

An illuminating portrait of the American spirit that will surprise, touch and utterly absorb you

The Oxford Project

Photographs by Peter Feldstein

Text by Stephen G. Bloom

Preface by Gerald Stern

(September 2008; \$50.00; ISBN 978-1-59962-048-0)

“What a marvelous way to get at “who we are” as a people. This powerful, confessional book draws its strength from the truth that so-called ordinary people, not those with bold-faced names, are actually the heroes of our American drama.”

—Ken Burns



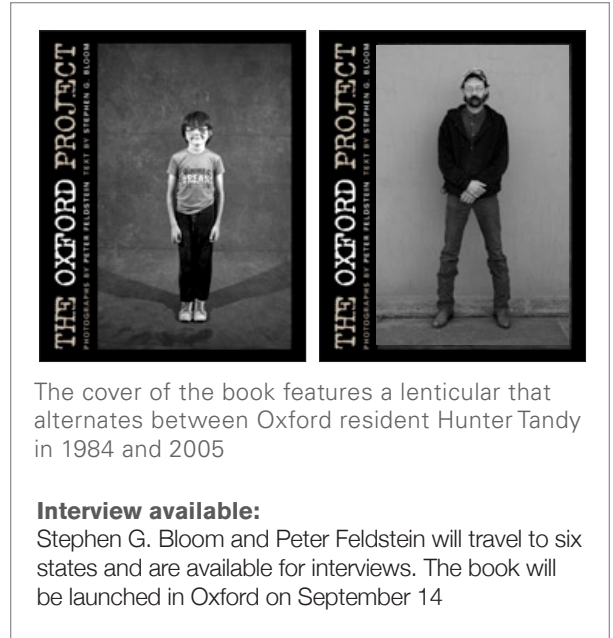
In 1984, Peter Feldstein set out to photograph every resident of his town, Oxford, Iowa (pop. 676). Twenty years later, he did it again. But this time those same residents did more than pose. With extraordinary honesty, they shared their memories, fantasies, failures, secrets and fears with writer Stephen G. Bloom. The result is a riveting collection of personal stories and portraits that tell much more than the tale of one small Midwestern town. Because beneath Oxford's everyday surface, lives a complex and wondrous community that embodies the American spirit.

In the narrative tradition of Studs Terkel's *Working* and the photographic spirit of Mike Disfarmer's *Heber Springs* series, *The Oxford Project* is equal parts art, American history, cultural anthropology, and human narrative — at once personal and universal, surprising and predictable, simple and profound.

The Oxford Project is a national portrait of overlooked triumphs and travails. In the faces and voices of these strangers, we grow to understand ourselves better. They remind us of who we dreamed we would become, and who we turned out to be.

—From the Introduction
by Stephen G. Bloom

In a place like Oxford, where newcomers are recognized by the sound of an unfamiliar engine hum, not only does everyone know everyone else, but also everyone else's brothers, sisters, parents, lovers, dreams, downfalls, and favorite pot luck recipes. This intricate web of human connections among neighbors, friends, and family is the mainstay of small-town American life, an ethos that is unforgettably captured here in Feldstein's candid black-and-white, time-lapse portraits and Bloom's astonishing confessional vignettes.



The cover of the book features a lenticular that alternates between Oxford resident Hunter Tandy in 1984 and 2005

Interview available:

Stephen G. Bloom and Peter Feldstein will travel to six states and are available for interviews. The book will be launched in Oxford on September 14





Beautifully designed and illustrated with more than 300 black-and-white duotone images and 12 gatefolds.

Peter Feldstein is an artist working at the intersection of photography, drawing, printmaking, and digital imaging. Feldstein's work has been shown in galleries across the country, at the Des Moines Art Center and has been included in group exhibitions at the Center for Creative Photography, Walker Art Center, and the Rhode Island School of Design. He has received an NEA Individual Artist's Grant and two Polaroid Collection Grants. For more than three decades, Feldstein taught photography and digital imaging at the University of Iowa School of Art & Art History.

Stephen G. Bloom is the author of *Postville: A Clash of Cultures in Heartland America* (2000). He also is the author of a collection of nonfiction stories, *Inside the Writer's Mind* (2002). *Tears of Mermaids: A Secret History* (St. Martin's Press) will be published in September 2009. Since 1993, Bloom has taught at the University of Iowa, where he specializes in narrative writing.

Gerald Stern is an award-winning poet and essayist. He is the recipient of numerous awards including the National Book Award, the Lamont Prize, a Guggenheim, four NEA awards and the Ruth Lilly Prize.

The Oxford Project is an extraordinary undertaking and a fascinating book. These magnificent and poignant photos and oral histories make for a can't-put-it-down read, and prove that the stories we find all around us are the most interesting and important of all. You'll be awed by the poetry in the words, dreams and faces of Oxford Iowa.

—Dave Isay, Founder of StoryCorps



These photographs and stories are American documentary work at its finest.

— Dale Maharidge, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *And Their Children After Them: The Legacy of Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*

To stumble upon a small town like Oxford is one thing—to be able to consider its whole population face by face, at your own leisure, is something else entirely.

— From the Preface by Gerald Stern

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