

New Mexico Historical Review

Volume 28 | Number 3

Article 5

7-1-1953

Book Reviews

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmhr>

Recommended Citation

. "Book Reviews." *New Mexico Historical Review* 28, 3 (1953). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmhr/vol28/iss3/5>

This Review is brought to you for free and open access by UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in *New Mexico Historical Review* by an authorized editor of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact amywinter@unm.edu, lsloane@salud.unm.edu, sarahrk@unm.edu.

Book Reviews

The Spanish Heritage of the Southwest. By Francis L. Fugate. El Paso, Texas: Texas Western Press, 1952. Pp. 32. \$2.00 and \$5.00.

Three years ago in this book review section, I deplored a work on Marcos de Niza by Cleve Hallenbeck, but waxed enthusiastic over the illustrations by Jose Cisneros and the printing by Carl Hertzog, and concluded by calling their contribution "a fine piece of jewelry made to display a beautiful pearl that unfortunately turns out to be a bitter pill."

Cisneros and Hertzog have teamed up again to produce another beautiful book. This time, however, the author of the text draws, not criticism or censure, but the same praise shared by the other two artists in this venture. For Mr. Fugate succeeds very well with a running commentary that flows smoothly in spite of being channeled severely within the confines of a single page facing each of Cisneros' dozen drawings. These complementary pages of drawing and text vividly and charmingly reproduce the influence of Spanish colonization on our own Rio Grande Southwest—from El Paso del Norte up to Santa Fe. Their content is aptly described by the twelve chapter headings: "Elements of the Conquest, The Seeds of Christianity, The Glitter of Gold, Beginnings of Government, Building the Churches, The Coming of the Cattle, The Point of the Sword, The Flavor of the Food, Naming the Land, The Victory of the Fiesta, Telling the Adventure, and Aftermath of the Conquest."

The full-page pencil drawings are a delight to the eye and fancy because the artist, by virtue of his own style, conjures up the very atmosphere of the Southwest, besides telling a historically authentic story; for Cisneros knows his costumes and armor perfectly, and styles in arms and apparel changed with each succeeding period. In other words, here DeVargas does not wear Oñate's accoutrement.

The genius of Hertzog consists in combining, and quickening, text and illustrations into a breathing whole. The handset type, the texture of the paper, even the dun-hued

line fencing the black letters, all contribute equally and admirably to this genuine contribution to the world of fine books. In the smaller world of Southwestern fine books, this slender but large volume stands at the very top, and no lover of artistic books on the Southwest ought to be without a copy to treasure forever. By this I mean the limited five-dollar bound edition with its wonderful original binding "taken" from a real adobe. The paper-back edition of two dollars is identical except for this binding, but, in lacking this, it is minus more than the three extra dollars asked for the bound volume.

Jemez Pueblo, New Mexico

FRAY ANGELICO CHAVEZ

Camels to California. By Harlan D. Fowler. Stanford Transportation Series. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1950. Pp. xi, 93. Illus. Bibliographical Notes. \$3.50.

Although Uncle Sam's Camel Corps of the 1850's has been exploited in many articles and feature stories, this is the first book on the subject since 1932. It is comprehensive, starting with the voyage of *The Supply* to the Levant for the purchase of the camels, continuing through the events of the overland journey by camel caravan from San Antonio, Texas, to Fort Tejon, California, and ending with tales of the dispersed herd in the Southwest past the turn of the century.

While Fowler gives the major share of credit for sponsorship of the novel experiment to Jefferson Davis, then Secretary of War, Fred S. Perrine, writing in the *NEW MEXICO HISTORICAL REVIEW* and using many of the same sources (Vol. I, No. 4, October, 1926), found that the leaders in this scheme were actually the men who carried it out, namely Major Henry C. Wayne and Lieutenant Edward F. Beale, who enlisted "the support of Honorable Jefferson Davis." This interpretation is maintained also by L. B. Leslie in his *Uncle Sam's Camels* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1929).

The author gave little attention to the broader setting in the intense rivalry between the North and South for the control and development of the projected transcontinental railway, for which, according to Paul Wellman (*Kansas City Times*, June 22, 1939), Jefferson Davis envisioned the establishment of a camel route as a strategic forerunner.

Nevertheless, Fowler has told well a story which has inherent interest due to the amusing incidents and peculiar vicissitudes of loading and riding the strange, spiteful, malodorous, but efficient beasts over difficult trails and among curious onlookers in the American Southwest. He has dug up new anecdotes about the phantom camels of later years and the fate of the Greek and Turk stockmen who were brought over with the original herd.

The format is superb and the proof-reading is flawless. The search of sources has been thorough. While the professional historian may regret that there are no footnote citations for his reference, the general reader may find the book more attractive for this omission.

New Mexico Highlands University

LYNN I. PERRIGO

Ethnobotany of the Ramah Navaho. By Paul A. Vestal. Cambridge, Mass.: Papers of the Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology, Vol. 40, No. 4. 1952. Pp. ix, 94 (Reports of the Ramah Project, Report No. 4).

This publication is one aspect of a considerable amount of work that has been done on the Ramah Navaho within recent years by a number of investigators. Happily, Vestal brings together not only the results of his two seasons of field work among these Indians but as well the ethnobotanical data bearing on the Ramah Navaho as gleaned from the notes of Kluckhohn, Bailey, Tschopik, and Wyman.

This study presents the results of investigations on the utilization of native plants for such purposes as food, medicine, dyes, ceremony, smoking, string and rope, basketry, toilet accessories, household articles, fuel, and arrow poison.

Also, there is a treatment of cultivated plants in which the author does a creditable job not only in presenting a statement of the growing and utilization of cultivated plants but, equally important, a brief statement of techniques of cultivation. Moreover, he has made a successful attempt at giving a judgment of the extent of cultivation in terms of specific crops in relation to acreages as well as of the relative importance of specific native food plants. Of considerable interest is the fact that Vestal's study of the nature of the Ramah Navaho concept of plant classification confirms the general conclusion reached earlier by Wyman and Harris with regard to Navaho plant nomenclature in general. The list, as well as the statement, covering Navaho names for plants is most useful as are the special statements of the several categories of plant utilization.

Interesting and very useful features of the publication are the Table of Uses, the Botanical Index, and the Common Name Index which make it possible for the reader to easily make the maximum use of the study.

The field studies on which the paper is largely based have been admirably executed, and the results of the investigation have been presented in an exceptionally well-organized manner. From this reviewer's point of view the only important fault of the study lies in the fact that it is very largely botanical in outlook and fails to investigate the interrelationships between the Ramah Navaho and their plants, in other words the cultural aspects of plant utilization.

University of New Mexico

E. F. CASTETTER

Wagon Roads West: A Study of Federal Road Surveys and Construction in the Trans-Mississippi West, 1846-1869.
By W. Turrentine Jackson. Berkeley and Los Angeles:
University of California Press, 1952. Pp. xv, 422. Maps,
bibliography, and index. \$5.00.

This well printed and excellently documented book describes the role of the federal government in the location, survey, and construction of wagon roads in the territory

west of the Mississippi before the railroad era. The author believes historians heretofore have left the impression that enterprising pioneers, alert to business opportunities, were primarily responsible for locating the roads in the west before the building of the Pacific railroads. This book was written "to alter and modify that interpretation."

Following a brief introductory chapter the author has divided his account into four unequal parts. The first, consisting of about one third of the book, is devoted to Wagon Road Surveys and Construction in the Western States and Territories by the United States Army, 1846-1861; the second part deals with Wagon Road Construction by the Department of the Interior, 1856-1861 and is based mainly on the little used Manuscript Records of the Pacific Wagon Roads Office. The author expresses the belief that no investigator had previously used this material. Part three tells how the Army continued to build roads West after the attempt of Congress to transfer all wagon road construction to the Interior Department in 1856, and part four explains the futile attempt at coöperation between the two Departments in wagon road building after the Civil War. The book is not a complete history of all wagon roads built in the West during the period, or even those built with federal aid, but is limited mainly to those initiated as national projects by Congress or by order of the Secretaries of War or Interior.

Despite sharp differences of opinion on the constitutionality of internal improvements at federal expense, the national government's contribution to western transportation was continuous and dominant during most of the nineteenth century. From 1806 to 1838, federal appropriations for the Cumberland Road alone, the first national internal improvement, totalled \$6,824,919. After the impact of the depression of 1837, federal aid for road construction within state boundaries was usually denied. It was generally recognized, however, that Congress had exclusive power to make regulations for the territories and military roads were justified on the basis of providing for the common defense. With the opening of the Great West after the Oregon Treaty and the Mexi-

can War, the necessity for communication lines over the vast distances of the new domain was immediate and pressing. Californians petitioned for wagon roads connecting their state with the Mississippi valley. Territorial assemblies memorialized Congress for a network of roads involving the expenditure of many hundred thousand dollars. The Thirty-fourth Congress approved almost \$800,000 for wagon roads in the Trans-Mississippi West. Accepting the principle that roads could be built to regulate commerce with the Indians as well as to provide for the common defense, President Pierce in 1856 signed the Fort Ridgely-South Pass Wagon Road bill, authorizing the Interior Department rather than the War Department to supervise construction. A year later the Secretary of Interior established a new agency, the Pacific Wagon Roads Office, to direct road building assigned to his Department. Previously the federal road program had been supervised almost entirely by the Bureau of Topographical Engineers of the War Department.

Division of responsibility in the federal road program between the two executive departments was most unfortunate. It was motivated in part by House Republicans who wanted to avoid the influence of Jefferson Davis and partly by western Congressmen who hoped the construction contracts would go to civilians, described as "practical men." Military roads in the territories remained under the Bureau of Topographical Engineers, but roads to be used primarily by emigrants, stage coaches, mailcarriers, and for the Indian trade were assigned to the Pacific Wagon Roads Office. The record of this civilian agency was the worst in the history of federal aid to road building, mainly because of the poor administration of the superintendents in charge of the road construction projects. Most of them were appointed because they were frontiersmen with political influence or had rendered "service to Democracy" in pivotal states. One superintendent, William M. F. Magraw, who was dismissed for chronic intoxication, chaotic financial accounts, and inability to account for extensive amounts of government property, was a long time personal friend of President Buchanan. On

the other hand, the War Department's Topographical Engineers, freer from partisan political influence and with experience in both road building and bookkeeping, have left quite a different record.

During the Civil War the road building program was dormant except for the completion of the Mullan Road. It was revived in March 1865 by a law providing for a series of roads leading to the Montana and Idaho gold mines. This road program was to be directed by the Department of the Interior. Military escorts would be necessary, however, because of the extreme hostility of the plains Indians and President Lincoln urged the War and Interior Departments to cooperate in solving the policing and transportation problems. The key road of the series was from Niobrara to Virginia City. This was strongly favored by enterprising Sioux City business men and equally opposed by the regular outfitting points of the overland trade, Council Bluffs and Omaha. The latter would prevent the opening of any other route than the regular Omaha-Salt Lake Trail. Military men considered it advisable to confine plains travel to one or two routes and judged the Niobrara route impracticable for wagon travel. The growing conflict between the two executive Departments over Indian policy was extended to the road program, rendering most attempts at cooperation futile. After 1869, the interest of transportation enthusiasts shifted to transcontinental railroads and wagon roads became of secondary importance.

The value of the book is greatly enhanced by the inclusion of over twenty excellent maps, which are a joy to the reader in keeping his bearings through the many roads discussed. Forty-six pages of footnotes, placed at the end of the book, and an eighteen page classified bibliography indicate a large amount of research and a careful study of the works of other students of wagon transportation, many of whose conclusions are integrated in this study. The following minor errors were noted: "Clark Fork" (p. 267, 284) for "Clark's Fork" of the Yellowstone; "folk" (p. 290) for "fork" of the Cheyenne; and "international" (p. 320) for "internal" im-

provements. Fort Reno must have been nearer thirty, rather than "three hundred" miles from Fort Philip Kearney (p. 286), and John Owen's Fort (p. 316) was not just below the mouth of Lolo Creek but twenty miles up the Bitterroot River to the south. But these are just minutiae and do not detract from the General excellence of the book.

Montana State University

EDWARD EARL BENNETT

Soldiers, Indians, and Silver. The Northward Advance of New Spain, 1550-1600. By Philip Wayne Powell. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press. 1952. Pp. ix, 317. Maps, bibliography, and index. \$4.50.

This is a scholar's monograph and not a popular tale, despite its colorful jacket and attractive appearance. Much of the material presented in this substantial study has already seen the light of day in various historical reviews, and now Dr. Powell brings it all together with some added data to tell the story of relations between the Spaniards and the Chichemeca Indians during the half-century following the discovery of silver in Zacatecas. The rush to this bonanza in northern Mexico was well started by 1550 and continued throughout the rest of the century, insofar as the brave and skillful Chichemecas would permit. Mining operations and supply services were constantly hampered until the Indians were subdued and this carefully wrought account explains how the Spaniards achieved their final victory.

The soldiers first tried the method they knew best, fire and sword for the "dirty, uncivilized dogs" as they considered the Indians, whose martial qualities they vastly underestimated. When force failed the viceroys adopted a peace policy and provided food, clothing, gifts, and friars to tame the nomadic tribes. Franciscans and Jesuits organized a mission system, converted the Indians, taught them the ways of peace, built churches, and thus stabilized the frontier. Finally, Tlaxcalan Indians were brought from the south to aid in the civilizing process. The Marqués de Villamanrique, seventh viceroy of New Spain, was the initiator of this new

approach in 1585 but he had able successors who continued his work. As the author concludes, "it took slightly more than a decade of an intelligent 'peace by purchase' policy to achieve what four decades of warfare had not been able to accomplish." By 1600 the long northern frontier of the Spanish empire was largely at peace.

The results of laborious digging in archives are to be found on every page of this book. Indeed, manuscript material from widely scattered repositories in Spain, Mexico, and the United States is used in such abundant detail that the reader is at times bewildered if not lost. Too many documents are included in the text to make for easy perusal, and the heavily factual presentation makes for a clotted style.

The Indian side of the encounter between these civilizations is well represented. Anthropological information is provided, but emphasis is placed on military detail. Nothing, or almost nothing, is given on social history, the development of mining, or growth of town life. The author evidently set out to write military history and this task he competently achieved using a rich variety of source material.

The University of Texas

LEWIS HANKE