New Mexico Historical Review

Volume 31 | Number 1 Article 5

1-1-1956

Book Reviews

We Fed Them Cactus. By Fabiola Cabeza de Baca. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1954. Pp. x, 186. Spanish glossary. Index. $3.50.

Books about the *Llano Estacado,* or Staked Plains, of Texas and New Mexico have not been numerous, and few if any have been written by descendants of the earliest Spanish settlers in that region. *We Fed Them Cactus* has the unique distinction of being a Spanish American history of the *Llano.* The author is a descendant of Don Luis María Cabeza de Baca, who in 1823 received a grant of land in the Las Vegas area totalling half a million acres. Much of this vast tract extended south and east over the Staked Plains, a vast plateau extending into northwest Texas and containing hills, peaks, mesas, canyons and valleys. During the eighteenth century, the Staked Plains were a great gap of land roamed by the Indians and acting as a barrier between the French settlements along the Mississippi and the Spanish colonies along the Rio Grande. In the early nineteenth century after the Independence of Mexico, the large landowners of northeastern New Mexico began to send their sheep and cattle into the Llano, and it is this period down to the near present which the author describes.

The opening chapters, which deal with the routine of life at a ranchhouse and branding corral, are personalized and interesting, especially such details as how the Spanish constructed a weather chart by designating each successive day of the New Year as a month and then balancing it against the next twelve days in reverse, i.e., January 1 and January 24 as the forecast for weather in January; January 2 and January 23 as the forecast for February, and so forth. Mrs. Gilbert tells about the time Santiago Estrada, the chore boy, persisted in singing a song so mournful that everyone in the roundup was becoming melancholy. Finally, *El Cuate* (The Twin) who was camp cook offered to buy the song, after which the boy could sing it only with his permission. Santiago offered to sell for a valuable quirt, and *El Cuate* said,

"The quirt is yours, and the tune is mine. From now on you cannot use it without my permission."

As the book progresses, the chapters on the Knights of Labor or "White Caps," on Vicente Silva, leader of the Society of New Mexican Bandits, and on the coming of the homesteaders retell with new and graphic data some of the most exciting events in the story of New Mexico. Don Graciano, the author's father, never really welcomed the "nesters" on the *Llano,* for he predicted that there was not enough rainfall to sustain their crops and those who broke the soil would contribute to drouth and the blowing dust of later years. Drouth in 1918 forced Don Graciano to move large numbers of his cattle to northern New Mexico and to burn prickles from the cactus so it could substitute for the grass which was gone. Thus came the title of the book. But one must add that Don Graciano did more than employ the resources of the land to feed his cattle. He also used the full resources of his mind and heart to care for his children, his workers, and those who were a part of his community, even the "Milo Maizes" as he called the farmers whose manners and ways were different from his own. Mrs. Fabiola Baca Gilbert's book should interest many readers because of its informative observations on the land grants during the American Occupation and the days when Las Vegas looked upon both Santa Fe and Albuquerque as the villages of New Mexico.

University of New Mexico T. M. PEARCE

Beyond the Cross Timbers: The Travels of Randolph B. Marcy, 1812-1887. By W. Eugene Hollon. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955. Pp. xiii, 270. Illustrations, index. $4.00.

This is really the biography of an Army officer who, as the title suggests, did among other things some exploring in Oklahoma, Texas, and New Mexico a century ago.

Randolph B. Marcy was graduated from West Point in 1832, ranking 29th in a class of 45. His more brilliant classmates generally left the service, but Marcy, unable to better

himself, stuck it out, though he complained about the poor pay, slow promotion, and "the dogs life that I am obliged to lead." He saw much garrison duty with units of the Fifth Infantry Regiment in Wisconsin and Michigan, and then in the Southwest.

Marcy suffered frequently from some ailment which Hollon suspects was "an asthmatic affliction." This kept him out of the Black Hawk War, and probably was the reason why he was assigned to recruiting duty at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, during most of the Mexican War.

Readers who expect Indian hostilities will be disappointed. Though Marcy is rated an expert on Indians, and dealt with them occasionally during his many years on the frontier, there is no suggestion that he ever shot an Indian or was fired upon by one. True, he did participate in scouting expeditions against the Seminoles in Florida for two months in 1857, and may have exchanged a few shots with shadows in the swamps.

Marcy's life which had been routine for many years became more strenuous in 1849 when he was given command of a military detachment escorting California-bound emigrants along a new route from Fort Smith, Arkansas to Santa Fe. Success in this venture brought him other exploring assignments, the most noteworthy taking him to the sources of the Red River in 1852.

In 1857-58 he served in the Mormon War. He won national recognition for leading a winter expedition from what is now southwestern Wyoming to New Mexico to obtain horses, mules, and relief supplies. This was his most spectacular and most dangerous expedition, for he and his party of 73 were lucky to get through the deep snow and bitter cold alive, and they suffered intensely (one death).

On his various expeditions Marcy was fortunate in having expert guides: the Delaware Indians, Black Beaver and John Bushman; Josiah Gregg's guide, the Comanche, Manuel; Jim Baker and Tim Goodale. However, it was an obscure packer, Miguel Alona, who extricated Marcy's Mormon War relief expedition from an almost hopeless predicament and led it through to New Mexico.

In following Marcy from post to post on the frontier, Hollon gives a valuable picture of Army life in the period. As usual the frontier was rough on women. Mrs. Marcy, who was a product of an Eastern finishing school, could stand just so much. Three servants were small compensation for loneliness, hardships, and privations. Of course, the two Marcy daughters had to be educated in the East. In 1852 Mrs. Marcy gave up trying to spend most of her time at frontier Army posts, and moved permanently to the East. Frequent family separations made life miserable for the Marcys but produced a rich by-product. Hollon labels "indispensable" the 500 family letters that have been preserved. Among other things these letters document parental maneuvering for a *mariage de convenance* for the Marcy's eldest daughter.

Promotions came slowly for Marcy: captain, 1846; major, 1858. In the Civil War, however, he became brigadier general of Volunteers, and served as chief of staff for his son-in-law, General George B. McClellan, in the Army of the Potomac. After Lincoln removed McClellan, Marcy spent the rest of the War inspecting militia troops in the West. For many years after the War he traveled through the West and Southwest in the capacity of Inspector General. He ranked as permanent brigadier general from 1868 to his retirement in 1881.

One of Marcy's best claims to fame is that he wrote three books: *Prairie Traveller* (1859); *Thirty Years of Army Life on the Border* (1866); and *Border Reminiscences* (1871).

To this reviewer Hollon's attempt to make a great, heroic figure of Marcy does not quite succeed, but he does the best he can with the material he has to work with. Whatever one may conclude about the stature of Marcy, the book is eminently readable and interesting, and the product of thoroughgoing research; and it affords many insights into the history of the United States in the 19th century. It is a job well done, and the University of Oklahoma Press, as well as the author, deserves congratulations.

University of Wyoming T. A. LARSON

The Southern Claims Commission. By Frank W. Klingberg. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1955. Pp. ix, 261. Appendixes, bibliography, index. $3.50 (University of California Publications in History, vol. 50).

This monograph is a detailed examination of a federal commission which for nearly ten years (1871-1880) considered the claims of "loyal" southerners to compensation for quartermaster and commissary supplies which they had made available (sometimes involuntarily) to the union armies. Although, as the title suggests, this study is limited in its scope, it nevertheless throws much light upon one of the most tragic groups of the Civil War era, namely the southern unionists.

Perhaps no propaganda stereotype of the war was more effectively exploited in the North than atrocity stories of attacks upon southern whites who refused to abandon their loyalty to the union. While Andrew Johnson, "Parson" Brownlow, Andrew J. Hamilton and similar political orators who addressed northern audiences were able to identify themselves with the leadership of this resistance movement, rumors circulated that "Leagues of Loyalty" were being organized in the South to uphold the cause of the federal government there. Indeed the Belgian patriots of the first World War or the underground of World War II might be compared in popular esteem with the North's admiration for the courage of the Civil War unionists. But with the coming of reconstruction these southern unionists became still more of a paradox, for although they had been shunned and persecuted by Confederate sympathizers in the South during the war, the northern Radicals in Congress during the reconstruction years linked these same unionists with disloyalty by the mere fact of their southern residence. Through the dogma of "constructive treason," civil disabilities imposed upon them by federal statutes could be removed if at all only by positive evidence of individual loyalty.

One of the earliest disabilities suffered by the southern unionists was incorporated in a law of July 4, 1864, which

forbade the quartermaster and commissary generals of the union army to pay unionists for army supplies which had been acquired from them in insurrectionary States, although these officers might continue to honor such obligations in non-secessionist States. It was only in 1871, when the Radicals' grip on reconstruction policies had begun to slip that the Border States' and southern leaders in Congress were able to push through a partial relief measure in the form of a bill to institute a southern claims commission to consider the unionists' claims to these payments. Even then the legislation required that Congress itself must have the final word in awards to such claimants. The appointees of the three-member commission were carefully selected to represent the Radicals' point of view.

Professor Klingberg prefaces his investigation of the Southern Claims Commission with introductory chapters on the origins of southern unionism, a discussion of the "twilight citizenship" or constitutional questions pertinent to the unionists, and an assiduous tracking of the southern claims commission bill through the congressional maze. Following this there are chapters on the commission's operating techniques (including its relations with its southern agents), the rigid loyalty test which required the claimants to present evidence of continuous loyalty to the union throughout the war, and an analysis of the complicated evaluations of property surrendered to the union armies. The property "furnished or taken" most often was livestock, corn, fodder, fence rails, and lumber. On occasion, however, other items, even dishes, candlesticks, Irish linen, coffee mills, and drugs were appropriated. The commission, however, refused to entertain claims for damages due to plunder or devastation. A revealing summary of the geographical distribution of these claims indicates that although the largest number of claims came from Virginia and Tennessee, many of the claimants who requested $10,000 or more were from Louisiana and Mississippi. The monograph concludes with a brief review of the federal government's action on southern claims after the commission's expiration, and a consideration of the political reorientation of the southern unionists.

Both because of the inflexibility of the commission's standards and the proscriptive inclinations of Congress (which cut off new claim applications in 1873), the quartermaster and commissary claims never became a raid upon the treasury. A total of 22,298 claims was filed, amounting to $60,258,150.44, but the amount awarded by Congress upon recommendation of the commission was only $4,636,920.69. Klingberg estimates that not more than one out of four southern unionists eligible to do so ever filed a claim with the commission. Hedged in with qualifications and limitations, the activities of the Southern Claims Commission could have had little influence in the reunification of the estranged sections of the nation. In the end the southern unionist, always an exponent of individualism, turned his back upon a northern political alliance and joined the "Solid South."

Ample documentation and a full bibliography of manuscript and printed sources indicate that much of the research for this volume was done in the National Archives and the Library of Congress, especially in the papers of the commission. The author prints useful statistical tables, a map indicating the distribution of claims, and a series of appendixes, one of which is a reproduction of the awesome eighty questions which were used to test the loyalty of each claimant.

One of the most interesting features of the study is the many excerpts from specific cases which give flashes of insight into the social conditions and psychological attitudes of the post-bellum South. Since the cases have been selected only from the 710 claims for $10,000 or more which the commission presented to Congress, and the more than 21,000 smaller claims receive scant attention save in the statistics, the study, in spite of a wealth of details, lacks a certain degree of completeness. There also is insufficient proof of the author's contention that because some of the unionists lived in commercial centers of the South they were for that reason drawn by commercial ties to the union. Many a southern merchant who was indebted to northern creditors proved Polonius' adage that a "loan oft loses both itself and friend" by becoming an ardent southern nationalist. Moreover it

may also be doubted that all Louisiana Germans were southern counterparts of Carl Schurz. Finally, a confused statement (p. 189) dates the Pargoud case decision by the Supreme Court in 1863. This is obviously an error, especially since the author himself states (p. 91) that it was decided in the 1871 term.

University of New Mexico GEORGE WINSTON SMITH

Champion of Reform: Manuel Abad y Queipo. By Lillian Estelle Fisher. New York: Library Publishers, 1955. Pp. xi, 314. $6.00.

In this volume on the life of Abad y Queipo, Dr. Fisher describes his life as a young priest and his rise to fame in Guatemala and later as a bishop in Michoacán. His life was indeed tragic. He constantly bombarded the Crown with his ideas for economic, social, clerical, and political reforms which he believed were essential for New Spain, but his energy and foresight alienated him from both church and sovereign. A man of such stature had no place in the Spanish world at the turn of the nineteenth century.

Although Bishop Abad y Queipo denounced the movement for independence led by Hidalgo, he nevertheless became embroiled with the Spanish inquisition. The later part of his life, which he spent in the mother country, was a troubled and unhappy period; he finally managed to get his name cleared by the inquisition in 1818 only to become involved in differences with Ferdinand VII. The king had him arrested and imprisoned in a convent where he died in 1825.

It might seem strange, perhaps, to criticize a scholarly volume for too great a dependence upon manuscript sources, but it is this concentration which unfortunately prevents Dr. Fisher's biography from being a definitive work. Had she used the material available, for example, in the work of Dr. Nettie Lee Benson and Castillo Ledón and the articles published by *Historia Mexicana* and *Abside* and worked it in with her own sources the result would have been an important book. For example, Dr. Fisher delineates clearly Abad

y Queipo's position with regard to Mexican independence, but because she has not used recently published material the total picture of the independence period remains vague and blurred.

University of Missouri WALTER V. SCHOLES

The Last War Trail. By Robert Emmitt. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1954. Pp. ix, 333. Maps, illustrations, bibliographical essay, bibliography, index. $4.50.

This is not history in the normal sense. Probably the author did not intend that it should be. Sometimes the reader feels that he is with the Utes, listening to one of their old men relate a tale of the hard winter of 1878, of the coming of the agent Meeker, of the farming venture, of the plowing up of pasture land which threatened the welfare of the horse, a measure of Ute wealth and prestige.

Mr. Emmitt affords us a rare opportunity to see the Ute through the eyes of Ute Indians. In some ways, *The Last War Trail* does for the Ute what *The Delight Makers,* and *The Man Who Killed The Deer* do for the Pueblo Indians, and what *Traders to the Navajos* does for the Navajo. All of these allow the "European mind" some insight, although often clouded, into the "Indian mind." There has been too little "meeting of the mind" between the American Indian and the American European.

To the historian this will seem a somewhat romanticized divergence from the old story of the white man's invasion of land that had for centuries been held by a particular group of Indians. Although he may argue with Mr. Emmitt on interpretation and use of evidence, the historian-reader will be grateful to the author for the effort he has made to present evidence from both the Indian viewpoint and that of the white man.

The anthropologist will not be completely satisfied with the author's use of ethnological data, but I believe he will appreciate Mr. Emmitt's effort to discover and consider it. There is a real need for further historical-ethnological study

of the Ute, as there is of almost all of the other Indian groups of the Southwest.

Once the ancestors of the Ute held approximately two-thirds of the state of Utah, and much of Colorado. The present northern New Mexico, northwest Texas, and western Oklahoma were also familiar to them. The first United States treaty with the Ute was made in 1849. In this the Ute merely recognized the right of the United States to govern them. No boundaries were set.

Actually the trimming away of Ute territory did not legally begin until 1863, when the Utes gave up the San Luis Valley. Formal boundaries were set in 1868, and the United States agreed to keep its citizens out of an area comprising approximately the western third of Colorado (the western slopes of the Rockies), by armed force if necessary.

The invasion began at once. Some gold, but particularly silver, was discovered in the San Juan mountains. In 1873 the Utes, under pressure, gave up almost four million acres of rich mineral land. This merely whetted the appetite of the land-hungry Coloradoans.

In 1878 the Southern Utes were forced officially to leave northern New Mexico, which they, it seems unknowingly, had lost in 1868. There were then two agencies for the Ute in Colorado: one which was headquarters for Ouray, designated head chief of the Utes, in southern Colorado, and the other on the White River in northern Colorado.

It was to this northern agency that Nathan C. Meeker came in the spring of 1878. Meeker was a writer by vocation, a farmer by avocation, and an idealist by nature. What he wanted the White River Utes to accomplish he felt certain was for their temporal and spiritual salvation. The Indians were not convinced. Pressures from both inside and outside the reservation were more than the Indian temperament could stand and more than their agent could cope with. When Meeker called on Major Thornburgh for aid the fat was in the fire.

It wasn't planned that way. Neither the Utes nor the troops really wanted a fight, but somehow it occurred. The people of Colorado were now able to bring pressure on the

President and Congress to rid Colorado of this threat to the peace and safety of its citizens.

In 1880 Congress decided that the Utes must go. The White River Utes were to join the Utah Utes on the Uintah Reservation. The other Utes of Colorado, after the death of Ouray, were all forced to leave Colorado with the exception of three bands designated as Southern Utes who were allowed to remain on that narrow strip of land in southwestern Colorado to be called the Consolidated Ute Reservation.

The wife of Ouray, Chipeta, was persuaded that on the new Uncompahgre Reservation set aside for them in Utah, an irrigation project would be developed and the Utes would be able to progress. A visit to the area today helps one understand why Chipeta was somewhat bitter toward Washington in her later life.

Mr. Emmitt tells an interesting story. I have enjoyed it. I believe you will.

Brigham Young University S. LYMAN TYLER

NEW MEXICO HISTORICAL REVIEW

NEW MEXICO HISTORICAL REVIEW

VOLUME XXX
1955

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY THE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF NEW MEXICO
AND THE
UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO

CONTENTS

NUMBER 4, OCTOBER, 1955

ILLUSTRATIONS

PUBLICATIONS FOR SALE

OLD SANTA FÉ (the quarterly published in 1913-16), 3 volumes unbound. A complete set may still be had at $20.00. The seventh issue is not sold separately; the tenth issue, $5.00; the others, $1.00 each. The Society will pay $5.00 for reasonably clean copies of Vol. II, no. 3.

NEW MEXICO HISTORICAL REVIEW (quarterly, from January 1926)

Vol. I, no. 1, out of print, Nos. 2, 3, 4, each	$2.00
Vol. II, no. 1 (sold only in sets)	$3.00
Vol. II, Nos. 2, 3, 4, each	$1.00
Vols. III to current year, per volume	$4.00
By subscription, during current year	$3.00
COMPREHENSIVE INDEX, Vols. I-XV	$2.00

PAPERS, Nos. 1 to 38 (1888 to 1935) List of titles sent on request.

ST. FRANCIS AND THE FRANCISCANS IN NEW MEXICO, 44 pp., ill. $1.50

REPRINTS from the HISTORICAL REVIEW, each $0.25

Titles sent on request. Some studies which appeared serially may be had as:

PUBLICATIONS IN HISTORY

Vol. I—Fray Marcos de Niza's *Relación*, Span. and Eng. ed. by Percy M. Baldwin. 59 pp. (1926) $1.00

Vol. III—New Mexico and the Great War, ed. by L. B. Bloom. 166 pp., index. (1927) $1.50

Vol. V—Barreiro's *Ojeada sobre Nuevo Mexico* (1832), ed. by L. B. Bloom. 60 pp., ill. (1928) $5.00

Vol. VI—Indian Labor in the Spanish Colonies. Ruth Kerns Barber. 135 pp., bibliog., index. (1932) $1.50

Vol. XII—New Mexico and the Sectional Controversy, 1846-1861. L. M. Ganaway. 140 pp., ill., bibliog., index. (1944). $2.00; in cloth $2.50

Vol. XIII—Black-Robed Justice. Arie W. Poldervaart. 234 pp., bibliog., index. (1948). Cloth $3.50

Vol. XIV—Albert Franklin Banta: Arizona Pioneer, ed. by Frank D. Reeve. 143 pp., ill., index. (1953). $2.25

Vol. XV—Bishop Tamaron's Visitation of New Mexico, 1760, ed. by Eleanor B. Adams. 112 pp., ill., index. (1954). $2.50

Address orders to

NEW MEXICO HISTORICAL REVIEW
Box 1727, Santa Fe, New Mexico