



The Baron in the Grand Canyon: Friedrich Wilhelm von Egloffstein in the West

Steven Rowan

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In *The Baron in the Grand Canyon*, Steven Rowan presents the first comprehensive look at the life of Baron Friedrich Wilhelm von Egloffstein, mapmaker, artist, explorer, and inventor. Utilizing new German and American sources, Rowan clarifies many mysteries about the life of this major artist and cartographer of the American West.

This revealing account concentrates on Egloffstein's activity in the American mountain West from 1853 to 1858. The early chapters cover his roots as a member of an imperial baronial family in Franconia, his service in the Prussian army, his arrival in the United States in 1846, and his links to his scandalous gothic-novelist cousin, Baron Ludwig von Reizenstein.

Egloffstein's work as a cartographer in St. Louis in the 1840s led to his participation in John C. Frémont's final expedition to the West in 1853 and 1854. He left Frémont for Salt Lake City where he joined the Gunnison Expedition under the leadership of Edward Beckwith. During this time, Egloffstein produced his most outstanding panoramas and views of the expedition, which were published in *Pacific Railroad Reports*. Egloffstein also served along with Heinrich Balduin Möllhusen as one of the artists and as the chief cartographer of Joseph Christmas Ives's expedition up the Colorado River. The two large maps produced by Egloffstein for the expedition report are regarded as classics of American art and cartography in the nineteenth century.

While with the Ives expedition, Egloffstein performed his revolutionary experiments in printing photographic images. He developed a procedure for working from photographs of plaster models of terrain, and that led him to invent "heliography," a method of creating printing plates directly from photographs. He later went on to launch a company to exploit his photographic printing process, which closed after only a few years of operation.

Among the many images in this engaging narrative are photographs of the Egloffstein castle and of Egloffstein in 1865 and in his later years. Also include are illustrations that were published in the *PRR*, such as "View Showing the Formation of the Cañon of Grand River[today called the Gunnison River] / near the Mouth of Lake Fork with Indications of the Formidable Side Cañons" and Beckwith Map 1: "From the Valley of Green River to the Great Salt Lake."

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