

Author Spotlight

The Irish General

by Paul R. Wylie

I have been telling lies for years! Little, less than half-true one-liners. For example, I can say truthfully, and I might add, with great aplomb things like “The last time I competed in the Rose Bowl I ran for 180 yards” (It was really just a 10K race that started outside and finished inside the Rose Bowl stadium); or “I played with a symphony orchestra in Vienna” (When it came time for audience participation in a tourist orchestra performance they handed me the tiny symbols to do a “ching ching” in *The Blue Danube*); or “I averaged twenty-six yards a carry my junior year in high school” (I did run for twenty-six yards for my eight-man small school football team on our first play, when I was knocked out cold by a hard tackle, and the concussion ended my season.). Just this last year I added another one—“I have performed on Broadway”! Let me tell you a little about that one.

In 1998, I was a sixty-two-year-old intellectual property lawyer with a thriving national practice, but starting to think about other things to do in life. On a family trip to Belfast, Northern Ireland, I had attended a Bob Dylan/Van Morrison concert on the outskirts of town. As we were walking back to our hotel through one of the troubled neighborhoods, we turned a corner and were confronted with a scene of armored cars with flashing

lights, and flak-jacketed constabulary who had large sub-machine guns trained on some young men who were pressed flat against a brick wall. We immediately headed up a dark street to get away and made our way back to the hotel. The whole event might have been normal enough for Belfast in those days, even a few weeks after the Good Friday Peace Accord, but to me, it was scary and impressed upon me the serious drama of the centuries-old struggles in that country. I had to find out more.

In the following months, I started to read Irish history; and was surprised that a familiar name appeared frequently. It was Thomas Francis Meagher, a 19th Century Irish revolutionary, well thought of by his countrymen for his part in starting a failed revolution against British rule. It caught my attention because I had been raised in Meagher County in Montana, named for the Irishman eighteen years after his Irish rebellion.

After Meagher escaped a death sentence in Ireland and exile in Tasmania, he had a brilliant, a somewhat checkered, career in New York as an orator, newspaperman, and lawyer, and as a Latin America explorer, before serving in the Civil War as the Brigadier General of the famous Irish Brigade he had recruited. Following the war, he served in the new Montana Territory as secretary and he was acting governor, when Meagher County was named.

As I read, my interest in Meagher became intense, and I found myself in the next months spending more and more of my time in research, and soon found that Meagher had a suspicious death in Montana in 1867, drowning in the Missouri River after falling off a steamboat docked at Fort Benton. He might have been pushed. That was still the question. The hunt was now on in earnest.

As a lawyer, I had always had shelves full of law books, but I soon found that space was being taken over by other books—lots of other books! There were books on Irish history, Tasmania, New York history, 19th Century politi-

cal figures, Catholicism, the Civil War, and Montana history to name just a few of the categories. Quickly following the heels of the book collecting was an invasion of my file room, as the drawers started filling up with copies of old letters, documents, court records, and maps. The real fun had started. I was experiencing the joys of discovery. I now wanted to write a book, and I wanted the book to be the definitive work on Meagher.

What a fertile field of inquiry I had discovered. For example, there was the mystery surrounding Meagher’s death in 1867. Many people in Montana thought he was murdered. On one trip to the Huntington Library in California, I thought I had found the answer when I discovered an old letter written by an aide to Meagher, claiming he knew who had killed him. It was a breakthrough in the case, until it became clear that the author of the letter was someone entirely unknown, and maybe even fictitious. These were the maddening questions that spurred on the search.

On another occasion, searching in the musty basement of the Virginia City, Montana courthouse, I stumbled on Meagher’s entire probate file, previously unknown to historians. It revealed much of Meagher’s personal life. Another find, was an obscure hand drawn map, showing the position of Meagher’s Irish Brigade at Fredericksburg, just a short distance in front of the stone wall at Marye’s Heights. And then there were the writings that spoke of an early attraction between Meagher and “*Spesranza*,” the poetess of the Irish revolution, who later became Lady Jane Wilde and equally famous as the mother of Oscar Wilde.

As I gathered information, I entered it into a rough manuscript, which grew to monster proportions. I also made many new friends; among them Pierce Mullen, a retired history professor, who suggested that it was now time to look for a publisher. Pierce put me in touch with Ursula Smith who put me in touch with Chuck Rankin of the University of Oklahoma Press, and within twenty-four

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hours I had an expression of interest from Chuck that provided the impetus to push onward. It has to stand somewhere on the list of shortest book marketing efforts in history! There was much work to be done yet, but I had been given a clear opportunity to have the book published by the ideal publisher. I set to work rewriting, and hired my own editor to go over the pages I had written.

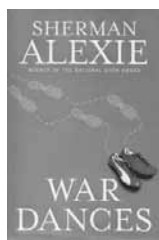
In the spring of 2006, a completed manuscript of manageable size was turned over to the Oklahoma Press and it was quickly sent out for review. At this point, I had confidence in the work I had done, and was not surprised at the enthusiastic approvals, nor discouraged by the helpful suggestions for additions that I eagerly included and resubmitted. I felt the book was finally on its way, and the approvals by faculty and editorial committees soon came.

In time illustrations were decided upon, and the book went to a copy editor, and then page proofs were sent for approval and, and indexing was completed. Then, after what seemed to be an interminable wait—actually it was only three months—the cover art arrived for my approval and I was delighted to see that the press had obtained the right to use a famous Civil War painting by Mort Kunstler showing Meagher at Fredericksburg. They had another pleasant surprise awaiting me. When the full dust jacket proof showed up, it bore the approval of two distinguished historians, one of them James M. McPherson, professor emeritus at Princeton University, and Pulitzer Prize winner for *Battle Cry of Freedom*.

The greatest feeling of satisfaction came when three boxes of “my” book arrived in the summer of 2007 just before I was to go to my first book festival in my old hometown of White Sulphur Springs in Meagher County. There have been more auspicious venues since, including Fredericksburg, Virginia, at their Civil War reenactment, and a reading and signing at the Broadway and 82nd Barnes & Noble in New York City on St. Patrick’s Day, 2008.

Book Reviews are written by Win Blevins, C. K. Crigger, Shannon Fagan, Bill Markley, Matthew P. Mayo, Rod Miller, Candy Moulton, Robert Nott, Robert Pohle, Tom Rea, Larry D. Sweazy, Dale L. Walker, Sandy Whiting, and Linda Wommack.

SHERMAN ALEXIE. *War Dances.* Grove Press. Hardcover, 256 pps., \$23. ISBN 978-0802-11919-3.



No one does razzle-dazzle like Sherman Alexie. His latest book, *War Dances*, is virtually indescribable. To call it a collection of short stories is pathetically inadequate. The book is studded with poems, many of them gorgeous, full of clever rhymes (!), one a sonnet (who does that anymore?), the last one both gorgeous and emotional. Alexie, a member of the Spokane Tribe, has a lot of Coyote, or trickster, in him. Yet he knows how to speak of the human condition.

Alexie has fun with blurring the distinction between narrator and author, in that way raising the question of whether these stories are fiction, or what fiction really is. Of all his tricks, my favorite is Q&A interviews between the characters, or between himself and the characters. When his father dies, the narrator (?) does an exit interview with the character, as though an employee were leaving a

job. It’s both funny and touching.

Alexie has other ways of dashing back and forth over the borders of what fiction supposedly is and is not. He is very much a wizard (in all senses), but unlike the Wizard of Oz, he makes us pay attention to the man behind the green curtain.

If you start wanting him to stop fooling around, read the last story in the book, “Salt,” about a writer of obituaries who tries to help an elderly woman honor her dead husband. It is traditional, and as good as stories get.

Bravo, Alexie.

—Win Blevins

STEPHEN BLY. *Creede of Old Montana.* Center Point Large Print. Hardcover, 518 pps., \$29.95. ISBN 978-1-60285-575-5.



“You’re crazy!”

“For saying a prayer over a dead moose?”

“For having a funeral for a medium rare steak.”

I dare you not to laugh when reading

those lines and many others!

Avery John Creede is used to being in command, both of his life and of those around him. He didn’t count on the All Mighty altering that life, especially not by throwing Miss Sunny Cutler in his path, sometimes friend, sometimes foe, but most definitely all woman. Except for an occasional over abundance of dialogue, *Creede of Old Montana* is funny, entertaining, a classic Western at its best. The large type printing makes it easy on the eyes to boot.

—Sandy Whiting

FRANK BONHAM (Edited by BILL PRONZINI). *Trouble at Temescal: A Western Duo.* Five Star. Hardcover, 210 pps., \$25.95. ISBN 978-1-59414-840-8.

Spur winner Pronzini contributes a pithy, flavorful foreword to this welcome Duo made up of a short story and a novelette by Bonham—who has,

of course, alas! passed into the realm of the “Collectible”—which this volume will certainly be for Bonham savors.

The title story first appeared in *Argosy* in 1951, and evokes the era after the Mexican-American War in the Los Angeles *pueblo*, with language, scenic description, and characterization that all strike their marks with Bonham’s sure hand. It’s hard to pick out favorite phrases: “With currycombs and dandy brushes, they burnished the golden horses.” “He rode with the soft night air pushing back his hat brim, washing his face with the clean sharp smells of the fields.”

The second and longer tale, “King of the Defiances,” appears here for the first time in this form: it’s the restored version of Bonham’s 1956 paperback set in Arizona among cattle ranchers who are attempting to defy the would-be title character and his nefarious schemes, and it’s also laced with the evocative language of this demi-master: “He knew he could not keep Serena in coal oil for the lamps she’d leave burning; what he would save on homemade harness, she’d waste in the kitchen.”

GLENN BOYER. *Where the Heart Was*. Legendary Publishing. Hardcover, 538 pps., \$34.95. ISBN 978-1-887747-40-0.



Despite the author’s pretentious dedication to Abraham Lincoln and claim that “A voice came in the night and said, ‘write the biography of the Republic,’” this is an ambitious novel worth a read.

A lusty group of fathers and sons, brothers and uncles, friends and neighbors populate this multi-generational tale. It covers, roughly, the period from the Civil War to World War II, centering on the Great Depression in the upper Midwest. Subplots reach the Alaska gold fields, the Little Big Horn, and elsewhere. Adding color as they inhabit the book are old soldiers, imaginary companions, hobos, ghosts,

and talking animals.

But it is the women who drive the story. An ancient Lakota great-grandmother, a domineering half-blood mother, school girls, movie stars, a waif of an adopted sister, and a succession of whores steer the central character on his path to manhood.

Bennie Todd’s discouraged “Pa” struggles to keep the family fed and sheltered through a succession of lost jobs in dead-end towns, all the while dreaming of returning to a farm “up north.” Wayward “Uncle Newt” arrives to set things right, to the delight of some and chagrin of others. Funded by Alaskan gold—a fortune he keeps secret but freely dispenses—Uncle Newt shames Pa into reclaiming his manhood, establishes the family on a farm, and leads the younger generation on a road trip to rediscover their heritage. Along the way, Uncle Newt helps Bennie become either a man or a reprobate, depending on a character’s point of view.

This hefty tome is hard to characterize. In its parts it’s frontier tale, love story, coming-of-age adventure, war story, political screed, vision quest, fantasy tale, and then some. On the whole, it’s a pretty good read—if not quite the “Great American Novel” its publicity material claims.

—Rod Miller

SANDRA DALLAS. *Whiter Than Snow*. St. Martin’s Press. Hardcover, 304 pps., \$24.99. ISBN 978-0-312-60015-0.



From the opening page we know a gigantic avalanche has swept away and buried nine children on their way home from school. Miraculously, four survive. Which four we don’t learn until the story is winding down, even though the reader can’t help wishing that in the end, all the innocents will. But this is a tale of survival, love, and of redemption, so we know wishing won’t make it so. In

Whiter Than Snow, author Sandra Dallas follows the lives and circumstances that bring the children’s families to Swandyke, Colorado, and puts them in the path of an avalanche.

Set in 1920, we learn of a Civil War soldier’s struggle with courage and cowardice. We learn tolerance and understanding as a Jewish girl falls from grace. Fear will touch the reader as a black man runs for his life, seeking equality and justice in the West. These, plus the trials of three more families are bound to keep you turning the pages.

As has become her norm, Dallas has written another important story with engaging, unforgettable characters drawn from America’s melting pot. Highly recommended.

—C. K. Crigger

JERRY S. DRAKE. *Aftermath*. Avalon. Hardcover, 256 pps., \$23.95. ISBN 978-0-8034-9990-4.

Gut shot by his once-upon-a-time best friend, thirty-one year old Mitch Ellsworth is left for dead in post Civil War Missouri. With seemingly the world against him, Mitch has the audacity to survive. His hat set to clear his name and bring his former friend to justice, Mitch takes to the road, relying on the kindness of strangers and one trustworthy new friend.

Against insurmountable odds, our hero will, none-the-less, prevail in this classic Western. But just how will he do it without becoming dead himself and without bringing more shame upon his parents’ heads?

The story trails along at a goodly pace until right at the end. The author gives a few reasons why the two men are no longer best buddies, but in this reader’s opinion, not enough to justify blatant murder or the reasons for self sacrifice. An additional chapter or two to delve into their long ago friendship would have gone a long way to make the ending a bit more plausible. However, *Aftermath* is nicely plotted overall and makes for a good day’s reading.

—SW

W. MICHAEL FARMER. *Conspiracy: The Trial of Oliver Lee and James Gililand.* Treble Heart Books. Trade Paperback, 500 pps., \$16. ISBN 978-1-932695-98-4.



Written in present tense, which took this reader a bit of getting used to, *Conspiracy* is peopled with a huge cast of characters, most of whom are real. The story is told, however,

by a fictional protagonist, Quentin Peach. I recommend reading as though you'd never heard of any of the characters (I hadn't) and sort it out later if you like.

Two men, Lee and Gililand, have been accused of murdering an important Republican legislator and his eight-year-old son. It so happens that the bodies have never been found and all evidence is circumstantial. Quentin Peach is a newspaperman sent to New Mexico by his San Francisco newspaper to write special reports from what has been termed the "Trial of the Century" as the two men are brought to trial. While in New Mexico, Peach meets a stagecoach driving cockney madam, powerful politicians, wealthy businessmen, his future wife, and is enthralled by a territory divided by the murders.

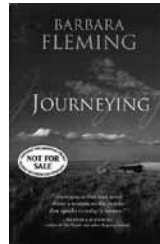
There is a lot of minutiae from the trial presented here and lots of description. Also, drawn from the times, are amusing anecdotes such as the one about women of the "Old West" and their love of their Singer sewing machines. Helpful to the reader is a Cast of Characters at the front of the book, plus maps, an afterword, and a listing for additional reading.

—CKC

BARBARA FLEMING. *Journeying.* Five Star Press. Hardcover, 260 pps., \$25.95. ISBN 978-1-59414-790-6.

Barbara Fleming weaves a wonderful tale of love and hardship on the prairie of Northern Colorado in the 1870s.

The book opens with pages from Hannah Morris Bowman's journal of her westward journey. It begins in 1872 when Hannah runs away from her Cincinnati home to escape an arranged marriage. She arrives by train at St. Louis, where she is reunited with her real love, Lucas Bowman. Bowman is a bi-racial son of a former slave, who is never-the-less highly educated in France, where he became a doctor. In order to have a life together, they decide to join a wagon train headed to California and leave racial bias behind.



Along the journey, tragedy strikes the wagon train folks when a child is snake bit. Lucas, who is acting as Hannah's servant, saves the boy's life only to be ridiculed by the boy's father that a black man had touched his son. Forced to leave the wagon train at night during a driving rain, they continue alone on their journey to their eventual homestead on the northern Colorado prairie.

Fleming is excellent in her descriptions of early frontier life in Colorado and draws much of this from her research of Fort Collins history. As she says in her introduction, "This novel honors the legions of women who settled the American West...how marvelous they were!"

—Linda Wommack

W. R. GARWOOD. *Roy Bean's Gold.* Five Star/Gale. Hardcover, 250 pps., \$25.95. ISBN 978-1-59414-839-2.

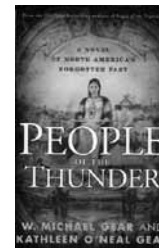
Roy Bean's Gold begins with the soon-to-be-famous judge's early years, where the reader discovers a young man no better than he ought to be. The opening pages describe all the *gringos* being run out of Chihuahua, Mexico, due to Roy's womanizing ways. From there he takes up with a mysterious stranger, Jeff Kirker, who claims to know where a stolen army payroll (in gold, of course) is buried. Unfortunately, Kirker is killed by

Indians before he can tell Roy the exact location. Upon safely reaching California, where his older brother is in business, Roy becomes involved in the chase for Joaquin Murieta and his gang, and then encounters an unscrupulous, but beautiful, young actress or two, and a shifty saloon owner/theatrical promoter who is out to take down the entire Bean family. But the climax comes down to finding the gold.

One of the most engaging scenes in the story, while preposterous, concerns "aigs" and cats. I totally believe this happened, even though most of the story sounds made up. That's the trouble with using a historical character in a fictional story; the reader doesn't know what's real and what isn't. But factual or not, the story keeps the reader turning the pages, with young Roy an appealing character.

—CKC

W. MICHAEL GEAR and KATHLEEN O'NEAL GEAR. *People of the Thunder.* Forge. Hardcover, 384 pps., \$25.95. ISBN 0-7653-1439-8.



I hope you read *People of the Weeping Eye* before you take up *People of the Thunder*, as the two make up a story that grew too big for one book. The cast of characters is

extensive and reading the books in order will help establish the people, the places, and the complicated situation of this huge, huge account of ancient peoples. On a personal level, this is a love story about a young couple, Morning Dew and Green Snake (who is also known as Trader), separated many years ago by lies and murder. On another, it is a political novel, illustrating how easily a people whose most enjoyable pastime is fighting can be manipulated into war.

Smoke Shield, the cunning Sky Hand leader, is a master at exploitation and intimidation, and he doesn't care who gets killed. His overwhelming desire is to gather power into his

hands. But you'll also read about the need to resolve old wrongs, as when Old White (also known as the Seeker), finally reveals that he is the high minko of the Sky Hand, and therefore destined to become high minko of his people. Add as catalyst, a mysterious woman, Two Petals, a Contrary who sees and says everything backwards, but who knows the future.

This big, sprawling book shows the reader a sophisticated civilization living in North America long before Columbus hit shore. We see large cities of many thousands of souls, and societies every bit as convoluted as our own. The spirit world plays a huge part in these people's lives. What is wonderful is that every bit could be true. The Gears, with their archaeological backgrounds, have based the premise on artifacts found in the area. Clothing, food, tools—all are part of an accurate portrayal of ancient North American people. Fascinating stuff with a rip-roaring good story.

—CKC

JOHN HARTE. *Ride for Justice.* iUniverse. Trade Paperback, 259 pps., \$17.95. ISBN 978-0-595-45897-4.



Tom Calvert has brought his family from Virginia to Texas in order to avoid the prejudice against his wife and son's Indian heritage. Their ranch is doing well until the beginning of the Civil War. Tom feels duty bound to fight for the Confederate side because of his friendship with Will Hastings rather than to any adherence to "the cause." The two men blithely traipse off to war, leaving Mary and thirteen-year-old Jack to run the ranch. Their only help is a youngster, Jamie Blanchard, who also can't wait until he's old enough to fight and be a hero. Nothing good can come of all this, especially after repeated run-ins with Dirk Evens, a man who sows death and destruction wherever he goes. Murder is his favorite pastime,

and the Calverts are a favored target.

There's a lot included in this book, which certainly doesn't lack for action. At times the motivation behind the plot seems forced, but it still makes for a dramatic story and includes some appealing characters.

JERE D. JAMES. *Saving Tom Black.* Moonlight Mesa Associates, Inc. Trade Paperback, 186 pps., \$15.95. ISBN 978-0-9774593-5-3.



Early spring of 1888 finds seventeen-year-old Elizabeth DuBonnet aboard an orphan train bound for the West. Not to be adopted, mind you, but to be married off to the first taker. Because she is a lovely young thing, no one expects the process to take long. The orphanage personnel fail to take Betsy's wishes into account, however, and after "borrowing" \$44 from the female chaperone's purse, she slips away.

Taking on a male persona, Elizabeth hitches a ride in a boxcar bound for Arizona. She's soon befriended by a black man, Thomas Jefferson, who risks death by helping this young white woman, never letting on he knows she's female. In fact, everyone who meets the pretty little blonde sees right through her disguise, including the handsome, newly appointed territorial marshal of Arizona, Jake Silver. Romance soon blooms between these two, although the path is never smooth. Betsy, you see, has a job to do, that of finding her mother and sister who have disappeared in Arizona Territory, and she will put everything aside, even love, to fulfill her quest.

Here's a sweet romance suitable for young adults on up, which includes a full cast of characters to enjoy. Moments of pathos help keep the story from becoming too sugary.

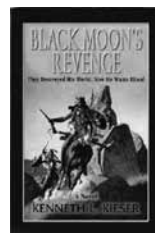
J. A. JOHNSTONE. *The Loner.* Pinnacle. Paperback, 313 pps., \$5.99. ISBN 978-0-7860-2151-2.

Boston businessman Conrad Browning has relocated to Colorado with his wife, Rebel. All is blissful for the couple until Rebel is kidnapped. The ransom attempt goes wrong and Browning vows to exterminate every one of the outlaws. Sorely wounded himself while attempting to carry out his vow, Conrad is rescued by Phillip Bearpaw who becomes his friend and mentor. Meanwhile, it seems there's one thing the kidnapers don't know about Conrad Browning. His father is none other than the famous gunman, Frank Morgan, and when the son puts together what he knows about gunfighting and seeks revenge, there's no stopping him.

This is a fast-paced, action-packed representative of the Western genre, with personable, non-stereotypical characters. I enjoyed this aspect of the story very much. One assumes a sequel is in the works, because the main question in this book's plot line is left unresolved. We never found out who was behind the kidnapping or the motivation for what happened. Sorry, but I call that cheating the reader.

—CKC

KENNETH L. KIESER. *Black Moon's Revenge.* La Frontera Publishing. Trade Paperback, 228 pps., map, \$19.95. ISBN 978-0-9785634-5-5.



The artfully sketched title character, a vengeance-seeking Lakota warrior, is first suspected to be still alive on page six of this new novel by WWA member Kieser, and the Indian with his "peculiar grin" makes a formidable nemesis for Dakota Territory rancher Birch Rose for the entire length of this well-crafted page-turner—a sequel to the author's *Ride the Trail of Death* (also from La Frontera).

Black Moon's trial in the white man's courthouse (about midway through the book) gives Moon the opportunity for some eloquent speeches and the author

the chance for some barbed satire.

There are too many legitimate surprises in the plot for me to want to risk giving readers any “spoilers,” but let me just say that Kieser draws upon his own familial pioneer heritage as well as a lot of plain old research to keep his story thoroughly believable even as it startles.

The four paragraphs where Moon takes a time-out from his escape to tend a wounded coyote, and the succeeding eight paragraphs where he seeks revenge for the coyote—although they don’t advance the book’s plot one whit—just might be the best writing in the whole work.

—Robert Pohle

JACK KINCADE. *Fighting for Air: the Unknown Adventures of Young Doc Holliday.* Kincade Publishing. Trade paperback, 545 pps., \$25. ISBN 978-1-61539-629-0.



Based on the title, this reviewer was somewhat startled to find the young Doc bidding farewell to his native South and heading West as early as page 148 in this rather hefty

545 page tome... indeed, for someone like the good Doctor who only lived into his middle thirties, some of us might consider that a tale that takes him well into his celebrated friendship with Wyatt Earp to have passed the “Unknown” period by a smidgeon.

WWA member Kincade does his darndest to keep the going lively: the bullfrog that confronts the barefoot nine-year-old Holliday on the first page is a *great* amphibian, and one of Doc’s less fortunate dental patients on page 188 screams “Aaaaahhhhh!!!!!!” That’s just a dental patient; you can imagine how the gunshot victims feel.

The post-*Deadwood* foul language rings false to those of us who were raised on John Myers’ Doc, I guess, but Kincade certainly gets an “A” for effort, as does Susan Leonard Kincade for her cover art.

—RP

RICHARD MARMAN. *Escape from Fort McCain.* Abela Publishing Ltd. Trade paperback, 234 pps., \$7.25. ISBN 978-0-9560584-3-0.

Set in the hauntingly beautiful American Southwest, Richard Marman’s amazing chase impels Lt. Otis Grey across the oft inhospitable land in pursuit of Jubal Quinn and Billy Songbird—one a buffalo soldier fresh from the Civil War, the other a mixed blood Kiowa.

Driven by a keen sense of duty, Grey stays steady, much to the chagrin of the other two men who’ve joined him on his quest. (For a supposed desolate land, the chased and the chasers keep running into new folks so much that you’d think they were in Central Park!)

Often within Grey’s grasp, Quinn and Songbird manage to stay free—that is until shanghaied in San Francisco. Against these new odds, can Grey nab his prey? Can he do so without losing the girl who has stolen his heart?

Written in United Kingdom English made reading this work a tad interesting. Some of the out-of-place locations and time facts (baton twirlers in a parade? Hydrogen balloon hoisting people over the Grand Canyon?) jarred this reader’s brain. But throw in cattle, a stampede, bandits, cacti, a few fires, horses and rivers, and you have a decent read and a fun romp across the Southwest.

—SW

LAURAN PAINE. *Gunman’s Moon.* Five Star. Hardcover, 262 pps., \$25.95. ISBN 978-1-59414-805-7.

Lauran Paine has written over 1,000 books under his own name and various pseudonyms, most notably (and recently) providing source material for the Western movie, *Open Range*, starring Kevin Costner and Robert Duvall.

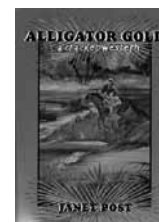
Gunman’s Moon offers two short novels packaged as one. The first, *Odd Partnership*, registers a scant 111 pages. *Odd Partnership* features the gunfighter Lewis Morgan, and at the beginning of the story, the reader finds him stranded

in a snowstorm with a horse that is struggling to continue on. When Lewis encounters a small farm with a cabin and a barn, he takes refuge in the barn. There he surprises two hired killers, set to kill U.S. Marshal Andrew Tully, who has also sought refuge from the snowstorm in the barn. Lewis scares off the killers, and tells Tully of their plans, then decides to ride into town with the marshal after the weather breaks—but the break is temporary, and Lewis and Tully quickly find themselves in the gunsights of the hired killers. This one is a bit of a mystery, and everything is not as it seems. The plot is tight and fast moving, if not all that original.

The second novel is the title story, *Gunman’s Moon*. After Ralph Bolley is killed by a shotgun blast at Rocking W Ranch, Deputy Sheriff Bob Lefton arrests Katherine Willard for murder, even though he believes she is innocent of the murder. The story is part police procedure and courtroom drama. Paine maintains the tension and suspense throughout the novel, even though the killer and motive are in plain sight.

—Larry D. Sweazy

JANET POST. *Alligator Gold: A Cracker Western.* Pineapple Press, Inc. Trade paperback, 320 pps., \$9.95. ISBN 978-1-56164-447-6.

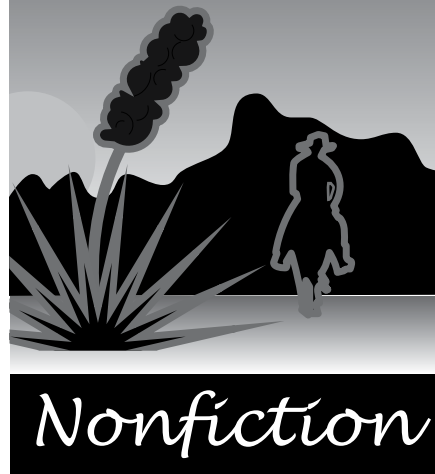


Now, let’s be straight-up at the start: despite the subtitle, the only times you’re going to encounter what most WWA members would consider to be your

actual *West* in this excellent novel are going to be places like on page 277 when “the sun was just about behind the trees on the western horizon.”

But don’t let that put you off: this is a sure-’nuff tale of the *frontier*, with cowboys, cattle thieves, Indians, guns, whips and all the other trappings of the traditional sagas that purists crave... told beautifully and freshly into the bargain—the events just happen to be mostly set in Central and Northeast Florida, which was rich with

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such ingredients in the time just after the Civil War.

Post is a newcomer novelist but a longtime agricultural reporter and Florida cattle rancher, and her craftsmanship and knowledge shine on every page. Non-Floridians who don't know much about "marsh tackies" or other Cracker horses will make their acquaintance with pleasure, in a landscape that's deftly shaded with Spanish Bayonets and palmettos, over sand that's sometimes called on to soak up blood.

The author has done her homework thoroughly, as seen by the throw-away mention of the historic cow-hunting family the Mizells ("Bone" Mizell was known to Frederic Remington). Along with all this Pineapple Press series, this novel is warmly recommended.

—RP

JAMES THOMAS and D. SETH HORTON, EDITORS. *Best of the West 2009*. University of Texas Press. Trade Paperback, 280 pps., \$19.95. ISBN 978-0-292-72122-7.



The full title of this anthology is *Best of the West 2009: New Stories from the Wide Side of the Missouri*, which is a bit of a mouthful.

Equally tasty is this collection from authors such as Annie Proulx, Joyce Carol Oates, Louise Erdrich, Lee K. Abbott, Mitch Wieland, Daniel Chacon, and many more. With subjects covering a wide territory, you'll find drug dealers growing crops on National Forest land, a lonely, probably mentally ill woman suffering through the loss of a child, a quest for water in a dry land, and even Hemingway's state of mind as he prepares his shotgun.

Drawing from many eras of Western history, including the present, the stories strive to show people, events, and the landscape that have shaped the West into what it is today. This is the book for you if you want to stretch your perception of what makes people tick.

—CKC

JOHN A. ADAMS, JR. *Conflict and Commerce on the Rio Grande: Laredo, 1755-1955*. Texas A&M University Press. Hardcover, 286 pps., \$29.95. ISBN 978-1-60344-042-4.

Laredo, on the north bank of the Rio Grande in south Texas, founded by Spanish explorers in 1755, has been an important ranch and trade center since its establishment. The second oldest continually established city in Texas, it remains a vital and booming port of commerce with a population of nearly a quarter million. (Its sister city across the river, Nuevo Laredo, to which Laredo is historically attached commercially, has about 350,000 citizens.)

Conflict and Commerce on the Rio Grande is loaded with charts, graphs, data, and massive research sources, and, while appealing to a specialized audience, is expertly organized and written.

John A. Adams, Jr. is the ideal scholar to chronicle the first two centuries of the business history, ranching, urban and industrial growth, and global trade of Laredo. He holds a Ph.D. in history from Texas A&M University and for ten years served as executive director and CEO of the Laredo Development Foundation.

CHARLES BRASHEAR. *Saving Sand: Stories of a Prairie Culture During the Great Depression*. Self-Published. Trade Paperback, 247 pps.,

\$15.95. ISBN 978-0-933362-24-6.



In this memoir, Charles Brashear entralls the reader with an examination of how his rural family coped with the Great Depression. Beginning with four-year-old

Charles' memories, we learn what little boys did for fun in the context of what they've been taught. In this case, little Charles farmed and raised livestock, copying his father in every way—including the language upon occasion, and not quite understanding why he gets in trouble and his father does not. We are shown how families stick together, even to taking in each other's kids in time of trouble. And we see how the lack of money affected every facet of life, including medical care for the poor, when little Charles almost lost his mother to "female troubles." Perhaps her problems are why she comes across as rather harsh and unfeeling. In this look at a dying culture, we are shown a work ethic almost unknown in these easier times.

I urge the reader to pay attention to the meaning behind the book's title, *Saving Sand*. That in itself is a revelation. This seems to me a good book for middle-school youngsters to learn something of the Great Depression. I don't kid myself that most of them, if not all, will be unconcerned with the swearing. And I can't help but think they'll get a kick out of young Charles playing "doctor."

—CKC

JEFFREY BURTON. *The Deadliest Outlaws: The Ketchum Gang and the Wild Bunch*. University of North Texas Press. Hardcover, 504 pps., \$34.95. ISBN 978-1-57441-270-3.

Jeffrey Burton, vice president of the English Westerners Society and a scholar of the American West in its outlaw heyday, has accomplished something special in this massive treatment of the Ketchum gang of New Mexico. Burton has made any future

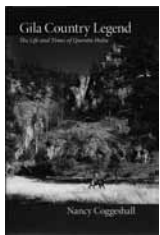
book on this subject unnecessary. Fully 110 pages of this 504-page tome are devoted to Notes—in agate type—in support of the well-written and definitive text. Nobody knows more about Thomas Edward Ketchum and his “gang” (consisting of himself, his brother Sam, and Texans Will Carver and Dave Atkins) than Jeffrey Burton and anybody writing about them in the future will need to say thanks to Jeffrey Burton.

(An example of the author’s tenacious research is his detailed biographies of each member of the gang and of Butch Cassidy’s Wild Bunch, with whom the Ketchums often rode. Dave Atkins, a shadowy figure in the gang, is unshadowed by Burton: Atkins left the West at the turn of the century, fought in Kaffir Wars in South Africa, killed a man in Belize, British Honduras, was judged insane in 1932, and died in Wichita Falls, Texas, in 1964 at age ninety.)

In addition to documenting all of the Ketchum Gang’s train robberies, killings and other felonies, Burton clarifies the confusing business of the nickname “Black Jack”—which belonged to another man and was appropriated by Tom Ketchum—and gives the awful details of the botched hanging of Tom Ketchum in Clayton, New Mexico, in April, 1901, in which Ketchum was decapitated.

— DLW

NANCY COGGESHALL. *Gila County Legend: The Life and Times of Quentin Hulse.* University of New Mexico Press. Hardcover, 280 pps., \$29.95. ISBN 978-0-8263-4824-1.



Quentin Hulse (1926 - 2002) was such a model of a 20th century New Mexico rancher-hunter that his likeness appeared on tourist postcards and souvenir license plates in the

1950s. He lived most of his life in the mine and ranch remoteness of southwestern New Mexico. In WWII he

served in the navy, took part in the bloody Okinawa landing, and returned home with a Bronze Star. Other than that interlude, he rarely drifted far from his piece of land at Canyon Creek, just off the northern edge of the Gila Wilderness.

Nancy Coggeshall has written a memorable, compassionate, and colorful biography of this pioneer who made a hard-scrabble living raising livestock and hunting dogs, and as an outfitter, mule packer, and hunting guide for city-dwelling nimrods and fishermen. He was also a storyteller of note, known for his wry sense of humor. (Asked about a man he considered a fool, Hulse said, “You can’t kill people like that. Even if you drop an anvil on them.” On another occasion he said of a newly arrived ranch family, “They were run out of Texas for stealing skunk hides.”)

The author, who lives in Reserve, New Mexico, in the Gila National Forest area, drew on oral history, archival sources, and her personal association with the Gila Country Legend to tell his story.

—DLW

GLENN DEDMONDT. *The Flags of Civil War Arkansas.* Pelican Publishing Company. Paperback, 160 pps., 61 color illustrations, 3 black and white illustrations, 20 color photos, 8 black and white photos, and 2 color maps, \$22. ISBN 978-158980-190-5.

The Flags of Civil War Arkansas covers Confederate national flags, Confederate company and regimental flags, cavalry flags, artillery flags, and naval flags. The author presents a Confederate point of view throughout the book. The colorful photos and drawings of the various flags are very good as well as the descriptions of the flags’ origins, use during the War Between the States, and their final demise or current location. As in his previous book, *The Flags of Civil War Missouri*, the author conducted extensive research tracking down the location of these Confederate flags and provides extensive

footnotes and index.

The National Park Service lists the state of Arkansas contributing ten Union infantry regiments, cavalry, and artillery units that served during the Civil War. These units carried flags; but they are missing in action from *Flags of Civil War Arkansas*.

—Bill Markley

CRAIG DENTON. *Bear River Last Chance to Change Course.* Utah State University Press. Paperback, 235, pps., \$24.95. ISBN 978-0874216509.



Craig Denton does an astonishing job on depicting the Bear River, beginning in the Uinta Mountains snaking north through Wyoming, and settling in Idaho at a bird refuge. The Bear River supplies many people, wildlife and forests. It provides for power plants, crops, and wildlife habitats. The Bear River’s age is debatable it is stated the Bear River has two ages; the upper half of its channel is middle aged and lower half is just a newborn in geologic time, they can estimate the age either by the erosion of the land or the sediments that the river carries in which the time eras are greatly different.

The author describes the vivid life and personalities the river portrays “it is exuberant and raucous” when the river is in mountain regions. “At other times it barely moves, pausing to reflect on its journey from land to sky and back.”

Denton gives the Bear River so much incredible energy, he makes you want to travel the watercourse from beginning to end just to experience its “life” in your own hands. Denton puts it in perfect words of the Bear River, “Gravity my engine, water my soul. I am the teller of life and deep time. ... Let me flow in your imagination that I may speak.”

—Shannon Fagan

MARK LEE GARDNER. *To Hell On a Fast Horse: Billy the Kid, Pat Garrett, and The Epic Chase to Justice In The Old West.* William Morrow. Hardcover, 315 pps., \$26.99. ISBN 978-0-06-136827.



If, as author Mark Lee Gardner argues in this competent retelling of the Billy the Kid/Pat Garrett saga, Garrett was indeed the right man doing the right job at the right time

when he shot down the Kid, then it's also clear that, for Garrett, so many other times just turned out wrong. The most interesting aspect of this dual biography is the way it paints Garrett as a heroic figure without romanticizing him as a mythical lawman.

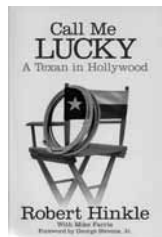
Gardner opens his book with an exciting scene, one that would make for good cinema, in which Garrett faces down a lynch mob intent on hanging the Kid (and other prisoners) in Las Vegas, New Mexico, in December, 1880. From then until the Kid's death in July of 1881, the two men's lives were bound together in what Gardner calls "the greatest show on earth." If so, it was one replete with animals, sideshow freaks, and clowns, all disguised as politicians, lawmen, and outlaws. Gardner's research is sound, his reporting is concise, and his analysis a little different from other Kid/Garrett historians, but he's at his best when he just sticks to telling the story without embellishing it with guesswork or cute remarks. Those interested in the topic will want to add this one to their shelves, but for those who want the definitive tome on the subject, Michael Wallis' *Billy the Kid: The Endless Ride* (2007) remains the best contemporary account.

—Robert Nott

HINKLE, ROBERT. *Call Me Lucky: A Texan in Hollywood.* University of Oklahoma Press. Hardcover, 272 pps., \$24.95. ISBN 978-0-8061-4093-3.

Not the autobiography of a favorite

dog or a fortunate gambler, *Call Me Lucky* is the memoir of a man grateful to have attained his dream of working in Tinseltown—and with some of



its most impressive characters. We're talking Elizabeth Taylor, Rock Hudson, James Dean, Paul Newman, John Wayne, Joel McCrea, Clint Eastwood, James Arness, Clark Gable, Marilyn Monroe, Robert Mitchum...and many more.

The book is a loosely stitched collection of memories detailing Hinkle's long and unlikely association with Hollywood. His humility and aw-shucks demeanor almost convince the reader that any success he found there was fortuitous and unexpected. But Hinkle worked hard for every bit—part role and grander subsequent triumph. He parlayed his Hollywood contacts into a career as a promoter and manager of such notables as Evel Knievel, Chill Wills, and Marty Robbins.

In lesser hands, this book might come across as an excuse to drop names, and while it does plenty of that, the reader never feels tempted to roll eyes and shut the book. As an added bonus, how about those exclusive black-and-white, behind-the-scenes photos documenting star-studded moments in an interesting life? Lucky, indeed.

—Matthew P. Mayo

ALLAN C. KIMBALL. *Who is Mother Neff and Why is She a State Park?* Eakin Press. Softcover, 265 pps., \$19.95. ISBN 193464583-4.



Subtitled "The story behind the names of the state parks of Texas," Kimball's book is equal parts travel guide and history lesson, as useful as it is compelling. While it may be of interest primarily to people who like their history Texas style (and that's a whole passel of people) or those who

plan on visiting a Texas state park (another big ol' group), *Who is Mother Neff and Why is She a State Park?* offers something for every reader.

The writing is clean and concise, and the book kicks off with an informative introduction, followed with seven distinct sections representing geographic regions of the mammoth Lone Star State.

The guidebook aspect is thorough enough that users will feel well-served by the level of detail included. And black-and-white photographs of parkland vistas and portraits of pivotal park founders are peppered liberally throughout.

A sample: Did you know that Kickapoo Cavern State Park is home to the largest natural column in the state—at eight stories tall? Yep. Still curious about Mother Neff and her cohorts? Then do I have a book for you...

—MPM

DENNIS M. LARSEN. *Slick as a Mitten: Ezra Meeker's Klondike Enterprise.* University of Washington Press. Paperback, 128 pps., \$24.95. ISBN 978-0-87422-302-6.



Ohioan Ezra Meeker (1830-1928) was an Oregon Trail pioneer who settled in the Puget Sound area and was founder of the city of Puyallup, Washing-

ton. He grew wealthy as a grower of hops for the brewing of beer and later, after suffering a disastrous downturn in his business ventures—an insect scourge in his crops that wiped him out "slick as a mitten"—became an innovator in dehydrating fruits and vegetables.

A true pioneer, Meeker was sixty-eight when he followed the gold stampee to the Yukon Territory in 1898 to recoup his lost fortunes. In four journeys into the Klondike, with his wife supervising the production of the goods in Puyallup, Meeker arranged the transport by wagons, pack animals, boats, and dog teams of 100 tons of

dried and fresh vegetables and canned goods to be sold in the mining camps and his “Log Cabin Grocery” store in Dawson City.

Dennis Larsen has artfully reconstructed Meeker’s great enterprise and arranged the many letters the entrepreneur wrote his beloved wife Eliza Jane from the goldfields, providing a valuable and fresh glimpse, from a merchant’s point of view, of the last great American gold rush.

—DLW

ADAIR MARGO and LEANNE HEDRICK, Eds., End Notes by Nancy M. Hamilton. *José Cisneros: Immigrant Artist.* Texas Western Press (University of Texas at El Paso). Hardcover, 108 pps., \$45. ISBN 0-87404-286-0.

This is a splendid hardcover tribute to El Paso artist José Cisneros, who died in November at age ninety-nine. The editors have gathered here a fine collection of Cisneros works, photos, and memorabilia and have written a warm and appreciative introductory narrative to introduce the inimitable voice of the immigrant artist himself. Cisneros’s story, told by himself, is a Texas border version of a Horatio Alger up-from-the bootstraps tale—only all of it true.

The world-renowned artist, known for his meticulous pen-and-ink images of horses and horsemen of the borderlands, was born in the village of Villa Ocampo, Durango, Mexico during the Mexican Revolution. He left his home country when revolutionaries looted his town and home, confiscating his family’s property. He was fifteen when the family moved to El Paso.

He married and raised five daughters working various jobs (including many years employed by the City of El Paso painting streetcars and buses) and at night teaching himself to draw, and earning his citizenship. His works have appeared in hundreds of books, newspapers, and magazines; the walls of his home bear a tiny portion of the awards and citations he has received.

These include the National Humanities Medal, Mexico’s Ohtli award, for lifetime achievement by a Mexican immigrant living in the United States, and framed citations from Pope Paul VI, Pope John Paul II, King Juan Carlos of Spain, and the two Presidents Bush.

John O. West, Cisneros’s biographer, once wrote that the life of this “gentle giant” “makes Horatio Alger look like an underachiever.”

Long associated with the master book designer Carl Hertzog, and with such authors as J. Frank Dobie, C. L. Sonnichsen, J. Evetts Haley, and Carlos Castañeda, Cisneros was himself author of such illustrated books as *Riders of the Border*, *Faces of the Borderlands*, and *Riders Across the Centuries*.

José Cisneros: Immigrant Artist is an admirable undertaking, both by the editors and by Texas Western Press, in appreciation of this great artist.

—DLW

MARK A. PAULDA, photographs by. *Celebrating El Paso.* Texas Christian University Press. Hardcover, 120 pps., \$29.95. ISBN 978-0-87565-402-7.



This excellent collection of color photographs is the second El Paso book published by TCU Press in 2009 and is a fine companion volume to *Literary El Paso*, edited by Marcia H. Daudistel and published in October.

Mark Paulda, a native El Pasoan, has captured the immense scenic variety of the far western Texas metropolis: desert, mountain, pastel skies at dusk, cobalt blue at noon, the skyline, architecture old and new (UTEP’s unique

Bhutanese building designs especially noteworthy), Fort Bliss, the Tigua Indian reservation, the Rio Grande and Juárez just across the water from El Paso, and time-lapse images of Mesa Street and I-10 traffic. There are virtually no humans present. This is a book about the physical city and its wonders and one hopes Paulda—or some equally capable photographer—will compile a second celebration that features the beauty and cultural mix of El Paso’s people.

RICHARD F. SELCER. *Fort Worth Characters.* University of North Texas Press. Hardcover, 288 pps., \$34.95. ISBN 978-1-57441-274-1.



Richard Selcer is Fort Worth’s Boswell.

Among his books are *Hells’ Half Acre: The Life and Legend of a Red-Light District* (1991), *The Fort that Became a City: An*

Illustrated Reconstruction of Fort Worth, 1849-1853 (1995), and *Fort Worth: A Texas Original!* (2004). In his new book the reader is introduced to a group of Fort Worth characters, some notorious, all fascinating. Among these notables, their stories colorfully written by this accomplished historian, are:

Maj. Ripley A. Arnold, the hot-headed, thin-skinned “founder” of Fort Worth who, in 1852, four years after the fort opened on the twin forks of the Trinity River, was gunned down by his own post surgeon;

Timothy Isaiah Courtright, known as “Long Hair Jim,” a drummer boy in the Civil War, town marshal, deputy sheriff, expert at poker and keno, who in 1887 got cross-ways with gambler Luke Short and was shot to death just outside the White Elephant Saloon;

Maggie Tewmey, a music teacher who was foully murdered in 1893, her body stuffed down in an outhouse, and whose killer was relentlessly pursued by Fort Worth police chief Jim Maddox;

Al Hayne, a hero by any definition, who at the Texas Spring Palace fire of 1890 was a selfless rescuer who died hideously of burns covering 90% of his body; and

Quanah Parker, who became the elder statesman of his Comanche people and one of the most dynamic of all Indian leaders in turn-of-the-century America.

—DLW

DUANE A. SMITH. *The Trail of Gold and Silver.* University Press of Colorado. Hardcover, 320 pps., \$22.95. ISBN 978-0-87081-957-5.



In *The Trail of Gold and Silver*, Colorado's preeminent historian, author Duane A. Smith takes the reader through 150 years of Colorado mining

history. The history of mining in Colorado is not only extremely detailed in Smith's 50th book on Colorado history, it goes beyond to explain the mining industry and the economic result to not only Colorado, but also the nation and even the world. From the 1858-1859 gold discoveries at Cherry Creek and up the mountain at Russell Gulch, Colorado's gold rush, *Pikes Peak or Bust*, was in high gear. Gold not only brought prosperity, it became an economic industry that helped in no small part to bring towns, the railroads, and eventually statehood. The advances in mining from panning to hard rock mining, the smelting process, and new technology of refining through cyanidation are covered in concise detail.

Smith documents the early discoveries of silver at Georgetown and the eventual bonanza that became the legend of Leadville. The lore of Tabor, Guggenheim, and Brown are included, as examples of the further prosperity of Colorado's mining. As the economy ebbed and flowed, so did mining. The 1891 gold discovery at Cripple Creek was the last, and greatest, discovery

that the Pikes Peak miners thirty years earlier could only dream of. With Bob Womack's discovery, millionaires by the ore lode were made with Cripple Creek gold, so much so that the economic depression of 1893 was largely diverted.

Throughout the mining towns of Colorado, labor wars broke out. Smith covers the strikes from Telluride to Cripple Creek, Victor, and Ludlow with amazing clarity.

Never before has such a concise history of Colorado mining come together in one volume, a first rate, solid history of mining in Colorado.

—Linda Wommack

JEFF SMITH. *Alias Soapy Smith: The Life and Death of A Scoundrel.* Klondike Research. Hardcover, 628 pps., \$26. ISBN 978-0-9819743-0-9.

Soapy Smith had a colorful history in the Old West. Throughout his criminal dealings in Denver, and Leadville, to the under-world element in the silver camp of Creede, Colorado, to the great Klondike gold rush, and Skagway, Alaska, where he met with death, Smith's exploits have only managed a chapter at most in the annals of history. Until now. Jeff Smith is the great-grandson of the con-man of the West: Jefferson Randolph Smith II. Better known as Soapy Smith.

Smith's biography is the culmination of years of research and verification of family documents, court records, and personal letters. The details of Smith's life from his Georgia beginnings to his murder in Skagway are laid out in neat chronological order. The reader gains an insight into the life of Smith, his dealings in the under-world, his con games, who he was and why he was. Backed by extensive documentation, enhanced with photos and personal letters, many never before published, this book is a must for anyone interested in the history of the Old West, games of chance, and the life and times of Soapy Smith.

—LW

KEITH THOMSON. *The Legacy of the Mastodon: The Golden Age of Fossils in America.* Yale University Press. Hardcover, 386 pps., \$35. ISBN 978-0-300-11704-2. Also available in paper at \$23.

After Lewis and Clark returned from the Pacific, Jefferson sent Clark west again—to Big Bone Lick, Kentucky, where people had been finding strange, huge fossils for more than sixty years. Clark returned with 300 mastodon, bison, musk ox, and deer bones, Keith Thomson reports near the start of this sweeping survey of fossil collecting in 19th century America. Jefferson spread them all out on the floor of the East Room at the White House, examined them closely, called in some expert help, and eventually turned a third over to the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia, sent a third to Paris, and kept the rest for himself.

Close attention to the personalities and methods of vertebrate paleontology, that most rugged yet understandable of sciences, against a background of American territorial expansion runs throughout Thomson's book. Perhaps because of his own background—he taught for many years at Yale and ended up at Oxford—he places everything in a context of discoveries on both sides of the Atlantic.

Unavoidably, the last three-fifths of the book is taken over by the conflict between Edward Drinker Cope of Philadelphia and O. C. Marsh of Yale, the two men whose decades-long feud brought about the description of thousands of previously unknown species of extinct vertebrates, divided American science, and destroyed both men. Great conflict makes for a great story. Thomson refuses to simplify it into mere bickering, however, and shows the toll the fight took on prominent colleagues as well, among them Joseph Leidy, the Philadelphia anatomist sometimes called "the last man who knew everything," and Ferdinand Hayden, who lost the bureaucratic battle for control of the government surveys after the Civil War.

This book is a must read for anyone who cares about fossils, the Gilded Age, or how politics and ambition play out in the natural sciences—good lessons for any era. Unfortunately it lacks a bibliography, and Yale seems to lack an editor who could have saved Thomson from a hatful of geographical errors. He has the Arkansas River emptying into the Missouri, for example, and swaps the locations of Granger and Green River on a map of southwest Wyoming.

—Tom Rea

JULIE WHITESEL WESTON. *The Good Times are All Gone: Life, Death, and Rebirth in an Idaho Mining Town.* University of Oklahoma Press. Paperback, 248 pps., 20 black and white illustrations, \$19.95. ISBN 978-0-8061-4075-9.



We were on a mission. My wife, Liz, and I raced cross-country to visit our son in Ellensburg, Washington, stopping in Kellogg, Idaho, for a brief pit stop and then

back on the road again. Imagine my surprise, when Candy Moulton sent for my review, *The Good Times are All Gone*, Julie Weston's memoir of growing up in Kellogg.

Weston begins with the early exploration of the area and the discovery of silver ore in 1885, by Noah Kellogg's mule kicking over a silver ore deposit. This was the start of the famous Bun-

ker Hill Mine, and soon the beginning of the town of Kellogg, where miners lived, worked, and played. Weston describes the history of Kellogg and the mines that supported it through the words of the folks who lived there. She tells what it was like to enter and work in the mine having had the opportunity to visit and descend into it during its final days of activity. Weston describes the hardrock underground mining processes and its dangers of injury and death associated with blasting, rock falls, and fire. She details the hospital and medical profession in town; her father was one of the local doctors. She tells about her childhood friends, teachers, shopkeepers, and the people in those business that gave Kellogg its wild town reputation—bars, gambling halls, and houses of ill repute.

Weston covers the environmental and public health damages caused by the mining and smelting of silver and other metals—especially lead. Bunker Hill and the other mines slowly died out due to falling metals prices, and new occupational safety and environmental laws. She discusses the tens of millions of dollars spent to remove and cap lead contaminated soils and riparian restoration, and the efforts of Kellogg residents to find new means to keep the town alive with the end of mining. After reading *The Good Times Are All Gone Now*, the next time I'm near Kellogg, I plan to stop and look around.

—Bill Markley

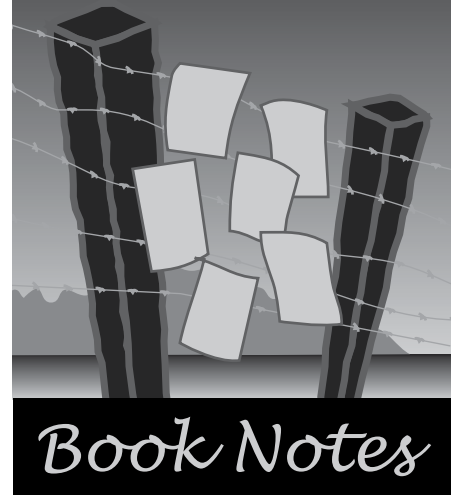
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Nonfiction

W. DAVID BAIRD and DANNY GOBLE. *Oklahoma: A History.* University of Oklahoma Press. Hardcover, 352 pps., \$24.95. ISBN 978-0-8061-3910-4.

This book ranges from the geologic formation of Oklahoma's land to the recovery and renewal following the Oklahoma City bombing. The authors explore a wide variety of Oklahoma happenings including the 1889 Land Run, Glenn Pool oil strike, and a forty-year winning streak for the Byng Lady Pirates. This is a good single-source history to the state.

JOHN KUHN. *Texas Eccentrics.* Atriat Press. Paperback, 272 pps., \$19.95. ISBN 978-1-933177-12-0.

According to the author the "Texan who can't name a crazy member of the family probably is the crazy member of the family." And in this debut book, you will definitely meet some Texas eccentrics. There are sports figures, politicians, businesspeople and artists and other oddballs. This is a zany look at some of Texas's, well... strange residents.

GIL BOLLINGER and the JIM GATCHELL MEMORIAL MUSEUM. *Images of America Buffalo.* Arcadia. Hardcover, 127 pps., \$21.99.

ISBN 978-0-7385-6909-3.

Photographs depicting the history of Buffalo, Wyoming, which began in 1878 as an army town adjacent to Fort McKinney.

JUDY JULIAN and the FOSSIL COUNTRY MUSEUM. *Images of America Kemmerer.* Arcadia. Trade paperback, 127 pps., \$21.99. ISBN 978-0-7385-6900-0.

Photographs selected depict the history of Kemmerer established in 1897.

SUZANNE BARTA JULIN. *A Marvelous Hundred Square Miles.* University of New Mexico Press. Hardcover, 221 pps., \$25.95. ISBN 978-0-9798940-6-0.

Black Hills Tourism from 1880-1941 covers the early development of political, local, and national influences that helped create tourism in western South Dakota.

Fiction

MAX BRAND. *Iron Dust.* Hardcover, 282 pps., \$25.95. ISBN 978-1-59414-836-1.

Fleeing into the wilderness after a quarrel with local belligerent Buck Heath, Andrew Lanning turns outlaw being chased down by Deputy Sheriff Bill Dozier and a posse.

ANDREW J. FENADY. *Tom Horn and the Apache Kid.* Leisure Books. Mass Market Paperback, 232 pps., \$6.99. ISBN 978-0-8439-6223-9.

This book is a reprint from 1984.

ED GORMAN. *Guild.* Leisure Books. Mass Market Paperback, 193 pps., \$5.99. ISBN 978-0-8439-6230-7.

Guild, a bounty hunter tormented by his past, is unwelcome in the dusty Dakota town of Denton in this Spur Award winning book.

ZANE GREY. *Desert Heritage.*

Hardcover, 282 pps., \$25.95. ISBN 978-1-59414-835-4.

The published version in 1910 differed from what Grey wrote, but this edition now restores the story to the way Grey intended.

WILL HENRY. *A Bullet for Billy the Kid.* Leisure Books. Mass Market Paperback, 292 pps., \$6.99. ISBN 978-0-8439-6340-3.

Five-time winner of the Spur Award, Henry tells the tale of a legendary gunman and the stranger who changed his life in "A Bullet for Billy the Kid." Also included are two other novellas: "Santa Fe Passage" and "The Fourth Horseman."

RAY HOGAN. *Land of Strangers.* Hardcover, 180 pps., \$25.95. ISBN 978-1-59414-832-3.

Part of a Western duo along with "Ben Sutton's Law." In "Land of Strangers" Frank Brokaw searches for a bank robber who killed his mother and father but who turns out to be a successful rancher.

ROBERT J. HORTON. *Ryder of the Hills.* Leisure Books. Mass Market Paperback, 275 pps., \$6.99. ISBN 978-0-8439-6310-6.

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The three stories in this book, "Granger's, Get Your Guns," "It's Hell to be a Hero!" and "The Durango Stage" all appeared in the pulp magazines in the 1940s.

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