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Book Reviews

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Book Reviews

Cuentos Españoles de Colorado y de Nuevo Méjico. By Juan B. Rael. 2 vols. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1957. Pp. Vol. I., xvi/559, Vol. II., xv/819. Bibliography. \$10.00.

In 1946 Aurelio M. Espinosa's monumental work *Cuentos Populares Españoles* was published and set a goal for other scholars interested in Spanish folklore. Now, eleven years later, Juan B. Rael, colleague and former student of Espinosa's, reaches another high goal and makes an important contribution to Spanish folklore studies with his *Cuentos Españoles de Colorado y de Nuevo Méjico*.

The collection, a two volume work, contains 518 tales collected by Rael in Colorado and New Mexico in 1930 and 1940. Although some tales had been published in the *Journal of American Folklore*,¹ this is the first publication of the complete collection. The great number of variants of well-known tales and tales appearing in print for the first time make the work an invaluable aid to the folklore scholar, especially for comparative studies.

Classified according to Espinosa's *Cuentos Populares Españoles*, the types of the tale in the collection range from the riddle, moral, animal and magic to the picaresque and cumulative. All are verbatim transcriptions from the lips of 98 Spanish-speaking informants, mostly inhabitants of small communities of Colorado and New Mexico, and reflect the Spanish cultural heritage which is still preserved by them.

Cuentos Españoles de Colorado y de Nuevo Méjico is a collection and does not make a pretense of being anything else; nevertheless, Rael makes the work of greater value by

1. Juan B. Rael, "Cuentos españoles de Colorado y de Nuevo Méjico," (Primera Serie), *Journal of American Folklore*, LII., 205-206 (July-December, 1939), pp. 227-323.

And

Juan B. Rael, "Cuentos españoles de Colorado y de Nuevo Méjico," (Segunda Serie), *Journal of American Folklore*, LV., 215-216 (January-June, 1942), pp. 1-93.

giving English summaries and comparative notes on each tale at the end of Volume II. He gives the most important data such as type numbers according to Aarne-Thompson, Espinosa, and Boggs' studies. Parallel tales found in other Spanish material are noted.

It is unfortunate that in Volume II, mispagination and misprint occur. "La piel de pulga" (313), which begins on page 326, continues on page 331 and ends on page 334. "El peladillo" (314), which begins at the bottom of page 329, continues on page 327 and ends at the top of page 329. In the bibliography under the entry on J. M. Espinosa, a misprint in dates is obvious: 1973 for 1937.

The mechanical errors mentioned, however, do not detract from the value of the collection. Rael's work is definitely a milestone in Spanish folklore studies and a must for the serious student of the folktale.

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SOLEDAD PÉREZ O.

Massacre: The Tragedy at White River. By Marshall Sprague. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1957. Pp. xviii, 364.

If the author had given his book the title "Incidents That Occurred in, Or That Can Be Related to the History of Colorado During the 1870's and 80's, particularly as it might pertain to the Ute Indians and more particularly the Meeker Massacre in 1879, with Biographical Sketches of Important Participants," it would have been easier for me to have reviewed this book. A remarkable job has been done of ferreting out these interesting incidents. They have been examined closely and reported well.

To indicate the time and effort that Marshall Sprague put into the preparation of the manuscript, and of himself to become familiar with the geographical area in which the events took place, let me quote directly from him: "I covered the fringe country east of the Rockies from Santa Fe through Taos, all up and down the San Luis and Wet Mountain Valley,

the various Colorado parks and old Ute camps around Colorado Springs. My wife was with me on all these trips which covered many thousands of miles in our station wagon. We are great fishermen and always had our fishing and camping gear along. We caught fish in the White River and most other streams mentioned in the book. My wife did most of the driving and I took notes. We spent several beautiful fall days picnicking and strolling around the battleground of the Thornburgh fight and made a point of being there on September 29 to have an approximate idea of what the weather may have been like in 1879 at that date. We spent weeks in and around Meeker, and a week at Greeley going over Nathan Meeker's home and habitat. For a solid winter I drove 75 miles one day a week to do research in the State Museum library and archives in Denver. We spent a week in Washington, D.C., combing the National Archives for other data. In matters of fauna and flora, nothing is mentioned in the book which we did not observe ourselves in the way of birds, animals, flowers, trees, bushes, geology and weather. We loved the country, and I hope some of the beauty we felt comes through to the reader."

Since the title of the book may lead the reader to expect a concentrated treatment of the Meeker Massacre itself, I should warn him that some sifting will have to be done to separate the material actually pertaining to this event from the balance of the information that the book contains. As a historian, one could question certain characterizations given and certain answers arrived at. As an ethnologist, one would urge greater caution in the conclusions reached. As a general reader, in the pursuit of information and pleasure, one would sit back and enjoy the accounts given.

This is certainly not the definitive work on the Meeker Massacre or the period in which this event occurred, but there is information included here which is not easily available elsewhere. Therefore, I would recommend that the book be acquired by persons doing research in the area, as well as the general reader.

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S. LYMAN TYLER

The Journal of Captain John R. Bell, Official Journalist for the Stephen H. Long Expedition to the Rocky Mountains, 1820. Edited by Harlin M. Fuller and LeRoy R. Hafen. (Glendale, California: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1957. Pp. 349. Index.

The expedition to the Rocky Mountains in 1820 under the leadership of Major Stephen H. Long was a major Federal government project for exploration of the Louisiana Territory. Captain Bell was designated the official chronicler of the expedition. His diary is now published in full for the first time with limited but adequate annotation by the editors, with most attention to the part that deals with the trans-Mississippi region.

Bell prepared his journal at the end of the trip from notes taken enroute. He confesses a lack of preparation for the task because of a deficient education. One eloquent passage (p. 177) reveals a talent for writing that would have been welcome more often. Otherwise his style is disjointed and a mild irritation is experienced when a key word is omitted or incompletely spelled. The editors could have interpolated words in brackets without detracting from their aim of presenting an exact copy of the original.

Bell's journal supplements Long's and provides corrections for some errors in geography. Bell's errors in turn are pointed out by the editors. The route of the expedition to the Rockies was "followed substantially" by the later stage coach and the present-day Union Pacific Railroad. The explorers skirted the east side of the Mountain, then Bell led a detachment homeward by way of the Arkansas River while Major Long followed the Canadian.

This journal provides interesting and useful insight to the lives of the Indian folk and the vicissitudes of travel on the plains caused by Mother Nature or the ineptness of man. Captain Bell would not have won a Boy Scout merit badge. The first night of camping under the stars was marred by breaking a hatchet in preparing firewood. Three days later he lost that most useful of articles, his coffee cup.

Information from interpreters and personal observations

describes the costumes and manners of the Indians. Otto Indian chiefs were observed wearing medals bearing the likeness of Jefferson and Madison, an old diplomatic practice of the white man in dealing with the aborigines. The travelers carefully observed protocol in Indian diplomacy and boldly resisted the Indian's tendency toward "thievery."

As volume VI of the publisher's *The Far West and the Rockies Historical Series 1820-1875*, it will be welcomed as another item in Western Americana and prove serviceable to scholars in several fields of study.

Fort Gibson was established in 1824 (cf. p. 270 note).

F. D. R.