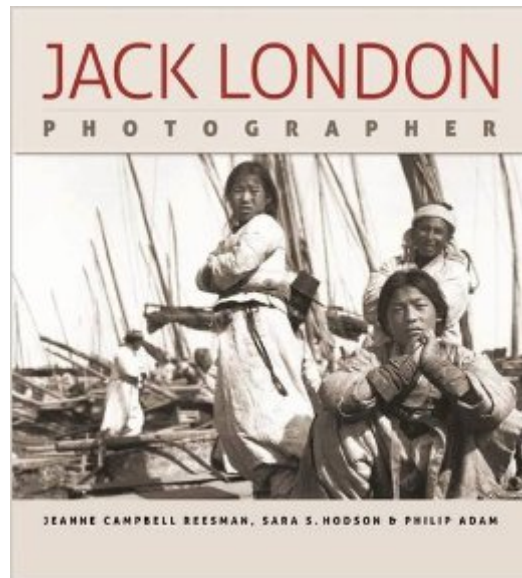


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# Jack London, Photographer



## Synopsis

Jack London (1876–1916) remains one of the most widely read American writers, known for his naturalist fiction, socialist novels and essays, journalism, and the many adventures that he shared with the world. London was also an accomplished photographer, producing nearly twelve thousand photographs during his lifetime. *Jack London, Photographer*, the first book devoted to London's photography, reveals a vital dimension of his artistry, barely known until now. London's subjects included such peoples as the ragged homeless of London's East End and the freezing refugees of the Russo-Japanese War, the latter photographed on assignment for the Hearst Syndicate. For *Collier's* magazine, London wrote his eyewitness account of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire and returned two weeks later with his camera to document a city in ruins but slowly recovering. During his voyage aboard the *Snark*, London produced humane images of the South Seas islanders that contrasted dramatically with the period's stereotypical portraits of indigenous peoples. In 1914 he documented the U.S. invasion of Veracruz during the Mexican Revolution. Although some of his images were used in newspaper and magazine stories and in his books *The People of the Abyss* and *The Cruise of the Snark*, the majority have remained unpublished until now. The volume's more than two hundred photographs were printed from the original negatives in the California State Parks collection and from the original photographs in albums at the Huntington Library. They are reproduced here as duotones from silver gelatin prints. The general and chapter introductions place London's photographs in the context of his writings and his times. London lived during the first true mass-media era, when the use of photographic images ushered in a new way of covering the news. With his discerning eye, London recorded historical moments through the faces and bodies of the people who lived them, creating memorable portraits of individuals whose cultural differences pale beside their common humanity.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Who knew? Well obviously some people did, because here in a splendid, large scale volume is the 'other aspect' of of legendary novelist Jack London (1876 - 1916): from the vaults of the Huntington Library and the California State Parks Jeanne Reesman, Sara Hodson, and Philip Adam gathered these fascinating images, coupled them with some of London's writing that accompany the images, and added background information making this book an invaluable missing piece of art history mystery. The 200 some photographs have been 'restored' or reproduced by Philip Adam, an expert in historical photography, in duotones made from Adam's silver gelatin prints. As noted in the preface, 'the majority of the photographs were reproduced from original negatives and the others by copy negatives made from original photographs in London's photo albums at the Huntington Library, as well as collections of the California State Parks.' What this book contains then are many portraits of various figures from London's brief life (he died at age 40 of kidney failure), but even more interesting are the documentation of the jaunts he made to London, England where he sensitively photographed the poverty stricken homeless, the South Seas Islanders, the devastation that resulted from the San Francisco Earthquake of 1906, scenes from the Mexican Revolution, and the victims of the Russo-Japanese War. As a photojournalist the quality of his informed inspection of sites such as this may make him one of the founders of modern photojournalism.

This excellent book provides the first comprehensive study of Jack London's work as a photographer. London, of course, is most famous as one of America's greatest authors, the writer of such celebrated works as *The Call of the Wild*, *White Fang*, and *The Sea-Wolf*. Despite being an incredibly prolific author and a world wide celebrity, London also managed to take over 12,000 photographs during his all-too-brief lifetime. While that number may not seem outrageous by today's standards, a century ago when cameras were bulky and complex and photography was a difficult and labor intensive craft, that's quite an achievement. For all intents and purposes, London was a professional photojournalist, and this is the first book to treat him as such. Though London is most famous for his stories of the Klondike Gold Rush, unfortunately he did not carry a camera when he ventured up to Alaska and the Yukon. The photos in this book are divided into six chapters, each a

photojournalistic journey. The first chapter contains pictures he took in the slums of the East End of London in 1903, while researching and writing *The People of the Abyss*. The second set of photos covers his period as a war correspondent in Korea in 1904, covering the Russo-Japanese War. Next there is a chapter on London's photos of the destruction caused by the San Francisco Earthquake of 1906. This is followed by a long chapter devoted to photos taken while London and his wife Charmian attempted to sail around the world in their yacht, a journey immortalized in the book *The Cruise of the Snark*. This group of photos, taken in 1907 and 1908, depicts their travels in Hawaii, Tahiti, the Marquesas, and the Solomon Islands. In 1912, Mr. and Mrs.

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