

FICTION

PETER BRANDVOLD

Bloody Joe

Wolfpack Publishing
Paperback, 296 pages, \$12.99
WolfpackPublishing.com

Anyone who has ever read a Peter Brandvold novel knows what to expect. Plenty of rough and tumble, no-holds-barred action, fistfights and shootings. *Bloody Joe* does not disappoint. It's an unapologetic traditional Western yarn of murder and revenge. Bloody Joe Mannion was hired by the citizens of Del Norte to tame their town. He's a town marshal and a county deputy sheriff. It has been five years, and he has accomplished his mission. Now, the town council is having second thoughts and would like to see him move on. But trouble still brews, especially from Whip Helton, the ne'er-do-well son of Garth Helton, owner of the largest ranch in the area. The pacing is good, the characters interesting, the dialogue realistic.

— James J. Griffin

JIRI CERNIK

They Called Them the Fightin' Earps

PTP Book Division
Paperback, 359 pages, price not listed.

Jiri Cernik has written, in his own words, "a narrative non-fiction." He delves into a subject that has been much covered – Wyatt Earp and his battle with the band of outlaws, known as "The Cowboys" in 1880s Tombstone, Arizona. Cernik entertains the reader by weaving historical names and tidbits throughout the book. Some little-known facts about Tombstone's origin in the prologue nicely set up the story he wants to tell. The book is laid out decently and takes the reader into the mindset of Wyatt and his family. We learn about some people, about whom some readers may have known little before, who played instrumental roles in the Tombstone saga. Even with so many other books, movies, and narratives on this subject, *The Fightin' Earps'* is an entertaining and a solid read.

— Wm. Epps

J. HOOLIHAN CLAYTON

Small Light of Discretion

Dog Soldier Press
Paperback, 376 Pages, \$19.95
DogSoldierPress.com

J. Hoolihan Clayton delicately and brilliantly weaves the history of the Ute people into this novel. With clear, engaging and well-researched details she reveals the catastrophic events that assailed the Ute people. The U.S. government has pushed the Utes onto reservation land in Colorado. The Utes just want to be left alone to live their lives according to their customs. However, certain government officials want to control them, insulting their honor and pushing them out of Colorado. C.W. Collins is tasked with investigating and preventing potential violence between the Utes and the government. He soon starts to understand the situation all too well. This excellent novel is a factual accounting of the tragic events that betrayed and devastated the Ute people.

— Milana Marsenich

JAMES ROBERT DANIELS

Jane Fury

Cutting Edge Books
Paperback, 324 pages, \$19.99
CuttingEdgeBooks.com

This is a sequel to *The Comanche Kid*, a 2022 Spur finalist in the traditional novel category. The first book follows the adventures of 16-year-old Jane as she seeks vengeance against the Comanches who murdered her family and tries to recover the baby sister they kidnapped. Great book that was spitting action from the first page. Now, it's 15 years later and Jane is the mother of a 15-year-old daughter, who is every bit as strong-willed as her mom. When a horse herd is stolen from her Texas ranch, Jane, her daughter, some Texas Rangers and others pursue the pilfered ponies into Mexico. The book, except for a couple of annoying terms too often repeated, is well written and Jane is a fascinating, although exasperating, character. But some scenarios feel farfetched and, unlike its predecessor, romance overshadows the adventure. I didn't care who ended up with whom. I just wanted to get the horses back.

— Ollie Reed Jr.

RAMONA EMERSON

Shutter

Soho Crime
Hardcover, 300 pages, \$25.95
SohoPress.com

In her debut novel, Navajo author Ramona Emerson moves adroitly between the harsh and gritty streets of Albuquerque, New Mexico, and the Navajo reservation, a place of poverty and despair but also of desolate beauty and enduring love and support. Her protagonist is Rita Todacheene, a Navajo woman who works as a forensic photographer for the Albuquerque Police Department and can see and communicate with ghosts. In a story that is both chilling and sensitively written, the ghost of Erma Singleton, an angry murder victim, insists that Rita bring her killers to justice.

— Ollie Reed Jr.

**W. MICHAEL GEAR and
KATHLEEN O'NEAL GEAR**

Lightning Shell

Forge
Hardcover, 473 pages, \$22.99
Tor-Forge.com

The final epic story of in the "People of Cahokia" series will not disappoint readers. It's an engrossing tale of power, betrayal, romance, murder and intrigue. The Gears take the world of Cahokia, its cosmology and Native American spirituality, and weave their story into a political and physical thriller. Carefully researched, the authors make a period of North America's archaeological past come alive with a series revolving around Morning Star, a mythical hero reincarnated in physical form. The plot is complicated with twists and turns as powers shift looking for a balance between the sky world and the underworld. River travel and trades are an integral part of the storyline. Four houses are in conflict with battles being fought for power and high positions. The descriptive writing is phenomenal, moving the action along at a breathtaking pace. An unexpected ending adds a dramatic conclusion to the story.

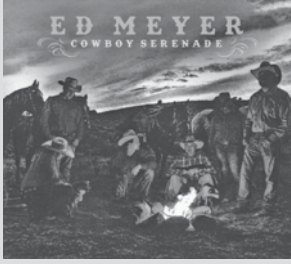
— Sue Ready

BOB HERZBERG

Borderline

Wolfpack Publishing
Paperback, 314 Pages, \$11.99
WolfpackPublishing.com

WESTERN MUSIC



ED MEYER
Cowboy Serenade

E-mail Meyer at Meyeree3@gmail.com for CD, \$15 plus postage, or flash drive, \$15, no postage.

There are three poems on this 10-cut CD, but the songs that flow out naturally are what speak to me

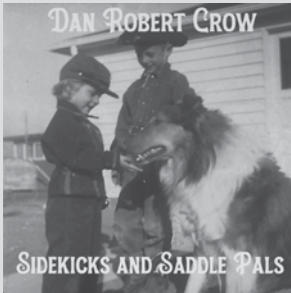
personally and are blessed by one of the smoothest, easiest-to-listen to voices I have heard in a while.



OLLIE REED JR.

Meyer, who manages a cow-calf operation in East Texas, wrote everything on this album. There is not one of the seven songs I don't listen to over and over. But pushed to name my favorite, I'll name four – the title track, “Barbwire and the Rails,” “Night Hawk Lullaby” and “Cowboy 'Till I Die,” the last of which asks –

*Whatever happened to the open range
And the longhorn that run free
Whatever happened to the Indians
What will happen to me*



DAN ROBERT CROW
Sidekicks and Saddle Pals

OwlhootRecords
Send \$10 plus postage to:
Dan Crow
1003 Hess Terrace
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Crow is best known for entertaining kids. He has appeared on children's educational TV channels

and written and performed songs for Disney.

This seven-cut EP, however, consists mostly of Western-themed songs. The title track is an upbeat tribute to B-movie supporting characters such as Gabby Hayes and Smiley Burnette. One of my favorites, “Rodeo Lady” by Crow and Fred Sokolow, is the story of a circuit-riding woman going through a bad stretch with barrels and men.

Crow wrote or cowrote all of these songs and most make apparent his interest in history. “Snap Mary Snap” is a snappy (I couldn't help it) tune about Stagecoach Mary Fields, who delivered mail in Montana from 1895 to 1903; and “The Coffin Note,” the only somber track, tells about the unsolved murders of Colonel Albert Fountain and his 8-year-old son in 1896 New Mexico.

“Law Dog Lament,” another favorite, is about Pat Garrett's pursuit of Billy the Kid, and, to my mind, makes clear that Billy is one kid Crow doesn't like.

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

When land agent Will Landry nears Sage, a Colorado range town, he knows he will have trouble enforcing the Van Wyck Fence Law, as he was sent to do. And the fact that he's an African American riding into an area where plenty of Southerners moved west after the Civil War makes his task even more dangerous. The most ruthless land grabber proves to be cattle baron Joachim Lang. To bring Lang to justice, Landry faces an uphill fight against racism and a town bureaucracy reluctant to challenge Lang. But Landry picks up other allies, all outcasts or people with their own personal vendettas against Lang. Gradually, Landry's perseverance sets the stage for a final showdown that will test one man's determination to make Lang and his brutal crew pay for the evil things they have done.

– Greg Hunt

NIK JAMES

Silver Trail Christmas

Sourcebooks Casablanca
Mass-market paperback, 353 pages, \$8.99
Sourcebooks.com

Caleb Marlowe and partner Henry Jordan are working to build their ranch outside of Elkhorn when Caleb's past comes to haunt him. Caleb left home at age 12 after his ruthless and abusive father, Elijah Starr, killed his mother. Caleb is relieved that his father is in jail and feels he is rid of him for good. But the judge releases Elijah and hires him to get the land he wants – the railroad's coming to Elkhorn – by any means necessary. That land includes Caleb's.

– Lowell F. Volk

STEVEN LINDER

Lost Creek

Stillman Press
Paperback, 172 pages, \$7.99

Another's greed and lust for what he does not own results in 12-year-old Kansan Ethan Tucker's becoming an orphan and totally alone in the world, or so he believes. Regardless of his young age, Ethan's father had already schooled him in survival skills on their homestead. No matter the obstacles he faces, Ethan is itching to discover who instigated his father's murder and why. Assisted by strangers who turn into friends, Ethan discovers blood ties are not the only family one can have. Perhaps if the author had made the boy a bit older, say early teens, it wouldn't have felt like a stretch for him to tackle outlaws, murder, advanced carpentry, romance and survive attempts on his life. All that said, this is still a sweet easy read.

– Sandy Whiting

KATHLEEN MORRIS

Golddigger: The Legendary Nellie Cashman

Dunraven Press
Paperback, 336 pages, \$14.99

I had previously read *The Lily of the West* by Kathleen Morris and now I have found a new favorite by her – *Golddigger*. It begins in 1866 with Nellie Cashman's desire to leave Boston and go west. Previously she had traveled west from Ireland during a plague. As we read, we see that Nellie has the wanderlust, living in Tombstone and Bisbee – “I love the desert because it wasn't empty, but a place where you could breathe.” During her long life as a single woman, she was most content in the gold fields of Canada and Alaska.

Morris' beautiful descriptive language flows amid historic accuracy, and I heartily recommend *Golddigger*.

– Linda Jacobs

SHELDON RUSSELL

Listen

Cennan Books

Hardcover, paperback, 205 pages, \$28, \$16

Cynren.com

2020 Spur Award winner (and 2022 finalist) Sheldon Russell turns his considerable gifts to the people of Depression-era Oklahoma with an ingenious story inspired by the Federal Writers' Project, a New Deal initiative that sent then-aspiring authors (among them Vardis Fisher, Nora Zeale Hurston and Nelson Algren) into rural America to obtain unfiltered interviews with "real people." Russell excels at the evocation of time and place – the interview interludes are by far the best thing in this book – but his story is thin on incident and suffers from a too-reactive protagonist torn between ambition and his mentorship of an aspiring amateur artist. The female characters, however, are nicely drawn, and Russell once again delivers a shocking twist in the final pages that wraps the story in an unexpected twist of fate.

– Kirk Ellis

ANNE SCHROEDER

Palomita: Dove of the Gabilans

Five Star Publishing

Hardcover, 256 pages, \$25.95

Gale.com/five-star

This one is not for the faint of heart. It begins with the murder of the father and brothers of young Señora Elena Matera and goes on to the family's vast land holdings, the insanity of Elena's mother, near starvation and Elena being sold into a rough bordello. Unspeakable cruelty seems to be the prevailing mindset of everyone involved -- North Americans, who came in and stole everything they could, and overly prideful Californios, who came from Spain and stole the land from the natives and made them slaves. So much pride, so much conceit. I found it hard to know who to root for. Anne Schroeder has penned a book filled with marvelous descriptions of land and customs and an accurate look at those times in California history.

– Carol Crigger

JANE SMILEY

A Dangerous Business

Alfred A. Knopf

Hardcover, 208 pages, \$28

KnopfDoubleday.com

A Dangerous Business is a literary historical mystery in which two prostitutes become enmeshed in solving the murders of several young women. This is an always interesting story that takes its time to develop the plot. The characters are so well depicted, you are drawn into the reasons they're like they are and how they got to Monterey, California in 1851. It was a treat to read a story where the prostitutes are protected while at work, paid for their services fairly and even accepted in the town. Who knew that at the time there was even a house for women to satisfy their needs? The story clued me in to the ins-and-outs of the business. An action-packed ending draws the reader to a totally satisfying conclusion.

– Carol Crigger



C. Courtney Joyner's Western Video review column will return in the October 2023 *Roundup* issue.

BOSTON TERAN

Crippled Jack

High Top Publications

Hardcover, 280 pages, \$22

HighTopPublishing.com

Pseudonymous author Boston Teran calls this powerful novel a "revisionist western," and the description is apt. The story centers on a handicapped boy, bound and left to die by his own family. A page from a King James bible is pinned to his shirt, with "It's up to God now" scrawled on it. Ledru Drum, a man on the run, finds and "adopts" the boy, names him Matthew, helps strengthen his muscles and teaches him to shoot. The book's real focus, though, is politics more than character, specifically the labor wars of the early years of the 20th Century. Drum is an assassin and terrorist on behalf of labor. After Drum's death, Matthew becomes involved with the real-life Mary "Mother" Jones and carries on his savior's mission. The prose is muscular but sometimes seems half-finished, and the tale is compelling if clearly one-sided: labor good, management bad.

– Jeffrey J. Mariotte

ROBERT VAUGHAN

The Tenderfoot

Wolfpack Publishing

Paperback, 232 pages, \$10.99

WolfpackPublishing.com

Rob Barringer becomes "The Tenderfoot," who lives in Boston and owns the Turquoise Ranch, which he has never seen, near Flagstaff, Arizona. Educated as a lawyer, he has not practiced law and decides to go to the ranch as a cowboy to learn the operations without the ranch manager or hands knowing that he is the owner. The story is full of Rob's adventures and his growing feelings for Melanie, the foreman's daughter. As Rob receives his education as a cowboy, he becomes accepted by the other hands before he reveals that he is the owner. You will love this book if you like a warm and exciting story.

– Lowell Volk

LANE R. WARENSKI

Grizzly Killer: Spirit of The Mountain

Wolfpack Publishing

Paperback, 250 pages, \$17.99

WolfpackPublishing.com

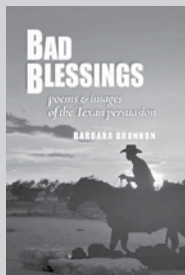
This is the 16th book in the "Grizzly Killer" series. Zach Connors is the given name of the central character (Grizzly Killer). He and his two wives, Sun Flower and Shining Star, live with the Shoshone Tribe. One of their children, Star, is an intelligent, prophetic child who adores her father as he adores her. Star "has special gifts," says an elder in the tribe. "She sees things that no others can see." A group of beaver trappers, led by Angus Michaels, plunder a mountain, sacred to the Ute and Shoshone tribes, in search of gold nuggets. The reader awaits the confrontation of Grizzly Killer and An-

gus Michaels. Ultimately, the spirit of the mountain provides resolution with a massive earthquake and accompanying flooding. Not having read the previous books in the series, I was not as familiar with the characters, their backgrounds or the historical references as would be a series devotee. But the author provides excellent landscape descriptions throughout the story.

– Tom Claffey



Editor's Note: Running in the August and February issues, Take 2 offers two opinions on one book.



BARBARA BRANNON

Bad Blessings: Poems & Images of the Texan Persuasion

Boldface Books
Paperback, 64 pages, \$18.48
BarbaraBrannon.com

Despite what you might assume from the title, Barbara Brannon isn't a native Texan but "a come-here Texan," having been transplanted from the East Coast, where she studied poetry under James Dickey, poet-in-residence at the University of South Carolina. She also writes fiction, but this slim collection showcases her gift for verse and keen eye for what makes Texas Texas. "– not the way you want to go/if promptness matters –/will get you there/if there is the middle of nowhere. ..." she observes in "The slow road to Flomot." "Hundredth Meridian" was included in *Weaving the Terrain: Southwestern Poems* (2017); "Fourteen" was a Top Four winner in the 2021 Maria W. Faust Sonnet Contest; and "The rock chip" was a 2016 finalist for the Ron Rash Award for Poetry. Brannon also has a keen eye for photography, and several color images are included. In fact, even her photographs look like pure poetry.

– Johnny D. Boggs

This lovely collection is punctuated with full-color images of Brannon's musings across Texas, her poems a collection of Texas with brand new eyes. Sometimes living in a place, we grow blind to certain details of our daily lives – things that a transplanted poet quickly picks up on. Brannon's poems are visual, full of place, seeming to question the directions of her fate, as in her poem "Hundredth Meridian": "Why.../did they not travel east?/at least back home/ they'd seen some green./An exodus, a one way/track, as though once/trained upon the sun/the wheel couldn't turn ..." And as enjoyable as these poems are, I believe Brannon's *Preface* in *Bad Blessings* to be its crown – a great reason to read this book. With beauty and detail, Brannon captures the nuances of traveling to Texas from the East Coast to begin a new life – from Texas's culture to its heat to its fascinating vocabulary (so often taken for granted): Caliche, dugout, pearl-snap, playa, prairie-dog, pumpjack, remuda ... A fun read.

– karla k. morton

MARK WARREN

A Last Serenade for Billy Bonney

Five Star Publishing
Hardcover, 384 pages, \$25.95
Gale.com/Five-Star

Mark Warren is a consummate researcher and leaves no stone unturned. He is also quick to praise historians who have devoted decades, even lifetimes, to study his main character. Research into the historical records of Henry McCarty, aka William H. Bonney, aka "Billy the Kid," combined with Warren's exceptional gift of creative writing, puts the reader into what may have been the personality of this legendary outlaw. Enlisting the help of fictional journalist, John Blessing, Warren invites us to listen in on jailhouse interviews and a respectful friendship between Blessing and Bonney. We hear from a former teacher Bonney may have been smitten with, family members and former employers. A special bonus at the end of this book is an original composition by Warren, "A Last Serenade for Billy Bonney."

– Denise F. McAllister

JAMES C. WILSON

Painted Skull Ranch: A Fernanado Lopez Santa Fe Mystery

Sunstone Press
Paperback, 139 pages, \$22.95
SunstonePress.com

The novel opens with the murder of a musician on the backstreets of Santa Fe. Fernando Lopez, a former police detective now working as a private investigator, is called upon by the dead man's wife to look into matters because she believes the murder is being written off by the authorities. Fernando's investigations take him from the lowest dives to some of the area's wealthiest citizens as he works through what happened. Drugs are involved – almost a given in this dog-eat-dog world. I think there are some procedural problems with the investigation, but one thing is sure – Lopez is persistent and dedicated to solving his cases and bringing justice to the victims, no matter what it takes.

– Carol Crigger

POETRY

SOPHIE KLAHR

Two Open Doors in a Field

The Backwaters Press
Paperback, 79 pages, \$17.95
NebraskaPress.unl.edu

The narrator of these poems is a peripatetic wanderer and keen observer of a number of Western locales including Nebraska, Utah, Nevada, Oregon, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas and Kansas. Channeling the spirit of the late Delta poet, Frank Stanford, Sophie Klahr's most intriguing travels are along the byways of existential angst and the treacherous trails of the human heart. In "Driving Through New Mexico, Listening to the Radio," the poet writes, "...Human shame is/so undependable; not believing/is perhaps a so much greater power/than belief." And in "Like Nebraska," Klahr ponders "His pale body smelling of flight like a familiar story,/An entire landscape curving to pull on a pair of boots." These are poems to ponder in flickering lamplight.

– Larry D. Thomas

SUSAN CUMMINS MILLER

Deciphering the Desert: A Book of Poems

Finishing Line Press
Paperback, 65 pages, \$19.95
FinishingLinePress.com

A 2023 Spur Award finalist in poetry, the author is also a former field geologist, college instructor, fiction writer and essayist. Susan Cummins Miller's nod to science is evident in the following lines from "The Bone-Man's Apprentice": "Under your watchful eye/I chiseled away the barren, protective strata,/exposing teeth and dimpled bone – a horse's skull/no longer than my hand, concealed/for eighteen million years."; and her mastery of poetic diction in "This light, this dawnlight, transports/the full, deep, nacreous numinosity/of the rosary beads I tucked into/the chest pocket of my mother's hospital gown/as I watched her final breath lift off." Rare is the poet who blends science and literary artistry with such elegance.

– Larry D. Thomas

JUVENILE

JENNIFER BOHNHOFF

Summer of the Bombers

Thin Air Books
Paperback, 123 pages, \$12
JenniferBohnhoff.com

This story is fast-paced and chock-full of obstacles for its 14-year-old protagonist to overcome. Inspired by the 2000 Cerro Grande (New Mexico) fire, "Punkin" Davis's life is turned upside down by similar circumstances caused by a controlled burn. What once was idyllic is now becoming a seemingly never-ending nightmare for the young girl. Her family life is threatened, her new home is a FEMA "tin can" trailer, and now her beloved horse, Wildfire, is missing. Does she have enough courage and initiative beyond her years to persevere and reverse the trajectory? Author Jennifer Bohnhoff is a former middle-school teacher who has her fingertips on the pulse of young people. Her residency in New Mexico contributes to vivid descriptions of the land, its people, as well as the hardships fire victims endure.

– Denise F. McAllister

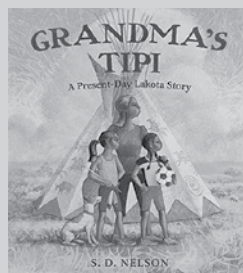
L.J. MARTIN

Stormy Seas: Two Thousand Grueling Miles: Book Three

Wolfpack Publishing
Paperback, 210 pages, \$14.99
WolfpackPublishing.com

This is billed a coming-of-age novel, but kids, you don't want to come of age like 18-year-old Jake Zane is coming of age. From Oregon, Jake goes to San Francisco, signs on a ship collecting lumber on the north coast, winning his sea legs, then back to San Francisco, where he tangles with the violent Sydney Ducks who are bent on killing him. Then he is off for the Sandwich Islands. Some of the crew are just as bent on taking the newbie down since he doesn't kowtow to them appropriately. Earning respect from ship's officers and befriending some native Hawaiians, Jake survives and returns to his mainland haunts, where he is soon offered a position that could take him to new adventures abroad. England and Ireland, for sure. Russia? Readers will demand a Book Four. A

Editor's Note: Running in the August and February issues, *Take 2* offers two opinions on one book.



S.D. NELSON

Grandma's Tipi: A Present-Day Lakota Story

Abrams Books for Young Readers
Hardcover, 40 pages, \$18.99
AbramsBooks.com

Third-grade Clara gets to spend her first summer away from home, visiting Unci, her grandma and her cousin Juniper at their home in Standing Rock Reservation. When Uncle Louie delivers the family's tipi, the girls learn how it represents one of many hoops in the great Circle of Life. They set it up, learn about the spirit pictures that generations of family members have painted on its walls, do beadwork inside and gather with other family members to sing and tell stories. This sweet book shares the delights of summer with grandma, with a special, Lakota twist. The gorgeous illustrations, inspired by 19th Century Lakota ledger drawings, beautifully honor Native traditions.

– Jennifer Bohnhoff

I don't know how S.D. Nelson does it ... how he keeps each subsequent picture book fresh and incomparable. His latest is *Grandma's Tipi*, featuring young Clara, who is allowed to visit her *unci* (grandmother) and cousin Juniper on the Standing Rock Reservation for the summer. The girls' Uncle Louie (drawn uniquely with an artificial leg) shows up with the family tipi, and the cousins learn how to stack the poles, wrap the richly painted canvas covering around them, and how the circle of the tipi is a reminder of how to live the great Circle of Life. There's plenty of time for "girl stuff," like braiding hair, swimming in the river, jumping in puddles and daydreaming, and both youngsters learn important lessons, especially about family values and honoring their Lakota traditions. Author's notes in the back offer additional explanations.

– Rocky Gibbons

longtime writer of traditional Westerns, Martin knows his 19th Century sailing ships. A good read.

– Harlan Hague

NONFICTION

GARY CLAYTON ANDERSON

Will Rogers and his America

University of Oklahoma Press
Paperback, 244 pages, \$24.95
OUPress.com

Will Rogers, one-quarter Cherokee, was born in 1879 near Claremore, Oklahoma. His rope tricks earned him berths in Wild West shows, then vaudeville, where he developed an irresistible, self-effacing comedy routine. The comedy

morphed into popular, highly profitable movies. Rogers also became one of the first stars of radio, but his homespun, widely popular newspaper columns were perhaps his greatest achievement. "A liberal in an illiberal age," Rogers rejected supply-side economics and became a champion of FDR's New Deal. Portraying Rogers's increasingly savvy understanding of politics and entertainment, Gary Clayton Anderson provides an incisive portrait of the wild 1920s and the desperate 1930s, but Rogers's the folk hero and comic always shone through. This slightly revised edition of Anderson's 2011 book belongs in every library and is perfect for the classroom.

— John Mort

RANI-HENRIK ANDERSSON and DAVID C. POSTHUMUS

Lakhóta: An Indigenous History

University of Oklahoma Press
Hardcover, 405 pages, \$34.95
OUPress.com

The two authors have done their research. I recommend this scholarly work for all who seek insight into the traditional beliefs, rituals and complex history of the Lakhóta [Sioux] people. In the past, the telling of our

story has often been misrepresented by preconceived notions from historians with their Judeo-Christian world view. This telling seeks to give an authentic Lakhóta perspective. The authors start with our origin stories as told by different Lakhóta people. Still, even when the sources are Indigenous people themselves, incongruities appear (as different interpretations appear in all cultures). At the beginning of the world there is order and chaos. Similarly, the Bible speaks of good and evil as being fundamental aspects of this world. However, "Rather than a personalized monotheistic deity like the Christian god, the traditional understanding of Wakhán Thánka [the Great Mystery] was much more amorphous. It was the impersonal totality of all that is mysterious in the universe." Hence, there is no radiant perfect being, that in an act of incongruity, managed to make a world where imperfection is an integral part of the process and outcome. "Only later, when Christian missionaries attempted to link Sioux traditions to their own religious systems, did this mysterious presence begin to take on human forms and demand a groveling, flattering kind of worship." All of creation is viewed as

the Great Mystery. Uncertainty (doubt), although unsettling, is a fundamental aspect of this world that the warrior must accept. There are not always answers to our questions in this perplexing world of great beauty and destruction. An engaging history!

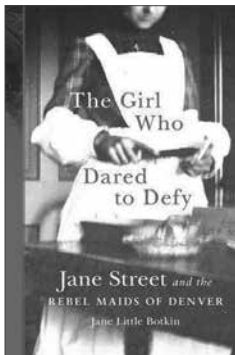
— SD Nelson

JEAN BARMAN

Sophie Morigeau: Free Trader, Free Woman, Nineteenth Century Indian Entrepreneur

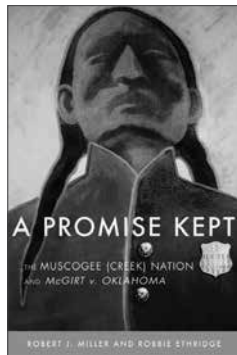
Salish Kootenai College Press
Paperback, 54 pages, \$14.95
NebraskaPress.unl.edu

Jean Barman uses the scant historical record and the remembrances of Sophie Morigeau's nieces and nephews to construct the life of this woman who did not let mixed heritage or gender stop her from living on her own terms. Born in 1836, Morigeau grew up to run a trading post in the frontier that became northwest Montana and southern British Columbia. She was flexible enough to manage her business as the economy transformed from fur trading to gold prospecting, to support as the railroad moved through, then ranching and farming. Morigeau was also flexible in



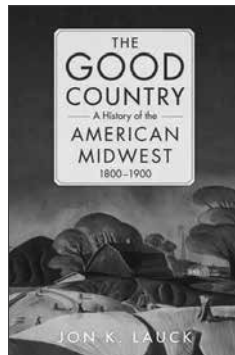
The Girl Who Dared to Defy
Jane Street and the Rebel Maids of Denver
By Janie Little Botkin

\$32.95 HARDCOVER
9780806168494
\$21.95 PAPERBACK
9780806190884



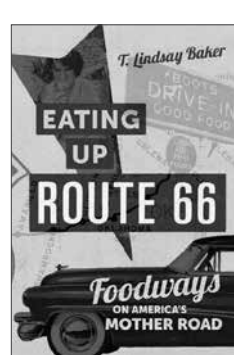
A Promise Kept
The Muscogee (Creek) Nation and McGirt v. Oklahoma
By Robert J. Miller and Robbie Ethridge

\$65.00 HARDCOVER
9780806191713
\$24.95 PAPERBACK
9780806191720



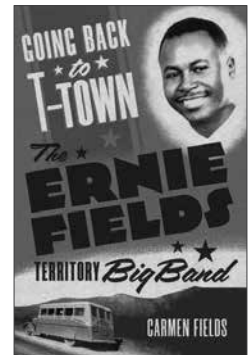
The Good Country
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her interpersonal relationships. Married at 16, she was on her own by the time she was 24 and remained unmarried and independent for the rest of her 80 years. This resourceful and courageous woman was an important trader and link between the Kootenai Indians and the white communities.

– Jennifer Bohnhoff

TOM CLAVIN

Follow Me to Hell: McNelly's Texas Rangers and the Rise of Frontier Justice

St. Martin's Press
Hardcover, 366 pages, \$29.99
StMartins.com

Readers expecting an extensive biography of legendary Texas Ranger Captain Leander McNelly will be sorely disappointed. As author Tom Clavin explains in the Author's Note: "This book is not to be a history of the Texas Rangers. However, to set the stage for the adventures of McNelly's Rangers in the mid-1870s, it seemed that including as much history of the Rangers as readers would tolerate was necessary." This was overkill. The title is misleading, and the reader has to pore through 123 pages of Ranger history (the first 20 chapters of 48) before being introduced to McNelly, the book's focal interest. He served throughout the Civil War, yet only 43 pages are devoted to his participation, and the remaining 178 pages to his Ranger service. He deserves a more extensive biography, expanding his involvement with the Sutton-Taylor feud, the Las Cuevas cattle recovery effort and the capture of gunfighter John King Fisher. Relevant segments of early Ranger history along with photos and a map of his Ranger jurisdiction would have augmented the biography but were omitted. McNelly deserves better.

– Stan "Tex" Banash

MICHELE CORRIEL

Montana Modernists: Shifting Perceptions of Western Art

Washington State University Press
Paperback, 208 pages, \$32.95
WSUPress.wsu.edu

Success without succession is failure. When most people think of Montana artists, Charles M. Russell (1864-1926) comes to mind. Even though a nostalgic Russell never understood the modernist art on display at the 1913 Armory Show, he would inspire a new generation of Montana artists to walk down their own path – in this instance post-World War II modernism. After

all, history is more about the future than the past. Michelle Corriel does a stellar job of presenting the lives and art of six outstanding deceased Montana modernists: Isabelle Johnson (1901-1992), Bill Stockton (1921-2002), Jessie Spaulding Wilber (1912-1989), Frances Senska (1914-2009), Robert DeWeese (1920-1990) and Gennie Adams Deweese (1921-2007). She astutely divides her presentation into three sections: Place (the landscape is the main character), Artistic Lineage (influences on their style) and Community (how artistic relationships made it all happen). With this publication, Montana art has never been bigger, but at the same time, it feels a little smaller without Russell and these six artists. Success with succession is a beautiful thing.

– Larry Len Peterson

ROBERT R. CRIFASI

Water A to Z: The History, Nature, and Culture of a Vanishing Resource

University Press of Colorado
Paperback, 375 pages, \$34.95
UPColorado.com

Not quite A to Z (X is omitted), this book combines dictionary, encyclopedia and glossary to define and describe the information found in the book's subtitle. It has more than 200 photographs, some in color, but it's not a picture book. Robert R. Crifasi has created a book that explores Western water as a precious and in many cases a scarce resource. After a brief introduction, Crifasi goes from Abbey, Edward to Zyback, Frank, looking at persons, places, and things, some very familiar, others not generally known. It's a book you can open at any page, and you'll find something out about water – dams, lakes, levees, fish hatcheries and other listings. He provides more than 300 end notes and a 17-page bibliography. Omissions and errors seem to be few: no mention of Mono Lake, and an outdated account of William Mulholland and the Los Angeles Aqueduct (the Los Angeles River is included). This is a handy guidebook, easy to use as an important reference work.

– Abraham Hoffman

LUCIE GENAY

Under the Cap of Invisibility: The Pantex Nuclear Weapons Plant and the Texas Panhandle

University of New Mexico Press
Hardcover, 307 pages, \$65
UNMPress.com

In 1942 the Pantex Company (Panhandle + Texas = Pantex) began operations in Panhandle, Texas, manufacturing weapons of war. In the Postwar Cold War era, the company received generous federal subsidies for the assembly and disassembly of atomic bombs. It offered good pay and employment opportunities, avoided publicity, and came to be a "cap of invisibility" with most Texans taking pride in their patriotism and opposition to Communism, accepting its near invisibility and viewing it as a part of the region's economy. Cattle raising and bomb making coexisted. However, when it came to providing its facility for storing radiative plutonium waste, many residents opposed the plan, and learned of illnesses such as cancer and birth defects in the region's population. Lucie Genay covers the rise and downfall of Pantex, combining an ironic and dark humor writing style with an impressive amount of research. For anyone not familiar with this episode in Northern Texas history, this book should be required reading.

– Abraham Hoffman

ANDREW GULLIFORD

Bears Ears: Landscape of Refuge and Resistance

University of Utah Press
Paperback, 512 pages, \$29.95
UofUPress.com

In 2016 President Barack Obama used the 1906 Antiquities Act to designate 1.35 million acres (more than 2,100 square miles) of southeastern Utah as a new national monument. Called Bears Ears, few Americans knew much about the place. When Donald Trump inspired controversy by reducing the designation by 85 percent a year later, it gained national attention. One response has been this survey, an encyclopedic yet quite readable historical narrative laced with personal observations. Tracking the Bears Ears region from prehistory, with its silent cliff dwellings and burials, through its use by their descendants and Native newcomers, Andrew Gulliford tells of white explorers, Mormon pioneers, cowboys and cattlemen, some of whom were first to discover the ancient cliff structures, and legions of pot hunters and grave robbers, oil and gas developers, uranium prospectors and mining companies, whose impetus inspired the roads that in turn brought adventure tourists, literary notice and public policy disputes. Gulliford attempts a balanced

view, but his bias toward reverence and preservation is plain. President Joe Biden restored what Obama created, but the challenges of use and overuse endure. Experience Bears Ears however you wish, but read this book first.

– Charles E. Rankin

PEKKA HÄMÄLÄINEN

Indigenous Continent: The Epic Contest for North America

Liveright Publishing Company
Hardcover, 571 pages, \$40
WWNorton.com

Recent studies in Native American history, including books by Michael J. Witgen, Colin G. Calloway, Justin B. Richland and other scholars, have challenged the Eurocentric view of colonial settlement and expansion across the North American continent. The author joins these scholars with a deeply researched, wide-ranging account of Indigenous resistance and resilience. Readers might be surprised at the weakness of European traders, military armies and farmers in dealing with such major Native nations as the Iroquois Confederacy, the powerful Lakota nation and other tribal nations. Indian resistance utilized an ability in forming alliances with these European nations when the fur trade proved profitable for both sides. Indians had no problem in acquiring manufactured goods, horses and treaties that benefitted them. Not until the middle and late 19th Century did European technology, especially railroads and repeating rifles, change the equation and relegate Indigenous people to reservations. Even so, Indigenous populations have significantly increased and succeed in preserving religious and cultural traditions. A particularly strong narrative makes this book essential for a popular readership as well as historians who would do well to revise their textbook interpretations and lecture notes.

– Abraham Hoffman

HELEN LINGSCHHEIT HEAVIRLAND

Surviving the Sand: My family's Struggle to Farm the Pasco Desert

Basalt Books
Paperback, 256 pages, \$18.95
WSUPress.wsu.edu

Nostalgia is a wonderful thing. I often think it is a child's thing, so that as adults we can look back and take a softer view of events. For us, in 2023, the events that take place in this gritty

(literally) recounting of childhood days when a family subdued – I won't say tamed, precisely – a desert, it seems as heroic as earlier tales of covered wagons and endless plains. Owing to the building of Grand Coulee Dam on the Columbia River, the desert country of Washington's Columbia Basin opened up to farmers and other entrepreneurs. Even with water, nothing came easy. The wind still blew the sandy soil, sometimes into a neighbor's fields, sometimes into the next county, taking every bit of greenery with it. But eventually, the desert bloomed. If you want a beautifully written history of those hard days, you'll enjoy reading how this family works together to build a better life.

– Carol Crigger

TEMPE JAVITZ

Bighorn Visions: The Photography of Jessamine Spear Johnson

South Dakota Historical Society Press
Hardcover, 160 pages, \$29.95
SDHSPress.com

Inspired by the great Montana photographers Evelyn Cameron and L.A. Huffman, Jessamine Spear Johnson (1886-1978) early on created her own path as she photographed ranch life. Born in Big Horn, Wyoming, Johnson was by 1918 capturing Western scenes with her large-format camera along with a Kodak 3A, which was much more convenient. A year earlier, she and her husband, Will, had purchased a ranch near Kirby in southeastern Montana, just a few miles north of the 1876 Rosebud battlefield. In the early 1930s, the Johnson family moved into her father's home in Sheridan, Wyoming, and managed the Spear Wigwam dude ranch. She kept busy throughout the Depression years photographing their guests along with ranch life, rodeos, Indian fairs, celebrations of the Little Big Horn battle, families, landscapes of the Big Horn Mountains and more. Lavishly illustrated and with an excellent text by her granddaughter, Tempe Javitz, this publication sheds much deserved light on a gifted photographer.

– Larry Len Peterson

MICHAEL K. JOHNSON

Speculative Wests

University of Nebraska Press
Paperback, 273 pages, \$30
NebraskaPress.unl.edu

The academic community's fascination with Weird Westerns continues

with literature professor Michael K. Johnson's *Speculative Wests*. This one is more accessible to the nonacademic reader than some others, however. Johnson's focus is the use of science fiction, fantasy and horror elements within Western settings and situations by writers who are Black, Indigenous and other peoples of color. To that end, instead of a simple survey of the whole field, he digs deeply into a few notable works of literature, film and television. The texts he explores often use the tropes of the Western in order to critique the Western, as when the Navajo protagonist of Rebecca Roanhorse's novel *Trail of Lightning* watches Western movies on TV with her grandmother and comments on the artificiality of white actors dressed in Indigenous clothing, with makeup and wigs. Johnson's book is eye-opening and could be useful for writers or readers who want to be challenged by perspectives on Western fiction that they might not have previously considered.

– Jeffrey J. Mariotte

WILLIAM D. KALT III

America's 1890s Parachute Queen: Pioneer Skydiving Sensation Miss Hazel Keyes

Universal Publishers
Paperback, 182 pages, \$25.95
Universal-Publishers.com

Hum. After reading this book, one can't help thinking the author opened a box of unpleasant surprises while researching the life of Hazel Keyes, a female daredevil who, for a decade between 1890 and 1900, entertained crowds by using a parachute to drop from hot-air balloons. Crazy is as crazy does. Would that such a perilous pursuit alone could suffice as biography. Hazel's life before, during and after her numerous parachute descents around the country was filled with countless infidelities and other unscrupulous behaviors. Consequently, the reader is hard-pressed to feel any empathy for or connection with the subject. The author does present an enlightening view of the parachuting craze of the period. His research is well-documented and there are ample illustrations.

– Tom Carpenter

ROBERT J. MILLER and ROBBIE ETHRIDGE

A Promise Kept: The Muscogee (Creek) Nation and McGirt v. Oklahoma

University of Oklahoma Press

Hardcover, paperback, 308 pages,
\$65, \$24.95
OUPress.com

In July 2020, the U.S. Supreme Court reaffirmed – or re-established, to use the authors' term – that the Muscogee (Creek) Nation still exists and that a significant portion of the State of Oklahoma, including the City of Tulsa, are part of "Indian County." As the book's two accomplished scholars observe in their conclusion and epilogue, just what that means going forward is anybody's guess and is destined to be litigated for years to come. For now, however, the lands and legal and political jurisdiction promised to the Creek Nation have been restored. This book is divided equally between Robbie Ethridge's remarkably comprehensive history of the wrongs done to the Creek tribe and the tribe's resiliency, and Robert J. Miller's tracing of the case law that led to the *McGirt* decision. The book is striking in two respects: for providing so cogent a history of "a bombshell" ruling; and for appearing in so short a time since the *McGirt* decision was handed down. Readable and useful. Engaging. Highly recommended.

– Charles E. Rankin

R. ELI PAUL

Skywalks: Robert Gordon's Untold Story of Hallmark's Kansas City Disaster

Bison Books
Hardcover, 376 pages, \$34.95
BisonBooks.com

On a Friday night in mid-July 1981, when hundreds of people gathered at the new Kansas City Hyatt Regency for drinks and dancing, two walkways, one suspended above the other and both high above the busy hotel lobby, came crashing down. Thirty-two tons of concrete, glass and steel killed 114 people and injured 214 more. Who was to blame? The architects, designers and engineers, of course. Not so, said Robert Gordon, a K.C. attorney who brought a class-action lawsuit against the hotel's owner, Hallmark Cards Inc. His thesis: They were responsible because they rushed the schedule and pinched the budget. Worse, they had ignored reasons for the collapse of the hotel atrium two years earlier. When Hallmark's lawyers bought off Gordon's plaintiffs, he wrote a book – "House of Cards" – that Simon & Schuster agreed to publish. But

Gordon wasn't a good author, and the book was never published. Now, in true whodunit fashion, R. Eli Paul has told Gordon's story. And, given the preponderance of evidence, he concludes that Gordon was right.

– Charles E. Rankin

BRENDEN W. RENSINK (editor) *The North American West in the Twenty-First Century*

University of Nebraska Press
Hardcover, paperback, 380 pages, \$99, \$30
NebraskaPress.unl.edu

Four decades ago, Patricia Limerick coined the term "New West," ushering in a generation of historians who challenged the triumphalist view of Western history. This anthology addresses the "Next West: or "Modern West" in which 13 historians explore topics either neglected or under-researched. It seems that Frederick Jackson Turner's famous frontier thesis is finally dead and buried. The essays offer case studies such as pollution of Montana's environment, petrochemical contamination in Western agriculture, Indigenous rights, the risks taken by migrant laborers exposed to toxic chemicals, equal rights for women, LGBTQ history and the ongoing controversy over Bears Ears National Monument. Each essay is heavily documented and includes an extensive bibliography. Add to this maps, photographs, and a comprehensive index, and you have a substantive study that is required reading for Western writers looking for a refresher course that argues convincingly that the Old West has been superseded by a West relevant for the times in which we live. Kudos to Brenden W. Rensink for assembling this collection of fascinating articles.

– Abraham Hoffman

WILLIAM L. SHEA

Union General: Samuel Ryan Curtis and Victory in the West

Potomac Books
Hardcover, 368 pages, \$34.95
NebraskaPress.unl.edu

Engagingly and intelligently written, the work brings light to the Civil War in the Trans-Mississippi. General Samuel Ryan Curtis won great victories at Pea Ridge, Arkansas, and Westport, Missouri, preserving Missouri and Kansas for the Union. He was the eighth-most senior general in the U.S. Army. While he was not dashing or flashy, he was

a brilliant general, calm and efficient and also the engineer on some of the greatest infrastructure projects in the West. So why have we previously heard so little about him? Is the author an enthusiast? General Philip Sheridan, who knew Curtis well, thought he deserved better, writing: "I was always convinced that Curtis was deserving of the highest commendation, not only for the skill displayed on the field, but for a zeal and daring in campaign which was not often exhibited at that early period of the war."

– Doug Hocking

JOYCE M. SZABO

Reimagining History from an Indigenous Perspective: The Graphic work of Floyd Solomon

University of New Mexico Press
Paperback, 100 pages, \$29.95
UNMPress.com

Joyce M. Szabo, Regents Professor of Art History Emerita at the University of New Mexico, provides an important profile of Floyd Solomon (1952-2008) of Laguna and Zuni origin who devoted his career as an artist to depicting Pueblo resistance to Spanish, Mexican and American aggression. Solomon believed that Indigenous people have not had their history properly told, as historical writing invariably had been written from the Euro-American viewpoint. He tells that story through his art. The 8x10 book includes dozens of vividly colored illustrations along with a knowledgeable narrative by Szabo. Readers may note a similarity between Solomon's etchings and Goya's graphic illustrations of French atrocities during the Napoleonic wars. Solomon intended to do some forty etchings, but he had completed only 20 when he died.

– Abraham Hoffman

AGNES VANDERBURG

"What I Know About the Old Ways": The Life and Wisdom of a Flathead Indian Reservation Elder

Salish Kootenai College Press
Paperback, 88 pages, \$14.95
NebraskaPress.unl.edu

"What I Know About the Old Ways" is a compilation of transcripts from oral interviews with Agnes Vanderburg, a highly respected elder from Western Montana's Flathead Indian Reservation. Born in 1901, she became an invaluable source of knowledge for the

younger generation of tribal members. In the last two decades of her life, Vanderburg ran a camp that shared her knowledge of the traditional ways, the culture and language of the Salish people. Although short, this book is not an easy read. The transcripts are largely unedited, and oral language does not always translate smoothly into writing. It's sometimes difficult to keep track of what Agnes is discussing, particularly when she is writing about maps or physical items present at the time of the interview but not visible to the reader. However, this book is a good source for those who want an understanding of the cadence of language, and her message about preserving culture is important.

— Jennifer Bohnhoff

TOM ZOELLNER

Rim to River: Looking into the Heart of Arizona

The University of Arizona Press
Hardcover, 376 pages, \$24.95
UAPress.arizona.edu

In 1884, a young Ohio journalist,

Charles Fletcher Lummis, embarked on a trek across the American Southwest. Zoellner, a former *Arizona Republic* reporter, seemingly takes Lummis's example to heart as he sets off on foot from the Grand Canyonlands to the U.S.-Mexico border in search of the beating heart of his native state. His destination is an obscure spot in northern Sonora, the site of a 1736 silver discovery, which provides a metaphor for four centuries of social, cultural, economic and political development in pursuit of mythical riches at the end of the rainbow. "Stories that begin with romantic mythologies and end in violence," Zoellner believes, "... are monuments to 'Arizona' and what it meant to so many people in its past." In this case, the stories he tells are gathered from decades reporting on a place where newcomers call the shots, rugged individualism is a virtue, nature is the handmaid of commerce and progress is measured in dollars and cents. The consequences he describes include social isolation, political extremism,

urban sprawl, and dwindling natural resources, particularly water. No wonder Zoellner has conflicted feelings. The literary equivalent of tough love, *Rim to River* deserves a place on the short list of essential books about the Grand Canyon State.

— Bruce J. Dinges

Reviews

To submit a newly published Western-themed book for possible review, mail one advance readers copy or the published book as soon as available to:

Editor, *Roundup Magazine*
10 Dovela Road
Santa Fe, NM 87508

Roundup reviews contemporary and historical Western anthologies, biographies, nonfiction books, memoirs, novels and short story and poetry collections.



SFTA symposium

The Santa Fe Trail Association's symposium, "Art and the Trail: How Artists Recorded the History and Culture of an Era," is scheduled for September 27-30 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Independence, Missouri.

The Missouri River Outfitters Chapter is host. Tours include forts Leavenworth and Osage. Information: SantaFeTrail.org.

Cowboy Days

After a two-year absence due to COVID restrictions, WWA returned to Cowboy Days March 3-4 at the Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum in Las Cruces, New Mexico.

WWA host **Ollie Reed Jr.** and authors **Jane Little Botkin**, **Natalie Bright** and **Carol Potenza** worked the WWA table in the museum's lobby, handing out copies of *Roundup Magazine* and other promotional materials. The authors also gave presentations.



Robert Nott, right, interviews Kirk Ellis at *Collected Works Bookstore* in Santa Fe, New Mexico, on April 20 about *Ride Lonesome*, the first in the University of New Mexico Press's "Reel West" film studies. The book chronicles the making and legacy of the 1959 movie starring Randolph Scott, directed by Budd Boetticher and written by Burt Kennedy.

Johnny D. Boggs

Ranch Verse lineup

Dave Stamey is on the August 5 lineup for the inaugural *Ranch Verse* event of Western storytelling, song and poetry at the National Ranching Heritage Center in Lubbock, Texas.

Stamey joins **Andy Hedges**, **Boots O'Neal**, **Randy Rie- man**, **Red Steagall** and **Andy Wilkinson** in the lineup. Daytime events from 10:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. are free, followed by a 7:30-10 p.m. concert with Hedges, Stamey and Steagall at the Cactus Theater.

Information: bit.ly/ranchverse; (806) 742-0498.

Quackgrass Sally accepts the Best Native American Film award for *The Trial of Standing Bear of the Poncas at the Red Dirt Film Festival in Stillwater, Oklahoma, in April. The film is one of the American Indian films included in The Homestead Foundation / WWA Packing the West classroom series. The film was also an Official Selection at the Atlanta Children's International Film Festival, held in June. Quackgrass also planned to attend the Texas Homeschool Conference in early June to promote Packing the West.*

Candy Moulton

