

Exhibition of Early 20th Century Wyoming Photographer Reveals American West From a Female Perspective

The exhibition showcases the images of Lora Webb Nichols, a Wyoming homesteader and prolific businesswoman.

PORTLAND, OREGON, USA, March 24, 2021 / EINPresswire.com/ -- The [Blue Sky Gallery](#) in Portland, Oregon is hosting an exhibition of work by early 20th century Wyoming photographer Lora Webb Nichols, curated by artist and educator Nicole Jean Hill, April 1 - May 1, 2021. The exhibition features 24 photographs selected from the recently restored archive that documents the Wyoming town of Encampment over the course of several decades.

The exhibition is in conjunction with a recently released photography book, "Encampment, Wyoming: Selections from the [Lora Webb Nichols Archive 1899-1948](#)". The book features 115 photographs created and collected by a homesteader/photographer in the early 20th century. Lora Webb Nichols was an entrepreneur who used photography to provide financial stability for herself and her family for several decades in rural Wyoming before, during and after the Great Depression. Culled from over 24,000 photographs, the selected images in the book provide a dynamic visual window into the American West from a female perspective and highlight the social, domestic, and economic aspects of the Wyoming frontier.

Nichols received her first camera in 1899 at the age of 16, coinciding with the rise of the region's copper mining boom. As early as 1906, Nichols was working for hire as a photographer for industrial documentation and family portraits, developing and printing from a darkroom she fashioned in the home she shared with her husband and their children. After the collapse of the copper industry, Nichols remained in Encampment and established the Rocky Mountain Studio, a photography and photofinishing service. Her commercial studio was a focal point of the town throughout the 1920s and 1930s. In addition to their value as historical documents, the images reveal a captivating approach to photography that looks and feels surprisingly contemporary,



Photo by Lora Webb Nichols of Harriet Eckerson, 1929

capturing an elusive sense of place through the photographs of a community of friends, families, and strangers. The book is edited by photographer and exhibition curator Nicole Jean Hill, designed by award-winning book designer Hans Gremmen, and published by FW:Books, Amsterdam.

Blue Sky, the Oregon Center for the Photographic Arts, is a nonprofit exhibition space and community research center dedicated to educating the public about photography through exhibitions, public programs, and publications, and dialogue.

Financial support for the exhibition and book was provided by the Wyoming Community Foundation, the J.M. Kaplan Furthermore Grant, Beth & Bruce White, and with research support from Grand Encampment Museum, the Wyoming Historical Society and the Peter E. Palmquist Memorial Fund. More information on the archive and book are available at the Lora Webb Nichols Archive website: www.lorawebbnichols.org.

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Photo by Lora Webb Nichols of Patsy and Bonnie Kauffman, 1932



Photo from Lora Webb Nichols Collection of Girls' Camping Trip, 1913

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