographical. In Grace's case, her album is centered on her homestead experiences. The process of creating an album involves taking or purchasing photographs, selecting images to be utilized, organizing the images in a meaningful way, assembling the album, adding captions and other forms of information to the pages, and sharing the album with an audience. The selection of images and their organization in the album can be random, but more often it takes on a chronological approach, from a trip covering days or weeks to an entire life. Assembling the images, the pages, and the captions results in the creation of a narrative, and narrative analysis provides another way to approach photograph albums.

Narrative analysis crosses many disciplines and has been utilized in many different situations, from folktales to oral interviews.<sup>17</sup> Central to this approach is the understanding that humans tell stories, on an individual level, on a community level, even on a national level.<sup>18</sup> In analyzing narratives, scholars consider the narrative on a variety of levels, including why the story is being told (purpose), how it is being told (structure, elements, and form), and where it is told (setting as well as the telling). Photographs and photograph albums are a form of "photo-narrative": "a set of photographs arranged to create a storyline within the constraints of a particular format."<sup>19</sup> Kodak has advocated photography's links to storytelling: The function of snapshots and home movies was not simply to help preserve family events but to have a privileged role in this story "telling" ritual. A 1950 ad reads "Snapshots remember when you forget." In fact, "Your snapshots tell the story best" (1951).<sup>20</sup>

While the role of narrator is important to the narration as well as to photograph albums, we do not always have this luxury. Albums do not tell a whole story; rather, they are meant to be shared by the creator with their audience, walking the viewer through the pages, explaining the images and their significance.<sup>21</sup> With historical studies, this verbal narrative is seldom available. But the sharing element of albums needs to be acknowledged, for the sharing of images can shape or reshape the audience's perceptions of people and places.<sup>22</sup>

Photograph albums are not just mnemonic devices to assist individuals to remember stories that are then conveyed orally. They can also be described as a sort of topographic map of individual lives, mapping out the "high points" and serving as signposts for specific memories. By paging through an album an individual can trace out both the temporal and spatial journey of their lives. Some may trace a clear path from the cradle to the grave, others' paths may be discontinuous. Through the album pages, time and space are transcended. In this "memoryscape," distant family are brought near, the dead are returned to life, and landscapes are rewound to earlier states of development.<sup>23</sup> Important to analyzing photograph album narratives is researching the history of the albums, establishing its creator and its function, becoming what James and Lobato call a "privileged reader"-this "compensates for the lack of context, stabilizes the ambiguities, reveals underlying tensions, and allows the viewer to read the subtext behind the photographic codes and conventions."<sup>24</sup> With such research, we can begin to place the albums into a socio-historical context, recognizing them as creations of an individual, utilized for

specific reasons. It has unfortunately been difficult to learn much about Grace, other than the simple basics that she was from Ottumwa, Iowa, homesteaded with her girlfriends in Montana, and eventually married a man in Seattle. Her album later turned up in an antiques store in Oregon. But from her album we can construct the following narrative: Grace arrives in Montana and establishes her homestead. She spends time in Montana and develops friendships with the neighbors. Time passes, portrayed by harvests, snows, and train station visits representing trips home. Eventually Grace proves up her homestead, documented in the album with the required newspaper announcement of proving up her claim. "And so, farewell to Montana!," written on one of the last pages of the album, provides a conclusion. Our heroine has triumphed: she has survived, reached her goal, and moved on.

For me, analysis of albums is multifaceted, as I "unfold" the narrative as much as possible without "forcing" it. Analysis begins with gathering background material on the albums and its creator, locating them in time and space. Next, a rudimentary content analysis of the album provides an overview of the album.<sup>25</sup> Content analysis, while often criticized for fragmenting data and removing it from its context, is useful in studies such as this where there are many elements to be examined.<sup>26</sup> A series of classifications is established prior to the construction of the analysis, structured around the goals and interests of the research (Table 2). Each photograph is examined and "graded" according to its "focal theme" and the results compared and contrasted.<sup>27</sup> The advantage of content analysis is that it permits comparison of multiple photographs and can provide an overview of large data sets (useful when each album is composed of anywhere from 15 to 150 photographs). Individual photographs may be examined for cultural codes and narrative imbedded in the image. Work then shifts to narrative analysis, returning the images to their context and examining the album as a whole. The use of multiple methods is crucial to "keeping our ears wide open" in order to hear the voices and stories, especially the voices that may have been silenced even before the passage of time.<sup>28</sup>

Finally, we might think in terms of albums, determining whether all the photograph albums constructed in a particular place and time may have certain commonalities in their narratives and their treatment of certain themes. Albums are artifacts of popular culture, composed of similar materials (paper, binder, photographs, captions), depending on a common "language," building with similar experiences and a common landscape.<sup>29</sup> It is not far-fetched to consider that photograph albums constructed on the Plains during settlement might share common themes, common landscapes. While their focuses and usages may differ, they are building with the same blocks. Together they are writing the history of their landscape and their place in the arena of public memory.<sup>30</sup>

## **PLAINS HOMEMAKING**

Before we grapple with Plains homemaking, we must first address "home" in general and the role the visual plays in homemaking. The concept of home has been associated with a variety of important human needs and emotions, such as privacy and refuge, security and control, creativity, symbol of self, permanence and continuity, family, center of activity and life, and material structure.<sup>31</sup> The concept of home is a complex one for most individuals. Few Americans could describe the significance of home in a few words. It cannot simply be boiled down to the space where we lay our heads. While it emanates from some form of structure, what is more significant are the experiences connected with this location: "The marker (wall, road, line, border, post, sign) is static, dull, and cold. But when lived (encountered, manipulated, touched, voiced, glanced at, practiced) it radiates a milieu, a field of force, a shape of space."<sup>32</sup> Home is "a material and an affective space, shaped by everyday practices, lived experiences,

social relations, memories and emotions .... The meanings and lived experiences of home are diverse."<sup>33</sup> Most, but not all, individuals have positive feelings and experiences of home. So easily can the refuge become a prison and family the torturers. One must be sensitive to the possible experiences of home, which can vary on so many levels (gender, age, ethnicity, experiences, etc). It can mean so many things to so many people, and be expressed in a wide variety of mediums. The multifaceted nature of home calls for multidisciplinary research.<sup>34</sup>

So how did settlers make a home on the Plains? The psychological process of "homemaking" on the Plains begins with the decision to move to the Plains, to leave a familiar place and people and migrate to a new location. It is a decision to leave a "home" and create a new "home." As one departs the old home, with its packing and good-byes, one intends to find, create, or identify a new home. This new home is anticipated: through readings and conversations an impression of the new home is already taking shape. As people travel, move through the landscape, they are moving away from an old home toward what they hope will be a new home. Because most people migrate in pursuit of a better life, they look forward to the new land and the new life.<sup>35</sup>

As settlers arrive at their new locations, their immediate concern is shelter and becoming established in this new place. A location for "home" is selected, chosen for its proximity to water, perhaps, or neighbors, refuge, or its location that reminds them of the old home landscape.<sup>36</sup> Location might also be influenced by the lifestyle pursued, be it farming or ranching, each requiring different geographic conditions. Temporary shelter may be used as "home" if more permanent shelter is not available: a claim shanty, a dugout, or a "soddie" might be constructed. Once shelter is established, steps are taken to make this structure "home" by unpacking belongings, arranging familiar things, constructing new furniture (sometimes from packing boxes), and adding personal touches. Traditionally, these actions are in the realm of the wife/mother, as the creators and caretakers of the domestic space, although single male and female homesteaders also might "homemake."<sup>37</sup> Women contribute to the "homemaking" process by the traditionally feminine responsibilities of cooking familiar foods, setting up their household, and keeping their families clean and clothed. While the new home and conditions may be different from those of the old home, the maintenance of such basic rituals allows a sense of control over their environment and the maintenance of a certain lifestyle.<sup>38</sup> Women took rough dwellings and added their own "civilizing" touches—curtains, rugs, flowers—transforming them into something akin to the homes they left behind. The husband/father might concentrate his activities on the realm outside, once a home structure was established: constructing a well and shelter for livestock, plowing and sowing a first crop. While we might speak in generalities of women constructing the "interior space" and the men the "exterior space" on the turn-of-the-last-century "frontier," gender roles were flexible. The husband might help with housework. Women and children might work alongside fathers and husbands in the fields and farmyard.<sup>39</sup> Everyone worked together to become established. In the case of single homesteaders, men or women might do a majority of the tasks or hire help, be it a male neighbor for fieldwork or a female neighbor for baking or laundry. As time went by, a more substantial house might be built, as basic farm needs were met and the owner had the money and inclination for a permanent structure.<sup>40</sup> The temporary shanty or soddie, the "old home," would be recycled into a barn or storage shed. Between the two spheres, the exterior and the interior, the site is molded by its residents. By placing their personal stamp on their domestic environment, by becoming familiar with it and its quirks, and by living in the place, the place becomes associated with "home."

The establishment of home is a significant event. A Scribner's Monthly reporter commented on western Kansas homesteaders in 1879: "The Kansans have a phenomenal genius for homes. They reverse the old order of pioneering, and make the home the foundation, instead of the outcome, of their struggle with nature."<sup>41</sup> On the eastern frontier, land needed to be cleared of timber for farming and could be a significant task in timbered regions. In contrast, the Plains did not need to be cleared, merely plowed, but there was no cover available other than what the settlers constructed. If there was to be shelter from the storm, the settlers had to construct it themselves. Home not only provides shelter from the elements but it is deeply intertwined with notions of family and self-identity, particularly in the Victorian era. In a new location, home ties the family together, as the site of both the people and their familiar possessions. As the family becomes established, their home reflects their values and traditions as well as personalities. Memories develop about the place and are tied to it and the life lived there.<sup>42</sup> Further, in uncertain times, homes represent stability and refuge.<sup>43</sup> Establishing a home was an essential task in adjusting to the new landscape of the Plains.

The physical transformation of the landscape continues, moving out concentrically from the home. Of immediate concern is the "center or centering," establishing a residence, planting a vegetable garden, and creating a farmyard to care for existing livestock. Once these are established, work might begin on the fields, plowing, planting, and establishing boundaries to the land. Trees might be planted close to the home, a tree claim established, or an orchard attempted (encouraged by promising booster images). Trees were a much-missed aspect of the environment for settlers: their planting provided a visual break on the Plains but also served another end. There was a widespread theory, put forth in both scientific and popular literature, that the establishment of trees on the Plains would modify its climate, bringing more precipitation into the region. By planting trees, settlers believed that they would be changing not only the landscape but also the climate of the Plains. Well-meaning but misled, settlers believed the myth, as they did the myth that rain would follow the plow, for decades before it was finally eradicated.<sup>44</sup> Nevertheless, the planting of trees and gardens around the home molded the immediate area to the needs and personalities of the homemakers. With the construction of shelter and other buildings, gardens, wells, and fields, space is brought under control.<sup>45</sup> But it was not just a matter of control; it was replacing the unfamiliar with the familiar. A Nebraska homesteader explained how, by introducing trees and plants, they "try to the best of our ability, to transplant to central Nebraska the comforts and home environment of Iowa."<sup>46</sup> The familiar shapes, scents, and colors would shorten the distance between the old home and the new. As the landscape is transformed, wildlife are replaced by domestic or introduced species, prairie plants by domesticated species, the wilderness by aspects of a familiar landscape. But only aspects, for not all new plants did well in this environment; settlers had to adapt to their environment.

While the physical transformation of the land might be most visible on the "homestead," homemaking can extend beyond the landowner's boundaries. Residents might name topographic features or associate directions with other homesteads in conversation with family or acquaintances (as in "I caught our stray cow over by the Olsen place the other day. Can't believe she made it that far"). The named environment serves as the basis for a common language and common memories, allowing a community to communicate as well as uniting them in a common shared landscape.<sup>47</sup> The local landscape is learned and communicated, from the best places for fuel or berry picking, to the locations of historic events. As place knowledge and human modification of landscape increase, feelings of vulnerability decrease. It is a



matter of not only identifying a place as home but also establishing a "topographical orientation," knowing where you are and where you fit in.<sup>48</sup>

As these molding processes occur, people are establishing connections to others who live in this area, connections that are both physical and social. The knowledge of the geographical area grows concentrically from the home outward.<sup>49</sup> Landmarks are recognized. Paths to neighbor's homes are learned, as are the paths or roads to the nearest towns and railroads. Social connections develop as the new residents meet their neighbors and begin to make friends. A sense of community develops. Perhaps family, old-home neighbors, or church members might also migrate and settle nearby, providing established social ties and commonalities.

Landscape transformation continues with the establishment of social institutions such as churches and schools.<sup>50</sup> These institutions often begin in homes, with families jointly hiring a teacher or taking advantage of a passing minister and the schooling or services held in homes. As more people express an interest in schooling for children or family worship, momentum grows for permanent solutions. Ministers might be requested from established religions; teachers from teaching institutions or state or territorial governments. Entire families might be involved in the founding of schools, post offices, churches, and in encouraging social interaction through various gatherings, such as dances, bees, and clubs.

On a larger scale, towns might also be "instigated" by residents as they seek to address their own needs. It might begin simply with a homesteader maintaining the local "post office" in their home. A little store might be added to take advantage of the needs of neighbors as they dropped by for their mail.<sup>51</sup> Perhaps the school and/or church might be located near the "post office." With the railroad boom on the Plains, established "towns" lobbied for a railroad line to pass through their town, adding to its importance and its potential, while new towns were speculated and created along projected rail lines.

## **VISUALIZING HOMEMAKING**

Creating a new home, not surprisingly, can be a difficult process. Yi-fu Tuan writes:

Even in the most sophisticated societies, people must use words to plan and build a home; moreover, after its completion, what the occupants say to one another, and about the spaces they share, makes a real difference to their home's ambience.<sup>52</sup>

While there is no discounting the power of words and communication, not enough emphasis is placed on the visual in homemaking. The architect cannot use words alone to convey to the builder how the building is to be constructed; designers cannot convey their "vision" of their rooms in magazines by words alone. Drawings were used before the written word to convey a sense of home: one of the earliest known maps of the world is a 6200 B.C. wall painting depicting the community of Çatalhöyük in what is now Turkey, including individual homes.<sup>53</sup> Communicating a sense of home, whether orally or visually, is important not only to the individual, but it is significant to communicating identity: "It is not the place we 'come from'; it is a place we are. Home and territory: territory and identity ... They are of course inextricably linked [home and identity]. And they are both the product of territorializing forces."<sup>54</sup> Territorializing forces involve the attachment of an individual to a place and a recognition of this attachment by others. The visual has been significant in claiming territory, be it as border markers, graffiti, or a river. Maps have classically been used to delineate territory by nations but photographs

offer a simpler solution for individuals, allowing them to claim space and to share this claim with others. But it is not just claiming space, it is developing a working knowledge and a set of experiences tied with the location that leads to the identification of a place as home.

On the Plains, as time passes, as people work and travel the land, as settlers interact in and with the place, the place comes to be seen as home. It becomes indelibly imprinted on the memory as well as the heart, particularly on the young, as home. Geographer Ronald Rees suggests that the "psychological adjustment to a new land can begin only when the bond of memory is broken .... To feel at home, emigrants, or their descendants, must acquire new ways of seeing.,,"<sup>55</sup> The "homemaking" is a form of visual patterning, a process of becoming familiar with a place and with its patterns. And it did require new ways of seeing, for the Plains were a radically different landscape for most people.

Coming from regions with more topographic relief and an abundance of trees, settlers experienced the Plains as a well-documented shock. Some settlers, men and women alike, found beauty in the new landscape before them. Julie Roy Jeffrey, in her study "'There Is Some Splendid Scenery': Women's Responses to the Great Plains Landscape," examines both the positive and the negative responses to the Plains landscape. Jeffrey writes:

"It all seemed like a picture," Mary O'Neil said of the North Dakota landscape. Her use of the word picture indicates not only her interest in the scenic character of her surroundings but also her aesthetic preference for a landscape that, like a picture, had some kind of definition.<sup>56</sup>

Others found it too open, leaving them exposed, and left as soon as they could:<sup>57</sup>

One woman who came to the valley of the Elkhorn River in Nebraska in the late 1850s wrote, "This is the picture as I see it plainly in retrospect-a country ... with a smooth, level, gray surface which appeared to go on toward the west forever and forever .... Ten or twelve log cabins broke the monotony of the treeless expanse that stretched far away, apparently to a leaden sky."<sup>58</sup>

Whether using the word "picture" or "landscape," both terms imply the human gaze on this spatial expanse, and with the gaze comes value judgment, the gaze being shaped by our experiences and sense of taste. In the above quote, the woman viewing the Elkhorn obviously was not impressed, given her use of the terms "level, grey, forever and forever, monotony, leaden." Human reaction to the Plains landscape might be communicated in letters to family, in a diary, or in reminiscences reflecting on their experiences. Others chose more artistic means of communicating their reactions to landscape, through literature and art. Northrup Frye has remarked that no land is home until it has been imaginatively digested or absorbed.<sup>59</sup> In communicating reactions to the landscape, be it through art or literature, there are two possible responses: To find new means to express the new forms or stay with the old means and tailor the new forms to fit them. In other words, homesick Plains settlers might frame the Plains in terms of "Old World" imagery, so that a painting of the Plains appears more like a painting of some place in Europe rather than a place on the Plains. Or Plains settlers would attempt to capture the new landscape as it appeared to them, the sensation of being on the Plains with the great sky overhead. This "place adjustment" is not unique to the Plains but can be seen in other situations where individuals encounter a new landscape. Barbara Brown and Douglas Perkins found in a behavioral study of college freshmen that the freshmen who decorated their dorm rooms with reminders of their old hometowns, such as pictures from high school or hometown slogans, were more likely to drop out than freshmen who seemed to adopt their new "home":

The dropouts were less likely to have decorations showing investment in and commitment to people, places, and activities in the new environment .... Students who chose to leave college had many symbols of attachment to the hometown, few to the new environment, and showed a narrower range of interests and activities in the new setting.<sup>60</sup>

Be it Plains settlers or college freshmen, the visual images they surround themselves with can indicate their "view" of their new home.

In examining photographs taken by Plains immigrants, it is possible to see how photographs contributed to "homemaking" on the Plains. Plains dwellers and settlers actively photographed and documented their new homes and home landscapes. By taking photographs, they were creatively viewing their land as well as claiming authorship of the changes they were bringing about in the land. But this claim of land is not a firm one: "As photographs give people an imaginary possession of a past that is unreal, they also help people take possession of space in which they are insecure."<sup>61</sup> To look at the land through the camera's lens distanced photographers from the landscape, requiring them to view the land with an "eye" toward constructing an image that appealed to their aesthetic sensibilities. In turn, the aesthetic sensibilities applied to the Plains were shaped by the visual and textual images encountered before their arrival, including camera manuals and guides and Plains promotional images. Camera guides and handbooks focused attention on how to photograph as well as what to photograph:

Part guide book, part catalogue, *Motoring* extolled the delights of bringing along a camera: "Of what shall you make pictures? What shall you take? Rather, what shall you not take? On an automobile tour, what do you take the most of? Scenery. Very well, take pictures of scenery." Its illustrations suggest what many Kodak magazine advertisements suggest-photographing rural scenery was a woman's job. Husbands drove the motor cars; wives watched for perfect rural landscapes, commanded husbands to halt, then aimed and "snapped" the camera. According to several magazine experts, using a camera improved one's ability to see; by extrapolation, carrying a camera while automobiling sharpened one's notice of beautiful rurallandscape.<sup>62</sup>

To "photographically see" was a means of "dis-covering the beautiful, a method to know and experience the world."<sup>63</sup>

Newspaper accounts, personal accounts, guidebooks, and railway fliers all provided an image of the place .. A Dutch immigrant to Manitoba describes the Canadian governmental recruitment poster that inspired their move:

On a large billboard in the Hague we had seen a picture of a farm in Canada. It was a beautiful poster. A golden grain field, waving in the breeze, a young farmer in a white shirt behind a beautiful set of horses, a young wife with a baby in her arms, bringing a basket of goodies from the field.<sup>64</sup>

The "framing" of a place in the media serves as a guide to the behavior of those who then visit or settle in the place.<sup>65</sup> The narratives Plains promoters told through their literature and the visual evidence they provided were positive, progressive accounts of Plains as "Garden," with bountiful rainfall and harvest and great potential.<sup>66</sup> Promotional materials focus on the narrow field of topics they believe their audience should know about, such as agricultural prospects, community, growth and development. All are presented in rosy terms, asserting that this is nothing but "fact" bolstered by "experts" whose

statements support the promoters' claims.<sup>67</sup> David Wrobel estimates that "in any given year there would have been million of copies of Western promotional books and pamphlets in circulation in the United States and Europe."<sup>68</sup> These accounts of the Plains provide an interpretation of the landscape and the life, directing the reader/viewer to associate the landscape with the view they present.<sup>69</sup> Even before arrival, impressions of a new home and a new geographical identity are being established.<sup>70</sup> The creation of "home" elaborates on or otherwise modifies these prior images.

While Kodak may not have specifically called for the documenting of human changes to the land, the company in its advertisements did suggest appropriate subjects for photography. The Kodak Company encouraged Americans through its catchy slogans to use snapshots to preserve memories, be it of a vacation or a childhood. By 1910 all the major themes that occur in Kodak advertising campaigns had been introduced-snapshot as memory, camera as storyteller, photographs as capturing time and extending the moment, and telling stories through photographs.<sup>71</sup> Landscapes important to the photographers quickly came to be "kodaked," capturing friends and family in their domestic settings, at play and at work. As time passed and family landscapes changed, the photographs became an important connection to a past landscape, representing a connection to a place.<sup>72</sup>

Plains settlers were also being shown that individuals were changing the Plains landscape and that this change could be visually seen and even documented with photographs. They were being shown that they too can at least visually achieve success on the Plains and that these successes can be visually measured and even documented to preserve the memories of the homemaking process. "Before and after" photographs in land company brochures illustrate the initial shanties or soddies of settlers and the subsequent homes they constructed as they thrived on the Plains.<sup>73</sup> The March 1, 1918, edition of the *Dakota Farmer*, a regional agricultural journal, featured "before" and "after" images on its cover of the "Farm Home of H. G. Halvorson, Brookings Co., S.D." It appears Plains settlers were being encouraged to photograph and share their experiences. Kodak certainly made it possible with their point-and-shoot cameras for Plains settlers, who were already "can-do" individuals, to document their own success stories. Using photography, Plains immigrants documented their experiences and imprint on the landscape, especially their homes, their businesses, their community connections, as well as the Plains themselves. Assembling these photographs into albums, with its bookish format, sequencing of photos, and captions added if they wished, allowed them literally to write themselves into American history.<sup>74</sup>

## **PLAINS PHOTOGRAPH ALBUMS AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF HOME**

Physically, photograph albums formed part of the homemaking process, taking up residence next to the family Bible, adding to the new home an elegant reminder of past parlors, as well as the hope for future parlors to house these components of "home."<sup>75</sup> An 1880 description of a Kansas dugout bears this out:

In one of those dug-outs which I visited on a certain rainy day, an organ stood near the window and the settler's wife was playing "Home! Sweet Home." ...

Many of those "dug-outs" ... gave evidence of the refinement and culture of the inmates .... The wife had been reared in the older states, as shown by the neat and tastefully-arranged fixtures around the otherwise gloomy earth walls ....

A neat polished shelf, supported by pins driven into the walls, contained the holiday gift books, album, and that indispensable household treasure, the family Bible.<sup>76</sup>

The visitor's reaction to the dugout is an interesting set of contrasts. On one hand we have the organ, neat polished shelf, book, album, and Bible, all "evidence of the refinement and culture." On the other hand, we have "the inmates" and "gloomy earth walls," language that suggests a prison rather than a home. Yet the homemaker had attempted to provide all the niceties of a proper parlor in the dugout, even reportedly playing "Home! Sweet Home" on her organ. Obviously the visitor and the settler's wife had very different views of the dugout. A similar description can be found in *Covered Wagon Days* (1929) where a dugout officially becomes home with the laying of a Bible and a photograph album on the family's table.<sup>77</sup> To have a parlor, be it a designated room or even a corner, was an acknowledgment of the family's belonging to "proper" society. The parlor was not only a space designated to formally represent the family to visitors but also a "place" where cultural and family values were passed on from parents to children. Photographs on the wall (Fig. 1), perched on the organ, arranged in an album, or in the form of stereographs were an important element in the parlor, serving to identify the space as well as identify visually the family and their interests: "Material cultures, through their installation, are critical in the formation of new political identities, carving out new landscapes of belonging."<sup>78</sup> When a family moves or builds a new home, the hanging of photographs or the placing of albums in the new home, along with the rest of their belongings, contributes to its recognition as "home," as familiar furnishings take up residence in the new structure.

Psychologically, photograph albums provide another mode of constructing home, beyond that of an artifact, working on a variety of levels, ranging from the identification of a place as "home" in the pages of the album to the sharing of the album and its constructed associations with friends and family. The placement of images of the new landscape, of the new home, in the family albums represents a more intellectual adoption of place. People take photographs of landscapes they identify with and want to remember, just as they photograph and "keep" individuals they wish to claim a connection to, just as names are entered into family Bibles.<sup>79</sup> Their placement in albums is an act of preservation and identification. In the case of pictures of home, it places the new home in the context of the family and its interests, often juxtaposed with the "old" home.<sup>80</sup> It may even be labeled as "home": this naming or identification process is part of the process of constructing place, calling a place into being.<sup>81</sup> However, in my sample of Plains albums, I did not find such a juxtaposition of old and new homes, just the documentation of the Plains homes they constructed. Additional images of the home landscape serve to further reinforce and define the sense of place, especially if the family members are photographed with it. These images can range from interior shots displaying living areas to exterior shots placing the home in the context of the physical environment.

As the family constructs the home and outbuildings, plants trees, breaks sod, participates in the organization of churches and schools, they are constructing and shaping their environment, strengthening and literally building ties to the landscape. Photographs of this process serve to establish a form of "authorship" of the landscape.<sup>82</sup> It is a recognition of the changes individuals can make on the land, the molding of a "raw" landscape into a "finished" product. Grace Jacobsen's diary, dating from 1912, describes how a young woman homesteader documented her "homemaking":

August 21, Wednesday

Papa and Frank, Pat, Richard and Harry all worked on my house. Auntie, Ma and I took dinner

down to them and took some pictures. Then Carrie and I cleaned up and baked and Mama and Auntie went over to Carrie's place ....

August 29, Thursday

Got up quite early. After breakfast took some more pictures. Then went home, picked some choke cherries, lost my Kodak on the way home, went back and found it. Carrie and I shocked Grain after dinner. It began raining so we had to quit. We darned stockings and made Jelly, after supper developed pictures and they were good. Then walked over to Carrie's place.<sup>83</sup>

Marilyn Motz has documented the use of cameras by midwestern women to record and communicate the details of their environment. Prior to widespread use of cameras, women would attempt to describe their new western homes in letters to friends and loved ones, adding wallpaper samples or snippets of fabric to illustrate their descriptions. Photographs allowed women a means of accurately capturing their new homes.<sup>84</sup> Women documented the interior as well as the exterior of the homes they were creating (Figs. 1 and 4). By sharing these photographs, they reinforced their own ties to a place, as well as encouraged others to connect the "homemaker" to the place. Much of the study of photograph albums focuses on women as the creators; however, the Plains albums I used in this study were created by both men and women, although women were the only ones to include interior shots.<sup>85</sup> But it is not just the photographs of the home that are significant, it is the capturing of their lives lived in this location, "the presence, habits, and effects of spouses, children, parents, and companions."<sup>86</sup>

Finally, albums serve as memory and documentation of the homemaking \_process. Many of the people who moved to the Plains in the later booms, such as Grace, came with the idea of homesteading to make a little money and have an adventure. "Snapshots" captured images from their "adventures" for viewing later, serving as a record of their experience. People want to remember the "good old days," of old friends and old landscapes that no longer exist. These are generally "good memories" and seldom capture more negative experiences. People want to remember and be remembered as successful and happy.<sup>87</sup> Richard Chalfen writes:

In a sense, we can think of an album (or photographic collection in general) as a storehouse, a holding bin, or even a filing system for views and memories of the past. Indeed, one common response people give for making snapshots is "the preservation of memories."<sup>88</sup>

Albums are undoubtedly a component of the homemaking process. But the questions still remain: How did people who made a home on the Plains see the Plains? And in what ways do their albums reflect their "views" of the "home on the Plains?"

The photographs taken by Plains settlers serve to document their ties in this new place, ties that were both physical as well as personal. The most obvious are the homes. Ed Kopac, a Nebraska-raised son of Czech immigrants, documented his homes, such as the Okaton, South Dakota, homestead he shared with his brothers (Fig. 5). Pauline Shoemaker, a woman homesteader in North Dakota, captured her "claim house" (Fig. 6). Grace Binks Price, a woman homesteader in Montana, captured her claim shanty and the homes of other homesteaders (Fig. 1). The Hall family documented their home, which was also their mission on Fort Berthold, and their place in the structure, literally with portraits of the family in the home and of their travels around the reservation, their home landscape.

The fact that we even have photographs to examine suggests their role in homemaking. In the few images of Plains home interiors that are available, photographs are visible on the walls of the areas designated as parlors. Although in the case of Grace (Fig. 1) the "parlor" is only a corner, there is an attempt to have an area to receive guests. Parlors were constructed to receive and entertain guests and represented a formal view of the family to the public. Photographs were an important aspect of the "formal family view" constructed in parlor furnishings, with photographs and photograph albums available for the visitors to view.<sup>89</sup> While we cannot "see" photographs albums in this photograph, but just the photographs on the walls, the album is available for us to see.

Not only was it constructed, but it still exists, valued enough to be kept over the years and donated to the Montana Historical Society where it might be preserved for future generations as well as used for scholarship.

Through "community" images, it is possible to "view" the social circle of Plains settlers. Grace and Pauline both portrayed themselves as part of a community, with photographs of neighbors and friends and their homes and land, along with images of their own homes and family, documenting the ties between them and their locale. In Grace's photograph album, it is possible to observe a shift in her community, as her social landscape changes. She begins homesteading with friends, but they only appear in the first half of the album, replaced in the second half of the album by her sisters who seemed to have followed her to Montana. Pauline's photographs also capture a changing social landscape. She moves to North Dakota to homestead, socializes with the neighbors, including the Crowley family, and eventually marries one of the Crowley boys.

Community extended beyond immediate neighbors and family to the civic structures with which they were involved, especially the schools and churches. In a landscape where settlers have no history, and may not have close family, social structures replace family, providing a support network to share joys and sorrows. Plains immigrants tended to document extensively their community and its development, from the construction of churches and schools to special events. Elizabeth Roberts documented the schools she helped found in Slope County, North Dakota, as well as the teachers who were brought in. While her primary concern was her own children's education, other children were to benefit from her work.

Business was another aspect of life that Plains photographers documented. Pauline and Ed photographed and represented in their albums their business ventures. Pauline, a schoolteacher, depicts her schoolhouse and students as well as her "claim house," although for a while they were one in the same. Ed has images of his farming ventures in Nebraska, South Dakota, and Montana as well as the Holt machinery he and his brother Emil sold. Elizabeth took photographs of the Percheron horses her family raised on their ranch. There are numerous examples of Plains farmers documenting their harvests or their livestock in images that appear to be right out of the promotional literature (Fig. 7).

Small-town businessmen such as Robert Trousdale of Mott, North Dakota, documented their businesses and their cities, often serving as civic boosters of their communities. "Welcome to Mott the Spot" reads a banner in an image from Trousdale's photograph album, celebrating the arrival of two railroads in Mott (Fig. 8). The arrival of the railroads was a significant event for the people of Mott, connecting it to the rest of the country. The railroad's arrival was also an occasion for community gatherings and celebrations as well as a city celebration and promotional event. It would have been hard to miss the booster slogan of "Mott the Spot." The "spot" on the banner is echoed in "spots" or targets on the

building on the right edge of the photograph. We are visually being shown "the Spot." For Trousdale, Mott was the spot, for it was the center of his business interests and even the center of his world. The livelihoods of Trousdale and other Plains businessmen, as well as their lifestyle, are tied to place and their interactions with the landscape, both "domesticated" and wild. From schools and churches to towns and communities, all these social landscape developments were documented by Plains photographers, capturing the evolving social and physical landscape.

Many Plains immigrants also attempted to capture the wild landscapes, the "undomesticated" shortgrass and tallgrass prairies, that compose part of their personal landscapes. By "wild landscapes" I mean those classic wideopen Plains wilderness images with not an iota of human presence, conveying a sense of timelessness and immense space. While these wild landscapes can be difficult to "capture," many Plains immigrants documented them. Pauline's landscapes are nearly lost in her medium of small snapshots, but she still attempted to capture them. Ed's large-format camera captures beautiful scenic images of wild lands, photographed for their visual appeal, although also perhaps for memory. Ed goes further a single photograph album, images of scenic beauty from around the American West with images of the Badlands, placing them into the context of the American West and into the national landscape (Fig. 9). Elizabeth Roberts obtained an early panoramic camera and used it to document her landscape of western North Dakota, despite having little to no background in photography. Panoramic cameras were and still are a bit of a rarity and are difficult to use. Roberts managed to master panoramic images and used them to great effect (Fig. 10). In many ways, panoramic images are the ultimate means of capturing the Great Plains landscape, combining in a ISO-degree image both earth and sky. Whatever the means, from "snapshot" images to professional photography, Plains photographers documented their experiences with the "wild" landscape.

From the range of "wild" Plains landscape images taken by settlers, the majority appear to be attempting to capture their experiences of living on the Plains. While few had the luxury of a panoramic or large-format camera, there are ample snapshots that attempt to capture the Plains. It is nearly impossible to judge why they documented these lands, except perhaps from clues in the captions: it may have been their visual appeal, for memory, or perhaps to represent the "before" to their "after." Robert's use of the caption "Badlands Scenery" (Fig. 10) suggests a positive view of the Badlands, while Kopac's "Victory" (Fig. 9) suggests pride in conquering (by climbing) this landscape. These "wild" landscapes cover the spectrum from spectacular Badlands formation to the classic flat open spaces of the Plains. There seems to be no aspect of the Plains landscape that was left undocumented, even the very flattest of the open Plains without any visible presence of humans, except perhaps the photograph itself (as in "Grace's Land"). The wide-open Plains were part of immigrants' Plains-viewing, and they did not appear to flinch from attempting to capture it, even going out of their way to portray it in their photographs.

Plains people took great pride in their transformation of the landscape. The photographs of the Great Plains during the period of settlement document this process, recording the roles individuals played in the creation of the rising communities. By taking and keeping photographs of this process, the photographers are claiming as their own this landscape and acknowledging their roles as creators and shapers of landscape, as if to say "I made this," as in the example of Grace Binks Price with her "land."<sup>90</sup> As a result, there are available amateur photographs of the processes associated with settling the Plains, such as sod breaking, home building, and establishing schools and churches. They also portrayed the open spaces and the rouge "badlands," often identifying the features by name, documenting the full



range of Plains landscapes, all in a positive vein. Keeping with the celebratory nature of photographs, few if any images could be identified as negative—no images of drought, of failed crops, of blowing dust, although this may reflect the climate at the time the photographs were taken. Plains immigrants revealed in their roles as participants in the American dream: they were not only making a place for themselves but also participating in the making of America. They shaped some portion of the land as they envisioned it, and they photographed themselves doing it as they wished, thus shaping the land as well as their memory of it. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in the photographs of Ed Kopac, the son of Czech immigrants. While we do not see him establishing community ties, the family stands out clearly, as does the appreciation of the American landscape. We are shown the marks that he and his family were making on the American landscape, from their farms to the figures posed in the Badlands, literally documenting their victory over nature.<sup>91</sup>

The narrative constructed in Plains photograph albums captures the transformation of the land and the self. These albums, created by individuals for their own use and to share with friends and family, cover the accomplishments and experiences of those living on the Plains. There is no single storyline to the albums; there is no clear-cut beginning and ending to them. Rather, they present a documenting of the ins and outs of life over a period of time, what might be termed "habitual narratives."<sup>92</sup> There is a sense of the passage of time, a sense of action, and of central players or actors. And it is a smaller community than we imagine: occasionally it is possible to see the overlap in the albums. For example, Elizabeth has photographs of Nell Crowley, Pauline's sister-in-law, in two of her albums. Nell was a teacher at the Slope County school that Elizabeth helped establish. Ed Kopac included a photograph of the Eaton Ranch in Wyoming in his album (the Eatons moved from North Dakota to Wyoming in 1903). For the most part, life on the Plains is portrayed as good, with hardly a hint of negativity. This may be a reflection of outlook, of album construction, or of a boom period in Plains agriculture. In many ways, the albums echo the positive image of the Plains found in booster literature. As settlers learned how to work with the land, grew familiar with Plains species and the cycle of seasons, developed memories in this place, they chronicled their experiences through devices such as diaries or photograph albums. They captured the practice and the process of homemaking on the Plains, the "diverse ways people 'do' and feel home ... the dynamic processes and transactions that transform a 'dwelling unit' ... into a home in the context of everyday life."<sup>93</sup> Their albums preserve a sense of a well-lived life, full of "memorable" moments, connecting these individuals to a place and a community over a period of time,<sup>94</sup> Albums played a powerful role, providing visual evidence, visual truth, of the changes brought about in the land and in individuals.

## **PHOTOGRAPHS AND ALBUMS AND THE NATIONAL NARRATIVE**

Now I "pan out" from viewing these albums on an individual and a Plains level and think in terms of a national narrative: "The family album represented genealogical and national heritage—it became a social and historical document of lineage and spatial belonging."<sup>95</sup> These albums represent both an artifact of an actual experience and a symbol of American experience on the Plains. Over time, as the oral narrative is lost, they shift from the actual and real to the symbolic, representing a fundamental American experience of homemaking on the frontier.<sup>96</sup>

The photographs of Pauline, Elizabeth, and Ed have taken on a new life, embodying Plains life and experiences and the expansion of America westward. Several of Pauline's photographs appear in *Land in Her Own Name*, exemplifying the experiences of women homesteaders in North Dakota, as well as in a

family history written by one of Pauline's daughters.<sup>97</sup> As illustrating women homesteaders, Pauline's photographs are viewed as representative of the experience of homesteading in North Dakota. Elizabeth's photographs have also been used to illustrate women's experiences in the West: an image of her daughter Ella pumping water was used on the cover of *Home on the Range: A Culinary History of the American West*.<sup>98</sup> Elizabeth's snapshot of Ella takes on new worth as an engaging image of a young woman on the Plains, rather than a sentimental picture of Ella. Ironically, this image does not appear in any of Elizabeth's albums. Elizabeth's images have been used to represent the Badlands landscape in books such as *After Barbed Wire*, "a pictorial history of the Homestead Rush into the northern Great Plains, 1900-1919," and *Slope Saga*, a history of Slope County, North Dakota.<sup>99</sup> No longer tied to Elizabeth's experiences, they are viewed as indicative of the landscape and the experiences at the turn of the last century. A photograph by Ed of his South Dakota homestead at night (but not included in his album) illustrates the chapter on homesteading experiences in *After the West Was Won: Homesteaders and Town-Builders in Western South Dakota, 1900-1917*.<sup>100</sup> In this way, the photographs taken by Pauline, Elizabeth, and Ed are more than just an individual's perspective on his or her life, but represent the "settlement" of the Plains, that is, "homemaking" on a large scale. Through their tales and photographs, they contribute to the collective memory of the community, recalling the land as it used to be, the larger-than-life personalities who haunt it, and the changes that have occurred in their lifetimes, creating a new landscape of their united memories and images.

Albums as objects that embody unity and community over time continue into the present. Barbara Allen has documented "Homestead Reunions" in Oregon that highlight the role of photography and photograph albums in constructing and reconstructing place connections.<sup>101</sup> Allen described the events of a particular reunion: people huddling over photograph albums spread over card tables; the "three-footlong photograph of the Fort Rock Valley in the mid-1910s" taped to one wall, setting the scene; and the children and grandchildren of homesteaders making a pilgrimage to homestead sites to take snapshots, "carefully framed to capture an image of the homestead site as it appeared in old photographs, even though there are few visible remains of buildings, windmills, wells, and fences that the homesteaders constructed."<sup>102</sup> While the event they are commemorating took place in the early part of this century, they are tied to the place, to home, through memories and photographs, creating new memories and photographs tied to a place they can no longer call home.

## **VISUAL PLAINS PLACE CONSTRUCTION AND ATTACHMENT**

Edith Ammons Kohl describes the transformation that occurred when she and her sister homesteaded in western South Dakota in 1907:

For Edith and Ida Mary Ammons, adjustment began when their box of possessions arrived from St. Louis. They cleaned the shack and used their rugs and pictures from home to make it familiar. Gradually, their sense of belonging expanded outdoors. "Even against our will," Edith remembered, "the bigness and peace of the open spaces were bound to soak in .... We could not but respond to air that was like old wine. ... Never were moon and stars so bright." After a short time on the claim, their vision "gradually adjusted itself to distance," and the sisters could pick out other shacks on neighboring claims. Other homesteaders heard of their arrival and dropped in to visit. "Almost without being aware of it we ceased to feel that we had left St. Louis." Edith wrote. "It was St. Louis which was receding from us, while we turned more and more toward the new country, identified ourselves with it."<sup>103</sup>

As Edith and Ida Mary constructed their home, they learned "Plains-viewing," adjusting their vision for the distances on the Plains. Their focus, both in life and in sight/site, was no longer their childhood home of St. Louis, but on the Plains as the new center of their world and life.

I believe photography facilitated the acceptance of the Plains as home. Photography represents a pathway to new ways of seeing. To photograph, to act as a photographer, requires the photographer to step back and see the scene before them from a distance. The photographer must decide how they want to frame the image, what to include, what to exclude, and then to snap the shutter at the right moment. While less thought might go into point-and-shoot cameras than large-format cameras, there is still that required process of pointing and shooting.

Through photography, the family is placed on the Plains, the image is kept (loose or in an album), it can be looked at and discussed again and again, and the process can be repeated over and over again. Over time, landscape changes were observed and documented-sod makes way for crops, buildings come and go, trees grow, people grow older-but the basic landform does not change. Only an individual's perception of it might change.

Through the photographs taken by immigrants to the Plains we can "witness" the process of establishing "home" as well as the process of learning Plains-viewing. We can glimpse the landscape and lives experienced by these people as they have "written" it. We can view the claiming of space, the claiming of territory. We can observe the imprinting of the Plains upon the eyes and lives of the photographers as well as the Plains immigrants. Each collection of photographs reflects the unique experiences of individuals and families on the Plains. Through multiple Plains collections, we can begin to explore the full range of Plains lives and landscapes and see how they documented their lives and their homes. While some settlers were thwarted by the negative aspects of Plains living, and some just found more opportunities in a different landscape, others found a place on the Plains they could "view" as home.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

First and foremost, I owe a great deal to the patience and cooperation of the photo archivists at the Montana Historical Society, the State Historical Society of North Dakota, the South Dakota State Historical Society, and the Wyoming State Archives. Thank you all. I am particularly indebted to Todd Strand, formerly of the State Historical Society of North Dakota, who introduced me to the spectacular Roberts collection when I just happened to ask about women photographers. My work with albums began with that moment-Strand with an armful of Roberts albums and photographs. Thanks also for the continuous support from my family, who all assisted me with taking album notes at one point or another: William and Caroline Dando, Bill Dando, Lara Dando, and my husband, Ty Sabin, and daughter, Emmaline. Finally, thanks to my colleagues at the University of Nebraska at Omaha-Susan Maher and John Price-for their thoughtful comments on my drafts and continuing support of my research.

## **NOTES**

1. John A. Lomax, *Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads* (New York: Macmillan, 1931), 39-40.
2. Walter Prescott Webb, *The Great Plains* (New York: Grosset and Dunlop, 1931), 507.
3. George O'Hara, "Where the Buffalo Roam: Walter Prescott Webb's *The Great Plains*," *Technology and Culture* 47 (January 2006): 156-63. See page 159.

4. This paper is based on my dissertation as well as on additional archival research: Christina Dando, "Imaging the Plains: Photographs, Photograph Albums, and the Great Plains Landscape, 1890- 1930" (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2000).

5. Richard Chalfen, "Redundant Imagery: Some Observations on the Use of Snapshots in American Culture," *Journal of American Culture* 4, no. 1 (1981): 106-13; Chalfen, *Turning Leaves: The Photograph Collections of Two Japanese American Families* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991); Chalfen, "Interpreting Family Photography as Pictorial Communication," in *Image-Based Research: A Sourcebook for Qualitative Researchers*, ed. J. Prosser, 214-34 (London: Falmer Press, 1998).

6. Marilyn F. Motz, "Visual Autobiography: Photograph Albums of Turn-of-the-Century Midwestern Women," *American Quarterly* 41 (March 1989): 63-92; Motz, introduction to *Making the American Home: Middle-Class Women and Domestic Material Culture, 1840-1940*, ed. M. F. Motz and P. Browne (Bowling Green OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1988). Other works on amateur historic photography include Deborah Chambers, "Family as Place: Family Photograph Albums and the Domestication of Public and Private Space," in *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination*, 96-114 (London: B. Tauris and Co., 2003); Martha Langford, *Suspended Conversations: The Afterlife of Memory in Photographic Albums* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001); and Madelyn Moeller, "Ladies of Leisure: Domestic Photography in the Nineteenth Century," in *Hard at Play: Leisure in America, 1840-1940*, ed. K. Grover (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press). For examples of work on recent amateur photography, see Gillian Rose, "Family Photographs and Domestic Spacings: A Case Study," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* NS 28 (2003): 5-18, and Mike Crang, "Picturing Practices: Research through the Tourist Gaze," *Progress in Human Geography* 21, no. 3 (1997): 359-73.

7. Chalfen, "Interpreting Family Photography," 215.

8. Cara Finnegan, "Recognizing Lincoln: Image Vernaculars in Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 8, no. 1 (2005): 31-58. See pages 41-42.

9. Chalfen, *Turning Leaves*; Motz, "Visual Autobiography."

10. Timothy Dow Adams, "Introduction: Life Writing and Light Writing; Autobiography and Photography," *Modern Fiction Studies* 40, no. 3 (Fall 1994): 459-92.

11. Catherine A. Lutz and Jane L. Collins, *Reading National Geographic* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

12. Chalfen, "Redundant Imagery," 109.

13. I was shocked to learn that some archives take albums apart and file the images by subject! (Author's conversation with a photo archivist.) This practice was also noted in Chambers, "Family as Place," 97.

14. It is hard to put an exact figure on the number of Plains photograph albums available in historical societies and other collections. In my experience, at state historical societies and universities, albums are generally held in the collections but the difficulty lies in locating them. In some cases, they have not been catalogued. The researcher is forced to rely on a patient archivist who will listen to what the researcher is looking for and is willing to dig if necessary. This, unfortunately, does not happen at all

locations. In Table 1, I list all the albums used for the study. More albums were located but not included in this study for a variety of reasons.

15. The following studies are excellent sources for photographic methodology: Patricia C. Albers and William R. James, "Tourism and the Changing Photographic Image of the Great Lakes Indians," *Annals of Tourism Research* 10 (1983): 123-48; Albers and James, "The Dominance of Plains Indian Imagery on the Picture Postcard," in *Fifth Annual Plains Indian Seminar: In Honor of Dr. John C. Ewers, 1980*, ed. G. P. H. Capture and G. Ball (Cody, WY: Buffalo Bill Historical Center, 1984); Albers and James, "Travel Photography: A Methodological Approach," *Annals of Tourism Research* 15 (1988): 134-58; Michael S. Ball and Gregory W. H. Smith, *Analyzing Visual Data*, vol. 24 of *Qualitative Research Methods*, ed. J. V. Maanen (London: Sage Publications, 1992); Chalfen, *Turning Leaves*; Crang, "Picturing Practices"; George W. Dowdall and Janet Golden, "Photographs as Data: An Analysis of Images from a Mental Hospital," *Qualitative Sociology* 12, no. 2 (1989): 183-213; Julia Hirsch, *Family Photographs: Content, Meaning, and Effect* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981); John Collier Jr. and Malcolm Collier, *Visual Anthropology: Photography as a Research Method*, revised and expanded edition (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986); Eric Margolis, "Mining Photographs: Unearthing the Meanings of Historical Photos," *Radical History Review* 40 (1988): 32-48; Madelyn Moeller, "Photography and History: Using Photographs in Interpreting Our Cultural Past," *Journal of American Culture* 6, no. 1 (1983): 3-17; James R. Ryan, *Picturing Empire: Photography and the Visualization of the British Empire* (London: Reaktion Books, 1997).

16. Martha Langford, *Suspended Conversations: The Afterlife of Memory in Photograph Albums* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), 128.

17. Catherine Kohler Riessman, *Narrative Analysis*, vol. 30 of *Qualitative Research Methods* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1993).

18. William Cronon, "A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative," *Journal of American History* 78, no. 4 (1992): 1347-76. See pages 1367-69.

19. Jan Baetens and Mireille Ribiere, "The Calaceite Conference on Photo Narrative," *History of Photography* 19, no. 4 (1995): 314-15. See page 314.

20. Amy W. Loomis, "Kodak Women: Domestic Contexts and the Commercial Culture of Photography, 1800s-1980s" (PhD diss., University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 1994). See page 198.

21. Andrew L. Walker and Rosalind Kimball Moulton, "Photo Albums: Images of Time and Reflections of Self," *Qualitative Sociology* 12, no. 2 (1989): 155-82. See page 157.

22. Lutz and Collins, *Reading National Geographic*.

23. Daniel James and Mirta Zaida Lobato, "Family Photos, Oral Narratives, and Identity Formation: The Ukrainians of Berisso," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 84, no. 1 (2004): 5-36. See page 25.

24. Ibid. See also Douglas Harper, "On the Authority of the Image: Visual Methods at the Crossroads" in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1994); and Joan M. Schwartz, "'We make our tools and our tools make us': Lessons from Photographs for the Practice, Politics, and Poetics of Diplomats," *Archivaria* 40 (Fall 1995): 40-74.

25. Albers and James, "Travel Photography"; Ball and Smith, *Analyzing Visual Data*; Udo Kelle, ed., *Computer-Aided Qualitative Data Analysis* (London: Sage Publications, 1995); K. Krippendorff, *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1980); Robert Weber, "Computer-Aided Content Analysis: A Short Primer," *Computers and Qualitative Data: Qualitative Sociology* 7, nos. 1-2 (1984): 126-47.
26. Robert Philip Weber, *Basic Content Analysis* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1990).
27. Albers and James, "Travel Photography," 145.
28. Ian Hodder, "The Interpretation of Documents and Material Culture" in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1994), 401.
29. *Ibid.*, 399.
30. Keyan G. Tomaselli, "The Geography of Popular Memory in Post-Colonial South Africa: A Study of Afrikaans Cinema," in *Qualitative Methods in Human Geography*, ed. J. Eyles and D. M. Smith (Totowa, NJ: Barnes and Noble Books, 1988), 137.
31. Graham Allan and Graham Crow, introduction to *Home and Family: Creating the Domestic Sphere*, ed. G. Allan and G. Crow, 1-13 (London: Macmillan, 1989); Alison Blunt, "Cultural Geography: Cultural Geographies of Home," *Progress in Human Geography* 29, no. 4 (2005): 505-15; Carole Despres, "The Meaning of Home: Literature Review and Directions for Future Research and Theoretical Development," *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research* 8, no. 2 (Summer 1991): 96-115; James S. Duncan and David Lambert, "Landscapes of Home," in *A Companion to Cultural Geography*, ed. J. Duncan, N. Johnson, and R. Schein, 382-403 (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004); Shelley Mallett, "Understanding Home: A Critical Review of the Literature," *Sociological Review* 52, no. 1 (2004): 62-89; Yi-fu Tuan, "Home," in *Patterned Ground: Entanglements of Nature and Culture*, ed. S. Harrison, S. Pile, and N. Thrift, 164- 65 (London: Reaktion Books, 2004); J. Macgregor Wise, "Home: Territory and Identity," *Cultural Studies* 14, no. 2 (2000): 295-310.
32. Wise, "Home: Territory and Identity," 297.
33. Blunt, "Cultural Geography," 506.
34. Mallett, "Understanding Home," 64.
35. Barbara B. Brown and Douglas D. Perkins, "Disruptions in Place Attachment," in *Place Attachment*, ed. 1. Altman and S. M. Low (New York: Plenum Press, 1992), 287.
36. Ronald Rees, *New and Naked Land: Making the Prairies Home* (Saskatoon, SK: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1988), 47-48, 51.
37. H. Elaine Lindgren, *Land in Her Own Name: Women as Homesteaders in North Dakota* (Fargo: North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, 1991), 52-53.
38. Rees, *New and Naked Land*, 58; Motz, introduction to *Making the American Home*, 1.
39. Sherry Boland Ahrentzen, "Home as a Workplace in the Lives of Women," in *Place Attachment*, ed. 1. Altman and S. M. Low (New York: Plenum Press, 1992), 116; Katherine Harris, "Sex Roles and Work Patterns among Homesteading Families in Northeastern Colorado, 1873- 1920," *Frontiers* 7, no. 3

(1984): 43-49; Laurie K. Mercier, "Women's Role in Montana Agriculture: 'You Had to Make Every Minute Count,'" *Montana, the Magazine of Western History* 38, no. 4 (1988): 50- 61; and Paula M. Nelson, *After the West Was Won: Homesteaders and Town-Builders in Western South Dakota, 1900-1917* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1986),50.

40. Nelson, *After the West Was Won*, 32.

41. Craig Miner, *West of Wichita: Settling the High Plains of Kansas, 1865-1890* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1986), 133.

42. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Eugene Rockberg-Halton, *The Meaning of Things: Domestic Symbols and the Self* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 133.

43. Brown and Perkins, "Disruptions in Place Attachment," 280.

44. Rees, *New and Naked Land*, 1988, 100, 107; Thomas F. Saarinen, *Perception of the Drought Hazard on the Great Plains*, Department of Geography, University of Chicago, Research Paper no. 106 (Chicago, 1966); and Henry Nash Smith, "Rain Follows the Plow: The Notion of Increased Rainfall for the Great Plains, 1844-1880," *Huntington Library Quarterly* (February 1947): .169-93.

45. Mallett, "Understanding Home," 79. Duncan and Lambert, "Landscapes of Home," term this "domestication of empire": "This involved the transference of a whole range of objects and ideas, from architectural styles and plant material, to legal systems and aesthetic visions. The emphasis here is not on an untroubled projection of homespace ... imperial landscapes of home as a contested terrain rather than a confident imposition" (390).

46. Frances Reeder Eddy, "The Reederers and Eddys Stake Their Claims in Custer," in *Pioneer Stories of Custer County, Nebraska*, contributed by more than one hundred present and former residents of Custer County, ed. E. Purcell (Broken Bow, NE: E. R. Purcell, publisher, 1936), 51-53.

47. Kevin Lynch, "Some References to Orientation," in *Image and Environment: Cognitive Mapping and Spatial Behavior*, ed. R. M. Downs and D. Stea (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1973),303; Yi-fu Tuan, "Language and the Making of Place: A Narrative-Descriptive Approach," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 81, no. 4 (1991): 684-96.

48. Donald Griffin, "Topographical Orientation," in *Image and Environment: Cognitive Mapping and Spatial Behavior*, ed. R. M. Downs and D. Stea, 296-99 (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1973),296.

49. Ann S. Devlin, "The 'Small Town' Cognitive Map: Adjusting to a New Environment," in *Environmental Knowing: Theories, Research, and Methods*, ed. G. T. Moore and R. G. Golledge (Stroudsburg, PA: Dowden, Hutchinson and Ross, Inc., 1976). Vaclav Havel in *Summer Meditations* (1992) writes, "What a person perceives as home (in the philosophical sense of the word) can be compared to a set of concentric circles, with one's 'I' at the centre." Havel expands the circles outward from home to encompass town and country: "All the circles of our home, indeed our whole natural world, are an inalienable part of us, and an inseparable element of our identity." See Vaclav Havel, *Summer Meditations*, translated from the Czech by Paul Wilson (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992),30-31.

50. Nelson, *After the West Was Won*, 70.

51. John C. Hudson, *Plains Country Towns* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985),28.

52. Tuan, "Home," 165.
53. Catherine Delano Smith, "Cartography in the Prehistoric Period in the Old World: Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa," in *Cartography in Prehistoric, Ancient, and Medieval Europe and the Mediterranean*, ed. J. B. Harley and D. Woodward, 54-102, vol. 1 of *The History of Cartography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).
54. Wise, "Home: Territory and Identity," 297.
55. Ronald Rees, "In a Strange Land ... Homesick Pioneers on the Canadian Prairie," *Landscape* 26, no. 2 (1982): 1-9. See page 8.
56. Julie Roy Jeffrey, "'There Is Some Splendid Scenery': Women's Responses to the Great Plains Landscape," *Great Plains Quarterly* 8 (Spring 1988): 69-78. See page 71.
57. Rees, *New and Naked Land*, 37-40.
58. Jeffrey "'There Is Some Splendid Scenery,'" 73.
59. Rees, *New and Naked Land*, 156.
60. Brown and Perkins, "Disruptions in Place Attachment," 290.
61. Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977), 8-9.
62. John R. Stilgoe, "Popular Photography, Scenery Values, and Visual Assessment," *Landscape Journal* 3, no. 2 (1984): 111-22. See pages 116-17.
63. Kenneth Helphand, "The Bicycle Kodak," *Environmental Review* 4, no. 3 (1981): 24-33. See page 29.
64. Mark Boekelman, "The Letters of Jane Aberson, Everyday Life on the Prairies during the Depression: How Immigration Turns Conservatives into Social Democrats," in *Dutch Immigration to North America*, ed. H. Ganzevoort and M. Boekelman, 111-29 (Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1983). See page 113.
65. Jeffrey "'There Is Some Splendid Scenery,'" 70; Crang, "Picturing Practices," 361.
66. Bradley H. Baltensperger, "Newspaper Images of the Central Great Plains in the Late Nineteenth Century," *Journal of the West* 19, no. 2 (April 1980): 64-70, see page 64; John E. Miller, "The Way They Saw Us: Dakota Territory in the Illustrated News," *South Dakota History* 18, no. 4 (1988): 214-44.
67. Jan Blodgett, *Land of Bright Promise: Advertising the Texas Panhandle and South Plains, 1870- 1917* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988); David L. Caffey, "We Have the Land; Now for the People: Boosterism in Frontier West Texas," *Permian Historical Annual* 21 (1981): 49-57; John R. Gold, "Locating the Message: Place Promotion as Image Communication" in *Place Promotion: The Use of Publicity and Marketing to Sell Towns and Regions*, ed. J. R. Gold and S. V. Ward (Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, 1994), see pages 30-31. Not all immigrants found the Plains as the booster literature promised. A Dutch immigrant commented: "People from all over Europe had been cheated" (201), quoted in Rob Kroes, "Migrating Images: The Role of Photography in Immigrant Writing," *European Contributions to American Studies* 29 (1994): 189-204. Kroes goes on to acknowledge the immigrants also "produced and



choreographed" their own images for their own use and to send to distant relatives, grumbling about American cons while carrying out their own fictions.

68. David Wrobel, *Promised Lands: Promotion, Memory, and the Creation of the American West* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2002), 3.

69. Elihu M. Gerson and M. Sue Gerson, "The Social Framework of Place Perspectives," in *Environmental Knowing: Theories, Research, and Methods*, ed. G. T. Moore and R. G. Golledge (Stroudsburg, PA: Dowden, Hutchinson and Ross, Inc., 1976).

70. Brown and Perkins, "Disruptions in Place Attachment," 288.

71. James E. Paster, "Advertising Immortality by Kodak," *History of Photography* 16, no. 2 (1992): 135-39, see page 138; and Loomis, "Kodak Women," 1.

72. Loomis, "Kodak Women," 40-42.

73. For example, before-and-after images appear in Wm. H. Brown Company, *Out They Go: Prosperous North Dakota* (Chicago: Wm. H. Brown Company, 1909).

74. Chambers, "Family as Place," 100.

75. Robert Taft, *Photography and the American Scene: A Social History, 1839-1889* (New York: Macmillan, 1942), 138; Shirley T. Wajda, "The Artistic Portrait Photograph," in *The Arts and the American Home, 1890-1930*, ed. J. H. Foy and K. A. Marling (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1994), 168.

76. Evan J. Jenkins, *The Northern Tier: or, Life among the Homestead Settlers* (Topeka: G. W. Martin, 1880).

77. Langford, *Suspended Conversations*, 24.

78. Divya Tolia-Kelly, "Locating Processes of Identification: Studying the Precipitates of Rememory through Artefacts in the British Asian Home," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 29, no. 3 (2004): 314-29.

79. Langford, *Suspended Conversations*, 92.

80. Motz, "Visual Autobiography," n.

81. Tuan, "Language and the Making of Place."

82. Motz, introduction to *Making the American Home*, 5-6; Marwyn S. Samuels, "The Biography of Landscape: Cause and Culpability," in *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes*, ed. D. W. Meinig (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).

83. Lindgren, *Land in Her Own Name*, 139.

84. Motz, "Visual Autobiography," n; Angel Kwolek-Folland, "The Elegant Dugout: Domesticity and Moveable Culture in the United States, 1870- 1900," *Women's Studies* 25, no. 2 (1984): 21-37. See page 25.

85. Motz, "Visual Autobiography"; Rose, "Family Photographs and Domestic Spacings"; and ToliaKelly, "Locating Processes of Identification" 2004.
86. Wise, "Home: Territory and Identity," 299.
87. Motz, "Visual Autobiography," 83.
88. Chalfen, *Turning Leaves*, 198.
89. Loomis "Kodak Women," 77.
90. Ibid., 150-51; Motz, introduction to *Making the American Home*, 1988, 5-6; Samuels, "Biography of Landscape."
91. Chalfen, *Turning Leaves*, In.
92. Riessman, *Narrative Analysis*, 18.
93. Mallett "Understanding Home," 79.
94. Chalfen, *Turning Leaves*, 198.
95. Chambers, "Family as Place," 105.
96. Orla Cronin, "Psychology and Photographic Theory," in *Image-Based Research: A Sourcebook for Qualitative Researchers*, ed. J. Prosser, 69-83 (London: Falmer Press, 1998).
97. Lindgren, *Land in Her Own Name*, 119, 235- 36, 239; Sheila Robinson, *The Crowleys of Knife River Ranch and Elm Creek Ranch* (Garrison, NO: BHG, Inc., 1997).
98. Cathy Luchetti, *Home on the Range: A Culinary History of the American West* (New York: Villard Books, 1993).
99. Marie Peterson Macdonald, *After Barbed Wire* (Glendive, MT: Frontier Gateway Museum, 1963); *Slope Saga* (Amidon, NO: Slope Saga Committee, 1976).
100. Nelson, *After the West Was Won*, 25.
101. Barbara Allen, "Landscape, Memory, and the Western Past," *Montana, the Magazine of Western History* 39, no. 4 (1989): 71-75.
102. Ibid., 74.
103. Nelson, *After the West Was Won*, 34. See Edith Eudora Kohl, *Land of the Burnt Thigh* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1986). First published in 1938.

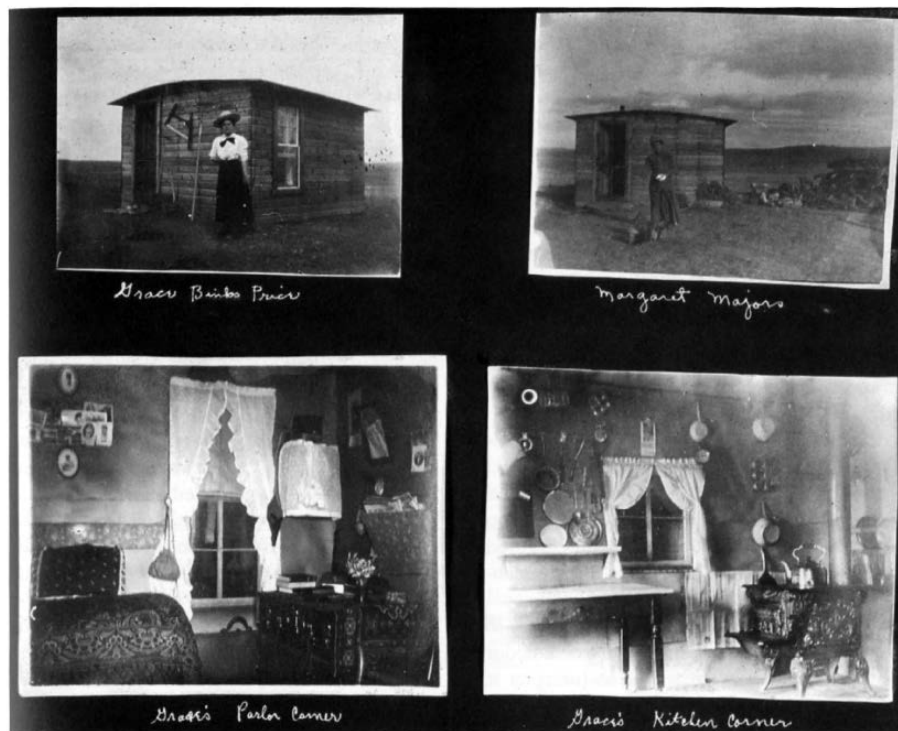


FIG. 1. "Grace Binks Price"; "Margaret Majors"; "Grace's Parlor Corner"; "Grace's Kitchen Corner." Grace Binks Price album, Montana Historical Society, Helena (PAC 96-62, page 6).



FIG. 2. Detail of Grace Binks Price album. Montana Historical Society, Helena (PAC 96-62, page 5).

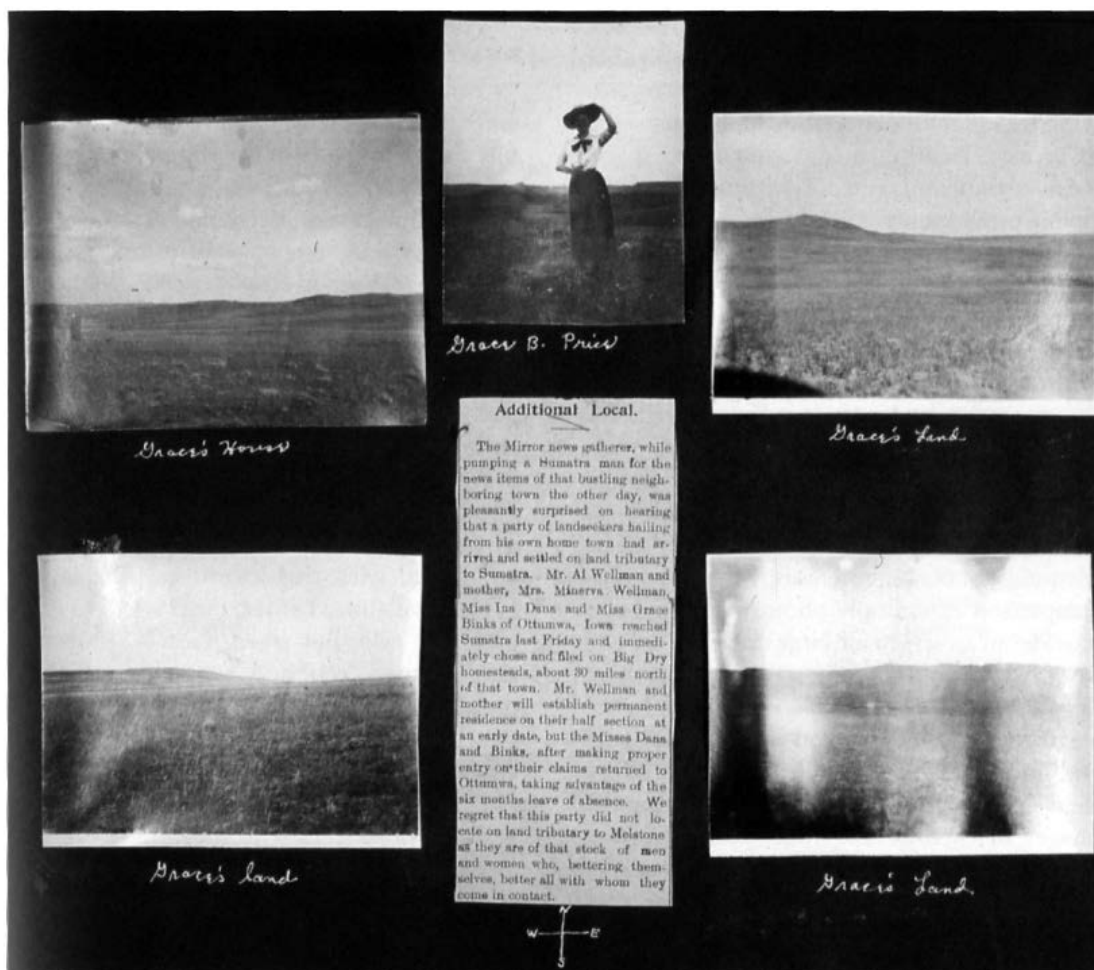


FIG. 3. "Grace's House"; "Grace B. Price"; "Grace's Land"; "Grace's Land"; "Grace's Land." Grace Binks Price album, Montana Historical Society, Helena (PAC 96-62, page 5).

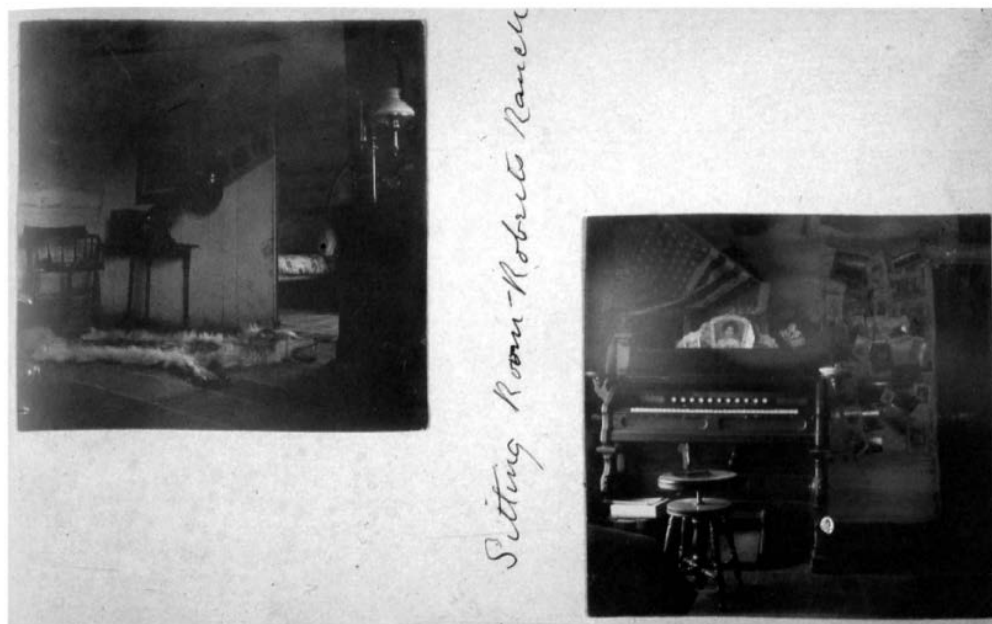


FIG. 4. "Sitting Room—Roberts Ranch." Elizabeth Roberts Collection, State Historical Society of North Dakota, Bismarck (0302-Album 2-p166).



FIG. 5. "On our homestead at Okaton S.D." Ed Kopac album, Montana Historical Society, Helena (PAC 81-65, page 8).



*The D.A.'s.*

*Pauline's claim house.*



FIG. 6. "The D.A.'s and Pauline's claim house." Pauline Shoemaker album, Sheila Robinson Family Collection, State Historical Society of North Dakota, Bismarck (0196-126).



FIG. 7. "Harvesting," Panorama, Elizabeth Roberts Collection, State Historical Society of North Dakota, Bismarck (0003-860). Note: This is a loose photograph from the Roberts Collection and not from one of her photograph albums.



FIG. 8. The barbecue held on arrival of two railroads at Mott, ND 1910. Robert Trousdale album, State Historical Society of North Dakota, Bismarck (0001-53-p13).

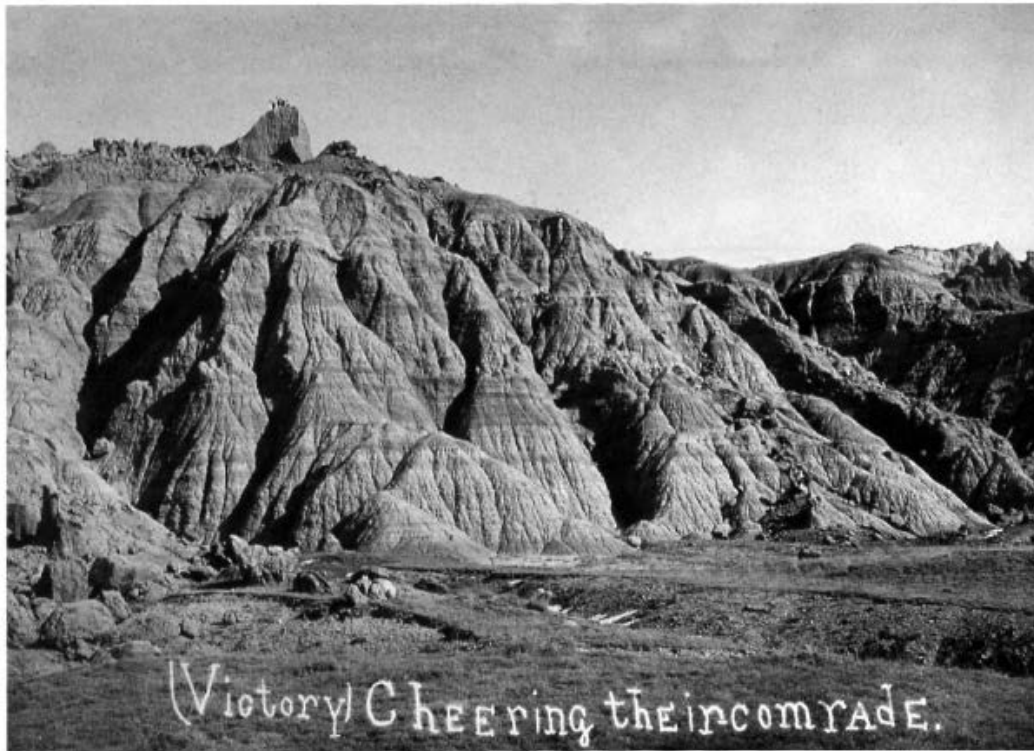


FIG. 9. "(Victory) Cheering their comrade." Ed Kopac album, Montana Historical Society, Helena (PAC 81-65, page 22). Note the small figures waving from the highest peak.



FIG. 10. "Badlands Scenery." Elizabeth Roberts Collection, State Historical Society of North Dakota, Bismarck (0302-Album 1-10).



TABLE 1  
PHOTOGRAPH ALBUMS USED IN THIS STUDY

Collection and reference number	Creator	Dates	Location	Number of albums, pages, and images	Focus of album
North Dakota State Historical Society (Col. 110)	Charles L. Hall family	1896-1909	Fort Berthold and Elbowoods, North Dakota	1 album of 29 pages, 87 images	Missionary work, family life
South Dakota State Historical Society (H. 72.2)	John R. Brennan and daughter Ruth	1900-1917	Pine Ridge Reservation, South Dakota	Album 1: 72 pages, 143 images Album 2: 50 pages, 147 images Album 3: 34 pages, 105 images	Life and improvements on the reservation, family life
North Dakota State Historical Society (Col. 302 albums 2, 3, and 4; Col. 308)	Elizabeth Roberts	1900-1905	Amidon, North Dakota	Col. 302, AL2: 14 pages, 62 images Col. 302, AL3: 46 pages, 73 images (images missing) Col. 302, AL4: 44 pages, 74 images Col. 308: 44 pages, 74 images (images missing)	Homestead and family life, ranching, landscape
North Dakota State Historical Society (Col. 286)	Alden and Howard Eaton	1902	Medora, North Dakota	1 album of 61 pages, 233 images	Ranch life, dude ranch activities
North Dakota State Historical Society (Brown 389-487)	William H. Brown Land Company	Undated, ca. 1906-1908	Hettinger and Morton counties, North Dakota	1 album of 90 pages, 100 images (five similar albums held at North Dakota State Historical Society; another album in held at Montana State Historical Society)	Promoting area settlement
Wyoming State Museum	Hazelle Ferguson	1907-1908	Wheatland, Wyoming	1 album of 50 pages, 103 images	Social life, art?
North Dakota State Historical Society (Col. 1-1-53)	Robert E. Trousdale	1909-1910	Mott, North Dakota	1 album of 46 pages, 46 images	Mott cityscapes
North Dakota State Historical Society (Col. 196)	Pauline Shoemaker Crowley	1911-1916	Mercer County, North Dakota	Black album: 14 pages, 39 images Gray album: 11 pages, 21 images	Homestead life, social life
Montana State Historical Society (PAC 92-62)	Grace Binks Price	1911-1914	Rosebud County, Montana	1 album of 45 pages, 188 images	Homestead life, social life
Montana State Historical Society (PAC 378-001)	Glass Brothers Land Company	ca. 1912	Big Timber, Montana	1 album of 82 pages, 82 images	Promoting area settlement
Montana State Historical Society (PAC 81-65)	Ed Kopac	ca. 1925	Hardin, Montana	1 album of 70 pages, 70 images (A striking homestead image by Kopac is held at South Dakota State Historical Society.)	Farming, landscape, travel

TABLE 2  
CONTENT ANALYSIS CRITERIA

LANDSCAPES	Wildlife	HUMAN ACTIVITIES
Town, exterior	Deer	Work
Town, interior	Antelope	Plowing
Railway stations	Bison	Planting
Railway lines	Rattlesnakes	Harvesting
Roads	Coyotes	Range work
Town elements	Wolves	Corral work
Homes	Birds (specify)	Haying
Stores	Non-Plains landscapes (specify)	Cutting wood
Churches		Feeding animals
Grain elevators		Domestic
School	TRANSPORTATION	Cooking
Railroad station	Train	Laundry
Post office	Horseback	Cleaning
Rural elements	Wagon	Other (specify)
Homestead, exterior	Automobile	Leisure activities
Homestead, interior	Bicycle	Picnics
Homestead, identified	Other (specify)	Suppers
Homestead, unidentified		Camping
Homesteads with occupants	HUMANS	Climbing
Sod house	Active	Swimming
Farm buildings	Male	Fishing
Well	Female	Dancing
Corral	Group, all male	Other (specify)
Outhouse	Group, all female	Reservation life
Other buildings (specify)	Group, mixed	Doles
Domestic	Passive	Celebrations
Sheep	Male	Schooling
Cattle	Female	Hunting
Horses	Group, all male	Farming
Chickens	Group, all female	
Hogs	Group, mixed	
Goats	Identified	TYPES OF IMAGES
Geese	Male	Snapshots
Crops	Female	Formal portraits
Grains	Unidentified	Bought photographs
Corn	Male	Postcards
Other (specify)	Female	Other (specify)
Native American landscape	Ethnicity	
Tipis	White, nonspecific	
Earthlodges	Native American	
Homes	Identified ethnicity	
Reservation buildings	Native Americans	
Schools	Dress, traditional	
Other	Male	
Badlands	Female	
Plains	Dress, contemporary	
Rivers/streams	Male	
Other landscapes	Female	