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BANKERS AND CATTLEMEN. By Gene M. Gressley. New York: Alfred Knopf, 1966. Pp. xv, 320. $6.95.

THE ROMANCE of the western cattle industry has attracted more than a score of good historians, many of whom have dwelt on the colorful aspects of the industry during the late nineteenth century. Professor Gressley's purpose in this fine study, however, is to penetrate what he calls the "barbed wire curtain," or narrow regional perspectives, and to study the western range industry within a broad national context. To achieve this goal he focuses largely on the relationships between eastern financiers and western cattlemen in the years between 1870 and 1900.

Professor Gressley provides us with various perspectives on the Cattle Kingdom. His opening chapters set the scene with colorful vignettes of Wall Street after the Civil War—and of its counterpart in Cheyenne, Wyoming—Carey Avenue. He then deals with the motivation of easterners, mostly Bostonians and New Yorkers, in coming west. He describes with verve the problems of capitalization and organization which they faced in the strange environment, and the types of people whom they encountered. These included a new breed of professional managers of cattle ranches, commissioner merchants, bankers, and inevitably, politicians. Their common efforts resulted in the dramatic rise of the cattle industry for more than two decades after 1870. Generally speaking, the author concludes, Yankees who came west rarely made a killing (financial), and frequently returned home poorer than when they started. But the significance of eastern capital was to spur western economic development during this era. And it provided additional momentum for a wide range of other economic enterprises which flowered in the west during the course of the twentieth century.

Professor Gressley has made a prodigious search for relevant materials. Much of the book is based on primary sources, including more than seventy-five manuscript collections from coast to coast as well as a wide range of contemporary western newspapers and pamphlets. The author has obviously gone to great pains to endow his book with a lively and interesting style, and he has carefully chosen a large number of apt narratives to illustrate his main contentions. Altogether this is a most useful and informative volume which will be of interest to devotees of western history—within and without the groves of academe.

The University of New Mexico GERALD D. NASH

GEORGE C. YOUNT AND HIS CHRONICLES OF THE WEST, COMPRISING EXTRACTS FROM HIS "MEMOIRS" AND FROM THE ORANGE CLARK "NARRATIVE." Edited by Charles L. Camp. Denver: Old West Publishing Company, 1966. Pp. xviii, 280. Illus., map, bibliog., index. $20.00.

IF, as Charles Camp suggests, "George Yount's name occupies a memorable place among the forerunners of westward expansion," much of the credit must go to Professor Camp. His publication, in 1923, of "The Chronicles of George C. Yount" in the *California Historical Quarterly* rendered them more accessible to a generation of historians. Yount's reminiscences, along with those of men like James Ohio Pattie, Kit Carson, and Peg-leg Smith, furnish much of the material from which the story of the fur trade in the Southwest has been told. Happily, additional Yount reminiscences have been found and Professor Camp, after a forty-three year intermission, is now able to complete Yount's tale of his adventures. The newly found item is an almost complete manuscript of a "Narrative" written by the Reverend Orange Clark, to whom Yount dictated his reminiscences. Camp's earlier publication was based largely upon a condensation of the original "Narrative" coupled with Yount's "Memoirs," which only went into 1826. The present editing represents "a fairly complete, reconstructed 'Narrative.'"

In the introduction and Part I of *George Yount and his Chronicles of the West,* Camp has constructed a biographical sketch of Yount and a useful summary, in near outline form, of the major trapping and trading expeditions in the Southwest between 1815 and 1830. With Part II the Yount "Memoirs" begin, describing Yount's family, his role in the War of 1812 in Missouri, and the ill-fortune which caused him to move west on the Santa Fe Trail in 1826. This portion of the "Memoirs" was not included in Camp's 1923 article.

Parts III through V treat Yount's trapping activities and rely heavily on the complete Clark "Narrative," which provided much new information on Yount's activities on the Gila and Colorado rivers between 1826 and 1828, and Yount's journey to California via the Old Spanish Trail in 1830-1831. The material on Yount's Salt Lake Expedition of 1829-1830 is almost entirely new. The recently discovered narrative also sheds further light on Yount's California activities, much of this being included in Part VI. "Indians of Napa" and the "Miraculous Escapes of Hugh Glass," Parts VII and IX, appear almost exactly as they did in the 1923 article. In Part X, as an added bonus, Professor Camp provides a composite picture of the adventures of Peg-leg Smith, based on various newspaper articles and other sources.

Yount, like many of his contemporaries, was never guilty of minimizing his own importance in the retelling of a story, or of underestimating the weight of a grizzly bear or the length of a rattlesnake. Yet one can hardly doubt that Yount participated in the adventures he related. Camp, while recognizing that "winnowing the facts from these fluorescent tales has become a kind of sport in historical research" (XV), participates in the game with vigor. His footnotes, which reflect changes in scholarship in the last forty years, are both informative and provocative—especially when he tries to make sense out of Pattie's *Narrative* or locate Yount's routes on the map. Some will find areas of disagreement in Camp's conclusion. I, for instance, doubt that Peg-leg Smith was gone for eighteen months on his 1824 expedition from Santa Fe (p. 288). But disagreements make it clear that the sport of "winnowing" is still in vogue.

This handsome volume, like all books designed and printed by Lawton and Alfred Kennedy, is a pleasure to read. One may at first experience some difficulty in determining where Camp's editing begins and Reverend Clark's ends, and vice-versa. The failure to include the numbers of footnotes at their appropriate places in the text (numbers 2, 50, and 62 were noted by this reviewer) compounds this difficulty. For the careful reader, however, this scarcely impairs the usefulness of this volume. Camp has made a long-lasting contribution by bringing this important source up to date.

The University of New Mexico DAVID J. WEBER

A WESTERN PANORAMA, 1849-1875: THE TRAVELS, WRITINGS AND INFLUENCE OF J. ROSS BROWNE. By David Michael Goodman. Glendale: The Arthur H. Clarke Company, 1966. Pp. 328. Illus., maps, bibliog., index. $11.00.

THIS is the second study of the western career of J. Ross Browne to appear in as many years and it gives a broader treatment and more extensive documentation than the first, Richard Dillon's *J. Ross Browne: Confidential Agent in Old California* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1965). But it is not and does not claim to be a full-dress biography of the colorful and wide-ranging Browne.

John Ross Browne was a man of many hats. Traveler, author, wit, artist, flutist, reformer, public servant, and diplomat, he came to be a well-known figure on the American scene, not merely in the West. As a young man he worked on a newspaper, made a cruise on a whaler (and wrote an important book about it), served as shorthand reporter for the *Congressional Globe* and as assistant compiler of bank statistics for the

U. S. Treasury Department. In 1849, he arrived in California in the Federal Customs Service, only to find his job abolished, but he persisted and was chosen to report and publish the debates of the California Constitutional Convention. Subsequently, from 1854 to 1860, Browne served as special agent, mainly on the Pacific Coast, investigating customs matters or the San Francisco Mint for the Treasury Department or land and Indian questions for the Department of Interior. All the while, he traveled widely and wrote extensively, especially for *Harper's Magazine*, in which his famous series, "A Peep at Washoe," appeared in 1860-1861. A tour of Arizona in 1863 and 1864 resulted in his fine descriptive account, *Adventures in the Apache Country* (1869), while in 1865 he lobbied successfully in Washington on behalf of California grape growers opposing a bill to tax domestic wines. In the following year he was appointed by the Secretary of the Treasury as the first commissioner to collect mineral statistics west of the Rockies, and, using the talents of experts more familiar with mining than himself, he published two reports on western mining which are still useful, but by no means completely reliable. The peak of his career came in 1868 with his appointment as U. S. Minister to China, a post which he held for eighteen months. Browne was undoubtedly a significant figure, though perhaps not as important as the author makes him out. Without question, as special agent, he saved his government much money ($2 million, says Goodman) and improved the reputation of the revenue and Indian services. He did know the West well and, according to Goodman, his greatest contribution was that he wrote "an honest and clear picture of his time" (p. 274), a conclusion that many of his western contemporaries would never have accepted. Nor would knowledgeable mining men of the era be inclined to agree with the author's evaluation of Browne as "one of the country's leading experts on mineral resources." (p. 11)

This is a good book, interesting and well researched, but not without its blemishes. An alert editor might have brought better balance to the volume. Roughly one-half the space is devoted to Browne the special agent, with chapters that are often so short and choppy as to be disturbing. The details of fraud, mismanagement, and inefficiency through which the reader must flounder are both excessive and dreary, and there is little satisfaction in the fact that Browne is invariably the hero, regularly acting as a one-man Hoover Commission to recommend improvements. Vigilant editing would have eliminated footnotes like number six on page nineteen which begins nowhere in particular and leads to no place at all. Throughout, more of the author than of Browne comes through, which is too bad, for Browne was a particularly engaging writer, though Goodman has a perfectly respectable style and has written a perfectly respectable book.

Western Panorama is a handsome volume in traditional Arthur Clarke format, with maps and some forty illustrations, most of them Browne's own sketches from *Harper's*. The impressive bibliography indicates comprehensive research not only in books, but in manuscripts, newspapers, and government documents, although curiously enough Goodman seems not to have consulted one of the best general treatments of Browne, Dorothy Johansen's fine article in the 1941 *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*.

University of Illinois CLARK C. SPENCE

KING FISHER: HIS LIFE AND TIMES. By O. C. Fisher with J. C. Dykes. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966. Pp. xviii, 158. Bibliog. $2.00.

NEAR THE TOP in what might be called the second echelon of frontier desperadoes, along with Clay Allison, Joel Fowler, and Mysterious Dave Mather, stands the flamboyant figure of King Fisher. He is young and handsome. He wears a pair of tiger-skin chaps. He is fast with a pistol and is so firmly in charge of his neighborhood on Pendencia Creek in Dimmit County, Texas, that he has posted a sign at a country crossroads: "This is King Fisher's road. Take the other." A man like that naturally becomes a legend, and during the eighty-odd years since his assassination, King has never ceased to be a topic for debate among bad-man specialists.

Now comes O. C. Fisher, lawyer, congressman and amateur historian, whose father was a first cousin of King, and gives us what should be the last word on his ruthless relative.

We learn that James Fisher came to Texas from Arkansas in 1835 and that his grandson was born near Goliad in 1854. By the time King was fifteen, he was ready to start his career as a Western Hero. He was a handsome fellow, admired by the girls, quiet and gentlemanly but good at fist fighting, a famous shot, a judge of fine horseflesh. He was also in trouble with the Law for "borrowing" a horse. He spent four months of a two-year sentence in the penitentiary (the Governor pardoned him because of his youth) and emerged with a reputation as a dangerous man. In the early seventies some of his old friends and neighbors who had moved to the Carrizo Springs neighborhood decided they needed him to fight Indians and outlaws and he moved over to join them.

Before he was out of his teens, he was the leader of a particularly hard and ruthless group of men, many of them wanted, all of them interested in other people's property. O. C. Fisher maintains that his weakness was in "trusting those who seemed to trust him, without asking questions.

It was not his nature to turn a man away who sought refuge at the Pendencia ranch." It is possible, he thinks, that these trusted cutthroats "may have engaged in acts of lawlessness which Fisher, had he known, would not have condoned." The same might have been said of Al Capone, but in justice we have to admit that some very good men, including Ranger George Durham, believed that "King was a better man than some that arrested him," and that he was declared innocent of all charges against him in 1881.

In 1882, chastened by his long wrestle with the law as implemented by the Texas Rangers, King decided to turn over a new leaf. In 1884 he rose to the honorable position of Sheriff of Uvalde County. When in that year the business of his office took him to Austin, however, his destiny caught up with him. On March 11 he met the notorious Ben Thompson and accompanied him to San Antonio. Thompson was off limits there, for in 1882 he had killed a popular theatrical impresario in his own place of business and set up a feud situation. That evening Thompson and Fisher visited the theater where the earlier killing had taken place and both were shot to death under circumstances which remain mysterious in spite of many attempts, including the present author's, to ferret out the facts.

Like most "family" biographies, the book is inclined to give its subject the benefit of all doubts—makes him, in fact a little too heroic to be true. It is not skillfully written or, in spite of Mr. Dykes' help adequately organized. On the other hand, it does give information that could have come only from an insider, and it does place King in proper perspective against the background of his time and place. Since there is no other volume on the subject, this one will be useful for the foreseeable future to all students of frontier times in Texas.

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C. L. SONNICHSEN

JOHN SELMAN, TEXAS GUNFIGHTER. By Leon Claire Metz. New York: Hastings House, Publishers, 1966. Pp. 254. Illus., map, bibliog., index. $6.95.

IT WAS INEVITABLE that someone would write a book about John Selman, who gained fame of a sort as a gunman by killing John Wesley Hardin in El Paso on August 19, 1895. It was also predictable that the author of such a book would be obliged, of necessity, to tell a sordid story of a man without a bit of glamour, lacking entirely any sense of humor, with which William H. Bonney, Ike Stockton and Port Stockton had been endowed,

with no redeeming trait or quirk of character which might entitle him to be a candidate for election to the dubious honor of a place in the Southwestern gallery of gunmen and outlaws.

Leon Claire Metz was the author chosen by fate to write such a book, entitled *John Selman, Texas Gunfighter*, and including a dozen or more good photographs. At the outset let it be said that Leon Metz has done a most creditable bit of research, particularly in the early years of Selman's life; and that the book is sufficiently meritorious in every respect to deserve a place on the Southwestern bookshelf alongside J. Evett Haley's *Jeff Milton*, Bobby McCubbin's reprint of John Wesley Hardin's *The Life of John Wesley Hardin*, and Dee Harkey's *Mean as Hell*. Carefully and painstakingly Author Metz has followed the footsteps of an obscure John Selman, beginning with his birth in Madison County, Arkansas, on November 16, 1839, and ending on April 6, 1896, the day after he was gunned down by George Scarborough, in El Paso. With apparent ability, zeal, and diligence which might well have been bestowed on a more important subject, the author traces Selman's peripatetic wanderings in and out of Arkansas, Texas, New Mexico, and Mexico; tells of his meetings and partings with several important gunfighters of the era. In the telling Mr. Metz is frank enough to indicate that Selman failed to measure up to more intelligent and competent outlaws roaming about the Southwest at the time.

It is apparent throughout the book that John Selman was, throughout most of his adult life, a whiskey guzzling, penny ante poker playing, small calibre man, always living on the fringe of society, always solicitous for the protection afforded by a deputy sheriff's badge, or a commission as precinct constable, the lowest possible rung on the law enforcement ladder.

Mr. Metz' best work in the book is done in Chapters 17 and 18, in which he tells of the various versions of the manner in which John Wesley Hardin was killed by John Selman in the Acme Saloon on August 18, 1895, with bullets pumped from a .45. The reader is left to decide for himself whether Selman did or did not shoot Hardin in the back, a question that has been debated on and off now for some seventy years. The Metz book successfully closes a gap in the literature surrounding the good old days when one outlaw suddenly killed another outlaw, to the eminent satisfaction of those advocating enforcement of law and order in El Paso.

Albuquerque, N. M. W. A. KELEHER