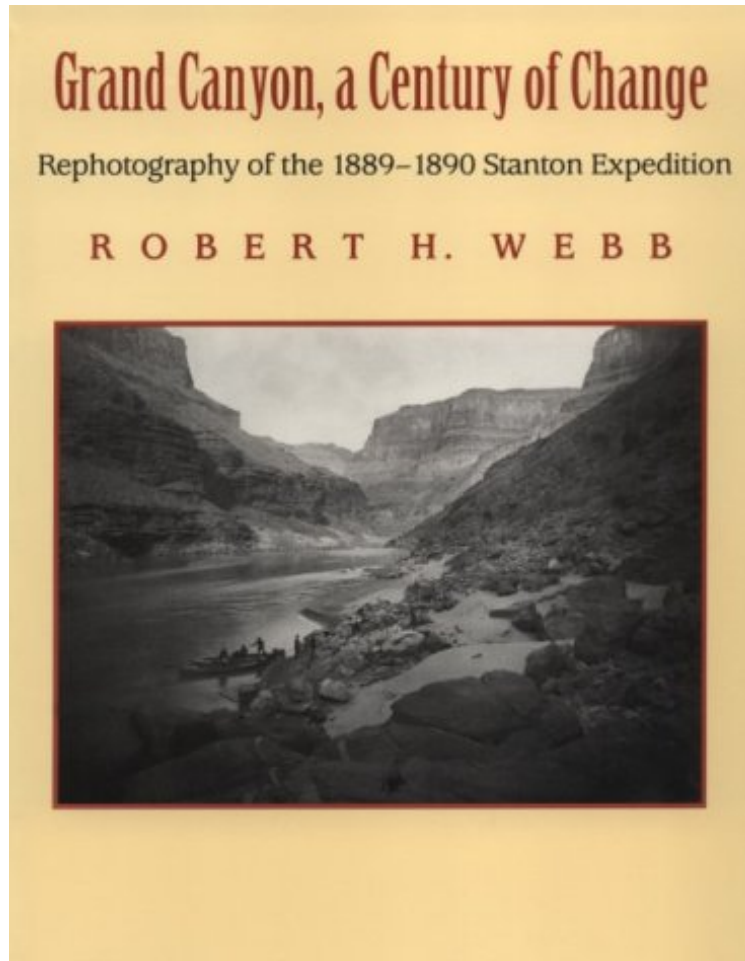


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# Grand Canyon, A Century of Change: Rephotography of the 1889-1890 Stanton Expedition

*Robert H. Webb*

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**Robert H. Webb : Grand Canyon, A Century of Change: Rephotography of the 1889-1890 Stanton Expedition** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Grand Canyon, A Century of Change: Rephotography of the 1889-1890 Stanton Expedition:

Photographs made in Grand Canyon a century ago may provide us today with a sense of history; photographs made a century later from the same vantage points give us a more precise picture of change in this seemingly timeless place. Between 1889 and 1890, Robert Brewster Stanton made photographs every 1-2 miles through the river corridor for the purpose of planning a water-level railroad route and produced the largest collection of photographs of the Colorado

River at one point in time. Robert Webb, a USGS hydrologist conducting research on debris flows in the Canyon, obtained the photographs and from 1989 to 1995 replicated all 445 of the views captured by Stanton, matching as closely as possible the original camera positions and lighting conditions. *Grand Canyon, a Century of Change* assembles the most dramatic of these paired photographs to demonstrate both the persistence of nature and the presence of humanity. Unexpected longevity of some plant species, effects of animal grazing, and expansion of cacti are all captured by the replicate photographs. More telling is evidence of the impact of Glen Canyon Dam: increased riparian vegetation, new marshes, aggraded debris fans, and eroded sand bars. In the accompanying text, Webb provides a thorough analysis of what each pair of photographs shows and places the project in its historical context. Complementing his narrative are six sidebar articles by authorities on Canyon natural history that further attest to a century of change. The level of detail obtained from the photographs represents one of the most extensive long-term monitoring efforts ever conducted in a national park; it is the most detailed documentation effort ever performed using repeat photography. Much more than simply a picture book, *Grand Canyon, a Century of Change* is an environmental history of the river corridor, a fascinating book that clearly shows the impact of human influence on Grand Canyon and warns us that its future is very much in our hands.

"Webb's book is by no means a typical repeat photography book. Rather, it is an eloquent tribute to the physical geography of the inner Grand Canyon that uses repeat photography to instruct about the canyon's geography and history. . . . A thorough, integrative book that is at the same time readable, humorous, and utterly convincing." *Journal of Geography*"This book is an excellent treatise on historical and geological changes within the Colorado River's riparian zone and contains a wealth of information on natural history, river running, and the myriad of changes in the Grand Canyon." *Journal of Arizona History*"The level of detail captured in the Stanton and Webb photographs is remarkable. This detail and the author's interpretive skill give the reader a better understanding of the ever-changing world of the Grand Canyon than any coffee table book devoted to color photography of the canyon country." *Utah Historical Quarterly*"Extremely well written and researched . . . The level of detail in the photographs is extraordinary and provides an unparalleled opportunity to study and evaluate changes in the Grand Canyon over the past one hundred years." *Environmental History*"For a geologist these views are elating. Page after page of repeat views make study of this book an adventure." *Earth Sciences History*