



# Edward S. Curtis Above the Medicine Line: Portraits of Aboriginal Life in the Canadian West

Rodger D. Touchie

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Edward S. Curtis Above the Medicine Line is both an introduction to the Seattle-based photographer and a tribute to a true visionary. While Curtiss photographs will long be his legacy, his own story is likewise compelling. Curtis built his first camera at 12 and developed that interest into a large Seattle photo studio by the age of 30. Then, on an expedition to Alaska in 1899, Curtis was exposed to First Nations cultures in a way that affected him profoundly. First Nations people had been decimated due to the diseases and aggressions of white settlers. Curtis, alarmed that their traditional ways of life were in danger of disappearing forever, made an incredible effort to capture their daily routines, character and dignity through photography and audio recordings. Curtis had planned to document only the First Peoples of the United States and Alaska, but his exposure to Canadas Blackfoot Nation spurred him to include all of North America. The visual result was The North American Indian, a 20-volume record of 75 of North Americas Native peoples. This collection of Curtiss images includes 100 of his most striking images and a biography.



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