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Book Reviews

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Book Reviews

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ARTISTS OF THE OLD WEST. By John C. Ewers. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1973. Pp. 240. Illus., bibliog. \$22.50.

CHOSEN for historical communication and aesthetic value, the 194 paintings, prints, and sketches reproduced in *Artists of the Old West*, 44 in color, offer lively visual experiences. John C. Ewers, Senior Ethnologist of the Smithsonian Institution, in sixteen engaging and informative essays, emphasizes those remarkable artist-explorers whose work continues to convey the immediacy of their encounters with aspects of the West now long gone: Indian buffalo hunting, trapping in the Rocky Mountains, fort-based trading, the overland trails, Plains Indian wars, and cattle ranching on the open range. The eager participation of artists in the then new West was expressed in 1851 by a young Swiss, Rudolph Friederich Kurz: "Constant danger from lurking enemies, the vast prairie . . . ; buffaloes and bears in prospect; perhaps a violent storm by way of variety; fine health and tense anticipation—what more could I desire?"

The majority of the illustrations portray Indians and their cultures, with three by native artists, notably a painted buffalo robe collected by Lewis and Clark. Paintings by such men as Peter Rindisbacher, George Catlin, and Karl Bodmer made Indians world-famous, and "To this day most Americans and Europeans think of Indians as these artists pictured them." Of Gustavus Sohon, historic trailblazer whose drawings of Indians of the northern Rockies are among the finest in the book, Ewers writes: "It is doubtful if any other nineteenth-century artist contributed in so many ways to the development of the West, or possessed a more intimate knowledge of the Indians or the landscape he pictured."

The new Westerners were recorded—Yellowstone fur traders by Kurz, California miners by Charles Nahl, Mountain Men by Alfred Jacob Miller, soldiers by Remington, and cowboys by Russell. George Caleb Bingham's "discovery of the common man on the Western frontier inspired his best paintings." Capturing what the camera (which came West in the 1850's) could not quite achieve, "scenes of Rocky Mountain grandeur" by Albert Bierstadt, Thomas Moran, and others, "aroused American appreciation of the Western wilderness areas, and helped to prevent their desecration or exploitation."

From the Southwest the book has a liberal sampling of the work of Edward and Richard Kern, including mid-century records of Zuñi and Jemez, among these a kiva mural. The single pre-1800 piece illustrated, and the only sculpture, is the St. Michael carved in New Mexico in the 1770's by Bernardo Miera y Pacheco—soldier, cartographer, and santero.

Useful dividends in *Artists of the Old West* are an awareness of important collections of Western art and a skeletal bibliography.

Albuquerque, N. M.

ROLAND F. DICKEY

PHILMONT: A HISTORY OF NEW MEXICO'S CIMARRON COUNTRY. By Lawrence R. Murphy, with foreword by Alden G. Barber. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1972. Pp. xx, 261. Illus., maps, bibliog., notes, index. Cloth \$12.00, Paper \$3.95.

PHILMONT is a comprehensive study of the natural and human history of Cimarron County in northeastern New Mexico. Cimarron County's legacy includes most of the engaging themes in Western development, ranging from interplay of Mexican-American relations to mining boom towns.

Cimarron County is a miniature of the West's raw, varied milieu. Its mixed geology and relief embraces plains, mountains, canyons, mesas, and upland meadows. Altering botanical zones grade westward from Great Plains grasslands to piñon and juniper stands, followed by ponderosa pine and, at 8,500 to 10,000 feet, belts of alpine fir and blue spruce. Wildlife includes pronghorn antelope, mule and whitetail deer, bear, mountain lion, elk, wolf, and restored bison.

The region's prehistory centers on the Ponil Creek complex. Folsom man occupied Cimarron County nearly 10,000 years ago. Successive paleo-Indian cultures include pottery-making agricultural peoples. In later times, Jicarilla Apaches, Utes, and Comanches ranged across the area.

The author traces Spanish and Mexican occupation of Cimarron County and the early Anglo-American entradas. Explorers from the United States who visited the area included Stephen H. Long. He reconnoitered Cimarron County during 1820.

Cimarron County's major historical focus centers on its role as a part of the Beaubien-Miranda grant, executed in 1841 by New Mexican Governor Manuel Armijo to Charles Beaubien, a wealthy Taos merchant, and Guadalupe Miranda, an official in the provincial government of New Mexico. Beaubien's son-in-law, Lucien Maxwell, a hunter and guide from

Missouri, joined with Kit Carson and Charles Bent in an attempt to colonize the grant. Several hazards discouraged settlement. Grizzly bears preyed on settlers' livestock. And on several occasions, predatory bands of Utes, Jicarilla Apaches, and Comanches forced Cimarron County settlers to retreat to the safety of Taos. For a time, the United States Army maintained a post at Rayado, garrisoned by forty-three dragoons, to protect the tiny settlement.

During 1857 Maxwell established a store, traders' compound, and residence on the Cimarron River near the intersection of the Bent's Fort Road and the Cimarron Canyon route to Taos. He prospered from the sale of provisions, grain, and hay to troops stationed in the area and to travelers on the Santa Fe Trail. Maxwell purchased Miranda's share of the grant and a portion of the Beaubien grant.

In 1866 prospectors found gold in creeks draining from Mount Baldy, situated on Maxwell's land. There followed a rush of miners to northeastern New Mexico Territory. Elizabethtown was the principal mining settlement in the new gold field. Maxwell developed the Aztec Mine. Hard rock extraction, requiring heavy machinery which mining companies imported from the East, was the principal method used for exploiting the local ores. Intensive mining exhausted the paying mineral lodes by 1870. As in other sections of the West during the bonanza age of postwar economic development, foreign capitalists invested in Cimarron County properties. Dutch and British interests prevailed. Their local managers built railroads over the region and developed mining, lumbering, ranching, and agricultural enterprises.

During the 1920's Oklahoma oilman Waite Phillips purchased a part of the old Maxwell holdings and established a ranch which he named Philmont. In 1941 Phillips presented a portion of his New Mexico properties to the National Council of Boy Scouts of America. Philmont Ranch became an international center for advanced scouting. Each year over 20,000 scouts from all sections of the United States and from several foreign nations gather at Philmont to fulfill the nature requirements and experiences of advanced scouting.

Philmont is an informative, interest-provoking work. The reader with concerns for conservation and ecological restoration will take comfort from the assurance that this Cimarron County wilderness region has been withdrawn from the exploitive frontier, that it is preserved, and that use of it is limited to those who respect nature.

University of Oklahoma

ARRELL MORGAN GIBSON

PAT GARRETT. *THE STORY OF A WESTERN LAWMAN*. By Leon C. Metz. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1974. Pp. xii, 328. Illus., bibliog., index. \$8.95.

THIS STUDY casts Pat Garrett as a post-bellum Western prototype. Garrett left his Louisiana plantation home to join the throng of young men seeking their fortunes in the Bonanza West. From his arrival in Texas during the 1870's until his death by an assassin's bullet on a dusty southern New Mexico road in 1908, Garrett was obsessed with a quest for fortune and fame.

Pat Garrett's image in Western history is that of a lawman. Yet, in a forty-year residence in the West he spent less than one fourth of that time in law enforcement. Garrett learned that law enforcement could be used as the means to accumulate capital for investment in ranching, mining, irrigation, and other promising ventures. While the office of sheriff in the post-bellum West was fraught with hazards it could be profitable. Besides annual salary and fees from county funds and regular subsidy from local cattlemen for vigilance against stock theft, a sheriff could hold a deputy United States Marshal commission and collect fees for Federal service. Also reward money for capturing posted criminals brought windfall bounties to the sheriff's annual salary. Garrett's service in law enforcement was not a career commitment, but periodic interludes to accumulate capital for fortune-fulfilling ventures.

Garrett's first Western experience was as a hired hand on an east Texas farm. A season of hard labor clearing sprouts and planting, cultivating and harvesting crops dissuaded him from farming. He worked briefly at driving cattle and saved his earnings to grubstake a buffalo-hunting partnership based at Fort Griffin on the edge of the west Texas plains. However, saturation hunting had annihilated the buffalo, aborting Garrett's dream of a quick fortune.

Garrett moved on to Fort Sumner, New Mexico. There his first effort at fortune making was a hog-raising partnership. Again he failed. Broke and hungry, Garrett took employment as a bartender in a Fort Sumner saloon. He became acquainted with the principals in the Lincoln County War—Alexander McSween, Lawrence Murphy, John Chisum, and Henry McCarty alias William Bonney, the notorious Billy the Kid.

In 1880 Garrett won election as Lincoln County sheriff. He proved a tenacious manhunter. His deliberate war of attrition on Billy the Kid's followers brought some order to chaotic Lincoln County. The climax of this law enforcement stint, which brought Garrett national fame, was killing the elusive Billy the Kid in Pete Maxwell's bedroom at Fort Sumner.

After completing his term as sheriff, Garrett used his reward money and

loans to establish a ranch on Eagle Creek in Lincoln County. This, like other Garrett ventures, failed. And a recurring pattern in Garrett's life manifested itself. The ranching frontier had extended into the Texas Panhandle. Small ranchmen were challenging big ranchmen for the region's grass and limited water by poaching on the latter's herds. Officials of the large stock-raising companies urged Garrett to return to law enforcement. He formed the Home Rangers, a small private force of riders, and in a summary fashion ended the stock brigandage.

Garrett used his earnings from leading the Home Rangers to join with several Roswell businessmen in developing a Pecos Valley irrigation project. By 1890, under Garrett's supervision, workmen had excavated the canals and the project was nearly completed. Thereupon the investment managers squeezed Garrett out of the venture. His capital, years of personal attention to the project, and promise of fortune vanished.

A ghoulis incident occurring in southern New Mexico led Garrett back to law enforcement. It centered on Albert Jennings Fountain, prominent Las Cruces attorney and powerful Doña Ana County Republican. Fountain and his young son disappeared in the White Sands on their return to Las Cruces from Lincoln County courthouse. Blame focused on Albert Fall, Fountain's bitter enemy and Democratic boss of Doña Ana County. Fountain's friends offered large sums for solution of the mystery and conviction of those assumed guilty of the crimes. They arranged for Garrett to become sheriff of Doña Ana County for the specific purpose of bringing the Fountain killers to trial. Garrett's search centered on Fall's gunmen, Oliver Lee and Jim Gilliland. Years of investigation and pursuit of Lee and Gilliland finally led to their surrender and trial at Hillsboro. Promise of a fortune in reward money for Garrett vanished upon acquittal of the defendants.

During 1901 President Theodore Roosevelt appointed Garrett collector of customs at El Paso. Garrett's reckless personal habits—preoccupation with saloon cronies, fast women, and horses, and his gambling and other acts unbecoming a public official—caused his removal from this prestigious position. He had returned to Doña Ana County in a vain attempt to succeed in ranching when he was shot down on the Las Cruces road in 1908.

Bibliographical analysis in *Pat Garrett* illuminates genesis of the legend of Billy the Kid. Garrett collaborated with Ash Upson, itinerant printer and editor, to produce *The Authentic Life of Billy the Kid*. John Poe, a Garrett deputy, published *Death of Billy the Kid*. Emerson Hough polished the incident in 1907 with his *Story of the Outlaw*. Hough shamelessly exploited Garrett in the preparation of this work. In 1926, Walter Noble Burns published *Saga of Billy the Kid*, which Garrett's biographer states was "based not on the facts but on the dramatics of the situation." The author

comments that because *Saga* became a best seller, Billy the Kid "became an established southwestern figure"; a "badman . . . worth more dead than alive." Lincoln County and Fort Sumner prospered from the tourist trade. The Kid's grave became a shrine for maudlin latter-day admirers.

Above all else, *Pat Garrett* depicts the deadly contest between lawmen and lawless. It renders the irony of twisted public esteem for the lawless, elevating them to the status of folk heroes, and scorn for lawmen who had the public duty to destroy them.

University of Oklahoma

ARRELL MORGAN GIBSON

THE MILAGRO BEAN FIELD WAR. By John Nichols. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975. Pp. 445. \$8.95.

MR. NICHOLS' third novel is a big book, a rich book, a perceptive book, and a funny book. It is also a scandalous book and an incomplete book.

The scene is the Rio Arriba country of New Mexico between the mountains and the Rio Grande Canyon where old New Mexico and its *gente* rub elbows with the world of jukeboxes and Coca-Cola and money-hungry gringos. The trouble starts when Joe Mondragón, a feisty individualist who can fix anything but is not too good at thinking, decides to raise a crop of beans. He owns the land but he and most of his people have given up their water rights, and when he taps into the ditch, he is making a revolutionary gesture.

The survivors of the old Mexican stock, some of them superannuated and a little crazy, recognize the gesture for what it is, and so do the developers and politicians in Santa Fe. They know that if they turn Joe off, they may turn a battle on, so they proceed cautiously. Tension mounts anyway and the shooting starts. The villain is Ladd Devine the Third, who already owns the water and most of the land and is about to develop a resort community, complete with golf course. Led by a jittery Anglo lawyer named Bloom, the people start to organize. At first only a few are willing to be involved but before it is over they are all working together, even the ones who have sold out to the gringos, and it looks as if better days are on the way.

The theme—the conflict between aggressive Anglo developers and resentful native New Mexicans—has been used as a subject for fiction ever since Harvey Fergusson's *Blood of the Conquerors* (1921). It was the core

of Richard Bradford's *So Far from Heaven* in 1973 and William Bayer's *Stardust* in 1974. With the Chicano movement the voices have grown shriller but the conclusion is the same: The Mexicans had better get together if they expect to defeat the greedy gringos.

What Mr. Nichols adds to this formula is a love of black humor and an indefatigable curiosity. He is the James Joyce of New Mexico, prying into the history, the psychology, and the personal habits of every character, pursuing them into their bathrooms, their bedrooms, and even their chicken houses. The reader gets it all in the face, and he could do with a good deal less.

There can be no doubt that Mr. Nichols admires and enjoys these native New Mexicans and is perfectly familiar with them and their language but a curious point comes up in connection with their speech. Mostly they talk in the American vulgate, implying that what they are saying in Spanish would come out that way if they were talking in English. Cantankerous old Onofre Martínez refuses to put money in Milagro's only parking meter and he tells Sheriff Montoya, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks, so screw you, Bernabé, go put the bite on somebody else." They all talk like that.

One feels an even greater uneasiness about a certain sameness in the people. Arthur Campa, who lived and taught for many years in New Mexico, used to say that Anglos could not write well about Latins. "They always make them too quaint." Mr. Nichols' characters go beyond quaintness and even eccentricity. They are also violent, profane, and alcoholic. He includes no quiet Mexicans, no polite Mexicans, no gentle Mexicans. They exist, even in Rio Arriba County. By leaving them out, Mr. Nichols comes close to giving us a caricature, or even a parody, of these people whom he loves.

Tucson, Arizona

C. L. SONNICHSEN

ABOVE AND BEYOND IN THE WEST: BLACK MEDAL OF HONOR WINNERS, 1870-1890. By Preston E. Amos. Falls Church, Virginia: Pioneer America Society Press, 1974. Pp. xiv, 52. Illus., notes, bibliog. Cloth \$9.00, Paper \$5.00.

PRESTON E. AMOS has made an important contribution to the study of black troops in the American West during the period 1870-1890. More specifically, this book is mainly concerned with the eighteen black men who served with such distinction in the American West that they were awarded the Medal of Honor.

Thousands of black troops were first stationed in the American West in 1865 at the end of the Civil War when fifty thousand American soldiers were dispatched to Texas for the purpose of making sure that the troops of Napoleon III were withdrawn from Mexico. During the Civil War one hundred and eighty-six thousand black volunteers served with the Union army but many of these were mustered out when the war ended.

However, on July 28, 1866, the Congress of the United States passed "an act to increase and fix the military peace establishment of the United States." The new law required that four additional cavalry regiments be established "two of which shall be composed of colored men, having the same organization as is now provided by law for cavalry regiments." The Congressional action also required that four black infantry regiments be established.

All of the enlisted men who served in these six new black regiments were persons of color, and all of the officers were white until 1877 when Lieutenant Henry Flipper, the first black graduate of the United States Military Academy, was assigned to one of the regiments. The six black regiments were designated the 9th and 10th Cavalry and the 38th, 39th, 40th and 41st Infantry. Many of the men who served in these units were former slaves who had just recently been emancipated.

The four black infantry regiments were combined to form the 24th and 25th Infantry Regiments and these, along with the 9th and 10th Cavalry Regiments, remained in the American West until the outbreak of the Spanish American War in 1898. The troopers of these regiments spent years on the frontier "at some of the worst and most isolated posts and performed their duties under unusually difficult circumstances." There were complaints that the army provided them with inferior mounts and that they were given food unfit for human consumption. In addition to the aforementioned encumbrances, they had to tolerate the racial slurs which were often heaped upon them by whites whom they frequently protected from hostile Indians.

The daily duties of these four regiments were varied and sundry and included protecting settlers and railroad workers; serving as escorts; building telegraph lines; fighting engagements with marauders, desperadoes and outlaws including William "Billy the Kid" Bonney; and fighting more than one hundred and twenty-five engagements with the various Indian tribes including the Cheyennes, Apaches, Kiowas, Comanches, and Sioux. These various campaigns against the Indians were waged in Arizona, Colorado, Mexico, Texas, New Mexico, and Indian Territory.

These regiments had some outstanding officers such as Zenas R. Bliss, James W. Forsyth, Benjamin H. Grierson, George Schofield, and Ranald S. McKenzie, whose names are easily recognized. Some of these officers were responsible for many of the commendations which alluded to the dedication, patriotism, and exemplary conduct on the part of the black troops.

In fact, eighteen of these black servicemen were recommended for the Medal of Honor for conduct above and beyond the call of duty. Of these eighteen, eleven served in the 9th Cavalry; one served with the 10th Cavalry; two served with the 24th Infantry; and four served with the Seminole-Negro Indian Scouts. Sixteen of these men received the Medal of Honor as a result of deeds performed while fighting engagements with Indians. The two remaining Medal of Honor winners were awarded the Medal as a result of a skirmish which was fought with the robbers of an army payroll.

Amos' book is well written and indicates that he was most judicious in his use of the sources. The book is timely; nevertheless, it does not in any way overshadow *The Buffalo Soldiers* by William H. Leckie. However, it is a welcome addition to the already existing literature which is primarily concerned with the American West.

Texas Southern University

CALVIN REESE