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Magnificent Failure: A Portrait Of The Western Homestead Era.

By Campbell, John Martin; Karsmizki, Kenneth W. (introduction)

University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 2008. Softcover. Book Condition: New. 200 pages. Softcover. New book. AMERICAN WEST. Stunning photographic testimony to the hard realities of western farming. In words that are as clean and precise as his haunting, starkly beautiful photographs, John Martin Campbell vividly recreates the life and times of the western homestead era, the period from about 1885 when the prairie lands lying west of the longitude of the western Dakotas became available to pioneering farmers. More than 70 black-and-white duotone photographs, with detailed captions, record bleak landscapes and abandoned farms, outbuildings, farm implements, and hand tools—mute testimonies to the failed hopes of several million families who settled on these arid and semi-arid lands. Campbell explains how their failure resulted from a deadly combination of natural and economic causes. Historians of the western United States have largely ignored the homesteaders, despite the lessons their experiences teach about irrigation and dry farming on the northern plains and the impact of the Great Depression and Dust Bowl. There is little romance in farming, especially when compared with that attached to cowboys, Indians, and explorers. Still, the homesteaders were heroes in the opening of the West, and this book, with its...



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