

# BOOK REVIEWS

## POETRY

**karla k. morton** and **ALAN BIRKELBACH**

*The National Parks: A Century of Grace*

Hardcover, 320 pages, \$54.95

Texas Christian University Press

prs.tcu.edu

Two past Texas poets laureate have united to coauthor this remarkable book that features all 62 of our national parks. karla k. morton and Alan Birkelbach traveled to each park, beginning with our first, Yellowstone, and ended after visiting our latest, White Sands. Stunning photography from each park, coupled with their accessible, relevant poetry, creates a book readers can page through repeatedly and proudly display on their coffee tables. The foreword by Michael Martin Murphy reminds us that Wallace Stegner believed these parks were America's best idea. morton and Birkelbach give us reason to believe it.

—Lynn Bueling

**GERALD D. SCHAEFER**

*Early West: Historical Events Described in Rhyme*

Self-published

Paperback, 82 pages, \$17

The author offers a book of poetry written in rhyming couplets paired in quatrains which speaks to such events as horse rustling, cattle drives, stagecoaches, the Fetterman battle and more. A relevant photograph accompanies each poem.

**W.K. STRATTON**

*Betrayal Creek: Poems*

Lamar University Literary Press

Paperback, 116 pages, \$16.95

Lamar.edu/literary-press

W.K. Stratton travels often to Betrayal Creek, the location of lost love and bad faith. Adept at the use of metaphorical images, he tells us one time he is a 1987 Chevy Impala with its tires bald and shocks shot, another a wing-stripped fighter pilot. He draws often on the world of Sam Peckinpah with his pessimism and concludes "You have failed at love time and again." But even with all his failures at marriages and affairs, this reader gets the feeling he is ready to continue trying. As a reading experience, the work is not couched in poetic snobbery but instead reads as a cut from his life.

—Lynn Bueling

## NONFICTION

**STEPHEN J.C. ANDES**

*Zorro's Shadow: How a Mexican Legend Became America's First Superhero*

Chicago Review Press

Paperback, 276 pages, \$18.99

ChicagoReviewPress.com

*Editor's Note: Running in the August and February issues, Take 2 offers two opinions on one book. Books are chosen at random, but reviewers have been sought out for their expertise.*

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**BILL MARKLEY**

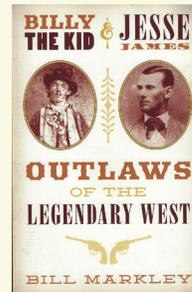
*Billy the Kid & Jesse James: Outlaws of the Legendary West*

TwoDot Books

Trade paperback, 324 pages, \$16.95

Rowman.com

A good read. Bill Markley, meticulous researcher and



writer, pens two parallel biographies of notorious outlaws, Billy the Kid and Jesse James. Billy, whose birth name was Henry McCarty, was born in 1859. His mother died of tuberculosis in 1874. He was caught stealing butter shortly thereafter, and his life of crime grew from there. He changed his name to William H. Bonney, Billy

the Kid, in 1877. Jesse Woodson James, outlaw, bank and train robber, was born in Clay County, Missouri in 1847. Did Billy and Jesse ever meet? No one knows for certain, but facts suggest that they met in a hotel dining room near Las Vegas, New Mexico, in July 1879. They lost their lives at early ages: Billy was gunned down by Sheriff Pat Garrett in Fort Sumner, New Mexico, in 1881. He was 21. Jesse was killed at his home in St. Joseph, Missouri, in 1882 by fellow gang member Bob Ford – who betrayed Jesse for reward money.

—Tom Claffey

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Because Bill Markley interviewed me about Jesse James and Billy the Kid films for this book, I didn't feel comfortable writing this review. Nancy Samuelson, historian of Old West outlaws, had the book, but wound up in the hospital and mailed it back. Others, citing time (not the book or author) declined. On a tight deadline, I surrendered. Markley gives an informative, easy-to-read primer on the two outlaws. Two minor points: Markley overlooks Mark Lee Gardner's research that proved that the surname of Billy's pal was Folliard, not O'Folliard. Tom Folliard (O'Folliard isn't a name) was killed in an ambush at Fort Sumner in 1880. Markley also says Jesse James killed Joseph Heyward in the 1876 Northfield, Minnesota, bank robbery. Most historians today believe that Frank James killed Heyward, based on eyewitness Frank Wilcox's identification of Frank James in Missouri. Overall, however, this book's a fine primer.

—Johnny D. Boggs

*Zorro's Shadow* unwinds like a mystery novel as author Stephen J.C. Andes searches for the famous caped crusader's roots, leading to fascinating research into the infamous Mexican bandit Joaquin Murrieta. Along the way, Andes reveals Zorro's creation, and the self-creation of his original author, Johnston McCulley, as well as Zorro's lasting impact on pop culture. It's serious history but, told through the eyes of a fan, never dry, never pedantic and plodding, but as lively and engaging as Zorro himself. As in all the best books, you'll find yourself learning things you never knew, things you wish you had always known. You'll marvel at some turns of phrase, laugh out loud, and come away with a fuller, deeper understanding of one of the most compelling, lasting, influential pop culture creations of all time. *Zorro's Shadow* is highly recommended – especially for nerds, but not exclusively for them.

– Jeffrey J. Mariotte

**BARBARA BELYEA (editor)**

*Peter Fidler: From York Factory to the Rocky Mountains*

University Press of Colorado  
Hardcover, 359 pages, \$52  
UPColorado.com

In the spring of 1788, a farmer's son traveled to London from his home in Derbyshire, England, and contracted for five years with the Hudson's Bay Company. Peter Fidler's immediate destination was HBC's York Factory in Canada. In 1792-93, Fidler and several companions visited the HBC's outposts along the Hayes and Saskatchewan rivers and a large Piegan Indian village situated along the Rocky Mountains' eastern front, where the entourage stayed for five months. When Fidler and his party arrived back at York Factory in March 1793, they had traveled nearly 1,250 miles. Fidler compiled two journals that documented his 1792-93 travels in great detail. Both narratives are presented in this book, along with comprehensive and enlightening annotations by Barbara Belyea. A valuable addition to the libraries of fur-trade scholars and aficionados.

– James A. Crutchfield

**ROBERT J. BIGART**

*Providing for the People: Economic Change among the Salish and Kootenai Indians, 1875-1910*

University of Oklahoma Press  
Hardcover, 278 pages, \$45  
OUPress.com

**Book Review Policy**

*Roundup Magazine* will run corrections on book reviews but not letters to the editor that dispute any reviewer's opinion.

The tragedy of American Indians placed on reservations and enduring poverty, alcoholism and disease has been the usual depiction after the Indian Wars. In his detailed examination of the Flathead Reservation in Montana, Robert J. Bigart presents a major exception to this view. The Salish and Kootenai tribes, and to some degree the Pend d'Oreille, saw the reservation as an opportunity to maintain their independence by modifying their hunting and gathering tradition and taking on cattle and horse raising and agriculture. They rejected the government's general rations, knowing that relying on such aid would curtail their independence. Bigart divides the book into four sections covering the period 1875-1910 that culminated in the Flathead Allotment Act, which deprived the tribes of much of the land that had enabled them to prosper in the white man's economy.

Newest release from Spur-Award-winning author Jane Little Botkin

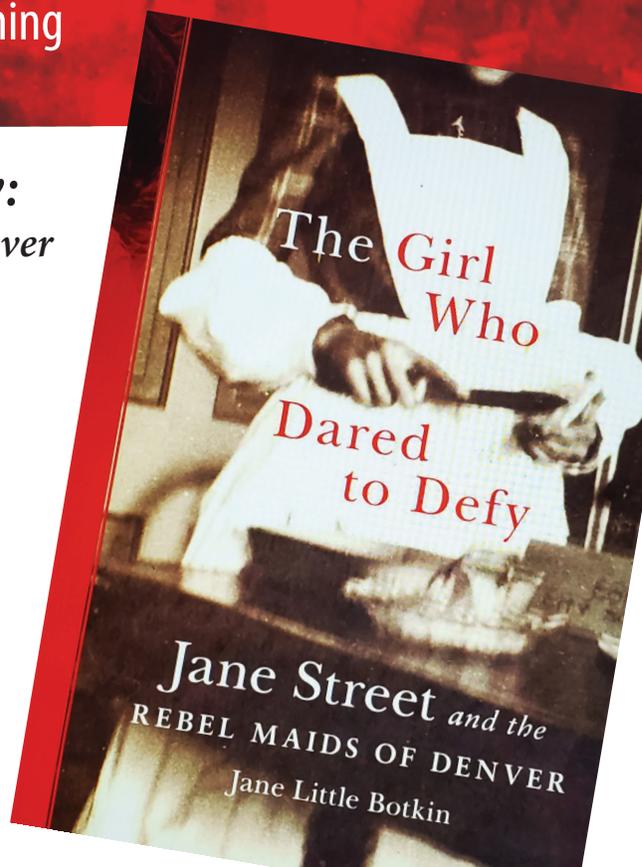
*The Girl Who Dared to Defy: Jane Street and the Rebel Maids of Denver*

To be released February 25, 2021

Setting Jane Street's story within the wider context of early twentieth century class struggles and the women's suffrage movement, *The Girl Who Dared to Defy* paints a fascinating-and ultimately heartbreaking-portrait of one woman's courageous fight for equality.

University of Oklahoma Press

Jane Little Botkin, Author  
<https://www.janelittlebotkin.com/>



A powerful case study that demonstrates Native resistance and accommodation while finding ways to preserve culture and tradition.

— Abraham Hoffman

**THOMAS A. BRITTEN**  
*Voices of the Tribes: A History of the National Tribal Chairmen's Association*

University of Oklahoma Press  
Hardcover, 240 pages, \$34.95  
OUPress.com

Radical American Indian movements grab headlines, as we old newspaper writers know. Activists are more colorful to cover than dreary old gatherings of policy makers. Thomas Britten looks at intertribal political work carried on at the same time as Indian civil rights activities. In the 1960s and 1970s, tribal leaders representing the people on federally recognized reservations resisted Indian activists seeing them as illegitimate. Even scholar and lawyer Vine Deloria Jr. predicted that cooperation with federal agencies would not be successful. The struggles taking place among the tribal chairman are illuminated in this volume.

— Vernon Schmid

**RICHARD W. ETULAIN**  
*Billy the Kid: A Reader's Guide*

University of Oklahoma Press  
Hardcover, 258 pages, \$34.95  
OUPress.com

The professor emeritus of history at the University of New Mexico, former director of UNM's Center for the American West and author of *Thunder in the West: The Life and Legends of Billy the Kid* (2020) provides a guide to and enlightening evaluation of the most relevant newspaper articles, books and pamphlets, essays, book chapters and novels written about Billy the Kid, as well as a chapter on movies about the New Mexico outlaw. There are even a few pages devoted to supposed photos of Kid. Want to know how Walter Noble Burns's 1926 Billy bio, *The Saga of Billy the Kid*, has stood the test of time? It's here. Interested in how survivors of Lincoln County War days reacted to the 1930 movie *Billy the Kid*, based on Burns's biography? Read this book. It's invaluable to researchers and to readers who are bats about Billy.

— Ollie Reed Jr.

**KERRY FINE, MICHAEL K.**

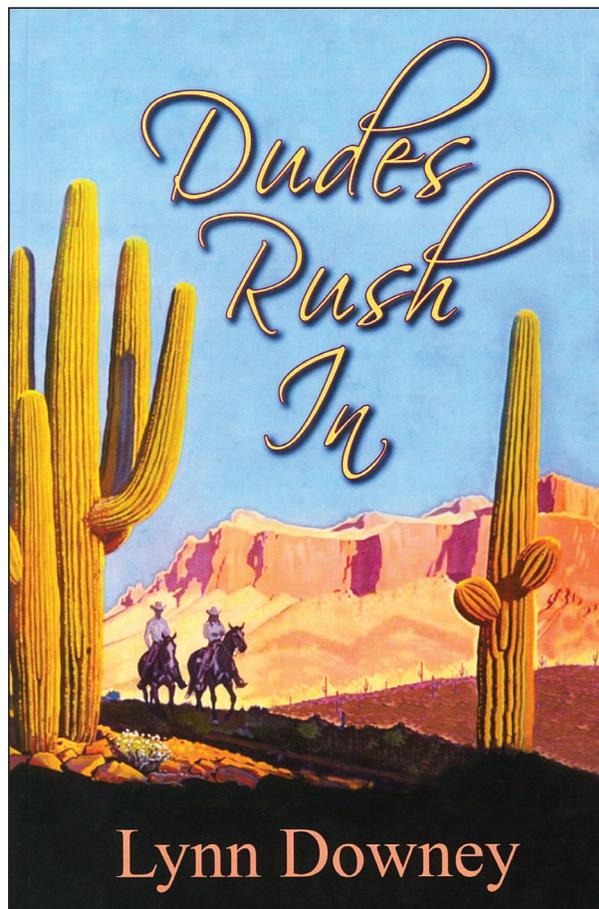
**JOHNSON, REBECCA M. LUSH and SARA SPURGEON** (editors)

*Weird Westerns: Race, Gender, Genre*

University of Nebraska Press  
Hardcover, paperback, 453 pages, \$70, \$35  
NebraskaPress.unl.edu

Apparently, if any topic hangs on long enough, it'll eventually attract the attention of academics, and it's happened for *Weird Westerns*. In this doorstep, 14 essays by various authors explore themes of (as the subtitle suggests) race and gender in the Weird West, along with the seemingly related themes of time travel, the living dead, cannibalism and lycanthropy, among others. If you're looking for a scholarly approach to media properties including *Westworld*, *The Walking Dead* and the *Deadlands* role-playing game, and the writings of Jonathan Lethem, Stephen King, Joss Whedon, Joe R. Lansdale and Quentin Tarantino, this is the book for you, but not if you're allergic to footnotes by the hundreds. And if you noted that several of those authors are critical darlings, but not particularly known for their Westerns, you're not alone. The best part might be the entertaining afterword by Stephen Graham Jones.

— Jeffrey J. Mariotte



## Dudes Rush In

It's 1952, and restless war widow Phoebe McFarland decides to leave her home in San Francisco to spend six months on her sister-in-law's dude ranch in Tribulation, Arizona. But Tribulation soon lives up to its name when secrets from the town's past collide with a shocking revelation of her own, leading Phoebe down a trail to both discovery and danger.

Available from  
[lynndowney.com](http://lynndowney.com)  
[bookshop.org](http://bookshop.org)  
[amazon.com](http://amazon.com)

Lynn Downey Awards:  
2020 WILLA award from Women Writing the West  
2019 Finalist for the LAURA award from Women Writing the West  
2016 silver INDIE award for Biography from Foreword Reviews

**PAUL L. HEDREN** (editor)  
*John Finerty Reports the Sioux War*  
University of Oklahoma Press  
Hardcover, 288 pages, \$34.95  
OUPress.com

Paul L. Hedren has done a great service for everyone wanting to know more about General George Crook's 1876 campaign against the Lakota and Cheyenne. John Finerty, correspondent for the *Chicago Times*, was with Crook's command for its entire time in the field. Hedren has gathered for the first time, in one volume, Finerty's newspaper accounts, telegrams and papers. Finerty wrote about the hardship of the marches, the boredom of camp, the action of the Rosebud and Slim Buttes battles, the booming Black Hills gold mining camps and the characters he encountered. Hedren's book provides background information on Finerty and places his writing in the context of his time. This masterful work needs to be read by all who have an interest in the Sioux Wars.

– Bill Markley

**JIM KRISTOFIC**  
*Medicine Women: The Story of the First Native American Nursing School*  
University of New Mexico Press  
Paperback, 416 pages, \$34.95  
UNMPress.com

This is a surprising and welcome story of the intersection of the Navajo people and the Presbyterian missionaries and doctors at the Ganado Mission on the Navajo Nation. It is focused on the School of Nursing established in 1930 at Sage Memorial Hospital by Dr. Clarence Salisbury. The last cohort of nurses graduated in 1953. Stories of cultural intersectionality rarely deviate from examining imbalances in power and oppression. This narrative is a welcome exception. Jim Kristofic, who grew up on the Navajo Nation, has produced an engaging narrative, well-supported by primary sources, that illuminates an important collaboration between cultures of the Southwest. Whether you are well-read in the history of the Navajo people or wondering where you might begin your exploration of these exceptional people and their culture, *Medicine Women* is an important addition to the scholarship.

– Tom Carpenter

**CHARLES LEERHSEN**  
*Butch Cassidy: The True Story of an American Outlaw*  
Simon & Schuster  
Hardcover, 304 pages, \$28  
SimonandSchuster.com

Charles Leerhsen, whose previous book was *Ty Cobb*, provides a fascinating portrait of Western outlaw Butch Cassidy. Born Robert Leroy Parker, he left his parents' farm in Utah and reinvented himself as Butch Cassidy, starting as a cattle rustler, then becoming a bank robber and a train robber. Well-dressed, charismatic and polite, he enjoyed targeting big business (railways, for example) rather than individuals. Along the way, he teamed with Harry Alonzo Longabaugh (who reinvented himself as the Sundance Kid) and Sundance's female companion, Ethel (not Etta, as she is often mistakenly referred to) Place. Fans of the 1969 film, *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (William Goldman's screenplay received an Oscar) will find that the movie's famous epigraph, "Most of what follows is true," isn't true. There's more to the story, especially after the trio fled to South America. The book includes asides to events such as the Big Die-Up blizzard of 1886-87 and the range wars of the 1890s.

– David Morrell

**RAY A. MARCH**  
*Mass Murder in California's Empty Quarter: A Tale of Tribal Treachery at the Cedarville Rancheria*  
Hardcover, 223 pages, \$27.95  
Bison Books  
NebraskaPress.unl.edu

The cryptic title of this important book might confuse some readers as to just where is the "empty quarter." It's Modoc County, in the northeast corner of California, where the population is a sparse 2.3 people per square mile. It's also the location of the Cedarville Rancheria, a small Northern Paiute Reservation where on February 20, 1887, Cherie Rhoades shot and killed four people and wounded two others, mainly family members. The mass murder shocked the nation as Rhoades was the first woman to do such a brutal act. Ray March not only explores why Rhoades killed her relatives, but also examines the conditions under which many

American Indians live today – poverty, disease, alcoholism, despair – passing from one generation to another. Whites in Modoc County living there for generations continue the prejudice of their ancestors towards Indians. March recounts the trial and its aftermath in a compelling story of the internal dissonance that plagues many American Indian families and what motivated Rhoades to commit mass murder.

– Abraham Hoffman

**VALERIE SHERER MATHES**  
(editor)  
*Gender, Race, and Power in the Indian Reform Movement: Revisiting the History of the WNIA*  
University of New Mexico Press  
Hardcover, 284 pages, \$65  
UNMPress.com

The Women's National Indian Association arose in the Progressive Era as an outgrowth of middle-class white women's desire to effect moral changes in American government. Its membership sought to improve the living conditions, economic opportunities and the dominant society's perception of Indian peoples. Valerie Sherer Mathes has collected a series of essays written by academic historians and scholars of gender studies who examine how the leaders of this movement viewed their reform efforts in terms of gender relations, race, religion and social structure. These 10 essays make no effort to applaud the efforts of the women reformers, but instead take on the daunting task of explaining how the membership's concepts of gender roles, masculinity, paternalism and Christian values affected the ways in which the organization sought to effect its goals. The authors use biography as an effective way of telling the stories of both white and Indian women in the movement.

– Catherine Holder Spude

**BILL O'REILLY** and **MARTIN DUGARD**  
*Killing Crazy Horse: The Merciless Indian Wars in America*  
Henry Holt and Company  
Hardcover, 320 pages, \$30  
HenryHolt.com

I like Bill O'Reilly's pithy writing style, but this book has problems. The title is misleading; the book has little to do with Crazy Horse. Endnotes are nonexistent. There are factual prob-

lems. Here are a few: The authors have Colonel Gordon Granger making peace with the Apache leader Cochise and agreeing to establish the Chiricahua Reservation, however it was General Oliver O. Howard, not Granger. The authors have Calamity Jane accompanying Custer's 1874 Black Hills expedition. She did not. There were never any Cheyenne people with the Lakotas killed at Wounded Knee. Unfortunately, *Killing Crazy Horse* has problems.

— Bill Markley

**JULIE WHITESEL WESTON**  
(author) and **GERRY MORRISON**  
(photographer)

*The Magical Universe of the Ancients: A Desert Journal*

Big Wood Books  
Hardcover, 152 pages, \$40  
BigWoodBooks.com

Shrunken corn cobs, red-painted figures adorning cragged rock, dwellings built of mud and willow tell of another time, another people. And the stories they tell are magical. This photo book shares the wonder of what we call the Southwest, an area of hard grace, stunning beauty and vistas that shatter

reality. Written with passion by Julie Weston, a woman from the Northwest, this book takes readers on a journey of discovery and total awe. Weston readily admits her fascination for the boundless miles deemed the West. The photos accompanying her revelations and musing are stunning, mostly black and white, giving the opportunity to appreciate the art of both the long-ago painters and of the photo itself. This beautiful book deserves shelf space.

— Melody Groves

**LINDA WOMMACK**  
*Ranching Women of Colorado: 17 Legendary Ladies*

Caxton Press  
Paperback, 340 pages, \$17.95  
CaxtonPress.com

Linda Wommack writes on historically significant people and places of her home state of Colorado. Here are profiles of 17 gutsy women who chiseled homes and livelihoods from the rocky, arid, untamed West. Most were either widowed or divorced (at a time when the latter was considered scandalous), and some, a number of times. My favorite sentence: "Josephine Bassett

McKnight Ranney Williams Wells Morris ... divorced four of her husbands, running one off at gunpoint, and the fifth husband died of natural causes, according to the coroner and two separate investigations." The ancestral info gets boggy at times, but there are scores of delightful anecdotes about hellcats, rattlesnake fighters, ranch queens and a woman who claimed that, in her teens, she kept the Sundance Kid company in the hayloft of her father's barn.

— Micki Fuhrman

## FICTION

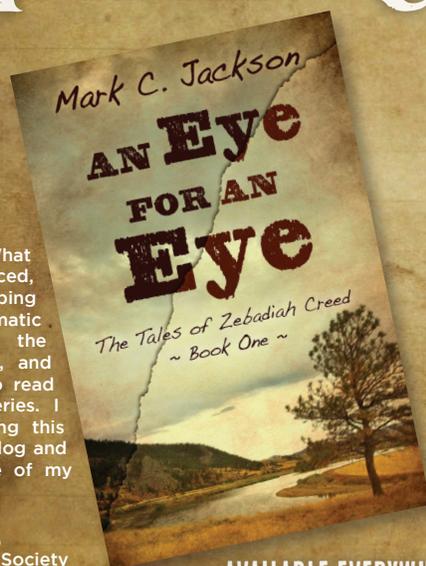
**T.L. DAVIS**  
*Rebel: The Last American Novel*

12 Round Publishing  
Paperback, 275 pages, \$11.95  
TwelveRound.com

In *Rebel*, we encounter Lane Daniels, a stoic, disaffected teen who leaves behind family, school and friends for a solitary, months-long ramble in search of freedom and self-sufficiency. Set in the late 1970s in Colorado and Kansas, *Rebel* follows the fortunes of this ranch-reared youth who chafes against

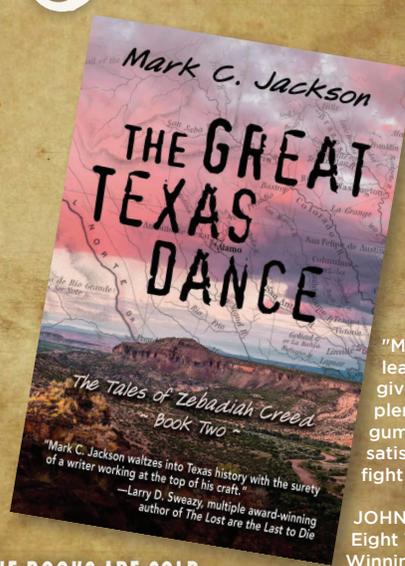
FROM AWARD WINNING, CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED AUTHOR, SINGER-SONGWRITER

# MARK C. JACKSON



"I loved this book. What an exciting, fast-paced, action-packed, gripping story with a dramatic conclusion! This is the author's first novel, and I will be anxious to read the next in the series. I had difficulty putting this book down. The dialog and drama make it one of my favorites this year."

JEFF WESTERHOFF,  
The Historical Novel Society



"Mark C. Jackson writes lean, leathery prose, gives his characters plenty of grit and gumption, and tells a satisfying story of Texas's fight for independence."

JOHNNY D. BOGGS,  
Eight Time Spur Award  
Winning Author

AVAILABLE EVERYWHERE FINE BOOKS ARE SOLD  
VISIT [MARKJACKSONWRITER.COM](http://MARKJACKSONWRITER.COM)

the “dehumanizing” tendencies of a world increasingly urbanized. With one foot in his region’s pioneer past, Daniels seems pressed into a sort of frontiersman’s bargain with civilization. He will live *in* it, but not quite be *of* it. *Rebel* could be a metaphor for the West, once the grandest of national treasures, more lately a region hijacked into contemporary times, too often dismissed for having values deemed archaic by modern sophisticates. In *Rebel*, by story’s end, we feel some comeuppance, if only because one soul remains true.

– Jesse Mullins

#### PHILLIP GESSERT

*Tintype Rogue, Illustrated Journal of the Western Frontier*

Lulu

Paperback, 244 pages, \$32.44

Lulu.com

Itinerant photographer Sherman Gephart documents his exciting adventures in the Wild West through the lens of his tintype camera and the words in his journal. His travels take readers to Dodge City, Deadwood and Tombstone, where he meets the West’s icons. While this book is a true gold mine for readers looking for authenticity in photos and words, this is a work of fiction. However, the photos are originals but, thanks to Photoshop technology, Phillip Gessert has enhanced them. In no way attempting to falsify history or fake actual photographs, Gessert spins a compelling story of a 19<sup>th</sup> Century photographer looking to earn a living. What he does is document westward expansion. As long as readers keep in mind this is fiction, it deserves shelf space.

– Melody Groves

#### GARY KAMEN

*Good with a Gun*

White Bird Publications

Paperback, 309 pages, \$22.99

WhiteBirdPublications.com

*Good with a Gun* can best be described as the pulpiest of pulp writers crossed with *Fiddler on the Roof* crossed with Sam Peckinpah. Gary Kamen has produced an interesting mix of characters in Max Gurowitz, who is ostensibly a poor Jewish peddler who owns a “talking” donkey, but in reality is a deadly gunfighter; his Jewish/Comanche cousin Benjamin “Blue Bear” Saloman; prostitute Magdalena Sheafer and her incredibly violent, evil family; and a score of others. The premise of Gurowitz’s background is unique and capably handled. The plot, while straightforward, still contains enough twists and turns to keep the reader guessing. The action is continuous, the violence over the top – way over. Peckinpah would have loved it.

– James J. Griffin

#### ELMER KELTON

*The Cowboy Way*

Forge Books

Hardcover, 240 pages, \$25.99

Us.macmillan.com

Seven-time Spur Award winner Elmer Kelton (1926-2009), known for penning some of the best literature of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Texas (*The Day the Cowboys Quit*, *The Good Old Boys*, *The Time It Never Rained*, *The Man Who Rode Midnight*) knew his way around short fiction, too. This collection includes

FEBRUARY 2021

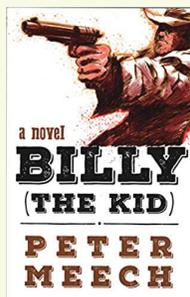
*Editor’s Note: What’s one person’s Shakespeare is another person’s slop. Any review is merely one person’s opinion, so in the sense of fair play, Take 2 provides two opinions on one book. Billy the Kid has been well-chronicled in fiction and nonfiction, so longtime Roundup reviewer Tom Carpenter and newcomer Tom Claffey take a crack at the latest novel tackling the Southwestern legend.*

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#### PETER MEECH

*Billy (The Kid)*

Sentient Publications



Hardcover, 192 pages, \$23

SentientPublications.com

I’ve never understood the fascination with Billy the Kid. Like the people who enjoy habanero peppers, fans of Billy the Kid are an enigma to me. So it was with trepidation that I agreed to review this novel. I was pleasantly surprised. The concept of this fictional alternative history is this: Billy did not die at the hands of Sheriff Pat Garrett on July 14, 1881. It is 1932. Billy has retired to Pueblo, Colorado, to become “Dr. McCarty,” a dentist, and to work on his memoirs that he hopes will correct all the false narratives about “Billy the Kid.” Meanwhile, a bootleg war forces his old skills to life again. One quibble: Dialogue without quotation marks. For goodness sake, why?

– Tom Carpenter

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This is an alternate history – taking a glimpse at the life of Henry McCarty, alias of William H. Bonney, also known as Billy the Kid (1859-1881), who resurfaces as a retired dentist, Dr. McCarty, and assumes the role of Billy the Kid in Pueblo, Colorado, in 1932. Despite the distraction of no quotation marks throughout the text and a sometimes-challenging story line, there are appealing moments of companionship between Billy and his 12-year-old friend, Tommy, and a growing spark of romance between Billy and widow Grace O’Bannon, which add elements of warmth and charm to the story.

– Tom Claffey

“The Black Sheep,” in print for the first time since its publication in *Everywoman’s Magazine* in 1956. Other titles include “Fighting for the Brand,” “No Music for Fiddle Feet” and “Dry Winter.”

#### ROD MILLER

*A Thousand Dead Horses*

Five Star Publishing

Hardcover, 264 pages, \$25.95

Gale.Cengage.com/FiveStar

Boone, a young man from Missouri, goes to New Mexico

Territory and meets Pegleg Smith, a mountain man with aspirations to steal horses from California. With a mixed group, they head to California, where they steal 3,000 horses and mules. Pegleg takes Boone under his wing, educating him about getting along with different people and the hardships of living in the West. Boone goes through many emotions on the journey to California and back to Santa Fe. This combination of facts and fiction will keep you interested. Rod Miller does an excellent job of portraying his characters and bringing the story to life.

– Lowell F. Volk

**PAMELA NOWAK**

*Never Let Go*

Five Star Publishing  
Hardcover, 478 pages, \$25.95  
Gale.Cengage.com/FiveStar

*Never Let Go* is a portrayal of the Lake Shetek Massacre that occurred during the 1862 U.S. Dakota War. Pamela Nowak delves into the lives of five actual women who settled in Minnesota with their families. Their already difficult lives

grew tragically worse when they were suddenly attacked by marauding Sioux. Trapped in Slaughter Slough, they helplessly witnessed neighbors, spouses and children murdered. One woman was left for dead. Three were taken captive. Another was abandoned on the prairie with two small children. All endured horrific events that tested their will to survive. Nowak's precise research and vivid imagination splashes this historic event on the page in stark brilliance. *Never Let Go* holds the reader to the very end. Well done, Pamela Nowak.

– Candace Simar

**CURTIS BRADLEY VICKERS**

*This Here Is Devil's Work*

University of Nevada Press  
Hardcover, 312 pages, \$28.95  
UNPress.nevada.edu

The author moves from the world of essay and short-story writing to deliver a rather ambitious debut novel. Weaving dissimilar story lines of wildland firefighters with their personal conflicts and a laundromat-working grandmother-turned-cattle rustler, Curtis Bradley

Vickers leads readers on a path that finally blends into a plausible outcome. While offering no great insights into the human condition, Vickers's imaginative storytelling entertains and promises more good things to come.

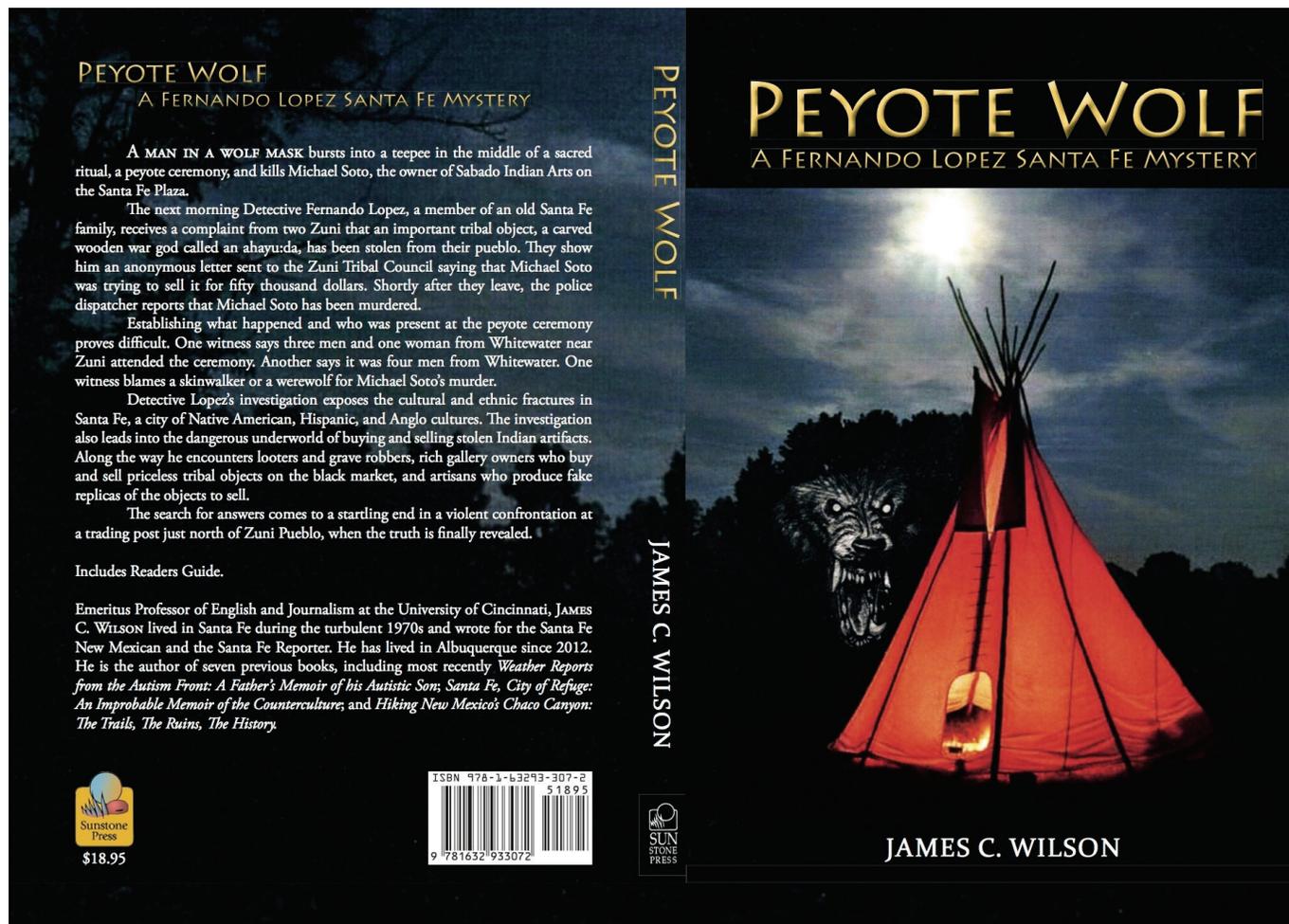
– Lynn Bueling

**JOHN WEST**

*Marshallville: An Action Western of Revenge, Romance and Retribution*

DS Productions  
Paperback, 365 pages, \$12.99  
Amazon.com

Six families drop out of a wagon train in eastern Colorado when their leader's wife suffers a difficult pregnancy. John Marshall's wife dies giving birth. Using the Township Act of 1862, on July 4, 1868, the group decides to form a town named Marshallville. There's a lot to like about *Marshallville*. It's a look into what a writer needs to do when plotting a novel, detailing each character so he/she comes to life on the page. When teaching novel writers about characters, this book would be a good example. However, conflict propels every story, and there isn't



any before the town is established and characters are in place, which doesn't occur until the last chapter or two. What violence there is happens off stage, a refreshing take on Western gunplay. This story is a good first attempt at novel writing. The author needs to read the genre more, work on dialogue and continue developing his characters. *Marshallville* is a good start.

– Melody Groves

**ETHAN J. WOLFE**

***Baker's Dozen***

Five Star Publishing  
Hardcover, 265 pages, \$25.95  
Gale.Cengage.com/FiveStar

U.S. Secret Service agent Murphy is trying to settle down with his new wife, Kai, when he gets a request from President Chester Arthur to help find a killer of seven victims in New York. The murders have caused a decline in the stock market. Murphy and forensic researcher Melvin Knoop try to determine what these seven people have in common. Their quest to resolve the mystery takes many turns. The author has a unique way of combining Murphy's personal life with his work in finding the killer.

I found *Baker's Dozen* to be an easy and entertaining read.

– Lowell F. Volk

**Book Notes**

**MARK LEE GARDNER**

***To Hell on a Fast Horse: The Untold Story of Billy the Kid and Pat Garrett***

William Morrow  
Trade paperback, 330 pages, \$16.99  
HarperCollins.com

Spur Award-winning author Mark Lee Gardner offers a dual biography of Henry Antrim, better known as Billy the Kid, and his killer, Pat Garrett in this best-selling book first published in hardcover in 2010. This special 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition includes a new afterword by the author in which Gardner reconfirms that “the Kid’s story was anything but tired” in 2010 and today “shows no sign of letting up.”

**BRIAN KAUFMAN**

***Dread Tribunal of Last Resort***

Five Star Publishing  
Hardcover, 359 pages, \$25.95  
Gale.Cengage.com/FiveStar

Decker Brown, a Boston-educated Virginian loves Paula Crane, the daughter of a flour-mill owner. But their relationship is tested when the Civil War breaks out. *Where Eagles Dare Not Perch* author Peter Bridgford calls this novel by Colorado novelist Brian Kaufman a “well-written and well-researched page turner.”

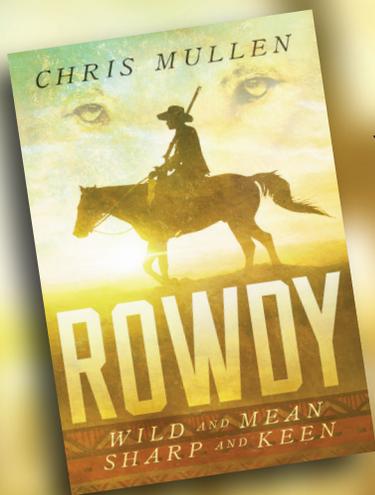
**AUBREY MALONE**

***Maureen O'Hara: The Biography***

University Press of Kentucky  
Trade paperback, 269 pages, \$19.95  
KentuckyPress.com

Often remembered for her co-starring film roles with John Wayne – including the Westerns *Rio Grande*, *McLintock!* and *Big Jake* – Irish-born Maureen O'Hara (1920-2015) was a versatile actress who also appeared in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1939), *How Green Was My Valley* (1940) and *Miracle on 34<sup>th</sup> Street* (1947). But she sure made a lot of Westerns. Now available in paperback, Aubrey Malone's biography, first published in 2013, follows O'Hara from her childhood in Dublin to her stardom and private life.

A man acts like one because he has to ...  
A boy acts like one when he wants to...  
**WHAT ARE YOU?**



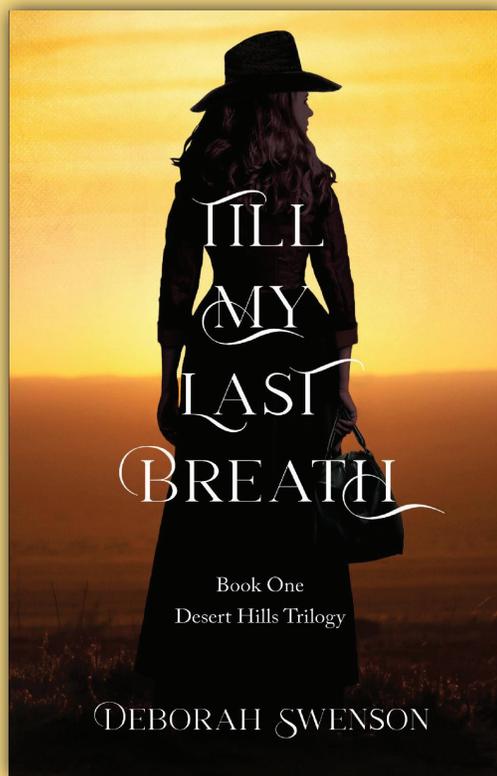
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