Overview of the Collection

**Photographer**  
Reed, Roland, 1864-1934

**Title**  
Roland Reed "See America First" Great Northern Railway National Park Route Photographs

**Dates**  
between 1912 and 1915 (inclusive)

**Quantity**  
7 photographs and 10 photogravure prints (1 box) ; 8 x 10 inches (photographs) and 11 x 17 inches (photogravures)

**Collection Number**  
PH0465

**Summary**  
Images of Piegan Blackfeet Indians at Glacier National Park, Montana, 1912-1915 made for the Great Northern Railway's "See America First" promotion.

**Repository**  
University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections  
Special Collections  
University of Washington Libraries  
Box 352900  
Seattle, WA  
98195-2900  
Telephone: 206-543-1929  
Fax: 206-543-1931  
speccoll@uw.edu

**Access Restrictions**  
Entire collection can be viewed on the Libraries' Digital Collections website. Permission of Visual Materials Curator required to view originals. Contact Special Collections for additional information.

**Languages**  
English

Biographical Note

Roland Reed (1864-1934) was born and raised in Omro, Wisconsin. He left home at a young age to work on railroads and to travel through the west. He had demonstrated talent in drawing and had hoped to acquire the techniques needed to capture photographic images of the peoples that fascinated him: Reed's lifelong interest was native Americans. He learned photographic technique from Daniel Dutro between 1893 and 1897, as he and Dutro traveled around Montana. Reed is recognized for the careful perfectionism of his images and so very few examples of his work are found. He used 11” by 14” glass plates to record his images.

In 1897 he left Montana to photograph the gold rush in the Yukon and Alaska for the Associated Press. By 1910 he had gained enough renown to focus exclusively on the work that would define his career. He is known to have first photographed the Piegan (One of the three tribes belonging to the Blackfoot Confederacy, also called Pikuni, Pikani, and Piikáni) in 1908, and again in 1915 in support of...
a book project with Edward Willard Schultz ("Blackfeet Tales of Glacier National Park"). Additionally, he maintained a studio in Kalispell, MT, around this time. His images are carefully staged, and his intention was to reconstruct a version of the Piegan people’s history with the help of elders who remembered the 'old' ways. His portraits are sparse, containing few people, and the landscape is a significant element in his effort to reflect the pride and dignity of the (human) subjects. Reed did not make many photographs and worked patiently to get what he felt was the image he wanted. He explained his method of work in a letter:

A friend once characterized my method of attack as indicative of Chinese patience, book-agent persistence, and Arab subtlety. In going into a new tribe with photographic paraphernalia, although I hire poinies and guides, I never once suggest the purpose for my visit.

When the Indians, out of curiosity, at last inquire about my work, I reply casually "Oh, when I’m home, I’m a picture-taking man." Perhaps in a few days an Indian will ask..."Could you make our pictures?" My reply is non-committal..."I don’t know...Perhaps." "Would you try?" "Sometime when I feel like making pictures." Further time elapses, apparently the picture-taking man has forgotten all about making pictures until an Indian friend reminds him of his promise. Then the time for picture-taking has arrived."

(from Grand Endeavors of American Indian Photography by Paula Fleming)

**Historical Background**

These images were made between the years 1912 and 1915, when the Great Northern Railway was encouraging tourism through the "See America First- Great Northern Railway - National Park Route" promotional campaign. Louis W. Hill, President of the Great Northern, was eager to promote tourism in the newly created Glacier National Park, primarily because his was the only rail line servicing the area. As part of this effort, he created an extensive promotional campaign that attached the Great Northern Railway logo and branding to the "See America First" slogan first espoused by Stanford Harris of Salt Lake City from 1905-1909.

Harris argued that many easterners "simply do not know - they are not educated about our throbbing West." In his conception, while the frontier had dwindled, touring the West offered an opportunity to encounter the wellspring of the American character: democracy, freedom, nature, and economic opportunity. Additional benefits included economic development in tourist destinations and a strengthened national awareness. Harris held annual "See America First League" conferences starting in 1906, where the message of western promotion was honed and refined. This approach certainly was successful for gaining some attention: the New York Times has articles from both 1906 and 1908 on the "See America First" conferences and proposals.

The slogan and program also gained support within centers of economic power: On the eve of his retirement, James J. Hill sent a letter of endorsement to the See America First Convention, citing his "hearty sympathy with ... the economic and patriotic ideas that have inspired it." His son, Louis W. Hill's, use of this phrase broadened the exposure the slogan received and gave it a different usage. Hill assumed control of the Great Northern in 1907. In the wake of Stanford Harris' death, Louis Hill adopted the 'See America First' slogan that Harris had used as a banner, incorporating the phrase into the company’s logo, its mission, and all its advertising and public relations. Under Louis Hill’s supervision, the phrase "See America First" became a part of the Great Northern’s logo Hill had appropriated the boosterist slogan and used it to support a new business direction for the Great Northern: Tourism. He also formed a new subsidiary for this purpose, the Glacier Park Hotel Company.

Promotional activities ranged through a spectrum of events. A key element to the constructed "See America First" narrative was the opportunity to ‘see’ native peoples. In this case, the Piegan had
developed a relationship with the national park and with the tourist concessions therein. It is important to note that while portions of Glacier National Park were within the original Blackfoot reservation as defined by treaty, the Piegan did not traditionally inhabit the area near the Glacier Park Hotel. Rather, they were semi-nomadic, high plains buffalo hunters claiming use of a large territory that encompasses portions of what we know as Montana, Wyoming, Idaho, and Alberta. One result of the relationship that developed between the Great Northern Railway, the Glacier Park Hotel Company, and the Piegan was the emergence of a coterie of recognized performers who maintained 'camps' near several lodges, performed 'traditional' dances and ceremonies for visitors to the park, and generally rubbed shoulders with hotel guests.

The images in this collection have served multiple purposes: They were used as promotional images by the Great Northern Railway for advertising; by the Glacier Park Hotel Company for souvenirs; and by authors for illustration in topical books. In all cases, though, one thing remains constant: these images are part of an economically motivated romanticization of the situation and reality of native Americans' lives. As such, all these images were carefully posed and created to support a narrative for potential and actual visitors to Glacier National Park.

**Content Description**

Collection consists of photographs and photogravure postcards depicting the Piegan Blackfeet in Glacier National Park, Montana. The images were intended to encourage tourists to come visit the Glacier National Park by riding on the Great Northern Railway.

**Use of the Collection**

**Alternative Forms Available**

View the digital version of the collection

**Restrictions on Use**

Restrictions may exist on reproduction, quotation, or publication. Contact Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries for details.

**Administrative Information**

**Processing Note**


**Bibliography**


### Detailed Description of the Collection

**Photographs, 1912-1915**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container(s)</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/1 1</td>
<td>A Piegan Blackfeet woman on a horse with baby carrier (cradle board) and travois <img src="#" alt="view" /></td>
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<tr>
<td>1/1 2</td>
<td>A Piegan Blackfeet man on a horse with travois <img src="#" alt="view" /> This image was used for the print (item 8) that appears with the caption: A Blackfeet Indian travois - The original American's first mode of transportation. Glacier National Park, Montana. See America First. Also printed with the &quot;See American First&quot; Great Northern Railway National Park Route logo.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/1 3</td>
<td>Piegan Blackfeet woman with baby carrier (cradle board) and man both on horses with travoises <img src="#" alt="view" /></td>
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<td>1/1 4</td>
<td>A group of Piegan Blackfeet men riding on horseback past teepees while women look on <img src="#" alt="view" /> This image was used for the print (item 9), that appears with the caption: Cutbank Canyon, native home of the Blackfeet Indians. Near Cutbank Camp, Glacier National Park, Montana. See America First. Also printed with the &quot;See American First&quot; Great Northern Railway National Park Route logo.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/1 5</td>
<td>A group of Piegan Blackfeet men and women next to teepees <img src="#" alt="view" /></td>
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A group of seated Piegan Blackfeet men and woman listening to a man in ceremonial headdress next to a teepee with women next to a nearby teepee. This image was used for the print (item 10), that appears with the caption: A council of the Blackfeet Indians. Lake McDermott Country, Glacier National Park, Montana. See America First. See America First. Also printed with the "See American First" Great Northern Railway National Park Route logo.

A seated Piegan Blackfeet woman wearing a decorated cradle board with a baby in it. In *Grand Endeavors of American Indian Photography* this image appears on p. 102 and is described as "Daisy Norris, a Blackfoot, with baby carrier."

"See American First" Great Northern Railway National Park Route photogravure prints, 1912-1915

A Piegan Blackfeet man on a horse with travois. Caption on print: A Blackfeet Indian travois - The original American's first mode of transportation. Glacier National Park, Montana. See America First. Also printed with the "See American First" Great Northern Railway National Park Route logo. The print uses the photograph described in item 2.

A group of Piegan Blackfeet men riding on horseback past teepees while Piegan women look on. Caption on print: Cutbank Canyon, native home of the Blackfeet Indians. Near Cutbank Camp, Glacier National Park, Montana. See America First. Also printed with the "See American First" Great Northern Railway National Park Route logo. The print uses the photograph described in item 4.

A group of seated Piegan Blackfeet men and a standing woman listening to a man in ceremonial headdress next to a teepee with women next to a nearby teepee. Caption on print: A council of the Blackfeet Indians. Lake McDermott Country, Glacier National Park, Montana. See America First. See America First. Also printed with the "See American First" Great Northern Railway National Park Route logo.
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<td>America First. See America First. Also printed with the &quot;See American First&quot; Great Northern Railway National Park Route logo. The print uses the photograph described in item 6.</td>
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<td>1/5 11</td>
<td>Piegan Blackfeet man and woman in front of an open teepee [view]</td>
<td>Caption on print: Three Bears and squaw, Blackfeet Indian medicine man. Glacier National Park, Montana. See America First. Also printed with the &quot;See American First&quot; Great Northern Railway National Park Route logo.</td>
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<td>A Piegan Blackfeet woman looking toward trees [view]</td>
<td>Caption on print: Dawn Mist, Blackfeet Indian princess. Glacier National Park, Montana. See America First. Also printed with the &quot;See American First&quot; Great Northern Railway National Park Route logo. The subject is probably the same woman shown in item 7, Daisy Norris.</td>
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<td>A Piegan Blackfeet man in ceremonial dress in front of a teepee [view]</td>
<td>Caption on print: Chief Two Guns White Calf, Blackfeet Tribe. Glacier National Park, Montana. See America First. Also printed with the &quot;See American First&quot; Great Northern Railway National Park Route logo.</td>
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<td>1/8 14</td>
<td>A Piegan Blackfeet man wearing ceremonial headdress and blanket and holding a decorated spear [view]</td>
<td>Caption on print: Medicine Owl, Blackfeet medicine man. Glacier National Park, Montana. See America First. Also printed with the &quot;See American First&quot; Great Northern Railway National Park Route logo.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/9 15</td>
<td>A Piegan Blackfeet man and woman in front of an open teepee [view]</td>
<td>Caption on print: Lazy Boy and squaw, renowned enemy of Crow Indians. Glacier National Park, Montana. See America First. Also printed with the &quot;See American First&quot; Great Northern Railway National Park Route logo.</td>
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<td>1/10 16</td>
<td>A group Piegan Blackfeet men on horseback with one wearing ceremonial headdress [view]</td>
<td>Caption on print: Chief Fred Big Top, Blackfeet Indian guide. Glacier National Park, Montana. See America First. Also printed with the &quot;See American First&quot; Great Northern Railway National Park Route logo.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/11 17</td>
<td>Seven Piegan Blackfeet men seated with blankets along a log bench. Caption on print: Blackfeet Indian Braves. Glacier National Park, Montana. See America First. Also printed with the &quot;See American First&quot; Great Northern Railway National Park Route logo. Men identified by Shawn David Kline, from left to right: Cream Antelope, Three Bears, Gambler, Medicine Owl, Lazy Boy, Two Guns White Calf, and Fish Wolf Robe.</td>
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Names and Subjects

**Subject Terms:**
- Indians of North America--Montana--Photographs
- Photogravure--Specimens
- Piegan Indians--Photographs
- Siksika Indians--Photographs

**Geographical Names:**
- Glacier National Park (Mont.)--Photographs

**Other Creators:**
- Corporate Names:
  - Great Northern Railway Company (U.S.) (creator)

Names and Subjects

**Subject Terms:**
- Visual Materials Collections (University of Washington)

2009 (Last modified: 4/18/2018)

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