

# New Mexico Historical Review

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## Book Reviews

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## Book Reviews

*Albuquerque.* Erna Fergusson. Albuquerque: Merle Armitage, 1947. Pp. 87. \$2.50.

The author of *Dancing Gods, Fiesta in Mexico, Our Southwest*, and other regional studies of South and Central America and our Southwest, has given us now *Albuquerque*, a biography of a city. Eighty-seven pages of attractive format designed by Merle Armitage, with seven full-page illustrations by Li Browne, the book reflects the brevity and good taste of a pleasant afternoon chat with a charming person who knows and loves her city. It is not a history; the facts will be well known to readers of THE NEW MEXICO HISTORICAL REVIEW, and the author has no need of footnotes. It is not a travel book; nowhere is the reader urged to climax his terrestrial existence with a pilgrimage to this place. It is not a book of reminiscences; though the author is a Native Daughter her vision is not dimmed by any nostalgic mist but is surprisingly clear and objective. In short, it is the simple life story of a city that is at once commonplace and fabulous, ancient and modern, ugly and beautiful—and dozens of other contradictions.

Miss Fergusson briefly traces the two hundred and more years of Albuquerque from the coming of the first agricultural colonizers in their creaking *carretas* down to the days of the B-29's, the Super-Chief, and the atom bomb. She gives a quick but penetrating look at the people, from Juan Candelaria, perhaps the town's first "reporter," to Ernie Pyle. She describes the way of life of the *ricos*, the *peones*, and the in-between people who owned a little land, raised a small garden, tended a few animals, worked if they felt like it—gently, in the spirit of "the land of mañana"—and took both their religion and their superstitions seriously. Much is said, and properly so, of the social stratification still to be observed in the slow amalgamation of Indian, Mexican, Spanish-American, and the various other breeds of "American." And much is also said of the coming of such necessities as the Rotary Club, sanitariums, winter sports, the Univer-

sity and football, community concerts, and immigrant politicians. To this city the new is always being added, but the old does not change. Here an Indian in a wagon dragged by a scrawny horse will pull up at an intersection, wait for the green light, and signal his left turn to the man waiting behind him in the latest Buick.

Much is said, and again properly so in a book of this kind, about folklore. The *curandera* with her charms for healing the sick, the Christmas and Easter festivals and traditional dramas, the *bailes*, and the tales of desperadoes, beautiful ladies, sham battles, local characters—all are here. A bit of folk etymology on the naming of the Sandias (p. 27) should interest natives who are sometimes hard put to explain why these inspiring mountains should bear the name *sandia*, watermelon.

Why do people live in Albuquerque? Because, says Miss Fergusson, they like it. It is as simple as that. People go through Albuquerque and then come back. The writer of this review was one; he started through Albuquerque, stopped for the night, and stayed nearly two years. This book will delight anyone who has seen Albuquerque and anyone who expects to see it. And that takes in just about everybody.

HECTOR LEE

Chico State College  
Chico, California

*1000 California Place Names, Their Origin and Meaning.*

Irwin G. Gudde. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1947. Pp. vii, 96. \$1.00.

This interesting little book is based upon Mr. Gudde's manuscript of *California Place Names*, a geographic dictionary of more than 5,000 names to be published in 1948. The stories behind place names often have considerable historical and human interest. Those of California are of widely varied origin and reflect its colorful history under Spanish and American rule. The forthcoming dictionary would therefore be valuable both to specialists and laymen. No doubt certain

flaws in the present publication will be corrected. For example, considerable care should be taken to distinguish local usages of Spanish and Spanish-Mexican terms from their original or more widely accepted meanings.

ELEANOR ADAMS

Carnegie Institution of Washington

*The Grassland of North America: Prolegomena To Its History.* James C. Malin. Lawrence, Kansas, The Author, 1947. Pp. viii, 398. \$3.00.

This is a study of the area usually known as the Trans-Mississippi West, or Great Plains, bounded by the first tier of states west of the Mississippi where the forest belt ends, at the east, and by the Rocky Mountain foothills where the more arid desert belt begins, at the west. When first found by the European at the opening of the sixteenth century its vegetational cover was grass rather than forest. This book is bound to be compared with W. P. Webb's on the same area. But Malin's method is to give greater stress to the ecological, agronomical, and geographical factors than has hitherto been done, seeking to point out the new tools and evidence which these sciences can bring to the aid of the historian.

The present book is closely related to one entitled *Essays on Historiography* by the same author in 1946, and is to be supplemented by a future work on fuel and housing in the grassland. He points out that the grassland extends eastward to Ohio and Kentucky and westward to the inland empire of the Pacific Northwest, northward into Canada and southward into Mexico. But chief emphasis is given to the High Plains, rather than to the "tall-grass prairie" east of the 96 meridian. Malin gives due credit, where credit is due, to pioneer students of the grassland plains, ecologists and physiographers as well as historians, such as N. S. Shaler, J. W. Powell, F. J. Turner, W. P. Webb, and numerous others less well known. But wherever he believes there are inadequacies in either the facts or interpretations of other scholars, those of an earlier day or

contemporaries, he is ready to point out such weaknesses and direct future students to paths where further research is needed.

Part one of the book is devoted to a survey of the natural sciences that have a bearing on the relations of man with his geographical setting in this region. The development of each of the sciences is approached historically, and their interrelations with the main course of social change is shown. Such sciences are included as plant, animal and insect ecology, microbiology, soil agronomy, geology and geography, and regional equilibrium. Part two deals with historiography, sketching the significance of various writers who have written on the history and physical geography of the plains, and how the growth of regional scientific knowledge has affected social theory and effective agricultural settlement.

Especially effective are his sections debunking the "plow to desert" mythology and related propaganda of the Tugwell bureau, with its posed photographs and film "The Plow that Broke the Plains," and of books such as *Plowman's Folly* and *Grapes of Wrath*, in his chapter on "Desert Equilibrium." Similarly the vagaries of political geographers of the "environmental determinism" school, who at will can attribute any desired type of government or social organization to geography and climate, are well demonstrated in his chapter on "Science and Social Theory."

It is a coincidence that this book appears in the same year as Toynbee's condensed *Study of History*. Toynbee or a similar future Toynbee might well find much grist for his mill in this interpretative guide for regional historiography by Malin. Lithoprinted from the author's typescript, in appearance and ease of reading the printing is quite adequate—a method which is apt to become more common in these days of inflated costs.

AUSTIN E. HUTCHESON

University of Nevada

# The Historical Society of New Mexico

*Organized December 26, 1859*

## PAST PRESIDENTS

- 1859 — COL. JOHN B. GRAYSON, U. S. A.  
1861 — MAJ. JAMES L. DONALDSON, U. S. A.  
1863 — HON. KIRBY BENEDICT

*adjourned sine die, Sept. 23, 1863*

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*re-established Dec. 27, 1880*

- 1881 — HON. WILLIAM G. RITCH  
1883 — HON. L. BRADFORD PRINCE  
1923 — HON. FRANK W. CLANCY  
1925 — COL. RALPH E. TWITCHELL  
1926 — PAUL A. F. WALTER

## OFFICERS FOR 1946-1947

PAUL A. F. WALTER, *President*

PEARCE C. RODEY, *Vice-President*

WAYNE L. MAUZY, *Corresponding Secretary*

ALBERT G. ELY, *Treasurer*

MISS HESTER JONES, *Recording Secretary*

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CHARLES W. HACKETT	FRANCE V. SCHOLES
GEORGE P. HAMMOND	ALFRED B. THOMAS

PAUL A. F. WALTER

**CONSTITUTION**  
OF THE  
**HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF NEW MEXICO**

(As amended Nov. 25, 1941)

**Article 1. *Name.*** This Society shall be called the Historical Society of New Mexico.

**Article 2. *Objects and Operation.*** The objects of the Society shall be, in general, the promotion of historical studies; and in particular, the discovery, collection, preservation, and publication of historical material especially such as relates to New Mexico.

**Article 3. *Membership.*** The Society shall consist of Members, Fellows, Life Members and Honorary Life Members.

(a) *Members.* Persons recommended by the Executive Council and elected by the Society may become members.

(b) *Fellows.* Members who show, by published work, special aptitude for historical investigation may become Fellows. Immediately following the adoption of this Constitution, the Executive Council shall elect five Fellows, and the body thus created may thereafter elect additional Fellows on the nomination of the Executive Council. The number of Fellows shall never exceed twenty-five.

(c) *Life Members.* In addition to life members of the Historical Society of New Mexico at the date of the adoption hereof, such other benefactors of the Society as shall pay into its treasury at one time the sum of fifty dollars, or shall present to the Society an equivalent in books, manuscripts, portraits, or other acceptable material of an historic nature, may upon recommendation by the Executive Council and election by the Society, be classed as Life Members.

(d) *Honorary Life Members.* Persons who have rendered eminent service to New Mexico and others who have, by published work, contributed to the historical literature of New Mexico or the Southwest, may become Honorary Life Members upon being recommended by the Executive Council and elected by the Society.

**Article 4. *Officers.*** The elective officers of the Society shall be a president, a vice-president, a corresponding secretary, a treasurer, and a recording secretary; and these five officers shall constitute the *Executive Council* with full administrative powers.

Officers shall qualify on January 1st following their election, and shall hold office for the term of two years and until their successors shall have been elected and qualified.

Article 5. *Elections.* At the October meeting of each odd-numbered year, a nominating committee shall be named by the president of the Society and such committee shall make its report to the Society at the November meeting. Nominations may be made from the floor and the Society shall, in open meeting, proceed to elect its officers by ballot, those nominees receiving a majority of the votes cast for the respective offices to be declared elected.

Article 6. *Dues.* Dues shall be \$3.00 for each calendar year, and shall entitle members to receive bulletins as published and also the *Historical Review*.

Article 7. *Publications.* All publications of the Society and the selection and editing of matter for publication shall be under the direction and control of the Executive Council.

Article 8. *Meetings.* Monthly meetings of the Society shall be held at the rooms of the Society on the third Tuesday of each month at eight P. M. The Executive Council shall meet at any time upon call of the President or of three of its members.

Article 9. *Quorums.* Seven members of the Society and three members of the Executive Council, shall constitute quorums.

Article 10. *Amendments.* Amendments to this constitution shall become operative after being recommended by the Executive Council and approved by two-thirds of the members present and voting at any regular monthly meeting; provided, that notice of the proposed amendments shall have been given at a regular meeting of the Society, at least four weeks prior to the meeting when such proposed amendment is passed upon by the Society.