



# Light on the Prairie: Solomon D. Butcher, Photographer of Nebraska's Pioneer Days

*Nancy Plain*

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**2013 Spur Award for Best Western Juvenile Nonfiction**

**2013 Will Rogers Medallion Award for Western Juvenile Nonfiction**

**Award of Merit from the American Association for State and Local History**

**2013 Nebraska Book Award winner in Youth Nonfiction**

Once President Lincoln signed the Homestead Act of 1862, which granted 160 acres of free land to anyone with the grit to farm it for five years, the rush to the Great Plains was on. Solomon D. Butcher was there to document it, amassing more than three thousand photographs and compiling the most complete record of the sod house era ever made.

Butcher (1856-1927) staked his claim on the plains in 1880. He didn't like farming, but he found another way to thrive. He had learned the art of photography as a teenager, and he began taking pictures of his friends and neighbors. Butcher noticed how fast the vast land was settling up, so he formed the plan that would become his life's work to record the frontier days in words and images.

Alongside sixty-two of Butcher's iconic photographs, *Light on the Prairie* conveys the irrepressible spirit of a man whose passion would give us a firsthand look at the men and women who settled the Great Plains. Like his subjects, Butcher was a pioneer, even though he held a camera more often than a plow.

Watch an interview with the author.

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