

## Review from *Railroad Heritage*, No. 31, 2012 by John Gruber

Two unusual railroad books, with remarkable imagery, have hit the markets: *Waiting for the Cars* by Wendell W. Huffman comes with red/cyan paper 3D glasses placed inside the front cover. *Wet Britches and Muddy Boots* by John H. White, Jr., has an abundance of woodcuts and steel engravings, hand-picked by White. Both books provide valuable information and also serve as a teaching tool on how photographs were used and reproduced in the nineteenth century.

*Waiting for the Cars*, published by the Nevada State Railroad Museum, features 218 photographs of the construction of the first transcontinental railroad presented as the photographer, Alfred D. Hart, intended them to be seen—in full 3D stereo. Its title comes from a short item in the *Sacramento Bee* in 1867 about a little fellow who was asked why he was looking at a stereo view of Bloomer Cut for a long time. "I am waiting for the cars to come along," he said.

The views include "American River from Green Bluffs," 71.2 miles east of Sacramento (page 132). It's a site affectionately known today as Stein's Curve, since it was a well known location for photographs by Dick Steinheimer, and also known simply as American River.

And, of course, there are the stereos that entranced the little fellow, "Bloomer Cut" itself (pages 64-67), 33.5 miles east of Sacramento. The cut is little changed from the time of construction except for the size the rail.

Huffman, curator of history at the Nevada Museum, wrote the text. His extensive captions explain whatever activity Hart may have recorded, and place what is seen in the context of the construction or early operation of the railroad. The subjects of the captions sometimes range far and wide, just as the railroad wound through a variety of landscapes, though they all relate in some way to the scenes that Hart recorded from 1863 to 1869.

Howard Goldbaum, a professor of photography at the Reynolds School of Journalism at the University of Nevada, Reno, located the images and transformed them into anaglyphs for the book. The conversion of the 150-year-old stereo cards presented a number of challenges, as some of the photographs were damaged by age or improper care. Since serious image defects would adversely affect the 3D presentation, the anaglyphs were digitally repaired where necessary. The original images, with imperfections intact, may be seen in the stereo card reproductions on the text pages.

In the introduction Mead B. Kibbey wrote: "When seen in 3D as the photographer intended, and as *Waiting for the Cars* facilitates, Hart's stereographs transform one's visual space into an exciting reproduction of the scene itself." Kibbey's 1995 publication, *The Railroad Photographs of Alfred A. Hart, Artist*, was an inspiration for this out-of-the-box book. And as might be expected today, there is a complementary website, [waitingforthecars.com](http://waitingforthecars.com), with more details about the stereo views.