



# The Time Of The Buffalo

*Tom Mchugh*

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According to the Blackfoot creation myth, the spirits first rolled moist earth in their hands and threw the magic symbol to the ground to make men and women. “Next they made earthen images of buffalo, blowing on them to bring them to life.” And it is the profound interrelationship of earth, animal, and human being that underlies Tom McHugh’s rich, comprehensive—indeed definitive—portrait of the American buffalo.

The book is alive with resonant detail: hunting ways, buffalo products, stories and ceremonies of the Cheyenne, Sioux, Mandan, Cree, and Assiniboin tribes, rare and pertinent Indian drawings, the use of buffalo horns and spoons, the Plains-wide revolution effected by the horse. Here, too, are reports from Coronado, Lewis and Clark, the painter George Catlin; the diaries of trappers, soldiers, travelers. And this is how luxurious hunting parties (Sir St. George Gore in 1854 and Grand Duke Alexis in 1872) found sport in a land just beginning its tragedy; and how the hidemen of 1871 to 1883, catering to Eastern markets for robes and leather, and out for fast money in lean times, completed the tragedy.

The movement to save the buffalo completes a large, informative, and moving work whose lucid narrative and lavish complement of maps, drawings, paintings, and photographs give us at last, in a full sense, the life, the world, the nature, and the time of the buffalo.

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