

COVID-19 leads to chapbook of poems in university's pandemic collection

By Lynn Bueling

Poet karla k. morton recognized the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on her life when she wrote these lines: "Six months into quarantine / I tell my children, these will be the stories / they tell / when they are old ..."



karla k. morton

The one-time Texas state poet laureate kept writing until she produced a chapbook, *Where to Go Among the Chaos*, which is filled with pandemic-influenced poems.

Tejasovido, an online literary journal, invited Texas writers to respond to effects of the pandemic, and morton sent in a few and saw two of them published. The experience motivated her to continue thinking about the topic while centering

her thoughts on human relationships in quarantine.

"Some relationships made it," she said. "But many did not." The chapbook emerged from her personal journey through this trying time.

Another excerpt from one of her poems states, "History will write it into the timeline / the year life turned hermit, and pulled the drapes." The nature of a chapbook is brevity, but in these 16 poems, morton packs a wealth of feelings. I return to them to find meaning in my own quarantined environment.

Asked how she gets away from the chaos, morton said, "My escape is the mountains, specifically the enchanted circle of northeast New Mexico, tucked into the mesas of Raton." While staying there, she worked on the recently published *The National Parks: A Century of Grace*, which

she co-authored with fellow Texan Alan Birkelbach.

The pandemic-inspired chapbook also became part of The Chancellor Carine M. Feyten Voices of the Coronavirus Pandemic Collection, a project Texas Woman's University Libraries and the Jane Nelson Institute for Women's Leadership are sponsoring to record experiences of this unprecedented health crisis and its impact.

All forms of human expression are accepted, including essays, photographs, audio and video recordings, songs, poems and personal narratives. Materials will be archived and made available to the public.

Project director Phyllis Bridges invites WWA members to contribute to this collection. The goal is to include as many voices as possible. For information on *Where to Go Among the Chaos*, visit kkmorton.com.



JUVENILE

DARBY KARCHUT

The Red Casket: Del Toro Moon #2

Owl Hollow Press
Paperback, 206 pages, \$12.99
OwlHollowPress.com

In this sequel to the award-winning *Del Toro Moon*, 12-year-old Matt Del Toro and his family are still working hard to keep their corner of Colorado safe from the creepy monsters known as skinners. Just when they think they're getting *that* battle under control, enter a Viking-size, motorcycle-riding sorceress who demands the return of a mysterious casket long guarded by the Del Toros. Good thing the family can depend on help from their giant warhorses Turk, El Cid, Izzie and Rigo, along with some wicked defense weapons at their disposal. Action abounds in this fantasy, and young readers will get a kick out of the fact that the horses not only talk, but they also squabble much like siblings.

— Rocky Gibbons

CHRIS MULLEN

Rowdy: Wild and Mean, Sharp and Keen

MKT Publishing
Paperback, 290 pages, \$10.99

This is a fun story for all ages. Reminiscent of Huck Finn, Rowdy faces challenges along the Mississippi River. Encountering murderous pirates, he finds himself alone in the world. Luckily, along with villainous folks, there are kind mentors. But first there's drama with a cutthroat rancher in Dodge City, Kansas, and then New Mexico – all over a horse. Now this Southern tale becomes a Western. Amid blood, bullets and tears, Rowdy never forgets his upbringing of fighting for what is right. A teacher of 20-plus years, Chris Mullen has done a fine job spinning this coming-of-age yarn. Filled with adventure, descriptive prose and moral life lessons, Rowdy is a character we want to follow.

— Denise F. McAllister

NONFICTION

MARSHA ARZBERGER

One Hundred Sixty Acres of Dirt: A History of the Pioneers of Kansas Settlement, Arizona Territory, 1909 and Stories, including the Schoolmarm's Pearl-Handled Pistol

Morgan James Publishing
Paperback, 240 pages, \$20.19
Morgan-James-Publishing.com

When imagination falls short, memoirs are reliable resources for inspiration and new information. Marsha Arzberger has provided us with an enjoyable collection of stories and profiles of the people and families of Kansas Settlement, Arizona. In 1909, 15 families left fertile, and expensive, land in eastern Kansas and traveled by train to southern Arizona to homestead 160-acre plots in the semidesert grassland of Sulphur Springs Valley, south of Wilcox. It was a hard life – too hard for some. Those who remained managed to adapt and thrive. Collected here are

tales of how those pioneers and their descendants managed to keep Kansas Settlement from drying up and blowing away. The author writes with affection and verve. The book has numerous photographs of the people whose stories she has included. In the genre of local history, this book stands out in production values as well as content.

– Tom Carpenter

TED BEHNCKE and GARY BLOOMFIELD

Custer: From the Civil War's Boy General to the Battle of the Little Bighorn

Casemate Publishers
Hardcover, 243 pages, \$34.95
CasematePublishers.com

Is another George A. Custer biography necessary? The answer is yes, even though hundreds have already been published. The co-authors present a nonscholarly minutia-less understanding of the four most important periods in Custer's life – West Point, the Civil War, the Indian Wars and Battle of the Little Big Horn. Ted Behncke and Gary Bloomfield remain faithful to the facts and enable the reader to better grasp the man as he was and the one he envisioned. Custer's personalities, beliefs and actions, or lack thereof, weave through each chapter, amid a lively and readable writing style that interlaces quotes and sources within the text. The conclusions may be as debatable as Custer's consequential decisions, but Custer buffs will appreciate the clarity and understanding brought to the complicated life of the "boy general."

– Stan "Tex" Banash

TED FRANKLIN BELUE

Finding Daniel Boone: His Last Days in Missouri & the Strange Fate of His Remains

The History Press
Paperback, 219 pages, \$23.99
HistoryPress.com

In 1799, when Kentucky became too crowded for Daniel Boone, he and his family moved to Missouri, where they settled on an 850-acre land grant, gifted to him by the Spanish government. When Boone's beloved wife, Rebecca, died in 1813, she was buried in a small graveyard near the family farm. Daniel died seven years later and was laid to rest beside Rebecca. However, in 1844, after Daniel had become a national icon, officials back in Ken-

tucky decided that the Boones should be removed to Frankfort for a proper burial. Amid much fanfare and publicity, and witnessed by 20,000 spectators, the couple was reinterred on Kentucky soil on September 13, 1845. But, were they? Many authorities think not. Ted Franklin Belue, a retired history professor at Murray State University, has followed the Boone trail for a decade, attempting to discover the real whereabouts of Daniel's remains. His study is a cutting-edge, enlightening and highly entertaining description and analysis of the frontiersman's years in Missouri. But it also reveals Belue's own complex – sometimes humorous, sometimes macabre – trials and tribulations while he was performing his research.

– James A. Crutchfield

JEFF BROOME

Indian Raids and Massacres: Essays on the Central Plains Indian War

Caxton Press
Hardcover, paperback, \$34.95, \$24.95,
506 pages
CaxtonPress.com

Jeff Broome chronicles the bloodshed in Kansas, Colorado and Nebraska from the 1860s to the 1870s in a collection of previously published articles, most of them for the Denver-based Westerners periodical. Most of the topics are well-known, but the attachment of "massacre" to some accounts might offend some readers. Broome is a tireless researcher, and while most of the accounts detail attacks involving Native Americans, the most interesting chapter corrects the myths surrounding Wild Bill Hickok's gunfight with 7th Cavalry soldiers in Hays City, Kansas, in 1871. A handy volume for Western historians and novelists.

– Johnny D. Boggs

IRIS JAMAHL DUNKLE

Charmian Kittredge London: Trailblazer, Author, Adventurer

University of Oklahoma Press
Paperback, 312 pages, \$26.95
OUPress.com

After Charmian Kittredge London's attempts to protect and bury documents that would enable unscrupulous biographers to sensationalize American author Jack London's life, Iris Jamahl Dunkle's meticulous biography of London's wife honestly presents the achievements and warts of both

husband and wife. Utilizing Charmian's personal documents, Dunkle pieces the puzzles of their lives, much like sorting the notes, papers and unfinished manuscripts littering Jack London's own desk at his untimely death. In doing so, Dunkle reveals a woman hungry to achieve literary success, though generally thwarted by a self-destructive husband who depended on her not only as his "first mate" but primary editor of his writings. Charmian was so essential to Jack London that he even used some of her literary descriptions, word for word, in his manuscripts. Yet Charmian, within a turbulent marriage, was able to trailblaze an adventurous life path that many Progressive-era women would have feared and avoided. All the while, Charmian's unselfish life quest to preserve her famous husband in a light she felt he deserved is revealed in Dunkle's work.

– Jane Little Botkin

ALICIA ELLIOTT

A Mind Spread Out on the Ground

Melville House Publishing
Paperback, 242 pages, \$17.99
MHPBooks.com

Alicia Elliott draws deeply from personal and generational memory in this collection of insightful essays, the title of which translates from a Mohawk phrase meaning depression. Elliott herself is a Tuscarora-Mohawk member living in Canada whose insightful work stems from that perspective. The book's wide-ranging subject matter speaks of sexual assault, racism, dark matter (yes, dark matter), rejection, plus many other topics. Of particular note is her speaking of the American Indian story that has too often been told through the white writer's frame of reference. Elliott is firmly in command of the English language and writes beautiful, well-constructed arguments to support her thoughts.

– Lynn Bueling

GLEN SAMPLE ELY

Murder in Montague: Frontier Justice and Retribution in Texas

University of Oklahoma Press
Paperback, 166 pages, \$21.95
OUPress.com

This fascinating, but brief, Texas tragedy fits firmly in the historical true-crime genre. Glen Sample Ely provides

WESTERN MUSIC



W.C. JAMESON *A Simple Life*

Alpha Wolf Records
\$4 as download in MP3, FLAC and more
WCJameson.com

For Christmas, my brother gave me a framed photograph of our father and me standing in front of an old barn in tiny Sibley, Mississippi,

back in 1991 or '92. The barn had been my grandfather's, my mother's dad. He raised cattle in Sibley, but he died 17 years before my dad and I took a drive back in time and



stopped at that barn. I was thinking of that day as I listened to W.C. Jameson recite "Grandpa's Old Barn," one of three poems on this CD. Jameson nails the way memories rushed from that barn and enveloped me.

*And I remember when the old man died
How I felt, and how I cried.*

Jameson, a former WWA president, has an easy-on-the ears, laid-back style well suited to the 11 singing tracks, including personal favorites "Trains #2," about a wandering man upset because "all the railroads put locks on the boxcar doors," and "When Roy Rogers was Around," another selection that takes me back.

*Life was a whole lot better when Roy Rogers was around
Roy never gave up, he never gave in.*



THE COWBOY WAY *Doin' What We Do*

Cowboy Way Music
\$15
CowboyWayMusic.com

New Mexico's Jim Jones, Doug Figgs and Mariam Funke won the

International Western Music Association's Group of the Year award three years running, so you expect the best out of them.

This 14-track CD, their third, does not disappoint. The group's overriding theme – the dignity, grit and satisfaction of cowboy work – is beautifully displayed in "A Cowboy 'Til I Die" by Figgs and Funke and "Don't say Goodbye to the Cowboy Way" by Jones and Randy Huston. But my favorites are Figgs's "That Night in September," about a cowboy's dance with "a lady so proper and fine" and "Western State of Grace" by Jones and Deanna McCall.

*It's a rugged, dusty beauty that makes this magic place
It's a blessing, this Western state of grace.*

E-mail Ollie at olreed.com@gmail.com and send CDs to him at P.O. Box 2381, Corrales, NM 87048.

the reader with enough post-Civil War frontier context of constant and expected violence, all the while building a powerful case for the miscarriage of justice that followed the brutal murders of the England family in 1876. As well as the expected investigation and criminal proceedings, this book takes an unadulterated view of early Texas justice as the state moved (begrudgingly) from vigilantism to a law-and-order state. A plus for researchers is a well-constructed index and backmatter section. Highly recommended for true-crime readers and those interested in forgotten Texas history.

– Larry D. Sweazy

JUSTIN GAGE

We Do Not Want the Gates Closed between Us: Native Networks and the Spread of the Ghost Dance

University of Oklahoma Press
Hardcover, 360 pages, \$45
OUPress.com

Native American peoples have always been resilient and flexible, often against long odds. Justin Gage's remarkable work on the Ghost Dance phenomenon examines how Native Americans across the West used the tools of Euro-American "civilization" to create continental communication networks that facilitated the spread of religious ideas in the late 19th Century. The U.S. government envisioned reservations as spaces of containment and education as an instrument of assimilation. However, Native peoples used railroads, newspapers and letter writing in ways that surprised Indian agents and military officials. These tools helped Utes, Lakotas, Southern Cheyennes and others to maintain simultaneously traditional lifeways and show themselves to be, in many ways, thoroughly "modern." In Gage's analysis, the Ghost Dance years were hardly the "last days" of any Native nation. This is essential reading for anyone interested in American Indian and federal policy history.

– David C. Beyreis

JEROME A. GREENE (compiler and editor)

All Guns Fired at One Time: Native Voices of Wounded Knee, 1890

South Dakota Historical Society Press
Hardcover, 287 pages, \$34.95
SDHSPress.com

Anyone familiar with Jerome Greene's work knows he is a consummate and meticulous researcher and first-rate writer – his 2014 book *American Carnage: Wounded Knee, 1890* won a Spur Award for Best Historical Nonfiction. But with this latest effort, Greene allows others to narrate the story of the Wounded Knee massacre for him. *All Guns Fired at One Time: Native Voices of Wounded Knee, 1890* relates the tragedy of that frigid December day through the eyes of survivors and non-Native witnesses to both the carnage and its aftermath. A number of interviews were conducted at a local chapel, where many of the wounded were taken after the fight. Other interviews took place in the days, weeks and years after the encounter. Greene's stated purpose in compiling this volume was to offer a non-military perspective to the engagement at Wounded Knee, and in that he has done a splendid job. *All Guns Fired at One Time* personalizes the events leading up to the tragedy, the fight itself and its consequences for the survivors. It is a collection that will haunt the reader long after the

last page is turned.

– Michael Zimmer

HENRYK HOFFMANN

The Careers of Burt Lancaster and Kirk Douglas as Referenced in Literature: A Study in Film Perception

Vernon Press

Hardcover, 256 pages, \$57

VernonPress.com

Poland-born film historian Henryk Hoffman, who came to the United States in 1992, continues his examination of references to Hollywood stars and films in literature. Previous volumes handled Humphrey Bogart, Gary Cooper, Clark Gable and Spencer Tracy (*Four Hollywood Legends in World Literature*) and Westerns (*Western Movie References in American Literature*). This time Hoffman looks at Burt Lancaster (“I remember trying to imitate Burt Lancaster’s smile after I saw him and Gary Cooper in *Vera Cruz*.” – *Motel Chronicles* by Sam Shepard, 1982) and Kirk Douglas (“How was I supposed to know you wouldn’t like *The Last Train from Gun Hill ...?*” – *A Bookie’s Odds* by Ursula Renée, 2015). Biographies and filmographies of Lancaster and Douglas are numerous, but Hoffman writes that “a database of quotations, comments and reflections with a perspective and a filter provided by one of the possibly most respected and acclaimed groups of intellectuals, writers, is definitely a fresh and significant contribution”

– Johnny D. Boggs

VALERIE SHERER MATHES

Charles C. Painter: The Life of an Indian Reform Advocate

University of Oklahoma Press

Hardcover, 304 pages, \$39.95

OUPress.com

Valerie Sherer Mathes recounts the life of Charles C. Painter, a clergyman-turned-reformer who recognized injustices and set out to reform U.S.-American Indian policy. She relates his skill as a negotiator and investigator who would travel to reservations, dig up fraud, promote education, badger Indian agents and do whatever necessary to incorporate Native Americans into the fabric of American life. As the author, a college professor, states, she spent 40 years studying and researching this and other similar works. Her effort and dedication have produced an admirable work that preserves the

memory of a man who might otherwise be forgotten.

– Lynn Bueling

SHANE MURPHY

John Hance: The Life, Lies, and Legend of Grand Canyon’s Greatest Storyteller

University of Utah Press

Paperback, 288 pages, \$24.95

UofUPress.com

This is the oddly appropriate and occasionally disjointed tale of the life of the Grand Canyon’s greatest storyteller – and liar. The saga is connected by the sporadic presence of John Hance and his mules. Hance’s papers, photos and news clippings have been dumped out on the table and connected with anecdotes involving the men and women who prospected, homesteaded, explored and publicized the canyon of the Colorado. At times the stories appear in chronological order but often as not they are out of order and joined by topic. The fun-to-read result bears a relationship to biography and history on a par with Hance’s own tales. Presidents, princes, teamsters and entrepreneurs wend their way through the narrative, shedding light on how the canyon came into being as a tourist attraction and how its features got their names.

– Doug Hocking

DAVID L. NICANDRI

Lewis and Clark Reframed: Examining Ties to Cook, Vancouver, and Mackenzie

Washington State University Press

Paperback, 184 pages, \$32.95

WSUPress.wsu.edu

David Nicandri offers new insights into Gary E. Moulton’s *The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* and the European-American search for a Northwest Passage. Thomas Jefferson gave Meriwether Lewis the accounts of James Cook, Alexander Mackenzie and George Vancouver in the spring of 1803. Lewis read them all and brought his copy of Mackenzie’s *Voyages from Montreal* on the journey. Nicandri ably traces specific similarities and influential passages from all three of these previous accounts and highlights the vocabulary of exploration common at the time. For example, he notes Lewis’s and Mackenzie’s similar reactions to topping the Continental Divide, hiring a Native “conductor” and having to “retrograde march” previous progress. Nicandri also carefully explores Lewis’s

relationship with Clark as well as his post-expedition emotional state. *Lewis and Clark Reframed* is an important read for anyone interested in further investigation of the expedition.

– Rita M. Cleary

ANA PULIDO RULL

Mapping Indigenous Land: Native Land Grants in Colonial New Spain

University of Oklahoma Press

Hardcover, 216 pages, \$45

OUPress.com

Conquistador Hernán Cortés’s small band of Spanish soldiers in the conquest of Mexico was vastly outnumbered by the armies of his indigenous allies. Afterward, he was in no position to deny their preexisting land claims, which were expressed in painted form utilizing native mapping conventions. As time passed, the indigenous mappers began to incorporate European symbols, materials and colors. These became an integral part of the Spanish state archive and were important in demonstrating native claims in legal disputes over land. The maps did not show an exact representation of the land, rather they demonstrated those elements important to the natives and to their claims.

– Doug Hocking

ORVILLE B. SHELburne JR.

From Presidio to the Pecos River: Surveying the United States-Mexico Boundary along the Rio Grande, 1852 and 1853

University of Oklahoma Press

Hardcover, 312 pages, \$39.95

OUPress.com

In 1848, when the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the Mexican-American War, the two countries began the process of redrawing their mutual border. Over the next eight years the work would start and stop many times as boundary commissioners failed to do the work and Congress failed to provide funding. Problems with the first treaty led to a second, the Gadsden Purchase. Major William Emory spearheaded the real work and ultimately produced *Report*, which not only settled the border with fine maps but also made the Southwest known to the American people. Probably to prevent future squabbling over the border in the difficult canyons of the Rio Grande, Emory ordered the supporting docu-



HIGH PLAINS DRIFTER

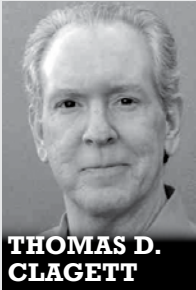
Kino Lorber

Blu-ray, \$29.95

KinoLorber.com

Clint Eastwood had already attained international stardom thanks to Sergio Leone's *Man With No Name* trilogy when *High Plains Drifter* opened in April 1973. His first directing effort, 1971's *Play Misty for Me* (in which he also starred),

had been well received. *High Plains Drifter* would be his first Western as star and director.



THOMAS D. CLAGETT

Eastwood plays a bearded stranger in a frock coat who rides into the town of Lago. After dispatching three toughs, he's offered anything he wants because the town needs protection from some bad outlaws who are coming, intent on making the townspeople pay for sending them to prison for killing the town marshal. The stranger agrees to stay and begins taking payment in sometimes

amusing, sometimes ugly ways. When the town tramp goads him, he pulls her into the livery and rapes her. It's an uncomfortable, gratuitous scene. But then you realize almost everyone in town, from the reverend to the mayor, is morally corrupt. They are also hiding a terrible secret about an unmarked grave and soon regret their invitation to this stranger, who brings stark veracity to the phrase "paint the town red." But who is he?

Ernest Tidyman, recent Oscar winner for *The French Connection*, wrote the screenplay (with an uncredited rewrite by Dean Reisner) that identified the stranger as the dead marshal's brother. However, according to Richard Schickel's *Clint Eastwood: A Biography*, the actor-director preferred something more ambiguous, even supernatural. The result was an unexpected, surreal Western.

The New York Times called it "part ghost story, part revenge Western, more than a little silly, and often quite entertaining in a way that may make you wonder if you lost your good sense." *The Monthly Film Bulletin* disagreed finding it, "a disappointingly sterile exercise in style." It was the 17th highest grossing film that year.

Released twice before on Blu-ray, this latest version from Kino Lorber is excellent. Details, like the shadows (an Eastwood trademark), are sharp and the sound quality superb.

Numerous extras include interviews with actors Marianna Hill, Mitchell Ryan and William O'Connell.

Roundup video reviewer C. Courtney Joyner is taking time off. Guest columnist Thomas D. Clagett is a Spur Award finalist and film historian.

ments burned. Until the present, we have known little of how the work was done. The discovery of Dr. David Parry's diary provides insight to the work of the surveyors and the extreme difficulties and hardships that they faced surveying a river that is unapproachable along much of its length.

– Doug Hocking

JOHN L. SMITH

Saints, Sinners, and Sovereign Citizens: The Endless War over the West's Public Lands

University of Nevada Press

Hardcover, 328 pages, \$39.95

UNPress.nevada.edu

An investigative reporter from Nevada looks at the Sagebrush Rebellion and offers an insightful account that clearly outlines a conflict pitting federal regulation against libertarian views. Occurring in several Western states, the movement protested government control over public land use and came to a head with rancher Clive Bundy's standoff with the Bureau of Land Management. He had illegally grazed cattle on public land and, when faced with forced sale of his herd, garnered support from sources sympathetic to his stand including gas, oil, uranium and real-estate concerns. John Smith's book digs deeply into an ongoing, unresolved ideological conflict that informs readers of its history.

– Lynn Bueling

KORY STAMPER

Word by Word: The Secret Life of Dictionaries

Vintage Books

Paperback, 320 pages, \$16.95

VintageBooks.com

Kory Stamper is a lexicographer and assistant editor at Merriam-Webster. She has written this book for those of us who are possessed, as she is, with *sprachgefühl*, German for "a feeling for language." With that sensibility as our touchstone, she leads us into the world of dictionary-making. She takes us on a journey from her job interview onward into the thick forest of grammar, defining, examples, small words, bad words, etymology, dates, pronunciation, dictionary authority. We are introduced to the lexical means and methods, as well as to the challenges: defining *nude*, for example. Stamper writes with wit, charm, and a healthy dash of salty irreverence. Prescriptivists beware. Who would have thought that a book on dictionary-making would cause a reader to laugh aloud? Stamper writes: "I've made it to the big leagues. I've been parodied by [Stephen] Colbert." This well-conceived and well-designed book includes footnotes, end notes, a bibliography and an index. You'll never read a Main Entry the same way again.

– Tom Carpenter

CHARLOTTE K. SUNSERI

Alliance Rises in the West: Labor, Race, and Solidarity in Industrial California

University of Nebraska Press

Hardcover, 142 pages, \$60

NebraskaPress.unl.edu

The ambiguity of the title and subtitle of this book mask its being a case study of the company town of Mono Mills,

California, from the 1880s to 1918. The author explores the historical archaeology of the segregated neighborhoods where Chinese and Kudzadika Paiutes resided. Excavation of relics reveals the relationships between Paiute, Chinese and European workers and the racial, ethnic and class distinctions that existed at Mono Mills. Charlotte Sunseri uses this evidence to demonstrate the tensions of capitalist owners and the efforts of workers to better their living conditions through unions and strikes. She argues that Mono Mills exemplifies these issues in company towns throughout the West. Readers who are not historical archaeologists may find the narrative tough going as the text is overburdened with parenthetical citations at the end of many sentences and often in the middle of sentences, an editorial decision that may limit this book to specialists in the field.

— Abraham Hoffman

MALCOLM VARON

Georgia O'Keeffe: A Life Well Lived

University of New Mexico Press

Hardcover, 112 pages, \$39.95

UNMPress.com

This beautiful publication is not only a celebration of the iconic artist Georgia O'Keeffe (1887-1986) but also the photographer most closely associated with her and her art, Malcolm Varon. The foreword by Cody Hartley, the director of the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum in Santa Fe, New Mexico; an introduction by Barbara Buhler Lynes, the preeminent scholar on the artist; and a personal reflection by Varon nicely compliment his 64 intimate, color photographs. Three years after her famous husband, Alfred Stieglitz, died, O'Keeffe left New York in 1949 to live permanently in New Mexico, generally dividing her time between Abiquiú (winters and springs) and Ghost Ranch (summers and autumns). Varon snapped the images at those two locations in 1977. "Photography takes an instant out of time," Depression Era photographer Dortha Lange once said, "allowing life by holding it still."

— Larry Len Peterson

PRISCILLA WEGARS

Polly Bemis: The Life and Times of a Chinese American Pioneer

Caxton Press

Paperback, 530 pages, \$29.95

CaxtonPress.com

This is the meticulously researched account of one of the best-known Chinese Americans in the American West. Sold by her parents in China to a slaver, she was brought to the United States and eventually settled in the mining camps in Idaho, where she married Charlie Bemis, a local miner. Her story has been fictionalized and became the inspiration for a film, *Thousand Pieces of Gold*. Polly and Charlie lived on the Salmon River, where he worked a placer gold claim. The book is a cornucopia of sketches of the people and life in north central Idaho in the last quarter of the 19th Century and first quarter of the 20th Century. Some general readers may become impatient with the volume's attention to minute detail. The book will prove a gold mine for researchers with its 165 pages of endnotes. The author is donating all her royalties to the Asian American Comparative Collection, University of Idaho.

— Harlan Hague

FICTION

LYNNA BANNING

Sisters

Prairie Rose Publications

Paperback, 257 pages, \$12.99

PrairieRosePublications.com

I devoured this romance in a single sitting, staying up well past bedtime to finish. With a strong sense of place and landscape, this Oregon 1800s story features a widowed Army nurse, who returns home from Fort Hall to Smoke River to help her younger sister. Ellie is engaged to marry Jack Mallory, who has just been shot and had his arm amputated. The story features characters who are human and fallible, and conflicts that are believable and not contrived. I ripped through the pages and believe that fans of romance will do likewise!

— Linda Jacobs

JAMES J. GRIFFIN

Ride for Justice, Ride for Revenge

DS Productions

Paperback, 207 pages, \$8.99

DSProductions.com

The prolific James J. Griffin, best

known for several series (for adults and younger readers) about Texas Rangers, kicks off a new series about a dedicated peace officer bringing law and order to the Lone Star State in the 1870s. This one is definitely for adults as Ranger Lieutenant Luke Caldwell, a loving family man, survives being gut-shot in a gunfight with one of the worst outlaw gangs in West Texas – then learns that there's an even meaner bunch of hombres. After those cutthroats kill Caldwell's brother-in-law and gang-rape Caldwell's sister, the Ranger rides out for revenge – with Caldwell's sister tagging along with him to mete out her own brand of justice.

JOHN J. JACOBSON

All the Cowboys Ain't Gone

Blackstone Publishing

Hardcover, 341 pages, \$27.99

BlackstonePublishing.com

In the waning days of the 19th Century, 21-year-old Lincoln Smith, longing for the vanished frontier, grabs his rifle, bids his best friend *adieu* and takes ship for North Africa to fulfill every cowboy's dream – joining the Foreign Legion. There's adventure aplenty, along with treachery, alluring maidens, and crocodiles. John J. Jacobson's writing is smooth, with good pacing. The plot, though, has strong similarities to the dime novels young Lincoln grew up on. In fact, he finds the kind of heroic adventures he has dreamed of. Whether this is parody or meant seriously, it might be hard for many readers to swallow. Nonetheless, it's difficult not to like the noble Lincoln.

— Loyd Uglow

LOUIS L'AMOUR with BEAU L'AMOUR

Louis L'Amour's Lost Treasures: Volume 2

Bantam Books

Hardcover, 576 pages, \$30

RandomHouseBooks.com

Upon opening the latest version of *Louis L'Amour's Lost Treasures*, I was immediately reminded of why I enjoyed the man's writing so much. The unfinished story, "Mac Ross," transported me back to when I cracked open the first pages of *Flint*, the first novel of L'Amour's I ever discovered. While I greatly enjoyed this new book, I also found it frustrating as the devil to get teased with another great L'Amour

offering, only to have no ending to go along with such a promising beginning. I'm not sure who I'm most angry at, Louis L'Amour for dying before he could finish all his stories or his son, Beau, who simply leaves us dressed up, with nowhere to go. I'm glad I had the chance to read it and disappointed that L'Amour and so many other great Western literary legends are no longer there to grace us with their work.

– R.G. Yoho

ERIN LINDSEY

The Silver Shooter: A Rose Gallagher Mystery

Minotaur Books
Paperback, 284 pages, \$17.99
MinotaurBooks.com

“Good heavens, what a tale!” a character exclaims early in this novel – clearly an understatement. Rose Gallagher is a Pinkerton detective hired by Teddy Roosevelt to figure out who (or what) is killing people, cattle and horses in 1887 near Medora, Dakota Territory. In addition to Roosevelt, Nikola Tesla and Seth Bullock make appearances, each having skills that no historian ever recorded. Both protagonists and antagonists possess abilities so useful and so

dangerous that the Pinkertons have established a special and secret division to solve the otherwise inexplicable crimes. Gallagher, her British supervisor, and a family group of Lakotas tackle the problem with predictable success. This is a lighthearted read that will charm readers who like mysteries, Westerns or tales of the paranormal.

– Catherine Holder Spude

L.J.MARTIN

The Songbird's Sting

Wolfpack Publishing
Paperback, 290 pages, \$11.99
WolfpackPublishing.com

Book 2 in L.J. Martin's “Arizona Series” is action-packed with a twist. Martin has created a female-oriented novel with Elizabeth Anne Graystone, pseudonym “Songbird,” as the protagonist. A thespian artist, she has an angelic operatic voice and lots of sass, which she plays to her advantage. The character-driven novel is set in the Arizona Territory 1873-1874, and Martin effectively captures Elizabeth's female persona, a career woman. Readers will admire her sass, self-assurance and resourcefulness. Despite her fashionable

and genteel appearance, Elizabeth is not afraid to use her 1870 Hopkins and Allen .32-caliber pocket pistol to defend herself and stay alive and out of the line of fire.

– Sue Ready

STEVEN PELCMAN

Riverbed

Mirador Publishing
Paperback, 242 pages, \$13.99
MiradorPublishing.com

A family saga condensed into the space of a few days – that's what Steven Pelcman offers up in this modern-day Western. Eighty-something-year-old Old Jim Bowdin and his pubescent grandson Jimmy strike into the mountains to hunt as bad weather threatens, while middle-aged Big Jim stays behind to run the ranch. The wilderness steps in as a crucial fourth character, testing the bonds and the tensions between the three Bowdins. The novel is too heavy on explanation, especially about feelings, and its constant present tense is more burden than asset. Characterization is definitely Pelcman's focus, though, with the plot forcing the three individuals to come to terms with one another.

– Loyd Uglow

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RICHARD PROSCH (editor)
*Under Western Stars: Stories by the
Western Ficcioneers*

Western Ficcioneers
Paperback, \$18.99, 382 pages
WesternFiccioneers.com

It's always good news when an anthology of Western short fiction hits the market. The short story is an agile art form that continues to evolve, even if the market for Western short fiction is drying up like a New Mexico stock tank in August. There are 22 stories in this collection, including stories by Spur Award finalists and winners Richard Prosch, Meg Mims, Michael Newton and Jeffrey J. Mariotte. All are written by members of the Western Ficcioneers. The furnishings and fixtures are familiar; the *patois* rings true. Yet some have plot developments that might amuse Brett Hart and surprise O'Henry. Reading short fiction is like nibbling supermarket apples. We know an apple when we see one. But this one is a "Lucy Rose" and that one is a "Jonagold." What is their taste and texture? There's only one way to find out; take a bite. Thus, the pleasure of reading anthologies; if one story doesn't suit your taste, try another. Chances are good you'll find something to your taste here.

– Tom Carpenter

GARY L. PULLMAN
On the Track of Vengeance

Campbell and Rogers Press
Paperback, 224 pages, \$10.99
CampbellAndRogersPress.com

Bane Messenger has a nice home, a fine family and income from various past and present investments. He's also a U.S. marshal who has killed dozens, if not hundreds, of men. When a gang seeking revenge starts attacking the railroads, killing innocent passengers, President Chester A. Arthur calls Bane back into service. What follows is a rollicking, violent tale of cat and mouse, including characters ranging from local law to outlaws of all stripes to the beautiful owner of a high class bordello. When Bane finds out the gang has targeted a train on which his wife and father are riding, his fight becomes more desperate – and personal. The ending has a nice twist, which, unlike most series books, wraps up the story neatly. However, better editing would

have helped. At the final showdown, the main villain's first name changes. Similar errors are sprinkled throughout the text.

– James J. Griffin

LOWELL F. VOLK
Trouble in the Mancos Valley

Wheatmark
Paperback, 208 pages, \$13.95
Wheatmark.com

Upon learning his father has been murdered, Jake Burton vows to return home on a quest to seek out justice and to help those at his family's ranch. On his way from Texas to Colorado, Jake comes to the aid of a family that is attacked by Indians. The battle leaves behind a widow and her young son. Lowell F. Volk's book is well-written and an entertaining read, with characters that ring true to life. The ending of the book, although fully resolved, took me by surprise.

– R. G. Yoho

RICHARD WILLIS
Born a Runaway

Independently published
Paperback, 281 pages, \$12.83
Amazon.com

Born a Runaway is two or more books under one cover. It begins with a family heading for Texas to homestead and then, after page 100, follows one of the sons, who matures into a part-time rancher and part-time Ranger. Born during the Texas Revolution, Matt Harvey grows up to fight Comanches, Mexicans and then Union soldiers in New Mexico battles. The second half of this well-researched novel is mostly about battle strategies and the layers of command in the Texas Rangers and then the Confederate army. Perhaps one battle in detail and more about what makes Matt Harvey tick would make him a character to care about. Realistic dialogue would have made this novel more believable.

ETHAN J. WOLFE
The Case of the Missing Cattle

Five Star Publishing
Hardcover, 258 pages, \$25.99
Gale.Cengage.com/FiveStar

The Illinois Detective Agency sends top detectives Jim Duffy and Jack Cavill to Montana to solve the disappearance of thousands of cattle. Although the story takes its time getting down to solv-

ing the case, the men being distracted by joining a posse that has nothing to do with cattle, it finally comes to a predictable ending. Duffy's and Cavill's easy banter reveals the respect each has in this working relationship. Their dialogue works well.

REAVIS Z. WORTHAM
Hawke's Fury: A Sonny Hawke Thriller

Pinnacle
Paperback, 440 pages, \$9.99
KensingtonBooks.com

Two-time Spur winner Reavis Z. Wortham continues his thriller-contemporary Western crossover series about Texas Ranger Sonny Hawke. This time, after a drug cartel attacks a movie production in the Big Bend, Hawke slips into Mexico to bring to justice the cartel leader, alias "The Devil Woman," who certainly lives up to her nickname. Switching from first to third person can be risky for any novelist, but Wortham keeps the plot twisting, bullets flying and Hawke making astute Texas observations like, "The *Caballo Diablo* was the darkest, smokiest, most frightening gun and knife joint I'd ever been in, and I'd been in some Oklahoma honky tonks on the Red River back when they still had sawdust on the floors." Highly entertaining.

– Johnny D. Boggs

BOOK NOTES

CHRIS DUBBS

*An Unladylike Profession: American
Women War Correspondents in World
War I*

Potomac Press
Hardcover, 326 pages, \$34.95
NebraskaPress.unl.edu

Military historian Chris Dubbs follows the correspondents that defied gender norms and covered World War I. "From the opening days of the Great War through the post-armistice chaos, women journalists carved out a distinctive role for themselves," Dubbs writes. Among the reporters covered are well-known names Edith Wharton (*The Age of Innocence*) and Elizabeth Jane Cochran Seaman, better known as Nellie Bly.

BOOK NOTES (continued on page 39)

Preston Lewis joins Texas Institute of Letters

Spur Award-winning novelist and past WWA president **Preston Lewis**



Preston Lewis

is one of 14 inductees into the Texas Institute of Letters' class of 2021. "I am honored to announce I have been elected to membership in the prestigious Texas Institute of Letters," Lewis said. "To be added to the roster of TIL members is a wonderful accolade, especially since my writing career has been boosted and influenced by so many past and present members. Longtime TIL member **Jeanne Williams** mentored me early in my fiction career, and bestselling Western author **Elmer Kelton** was a perpetual source of encouragement and inspiration."

Established in 1936, the Texas Institute of Letters celebrates Texas literature and recognizes distinctive literary achievement.

Also in the 2021 class are **Crystal Allen, Chris Barton, Raymond Caballero, Gail Caldwell, Allison Hedge Coke, Tony Diaz, David Samuel Levinson, Michael Martin Murphey, Kevin Prufer, Cristina Rivera Garza, George Saunders, Bryan Washington** and **Scott Wiggerman**.

WWA news

Tim Nicklas was appointed 2022 Spur Awards chair, and **Phil Mills Jr.** and **Chris Enss** were appointed to three-year terms on the Homestead Foundation board of directors. The moves were confirmed during a WWA board teleconference January 11.

Nicklas served as Spur chair for this year's Spur Awards. Mills replaces WWA past president **Nancy Plain** on the Homestead board. Mills's appointment maintains compliance with Homestead Foundation bylaws when he takes over as WWA president in 2022. Plain had served on the board

for the past six years. Enss was already serving on the board.

The WWA board appoints the Homestead Foundation board of directors. The Homestead board oversees the charitable 501(c)(3) foundation that supports WWA's educational and award-giving functions.

UNM Press launches High Road imprint

High Road Books, a new imprint at the University of New Mexico Press that is dedicated to thoughtful, stylish, provocative fiction and nonfiction with Western roots and national appeal, has launched.

Debut titles were released in March: *Fortunate Son: Selected Essays from the Lone Star State* by **Rick Bass**; *The Believer: Alien Encounters, Hard Science, and the Passion of John Mack* by **Ralph Blumenthal**; and *Hill of Beans: A Novel of War and Celluloid* by **Leslie Epstein**.

"With the launch of High Road Books, we continue to expand upon our legacy as New Mexico's window on the world," UNM Press director **Stephen Hull** said.

Newsmakers

√ **Marilyn Irvin Holt's** *Nebraska during the New Deal: The Federal Writers' Project in the Cornhusker State* received the Nebraska Center for the Book's 2020 Nebraska Book Award for nonfiction. The Nebraska Center of the Book, affiliated with the Library of Congress Center for the Book, promotes public interest in writers, books and reading.

√ **Mike Shellenbeger's** novel *Refuge* was voted best novel in the Other Fiction genre for the 2020 year at Online-Books.com and earned five five-star reviews, the highest rating, on Readers-Favorite.com.

√ The 109-year-old Texas Folklore Society is partnering with Tarleton State University and moving its offices to the Dora Langdon Center in Granbury, Texas. The Texas Folklore Society is the oldest state folklore organization continuously functioning in the United States.



Markley gets Branding Iron

WWA executive director **Candy Moulton** presents the 2020 *Branding Iron Award* to **Bill Markley** in the Badlands near Wall, South Dakota, on August 12. *Liz Markley*

BOOK NOTES (from page 33)

HARLOW ROBINSON

Lewis Milestone: Life and Films

University Press of Kentucky
Hardcover, 296 pages, \$50
KentuckyPress.com

The Ukraine-reared film director isn't known for Westerns – although his credits include movie versions of the John Steinbeck classics *Of Mice and Men* (1939) and *The Red Pony* (1949) and, surprisingly, two 1958 episodes of the TV series *Have Gun – Will Travel*. But a comprehensive biography of Milestone, who learned his trade as film editor for the U.S. Army Signal Corps during World War II, is long overdue.

PATRICK S. WASHBURN and CHRIS LAMB

Sports Journalism: A History of Glory, Fame, and Technology

University of Nebraska Press
Hardcover, 256 pages, \$60
NebraskaPress.unl.edu

Two journalism professors cover the sports pages of the past and today, discussing racism, sexism ... athletes and columnists ... newspapers, magazines (*Sports Illustrated*, etc.) ... social media and new technology. There's not much about the West, however, and that veteran lawman-turned-New York sports scribe, **Bat Masterson**, gets nary a line.