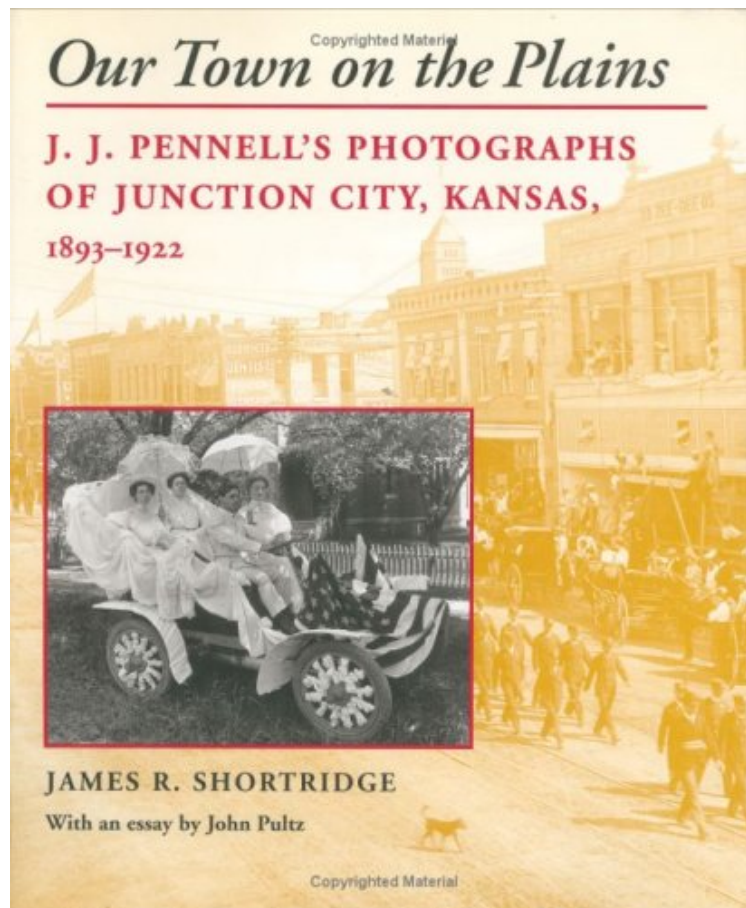


## Our Town on the Plains: J. J. Pennell's Photographs of Junction City, Kansas, 1893-1922

James R. Shortridge

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**James R. Shortridge : Our Town on the Plains: J. J. Pennell's Photographs of Junction City, Kansas, 1893-1922** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Our Town on the Plains: J. J. Pennell's Photographs of Junction City, Kansas, 1893-1922:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great Photographs and History By John R. Harbour Great set of photographs by J. J. Pennell of Junction City, Kansas during the period of 1893 -1922. The book contains a well written history of Junction City integrated with the photographs of Pennell to provide a window into that period of Kansas history. I bought the book because of family members who lived in Junction City during that time period so I had a special interest in the book. However, it would appeal to any person who is interested in understanding the history during that time in the US. And, the photographs alone are worth the price of this book. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great book! By cdsgoddess Lots of restored pictures and information about the city and the people. Turns out there was a photo and information about my great great grandfather and his brother. I had no idea,

neither did my mom. I ordered the book for her (she does genealogy) and decided to order an extra copy for myself. Very impressed with the quality and content of the book. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Would definitely recommend. By Lisa Ennis A fantastic book, and very impressed by delivery time. Would recommend both item and seller.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, photography had become accessible to average Americans as a means of documenting their lives. Although most people did not yet own cameras, they flocked to commercial photographers for affordable portraits that became the family heirlooms we gape at in wonder today. One of the most accomplished of these photographers was Joseph Judd Pennell of Junction City, Kansas. Pennell had one of the best equipped studios in the state and took thousands of photographs recording the public life of his town. People from all walks of life posed for his camera, and his images not only constitute one of America's great photography collections but also one of the richest visual documentations we have of this era. *Our Town on the Plains* reproduces more than one hundred of Pennell's best photographs. Taken from 1893 to 1922, these wonderfully crisp images depict life in Junction City and nearby Fort Riley: people posing with studio props or in front of their homes, group shots of schools and clubs, commissioned photographs of buildings and businesses, public events like parades and unveilings, and ordinary people at work on their farms and in their shops. These photographs suggest a world of solid civic and personal values, with Pennell's wide-angle lens lending a sense of spaciousness to everyday life. We see a baseball diamond from the late 1800s and a bar so typical of its day it was used in the opening credits of *Cheers*, images as inspiring as Teddy Roosevelt on the campaign trail or as nostalgic as storefront windows with groceries or corsets. They also depict a time of major transition in American life, as some people pose with their horse and buggy and others with their automobile. James Shortridge's text, interwoven with Pennell's images, takes readers on a stroll through Junction City in this golden age and points out many of the changes that were sweeping America. An introductory essay by art historian John Pultz reviews Pennell's career during the heyday of studio photography. Pennell's work is widely celebrated, having appeared in numerous books and PBS documentaries. *Our Town on the Plains* now preserves some of the best of those photographs in a volume through which we can visit our past and, in the process, discover ourselves.

"Intelligent and detailed, this eerily nostalgic journey into Junction City's past tells the story of the town's economic beginnings and those of J. J. Pennell. His lens captured an entire community, and this book preserves a prismatic account of the buggy-to-automobile era as seen through the lives of its inhabitants." About the Author James R. Shortridge is a professor of geography at the University of Kansas. Among his other books is *The Middle West: Its Meaning in American Culture*, winner of the John Brinckerhoff Jackson Prize. John Pultz is curator of photography at the University of Kansas's Spencer Art Museum.