



Smithsonian Associates

## Edward S. Curtis: A Complicated Photographic Legacy

Clay Jenkinson.

Thursday, May 19, 2022 - 6:45 p.m. to 8:15 p.m. ET

### Books by Clay Jenkinson

*The Language of Cottonwoods: Essays on the Future of North Dakota*

*Bring Out Your Dead: The Literature and History of Epidemics*

*Message on the Wind: A Spiritual Odyssey  
on the Northern Plains*

*The Writings of the Lewis & Clark Expedition  
in North Dakota*

*Becoming Jefferson's People: Re-Inventing  
The American Republic in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*

*A Free and Hardy Life: Theodore Roosevelt's  
Sojourn in the American West*

*The Character of Meriwether Lewis: Explorer  
in the Wilderness*

### A Few Books on Edward Curtis

Timothy Egan. *Short Nights of the Shadow Catcher.*

Anne Makepeace. *Edward Curtis: Coming to Light.*

Mick Gidley. *Edward S. Curtis and the North American Indian, Incorporated.*

Mick Gidley. *Edward S. Curtis and the North American Indian Project in the Field.*

“You have begun just in  
time.”

Theodore Roosevelt  
to Edward S. Curtis

### Cultural Tours

Clay leads annual cultural tours on the Lewis and Clark Trail, in Mr. Jefferson's Virginia, and France, in John Steinbeck's California, in Homer's Greece, and the Landscapes of English Literature.

Clay also hosts January humanities retreats at a wonderful mountain lodge west of Missoula, Montana, on Thoreau, Dickens, Shakespeare, Books of the Road, American Indian literature and history, and more. It's the book club you always wanted to join.

Clay teaches online humanities courses for adults (no essays, no exams!) on a wide range of subjects, from the future of the U.S. Constitution, to the Making of the Atomic Bomb, to the literature and history of the Great Plains, to Virgil's *Aeneid*.

For more information, go to  
[Jeffersonhour.com](http://Jeffersonhour.com).

Listen to the **Thomas Jefferson Hour**, soon to become *Listening to America*, Clay's weekly podcast about the life and vision of the Third President of the United States. See [Jeffersonhour.com](http://Jeffersonhour.com) for details.

Clay is the editor of *We Proceeded On*, the quarterly journal of the Lewis & Clark Expedition. You should subscribe:  
[www.lewisandclark.org](http://www.lewisandclark.org).

Clay lectures throughout the United States about the future of the humanities in higher education. His company is known as **The Erasmus Group**. Clay believes that much of the current collapse of American norms is related to the loss of humanities education.

Clay performs a one-man show called **Shakespeare without Tears** throughout the United States. The purpose is to show a: that Shakespeare is not nearly so intimidating as he might seem; b: that today is the best time since the Elizabethan era to appreciate Shakespeare. This highly entertaining show is not just for English majors!

Clay is a writer, public humanities scholar, editor, public radio personality, adventurer, leader of cultural tours. He lives in Bismarck, North Dakota, one of the last agrarian places in America. He has a particular interest in the American West. He was the founder of the Theodore Roosevelt Center at Dickinson State University. He writes for [Governing.com](http://Governing.com), where he is a senior editor. He is leading an initiative called **Listening to America**, on the principle that most of the country lies well within the middle, well between FOX and MSNBC.

Clay Jenkinson  
701-202-6751  
[clayjenkinson.com](http://clayjenkinson.com)  
[clayjenkinson2010@gmail.com](mailto:clayjenkinson2010@gmail.com)

1324 Golden Eagle Lane  
Bismarck, North Dakota 58503  
[jeffersonhour.com](http://jeffersonhour.com)

## An Edward S. Curtis Timeline

- 1868 born, White Water, Wisconsin, but soon moved with family to Minnesota
- 1887 Curtis and his father move to Puget Sound
- 1880 builds first camera
- 1888 Curtis' mother, brother, and sister join father and son in West; father dies
- 1891 becomes partner in two Seattle photo studios
- 1892 marries Clara Phillips
- 1895 photographs Princess Angeline, daughter of Chief Seattle
- 1898 helps distinguished group that was lost on Mt. Rainier
- 1899 joins Harriman Expedition to Alaska, 4,000 photographs
- 1900 joins George Bird Grinnell on Blackfeet (Piegan) Reservation in Montana
- 1901 undertakes what will become *North American Indian* project
- 1903 photographs Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce in his Seattle studio
- 1904 invited by Theodore Roosevelt to photograph his children at Sagamore Hill
- 1905 first New York exhibit at the Waldorf Astoria
- 1906 convinces J.P. Morgan to fund his project, \$15,000 per year for five years
- 1907 first volume *North American Indian* published
- 1914 produces film, *In the Land of the Headhunters*
- 1916 Clara files for divorce
- 1920 Moves to Los Angeles
- 1930 final volume of *North American Indian* published
- 1952 dies in Los Angeles
- 1972 copper plates and prints discovered in a Boston bookshop