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Book Reviews

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Book Reviews

In Mountain Shadows: A History of Idaho. By Carlos A. Schwantes. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991. xii + 292 pp. Illustrations, maps, charts, tables, notes, index. $24.95.)

Carlos Schwantes has given us a modest history of Idaho that should appeal to popular taste. He has made a deliberate effort to show how present-day Idaho has developed from its past. The book should find a ready market not only among history students but also among many recent arrivals from other states who may have a curiosity about their newly adopted homeland and its history.

Idaho is not well known even to many of its residents. To understand the state it is important to consider its rivers and mountains. The numerous rivers of Idaho that provide water for irrigation and electric power may well be the most valuable natural asset in the state. Of the rivers in the state none is more important than the Snake, "the thousand-mile-long waterway" that "has been called the Nile of Idaho" (p. 7). Rugged mountains have created a barrier between the north and south that has limited travel and communication between the two sections. Yet the mountains provide a retreat where Idahoans may go to observe and appreciate nature basically unchanged from earlier days. The mountains can be seen from most places in Idaho and their influence is so pervasive that the whole state "even the flat places can be described as lying within the mountains' shadow" (p. 6).

Schwantes has woven attention-getting tidbits about Idaho throughout the book. One may learn, for example, that in Idaho people moved not from the country to the city but from mining and agricultural settlements to the country; that Henry Spalding, a missionary to the Nez Perce Indians, owned the first printing press in the Oregon country; that a world record was set in the Coeur d'Alene district when "the billionth ounce of silver was mined" in 1985 (p. 95); that the New Deal provided Idaho with 163 Civilian Conservation Corps camps, a number second only to California; that Idaho was first to elect a Jew as governor in the United States; and that is was not until late in the 1950s that Idaho became the leading grower of potatoes.

The book is written primarily from secondary sources and makes limited use of endnotes. There is a valuable, partly annotated, bibliography that runs to twenty-six pages and is divided according to chapters. It is evident that Schwantes found the Idaho Historical Society's journal, *Idaho Yesterdays*, an

important source for his study. Distributed throughout the volume are more than one hundred pictures and photographs plus maps and other illustrative materials.

This work deserves to be kept in print and periodically updated, especially in light of the changing character of Idaho as more people migrate into the state. A second edition would allow the author and publisher to correct the garbled text on page ten; and perhaps Professor Schwantes would agree that he should place the confluence of the Boise and Snake rivers near the town of Parma rather than Weiser.

Robert C. Woodward
Northwest Nazarene College

Prose & Poetry of the American West. Edited by James C. Work. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990. xv + 733 pp. Notes, index. $50.00 cloth, $25.00 paper.)

"This anthology," says James C. Work, "is a gallery of artists who work in various literary media"; it is not "a *catalog* or *index* or *guide* to western literature" (p. xii). Four principal considerations guided Work in making his selections: he "avoided excerpts whenever possible"; he chose writing that acknowledges the Hispanic tradition; he tried to represent more accurately "the indispensable contributions made by women"; and he picked "writers who could exemplify the many different facets of western literature and who could thereby act as spokespersons for the hundreds not included" (pp. xiii–xiv). Work "presents authors in the order in which they were born" (p. xiv) and divides the anthology into four parts, each with an introduction: The Emergence Period, 1540–1832 (78 pages; 11 writers); The Mythopoeic Period, 1833–89 (277 pages; 18 writers); Neomythic Period, 1890–1914 (256 pages; 15 writers); and The Neowestern Period, 1915–Present (103 pages; 9 writers). All of Work's editorial decisions are based upon his "belief in the centrality of myth in western American literature" (p. xiv).

In some ways, Work's *Prose & Poetry* improves upon J. Golden Taylor's *The Literature of the American West* (1971), long out of print. Of the sixty-one writers included in Taylor's collection, only one is a woman and none is Hispanic; in contrast, ten women and three Hispanics are among the fifty-four writers in Work's gallery. Although Taylor provided brief introductions to each of the nine generic divisions in his book, he gave no introduction to individual authors, whereas Work introduces not only each section but also each author.

Work has not matched Taylor in other areas, however. Taylor discussed bibliographical resources and supplied lists for further reading, but Work gives only occasional footnotes and lists only selected titles by the authors he includes. Moreover, a few of Work's selections (namely, those by Hough, Neihardt, Harris, and Anaya) are mediocre. Nitpickers will spot some errors of fact such as Work's statement that Bret Harte never again saw his wife after he left the United States. Any fair assessment, however, will applaud Work's scholarly achievement in giving informative and engaging introductions to over fifty writers.

Overall, although *Prose & Poetry of the American West* includes a representative sampling of works not only by white males but also by Native Americans, women, and Hispanics, it gives short shrift to poets, contemporary writers, and immigrant groups such as Asian Americans and Scandinavians. Nevertheless, most of the reading is lively and enjoyable, and the book conveys a strong, clear sense of the western experience. Work knows his subject and writes so well himself that some of his introductions outshine the literature that follows them. His book should be available in every library in the West.

James H. Maguire
Boise State University

Life in Mexico under Santa Anna, 1822–1855. By Ruth R. Olivera and Liliane Crété. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991. xv + 264 pp. Illustrations, maps, bibliography, index. $24.95.)

To experience Mexico in the historic literature, e.g., *Life in Mexico under Santa Anna, 1822–1855,* is to enter this country as though in a dream. Mexico threw off the Spanish yoke and its cohesive political structure in 1821 and Catholic religion continued to furnish a common denominator to a degree. The country was otherwise fragmented, diverse, far-flung from Santa Fe to Mérida, Yucatán, roughly two thousand miles as the crow flies and much farther traveled by road. It was a strange land in which gigantic feudal estates thrived independently and charming colonial towns supported isolated families ringed by ancient Indian populations further alienated by traditions and language. In short, not only was Mexico complex but also elusive, difficult to control and govern.

By default President Antonio López de Santa Anna surfaced to head the republic, off and on, from 1822 to 1855, a figure the authors describe as "the personification of the period" (p. xi). Olivera and Crété have used most of the published journals, both foreign and Mexican, as well as the preeminent Gardoa family papers, to examine Mexican life, towns and villages, the people, customs, some governmental attempts to pull society together through education, transporation and communication, commerce, and more. To their credit, they have made use of *diarios,* informative official departmental (states') newspapers established after the Constitution of 1836, which were filled with local concerns and news from around the country.

Withal, the survey presented here whets the appetite for more. Mexico City is described as being 2 miles long and 1.5 miles wide with a population of 170,000. Roads were in bad repair, requiring life-endangering convoys, threatened by thieves, primitive accommodations, and sometimes months of travel (six months from Mexico City to Santa Fe, New Mexico). John Lloyd Stephens thought Mérida, capital of Yucatán, "a little nook almost unknown to the rest of the world." There is much more but also not enough. Lovers of Mexico can hope this little book will lead the way for future volumes, and they are warned in the preface that Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and Altá California were omitted in order "to study daily life in Mexico proper. . . ."

A tendency exists to gloss over situations that may not be familiar to the

reader. For example, the Monte de Piedad, the national pawnshop, was founded by the Conde de Regla in 1775, but the importance of this family to Mexican history is nowhere explained; the building itself served as the first viceregal residence, and is much older than implied (p. 49). The Texas–Santa Fe Expedition occurred during the summer of 1841, not the following year (pp. 171–72). Some discussion of the Guadalupe shrine appears, but the importance of ancient shrines such as San Juan de los Lagos is not otherwise explained.

Too many indeeds and moreovers clutter up an otherwise clean and straightforward text. The authors, however, are to be congratulated for overlooking the many prejudices found in the journals listed in their bibliography, and for giving the reader a clearer picture of what these visitors actually saw. There is no other book available on the period quite like this one.

Ward Alan Minge
Corrales, New Mexico

Politics and Public Policy in the Contemporary American West. Edited by Clive S. Thomas. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991. xiii + 589 pp. Maps, charts, tables, notes, bibliography, index. $40.00 cloth, $19.95 paper.)

Clive Thomas, the editor of this collection of essays on contemporary (post-1960) western politics, is a professor of political science at the University of Alaska Southeast; he is also author or coauthor of five of the twenty essays. Twenty-three other authors also contributed; twenty of them are also political scientists. They define the West as the thirteen states wholly west of the 100th meridian.

Thomas has integrated the twenty essays more successfully than is usually the case for such collections. As a result, the essays effectively draw upon or contribute to a common core of analysis presented in the first two essays and reiterated in the final one, all authored or coauthored by Thomas. His espousal of Daniel Elazar's concepts of political culture is not convincing, however, and few of the other authors rely on it. More successful is Thomas' set of ten persistent, and overlapping, characteristics that mark western politics as unique (p. 8 and throughout). Two of these characteristics—an "all-pervasive" dependence on government, especially the federal government, and a high level of political individualism—combine to produce "the western political paradox," exemplified by politicians who build careers on "the two seemingly contradictory practices of securing huge amounts of federal funds while vocalizing anti-federal government sentiments" (p. 37).

In the first section, dealing with influences on western politics, the economy and the federal government each receive a full essay. Richard Foster's essay on the federal government suggests that it was so central to the economic development of the region that it generated a "politics of symbolism" (p. 77) in opposition to federal influence.

The second section presents forms of political participation, and gives special attention to westerners' frequent use of the initiative and referendum, the tendency of western election campaigns to focus on candidates rather than parties, and the weakness of western political parties and corresponding strength

of interest groups. Robert Benedict and Ronald Hrebenar, coauthors of the fifth and sixth essays, include an extensive exploration of the increasing conservatism and Republicanism of the West. One essay focuses on the political roles and significance of women, Mexican Americans, and American Indians, with some attention to other ethnic minority groups. None of the essays offers a comparable examination of the Mormons, surely one of the West's most politically significant cultural groups.

The third section describes and analyzes the region's legislatures, governors, judiciaries, finance, local government, and education; large portions of some essays tend to be descriptive. The final section, on intergovernmental relations, focuses on three related sets of issues with federal, state, and local implications: land and natural resource policies, water policy, and environmental policy.

Historians will be disappointed that so few of the essays draw upon the rich literature they have developed on western politics. The bibliography includes many important works by historians, but few appear in the footnotes. Several authors, for example, point to the continuing influence of Populism and progressivism, but none cite recent works on those topics.

Robert W. Cherny
San Francisco State University

Dispatches from the Deep Woods. By John G. Mitchell. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991. xiii + 304 pp. Index. $24.95.)

Self-proclaimed "tree-hugging" nature writer John G. Mitchell has brought together in *Dispatches from the Deep Woods* thirteen of his previously published essays on American forests and trees. All essays appeared in nature magazines, such as *Wilderness* and *Audubon*, in the 1980s.

Mitchell's writing tends toward the personal, and is certainly biased by the perspective of an environmentalist, though the type of environmentalist who is essentially a humanitarian at heart. So before reading this volume, one should take seriously Mitchell's remark in his introduction that while years ago he would not deny it if someone suggested that he loved trees more than people, today he would, "because it is only half true" (p. xiii).

Mitchell's essays range from the highly personal to the deeply social-environmental. Thus the tone of his collection varies from the lighthearted to the distraughtful. Two charming essays about Mitchell's personal development as a tree-hugger include one about a sycamore hiding-tree he knew when a youngster, and another about the northern Michigan forests where he spent several childhood summers in the 1930s. In the other essays, one will find, among other things, topical synopses of the history of Redwood National Park, wood burning in New England, Plum Creek Timber Company's holdings in Montana and Idaho, and preservation of the Olympic Peninsula. Two other essays are biographical sketches of Verplanck Colvin, surveyor of Adirondack wilderness in New York State, and Robert Marshall, founder of the Wilderness Society. A third concerns the conservation activities of the Civilian Conservation Corps during the 1930s and 1940s.

Being from the Pacific Northwest, I found particularly compelling and useful Mitchell's essays discussing the complex social-environmental crisis in Washington and Oregon, which revolves around the harvesting of second-growth timber, the loss of old growth, the legacy of sustained-yield forestry, the problem with timber-based communities, and the responsibility (or irresponsibility) of the United States Forest Service and large and small timber firms.

Dispatches' essays concern the forests of the greater Pacific Northwest and the Northeast. There is nothing about the forests of the Southeast or of the southern Rockies. The collection, however, is a useful reader on the past, present, and future of some of America's trees and deep woods. It should be read by environmental and forest historians. And, no doubt, the general populace will benefit as well, since the essays explore and explode some of the myths shrouding our forests of today—especially those of the Pacific Northwest. If one can, read the book out-of-doors, under a favorite tree.

Peter G. Boag
Idaho State University

The Desert Reader: Descriptions of America's Arid Regions. Edited by Peter Wild. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1991. 236 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. $19.95 paper.)

Peter Wild's book, *The Desert Reader,* contains readings from the works of nineteen authors who have written on North America's dry lands. Wild begins with a short overview of the book. He then, in turn, briefly introduces and places into perspective each reading. His approach is broadly chronological, ranging from Papago Indian mythology and the Spaniard Cabeza de Vaca's account of the Texas Trans-Pecos region, to the works of such modern writers on the dry lands as Wallace Stegner and Edward Abbey.

Wild wrote this book to acquaint readers with the "best writings about the arid lands," and to give readers an understanding of how American attitudes toward deserts "have changed over the years" (p. 3). That change has been from a view of deserts as natural resources to be exploited, to one of appreciating them for their more subtle qualities. Wild makes no particular effort to write about plant and animal life, or specific deserts, or conservation. These topics, nevertheless, figure prominently in his choice of readings, which clearly indicates that he is sensitive to, though not shrill about, environmental issues.

Among the writings Wild uses, William Gilpin's *Mission of the North American People* serves as a "yardstick of prevailing [early] ideas against which better ideas can be measured" (p. 4). Gilpin, of course, was the ultimate booster—a stock arid lands character—who blindly touted the Great Plains as a fertile "garden" in which no settler could fail to succeed. From Gilpin, Wild moves to several writings of John Wesley Powell that focused national attention on the arid lands: *Exploration of the Colorado River in the West* and *Report on the Arid Region of the United States.* The latter is particularly important for historians,

because in it he goes against booster wisdom to suggest more realistically how the arid lands ought to be settled.

James O. Pattie's *Personal Narratives* is another important writing in this book. Pattie trapped beaver along the streams in the southwest deserts in the 1820s. His descriptions of the abundant vegetation and wildlife along them then, despite some exaggeration, constitute a "base-line account" for today's students in a variety of disciplines to assess the current status of the deserts in the Southwest (p. 27).

An excerpt from art critic John C. Van Dyke's 1901 classic, *The Desert,* is similarly a milestone in Wild's treatment of arid lands. Wild calls this work the "most sensitive book about our deserts" and the "grafting stock" on which later writers modeled their efforts (p. 111). Van Dyke's book appeals especially to readers with an aesthetic and spiritual bent.

Wild's thoughtfully chosen collection of writings offers something useful to the specialist and nonspecialist, to students in literature, the natural sciences, geography, and history. But his book seems most useful to students and teachers in environmental history. Besides those already mentioned, Mary Austin's *Land of Little Rain* has a strong environmental flavor. Austin knew her ecology; she was "land centered" (p. 122). Another such gem is the Texas naturalist J. Frank Dobie's *Voice of the Coyote.* In it, he places that resilient small canid in a more balanced perspective. And then there is the righteous Aldo Leopold's "Land Ethic" chapter in *A Sand County Almanac,* in which he exhorts us to treat the land kindly.

Peter Wild's *The Desert Reader* reflects sound scholarship. Should he, however, decide to publish a sequel, he might benefit by looking at the official reports of the explorers who traversed the Great Plains and the Southwest during the first half of the nineteenth century. They describe in some detail the natural history of the dry lands. The reports on the 1819–1820 Stephen H. Long and the mid-1800s Randolph B. Marcy expeditions are quite quotable and readable in places. Wild's writing is tight and antiseptic; those of the authors he cites, descriptive and almost always entertaining. He uses some thirty-seven period drawings to give readers an appreciation for time and place. Because this book is the first of its kind, it fills a gap in our knowledge. It would be useful in university courses in environmental history as an outside reading. Wild offers a balanced range of readings on a fragile, threatened ecosystem and thus increases our understanding of it. Herein, perhaps, lies his main contribution.

Jim Fenton
Texas Tech University

From Desert to Bayou: The Civil War Journal and Sketches of Morgan Wolfe Merrick. By Morgan Wolfe Merrick. Edited by Jerry Thompson. (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1991. vi + 135 pp. Illustrations, map, notes, bibliography, index. $40.00.)

As Ken Burns' recent PBS television series, "The Civil War," so aptly demonstrated, nothing draws attention to or enhances the memory of a great

historical event like the use of personal documents to flesh out and humanize its intrinsic framework of facts and statistical evidence.

From Desert to Bayou: The Civil War Journal and Sketches of Morgan Wolfe Merrick is such a vehicle, particularly for those interested in the role of the Texan troops who invaded southern New Mexico in 1861 and controlled portions of Arizona and the Mesilla Valley until their retreat a year later.

In addition, Merrick recorded information about General Emanual Twiggs' controversial surrender of the Department of Texas in February 1861, and also depicted later events such as the 1863 battles of Donaldsonville, Lafourche, and a rebel attack on Vidalia, Louisiana, near Natchez, Mississippi.

Two intriguing differences between Merrick's journal and many other contemporary diaries are his forty-five detailed pencil and watercolor sketches and his sense of humor. Merrick's art work, while obviously amateurish and stiff, is precise and detailed. Fortunately his choice of subject matter was extremely varied, ranging from trailside camps along the San Antonio–El Paso road to scenes of attacks on gunboats on the Mississippi. He also sketched historical buildings, views of Indian depredations, and even several Mescalero Apache portraits. As a result readers can literally see many of the places and incidents that heretofore only could be imagined. Editor Jerry Thompson has provided an excellent introduction and prolific notes that expand on events and personalities to a very satisfactory degree.

The book will be of value to those wishing to learn more physical details of the route covered by the army of Texans as they proceeded westward in 1861, about Forts Davis and Fillmore, the Mesilla Valley, and the feud between Confederate commanders Colonel John Baylor, who carried out the original invasion, and his superior, Brigadier General Henry H. Sibley, who directed the entire New Mexico campaign.

Always intrigued by the unusual, Merrick also sketched a hanging, recorded seeing a fellow soldier struck and killed by lightning, told of coming across a demented man on the road between the Gila and Pecos rivers, and described a case of cannibalism.

But perhaps the most important legacy Merrick's diaries and sketches left is the real sense of day-to-day living, the tragic, humorous, and routine events that the military men experience between the rare and intense moments of military combat. Minutiae like this from personal accounts not only adds color but often discloses bits of new information that enhance official documents.

Jacqueline Dorgan Meketa
Placitas, New Mexico

Let Justice Be Done: Crime and Politics in Early San Francisco. By Kevin J. Mullen. (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1989. xix + 313 pp. Illustrations, map, tables, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. $24.95.)

Veteran San Francisco policeman turned skillful historian, Kevin J. Mullen provides an impressive history of crime, police, and politics in San Francisco's 1846–1853 era and a telling critique of the great vigilance committee of 1851. Originating in the early 1850s, the legend held that San Francisco was victim-

ized by Australian arsonists and a murder wave of hundreds of homicides per year. In response, said tradition, the vigilantes rose up to end the fires and curb the killing. Several recent scholars rejected the legend, but the message never got across to popular writers and even eluded some California historians. Showing that the arson was largely a myth, Mullen crushes the legend of massive murder by presenting overwhelming quantitative evidence to the contrary.

Emphasizing even more than others that the vigilance committee of 1851 was a virtual monopoly of San Francisco's commercial and maritime establishment, Mullen's analysis underscores his conclusion that in taking the law into their own hands the self-serving vigilantes were also pursuing political power. Yet, in an important finding, Mullen reveals that the city's amount of murder, robbery, and burglary was about the same both before and after the vigilantism of 1851. More symptom than cure, the vigilante campaign was, Mullen reports, a spasm reaction not to the legendary annual hundreds of murders (there were just forty-four criminal homicides in the entire 1850–53 period and only fifteen in 1851) but to something far broader: the surge in crime engulfing America's biggest cities of the time. San Franciscans, says Mullen, had never before known the brutal business robbery that triggered the vigilante movement of 1851. Also new to them was the city's steep criminal-homicide rate of 1850 (twice that of San Francisco in the late 1980s)—one that was, however, strongly skewed upward, Mullen explains, by the city's abnormally high number of crime-prone young males. Although wildly incorrect the legend of murder by the hundreds may have been, it seems to me, a psychological metaphor for the reality of crime shock felt by the leading merchants of this instant city of the Gold Rush.

Richard Maxwell Brown
University of Oregon

The Quanah Route: The History of the Quanah, Acme, & Pacific Railway. By Don L. Hofsommer. (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1991. xiv + 215 pp. Illustrations, maps, tables, notes, bibliography, index. $42.50.)

In the past two years there have been two histories of the Quanah, Acme, and Pacific, locally known as the Quit Arguing and Push Railroad. Both are factually detailed and designed for either the railroad buff or the local historian. Of the two, this is the superior, both in content and production.

The railroad, conceived as a connecting route for small towns in the Texas Panhandle and beyond, achieved its first goal but it never quite reached the Pacific, or El Paso for that matter. Locally, however, it did its job well. As a local hauler it served the region quite adequately until its demise in 1981. As with many other short lines across the country, its passenger business was destroyed by cars, and buses and trucks did in its freight hauling. In short, it came into existence when it was needed, it performed a useful function, and when that function began being handled more efficiently by other means, it ceased to exist. All in all that is not a bad epitaph for a railroad.

Railroad historians, railroad buffs, and local historians should all be sat-

isfied with this volume. It is well researched and the formal research is nicely fleshed out with oral interviews of key employees. The maps are well done and useful and the book is copiously illustrated. All in all, like the QA&P, the author has done his job and done it well.

G. L. Seligmann
University of North Texas

Oliver La Farge and the American Indian: A Biography. By Robert A. Hecht. (Metuchen, New Jersey: The Scarecrow Press, 1991. xi + 370 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. $42.50 cloth, $25.00 paper.)

Robert Hecht's new biography of Oliver La Farge, the second to be written since La Farge's death in 1964, relies primarily on family records and correspondence and the archives of the Association on American Indian Affairs (AAIA). La Farge served as head of that organization from the 1930s through the 1960s. Hecht's discussion of La Farge's role in restoring Blue Lake, sacred to the Taos Pueblo Indians, to their exclusive control is particularly effective. The author also includes an extensive reprise of Navajo history (more extensive than necessary, perhaps, for most readers) that provides a context for La Farge's activities on the Navajo Reservation.

While Hecht's study in most instances parallels D'Arcy McNickle's 1971 biography of La Farge, he does provide details that augment the earlier account. For instance, he offers additional information about La Farge's first marriage and subsequent divorce/annulment. He also describes the increasing turmoil in the Association during the early 1950s, when Alexander Lesser was executive director. Unfortunately, he does not balance the AAIA account with records of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), although he places Lesser's dislike of the NCAI in the middle of the controversy. He might also have consulted Elizabeth Clark (Betty) Rosenthal and Lucy M. Cohen, Saul Cohen's widow, for a more complete picture of Lesser's fall from grace. For reasons that are not clear, McNickle in his biography had ignored the whole affair, perhaps because as one of the founders of NCAI he was personally involved in some way.

In other matters, too, Hecht might have provided a more rounded interpretation. Others have written about Dillon Myer without resorting to Richard Drinnon's hyperbole, and their views about Myer and the termination years would have added balance to this account. Finally, it is always distressing to find people's names misspelled. Maria Chabot, Rene d'Harnoncourt, and Sam Ahkeah all are spelled incorrectly in both the text and the index.

Hecht's painstaking and detailed research in the extensive La Farge family records is certainly commendable, and the photographs, provided mainly by La Farge's son Pen, add much to the book. But, although he fills in details not included in the McNickle biography, we are still left with the feeling that the definitive biography of Oliver La Farge is yet to be written. We now have the

narrative outline in considerable detail; the inner workings of the man, however, continue to elude us.

Dorothy Parker
Eastern New Mexico University

Campaigning with King: Charles King, Chronicler of the Old Army. By Don Russell. Edited by Paul L. Hedren. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991. xxix + 187 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. $25.00.)

Few people associate army officers with literary figures. Yet Charles King was both. A captain in the Fifth Cavalry, King also authored over sixty books, mostly novels, between 1880 and 1914. In fact, King transformed western army post life and Indian Wars incidents into tales that for many years influenced the American reading public's images of the military.

This biography, published for the first time nearly sixty years after Don Russell wrote it, chronicles King's dual career. The first half of the book covers King's army experiences, which began as a West Point cadet and ended in 1879 when he was placed on the retired list, a result of a wound in a skirmish with Apaches.

King is noteworthy, however, not for his military exploits but for his ability to turn those experiences into fiction. His books, while not great literature, nonetheless found a wide audience and so, carry some significance. King drew upon actual people and events for his inspiration. Russell maintains he offered "an accurate picture of contemporary society" and Paul Hedren, who wrote the book's introduction, concurs that King deserves our attention because his "stories depict with great veracity" army life.

Hedren, however, also notes, "virtually the same plot served for all his fiction." Contrived, melodramatic situations all too often characterized the work. King cranked out his books, completing one in three weeks. He represented, in fact, as Russell put it, "a novel factory" that found a market well into the twentieth century. Happily, King never pretended to be a "literary personage" nor did he every deny his principal motive was money.

Russell's work offers an interesting overview to Charles King and his work. Although not written according to scholarly forms, he researched his subject and included footnotes. He apparently knew King and meant this biography as a celebration of the officer/writer rather than an analysis of his work. Some aspects of the manuscript are dated. Scholars no longer have Indians "infesting" areas where they live, nor do they usually present U.S. involvement in the Philippines as an example of American "idealism."

Hedren's excellent bibliographical essay lists more recent works that feature King, including one that takes advantage of "very personal and frank letters King wrote to his family from the northern plains in 1876" (the sort of thing missing in Russell). Others examine King in a cultural, literary context—the most appropriate way to examine this officer's long and influential writing

career. Russell's book can be a reader's first look at King, but it should not be the last.

Sherry L. Smith
University of Texas, El Paso

Emergence of the Modern Mexican Woman: Her Participation in Revolution and Struggle for Equality, 1910–1940. By Shirlene Soto. (Denver: Arden Press, 1990. xvi + 199 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. $26.50 cloth, $16.95 paper.)

Soto's work moves beyond explaining preconditions and causes for the Mexican Revolution, the examination of the role of ideology and leaders in the revolutionary process. Although the author does not elaborate, she recognizes that one gender does not stand alone, but is embedded in relationships with the opposite sex and that these relationships are conditioned by class, ethnicity, age, and other factors. A theoretical chapter is missing, but a connection is made between women's culture and women's politics. This text answers the question: what is gender-specific about how women related to the revolution and the social conditions that followed it?

The text's focus is on the years 1910–1940, the administration of Porfirio Diaz (1876–1910), the administration's favoritism toward North American business, and the thirty years following the revolution in which women struggled for women's rights. The author maintains that during the Porfiriato the social change movement for women was led mostly by a few middle class women who organized a wave of protest aginst the overwhelming influence of the Catholic Church, which kept women tied to home and family. These women, allied with upper class Mexican women, also organized against the legal code that served to stifle women's political, educational, and economic needs. Soto does not give detailed insight into the vast majority of Mexican women, who were poor and illiterate, and yet organized into action in the fields and ranch houses of rich landowners. Perhaps she did not do this because the work of peasant women has, to a very limited degree, already been outlined.

A more extensive and interdisciplinary work is in order; one that organizes feminist activities in a multifaceted manner, one that moves away from the hierarchical, chronological, male-dominated way of documenting history. The book is weak in recording race and ethnic issues during the period. But it does document how during this period appreciable numbers of women were able to diverge from prescribed gender roles. Soto barely mentions the viable link to the U.S. Chicana by discussing how some of these women became role models to U.S. Chicanas during the Chicano Movement. However, Soto does lend insight into understanding the Mexican women who were exiled in this country as a result of their revolutionary activities.

Soto's move toward a more egalitarian treatment of the Mexican Revolution presents both the positive and the negative aspects of revolution. This reader would have liked to have seen more emphasis on the devastating effects on women who were raped and pillaged, how they endured the separation and death of loved ones, and the breakup of families. As a consequence women were forced to organize. This forced struggle is a major theoretical weakness

in revolutionary and social change theory. It is one that has been strongly overlooked by male scholars. It is also another link to Chicana scholarship. U.S. Chicanas did not organize into the Chicano Movement and into their own feminist movement because they had middle class leisure time that would allow them to think and write about sexism. They organized because social conditions forced activism.

Irene I. Blea
University of New Mexico

Pueblo Style and Regional Architecture. Edited by Nicholas C. Markovich, Wolfgang F. E. Preiser, and Fred G. Sturm. (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1990. xv + 348 pp. Illustrations, maps, charts, tables, notes, bibliography, index. $45.95.)

"Pueblo style is not a style, it is a way of life shaped by a reaction to the desert climate, available building materials, and cultural and mythical forces. It is also an alluring trap for those of us who must create in the shadow of its force." This quotation from an essay by Glade Sperry, Jr., in *Pueblo Style and Regional Architecture* suggests the power and mystique of the book's subject. The interpretive possibilities are, as the book demonstrates, virtually endless.

This collection of twenty-one essays examines aspects of the pueblo style of architecture from prehistoric beginnings through its influence on modern architecture, with side trips into more esoteric areas of ritual, vision, and myth. Both ancient and contemporary pueblo architecture are discussed, along with the impact of pueblo revival styles in the Southwest and elsewhere. One section is devoted to regionalism and the ingredients leading to creation of unique architectural styles in an area. (Contributing author Buford L. Pickens writes, "The seeds from Old World species of architecture and town plans were sown at different places on virgin soil, under conditions capable of producing vital new characteristics.")

The study is comprehensive; the diversity of material requires a certain amount of mental gear-shifting by the reader to bridge its leaps from the practical to the very abstract. Writing styles and approaches vary widely from essay to essay. The book concludes with a twenty-four-page photograph portfolio tracing the history of architecture in New Mexico.

Pueblo Style and Regional Architecture is a valuable resource on the pueblo style and associated theory. The book is aimed at an informed audience; its textbook-like format and small print, as well as the dryness of some of its text, may discourage the casual reader. The subject matter, though—in all its variety—is rich and worthy of further study.

Susan Berry
Silver City Museum

Promise to the Land: Essays on Rural Women. By Joan M. Jensen. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991. xii + 319 pp. Illustrations, maps, tables, notes, index. $27.50.)

Although many of the essays in this volume have appeared before, there is much to be learned from Joan Jensen's *Promise to the Land.* In many ways, the collection is as innovative as Jensen's essays always have been. In it she crosses boundaries between the personal and the scholarly, and the historical and the contemporary, as well as between a variety of disciplines. She is also intent on serving as a guide for others to make the same journey.

Several of my old favorites appear in this volume, including "Cloth, Butter, and Boarders: Women's Household Production for the Market," which, when it appeared in 1980, redefined our notions of women's economic roles and larger economic structures and development. The old and new essays together demonstrate Jensen's startlingly wide range from the general to biography and autobiography, from the sixteenth century to the present, from eastern Europe to Pennsylvania, Maryland, and several essays on New Mexico, from German immigrants to Seneca Indians, enslaved blacks, and Puebloan peoples. Despite the range, there are several unifying themes besides the topic of rural women itself.

In line with "Cloth, Butter, and Boarders," Jensen throughout asks us to reexamine our assumptions about the processes of economic change by taking into account women's household production as well as reproduction, and women's technological and market innovations that affected larger capitalist structures. Economics plays a key role in Jensen's analysis, with each chapter providing a detailed narrative of the larger and local economic structure. At the same time, Jensen pays close attention to differences born of unequal power relations among cultural and racial groups. New Mexico Hispanic women's responses to land development schemes and agricultural extension work, for example, differed from those of their Anglo neighbors.

Jensen also asks us to recover the rural in our own past. Each of us, she insists, had rural forebears, and most do not have to go back far to find them. Such a recovery will not only affect our understanding of our own lives, but alter the way we perceive the structure and meaning of U.S. history. Her focus on the rural as a distinct set of values, a distinct culture, brings an interesting twist to, for example, African American history, where she grounds reliance on "kinship, community, work and a language of [female] assertiveness" (p. 235) in culture common to other rural groups rather than simply in African roots.

Jensen makes us aware again that the current farm crisis is not new. "Because this is such a big diverse country," she asserts, "with a variety of people and a variety of crops, this constant crisis has often been masked" (p. 234). She finds much to guide us in the strategies of our hard-driven forebears as well as in the generational rifts the hard life wrought. Like Mary Blewett's *Last Generation* of Lowell mill workers, at various points at almost all times, there were farm women for whom changing economic structures "made work harder and had stripped it of much of its cultural significance" until "Work was no longer a way to transmit values, it was only a way to transmit poverty,"

and so the next generation headed for the promise of the city and its popular culture instead of imbibing the traditional culture that was all their mothers could transmit.

This extremely readable volume would work well in a variety of classes, such as social history, women's history, agricultural history, labor history, or simply U.S. history.

Sarah Deutsch
Clark University

Women in the Field: American's Pioneering Women Naturalists. By Marcia Myers Bonta. (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1991. xix + 299 pp. Illustrations, bibliography, index. $29.95 cloth, $13.95 paper.)

In the burgeoning field of women's history, *Women in the Field* is a work on a seldom-encountered subject. Bonta presents the lives of twenty-five American women who, despite family commitments and prejudices against their gender, contributed to the science of natural history. Most of these women worked in the nineteenth century and many lived in the West.

The biographies are grouped by subject into six sections from botanists to ecologists, each prefaced with a general essay. Endnotes provide references for further research. The lives span the eighteenth through the twentieth centuries.

From the chronological arrangement a history of American attitudes toward women naturalists emerges. One of the first American naturalists, Jane Calder, a pre–Revolutionary War botanist, was guided in her botanical activities by her father, who believed that "women were . . . suited . . . to the study of botany because of their natural curiosity and the pleasure they take in the beauty and variety of dress."

Margaretta Morris, a mid-eighteenth-century entomologist had her papers read to scientific societies by men, since "no self-respecting female would have considered reading a paper before an all male audience." Martha Maxwell "put up with cruel jibes from women who thought she had brought shame on their sex by daring to exhibit her collection [of habitat groupings]" at the end of the nineteenth century. Kate Brandegee allowed her botanical work to be credited to men out of respect for prejudices against women botanists in powerful positions.

On the other hand, the last subject, the twentieth-century ecologist Rachel Carson, earned a master's in marine biology at Johns Hopkins, then became a biologist for the Fish and Wildlife Service. During her professional life she was granted the first Audubon medal ever given to a woman, as well as many other prestigious awards.

But this book is much more than a social history. Bonta has ferreted out enough information on these obscure women to bring the subjects alive. We can see how they became interested in natural history and how they managed to pursue their investigations while carrying out their family duties.

Women in the Field depicts women who overcame hardships to study natural history. Each biography is an example of the obstacles society has placed in

the path of intelligent, curious women. Students of natural history will find here a history of changing attitudes toward women in science in America. In a broader sense, each biography is an inspiration to all women to follow their inclinations and to rise above society's limitations.

Aside from a few instances of misuse of scientific terms that could have been avoided by having the text reviewed by a specialist, the biographies are well written, authoritative, and interesting to read. Bonta has brought together information on these relatively obscure women in an interesting and readable book. Moreover, her work will stimulate many readers to learn more about America's pioneering women naturalists.

Carolyn Dodson
University of New Mexico General Library

River of Traps: A Village Life. By William deBuys and Alex Harris. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1990. 238 pp. Illustrations. $19.95.)

Reviewers do not often finish reading books with tears in their eyes. And they rarely look for excuses to drop other chores in favor of returning to the task of constructive criticism. But *River of Traps* is unique, powerful, and appealing. It is a beautiful book, both in its composition and its ability to enliven the subject. It is, in fact, a beautiful merging of photographic artistry with poetic writing. It is poignant. It stirs the senses. And along with Stanley Crawford's *Mayordomo* (University of New Mexico Press, 1988), it provides the kind of visceral perceptions needed to understand the ingredients of Hispanic life in northern New Mexico.

It is essentially the story of eighty-year-old Jacobo Romero, his family, and how two young Anglo-Saxon men, deBuys (writer) and Harris (photographer), entered into the life of the El Valle community along the unpredictable, occasionally violent, and sometimes insignificant Río de las Trampas. With deBuys trying to write a book (*Enchantment and Exploitation*, University of New Mexico Press, 1985) and Harris working to develop a career in documentary photography, the authors' focus was not initially on the subject at hand. In fact, before Jacobo Romero died, Harris had no intention of turning his photographs into a book and deBuys simply took notes of their daily activities.

Gradually, however, both men became hypnotized by Jacobo Romero and what he was teaching them about living with the land. They learned about working their water, never giving it a holiday, sharing it with others. They discovered how their neighbors helped each other, how they calculated values, not in terms of dollars, possessions, or leisure but in terms of food. They fell into the rhythm of the land, adjusted to the seasons, and shared in their neighbors' tragedies. Aging, death, family feuds, loss of land, livestock, and property paraded before them. Along with the tragedies of daily life, they were also witness to the "currency of the neighborly way: coffee, meals, stories, sympathy, advice, and not least, the loan of tools" (p. 148).

They were gringos in a Hispanic world, but they won a measure of acceptance and developed "a sharper sense of our mettle, as though it were a muscle we could feel" (p. 185). Although the provincialism and fatalism of the

people were often difficult to accept, they grew to appreciate local customs. When Jacobo Romero died, they struggled with their own future. Staying or leaving? It was a difficult choice, but they had begun "to mistake the familiar horizons of the valley for those of the world" (p. 221). It was time to go. "The task of the student is not to copy the teacher but to apply things taught to what is needed" (p. 222).

And so they wrote this book, partly to celebrate their own experience and partly as a testimonial to Jacobo Romero, the Río de las Trampas, and the community of El Valle. With "cantos" setting the stage for each chapter and photographs sensitively matching the narrative, reading this book becomes a pure delight. Undoubtedly, the authors left something of their souls in northern New Mexico.

Daniel Tyler
Colorado State University

Carl Wimar: Chronicler of the Missouri River Frontier. By Rick Stewart, Joseph D. Ketner II, and Angela L. Miller. (Fort Worth: Amon Carter Museum, 1991. xi + 252 pp. Illustrations, maps, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. $49.95.)

This monograph on Carl Wimar (1828–1862) was published in conjunction with an exhibition (thirty-five paintings and thirty drawings) at the Washington University Gallery of Art in St. Louis, and the Amon Carter Museum in Fort Worth. At the Texas exhibition, a symposium on Wimar's works—"Carl Wimar's American Frontier—Realty or Myth?"—was held in early May 1991 to discuss issues raised by the exhibition.

The book consists of three essays, 241 illustrations—24 of the major works in color—and an appendix of Wimar's works. "An Artist on the Great Missouri," by Rick Stewart, curator of western painting at the Amon Carter, is the longest of the three. It covers the period 1858–1859 when the artist journeyed from St. Louis up the river to observe for himself the western reaches that Catlin (1830), Bodmer (1833, published in 1839), Bingham (1845), Deas (1841), Ranney (1840s) had accomplished earlier. Many, but not all, of Wimar's most important western pictures had been done before this trip while the artist was a student in Germany at the Düsseldorf Academy.

The many sketchbook pages of detailed pencil drawings provide firsthand observations of animals, ceremonies, and the buffalo hunt—the materials for his last easel paintings. Wimar's photographs of these same subjects (mentioned in text but not shown) would have been equally revealing.

The essay by Joseph D. Ketner II, director of the Washington University Gallery, "The Indian Painter in Düsseldorf," is concerned with the period when Wimar, as well as many other American western landscape painters—Worthington Whittredge, Alfred Bierstadt, and George Caleb Bingham to name only the three most important—were also learning at that most prestigious German academy. Their mentor, in formal academic instruction or at the Gasthaus of the *Malkasten*, the informal club of young artists, was Imanuel Leutze, the German-American painter of U.S. history—"Washington Crossing the Delaware" (1851) and "Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way" (1862).

This essay considers subjects of current critical substance and debate. The influence, in both an artistic and an economic sense, of the commercial panoramas of the Mississippi River, the mythology associated with the captivity myth, in the case of Wimar, the capture of Daniel Boone's daughter Jemima, the appropriation of European religious iconography for enthusiastic proponents of national expansion are but a few of these issues. Such didactic curatorial rhetoric in recent exhibit and catalog at the National Museum of American Art in Washington, D.C., have become the occasion for impassioned arguments for artistic censorship.

The final essay, "A Muralist of Civic Ambitions" by Angela L. Miller, an art historian at Washington University, is concerned with the mural decorations for the rotunda of the St. Louis courthouse, a commission left unfinished in 1862 when Wimar died of tuberculosis. He believed that a public art of fresco painting best would serve religiously inspired national aspirations. The cycle was to include Hernando de Soto discovering the Mississippi and other local historical events.

Any discussion of Missouri River imagery in American art must make some obeisant recognition of George Caleb Bingham's *Fur Traders Descending the Missouri* (1845), regarded by some as the quintessential vernacular image of the reality of myth. In contrast to the simple luminous brilliance of the Bingham work, much of Wimar's epic construction is a torturous semiotics of postured iconography.

Douglas R. George
University of New Mexico

Regulating Danger: The Struggle for Mine Safety in the Rocky Mountain Coal Industry. By James Whiteside. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990. xv + 265 pp. Illustrations, maps, tables, notes, bibliography, index. $37.50.)

Among the many happy consequences of the so-called new western history is that historians are finally paying attention to the story of the industrial West. James Whiteside's *Regulating Danger* is an example. He deals with one of the Rocky Mountain states' most important industries, the extraction of coal, and with the efforts of those states to regulate the dangers inherent in that enterprise. His themes and characters, however, seem quintessentially eastern: Southeast European immigrants, giant corporations, state regulators, labor unions, sociological departments—a West, in other words, where frequently was heard a discouraging word. The only recognizably western theme is violent and random death and even it wore an eerily non-western aspect, occurring in the confined space of coal mines indistinguishable in most particulars from those in Pennsylvania or Wales. Coal mining in the Rockies is an important topic and Whiteside deserves thanks and praise for taking it on, and in the process, extending our understanding of what the West really was.

I wish I could be as positive in commenting on the success with which he carried out the mission. Unfortunately, *Regulating Danger* is a book of missed opportunities. One flaw is the book's emphasis on major disasters and the subsequent scurry by state legislatures to limit their recurrence. Whiteside

notes that men died by the ones and twos as well as by the hundreds, and that the day-to-day hazards of coal mining were deserving of some state attention. They are also deserving of some of his.

It is also a story that clamors for some discussion of how the workers themselves dealt with those day-to-day hazards and how much responsibility the workers bore for them. Whiteside discusses the companies' frequent charge that the miners were careless and brought many of the hazards upon themselves. He also mentions that the companies believed new immigrants to be more careless than old hands. But he does not analyze the accuracy of either of these corporate contentions. How careless were the men? Were the immigrants uncommonly reckless? If so, was it because of inexperience? *Were* they inexperienced? Regardless of cause, why did the companies recruit them? Which of the immigrant groups were most careless? There were a lot of Italians in Helper, Utah; Trinidad and the Carbon Valley of Colorado; Red Lodge, Montana. Were these northern Italians or southern? Their origins would say volumes about their previous work experience.

There are other problems: He is careless in his use of some of his statistics. In spite of its title, this is a book about Colorado. I am forced to ask what would have been wrong with a book on Colorado, using the pages saved to deal with the important social issues noted above. Obviously, I wish Whiteside had done more. It would have been a stronger and more useful book. This is a long way, however, from saying it is without strength and usefulness. This is an important book because it draws our historical gaze to a neglected topic. It is part of an evolution in western studies that promises to change forever our understanding of that misunderstood region. I hope Whiteside will write a companion to this volume dealing with issues omitted here. He is a good researcher and a good writer. No one is better qualified to carry on what he has started.

David M. Emmons
University of Montana

John Rollin Ridge: His Life & Works. By James W. Parins. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991. 252 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. $30.00.)

At daybreak on June 22, 1839, John Rollin Ridge, twelve-year-old half-Cherokee son of John Ridge and grandson of Major Ridge, foremost leaders of the Treaty Party of the Cherokee Nation, was awakened by loud pounding at the door of the Ridge house on Honey Creek in what is now northeastern Oklahoma. On peering through a window, the boy soon saw a number of armed men drag his father into the yard and stab him twenty-nine times. But the murder of John Ridge was not the only tragedy to occur that fateful day. Word soon came that Major Ridge had been shot from his horse a mile inside Arkansas and that, at Park Hill, assassins had split the skull of Elias Boudinot, a third leader of the Treaty Party. These deeds were committed as retribution for the slain men's having flouted the majority will in signing the Treaty of New Echota, which mandated in 1838 removal of the Cherokees to the West from their southeastern homeland. For the rest of his life Rollin Ridge mistak-

enly believed that John Ross, principal chief of the Cherokees, had ordered the assassinations, and he burned with lust for vengeance.

After the tragedy, Rollin's white mother took her children to Arkansas, where young Ridge completed his education. In 1847 he married Elizabeth Wilson, a white girl of Fayetteville, and settled down as a poet-farmer, publishing romantic verse in Arkansas newspapers while he opened his Honey Creek farm. In 1849 he killed David Kell, a Ross adherent, in self-defense; and in 1850 to avoid a trial that he doubted would be a fair one, he joined the Gold Rush to California. There he worked for a while as a placer miner, then spent most of his remaining life as a newspaper writer and editor. He continued to publish poetry in newspapers under the *nom de plume* "Yellow Bird," a translation of his Cherokee name. His wife brought out a posthumous volume of his poems in 1868, but Ridge is chiefly known for his lurid account of the California bandit Joaquín Murrieta (1854), in which he sublimated his passion for revenge and inaugurated the hardy Murrieta legend along the lines of Robin Hood. Notwithstanding his record as an active Copperhead during the Civil War, Ridge was called to postwar Washington to serve as "loyal" chief of the Southern Cherokee delegation. He died soon after, in 1867, of brain fever.

James W. Parins has given us a well-researched, beautifully organized, and smoothly written biography of John Rollin Ridge. It is a memorable achievement, presenting a sharply realized characterization of this pioneer Indian writer.

Thurman Wilkins
Bandon, Oregon

Hell's Half Acre: The Life and Legend of a Red-Light District. By Richard F. Selcer. (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1991. xvi + 364 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, appendixes, bibliography, index. $24.95 cloth, $15.95 paper.)

In *Hell's Half Acre* Richard F. Selcer investigates the historical record to reconstruct life in the fabled tenderloin of Fort Worth, Texas. Every sizable western railroad, mining, or cattle town had its own version of "Hell's Half Acre." New Mexico had notable red-light districts in Santa Fe, Albuquerque, Las Cruces, Socorro, and Silver City. Selcer's painstaking treatment of Fort Worth provides historians and westernlore aficionados an opportunity to compare and contrast that district with others.

The majority of these amoral zones were geographically ill-defined. No signs warned passersby that they were about to set foot on the wild side. Instead, these red-light districts were distinguished by the establishments they contained: gambling saloons, houses of ill-repute, cribs, dance halls, opium dens, and wine rooms.

The historiography of these districts is challenging because of the paucity of sources and the disinformation of legend. All too often the only sources of information are local newspapers. As Selcer affirms, few bartenders, madams, or cowboys left memoirs. Illiteracy was common, and persons who frequented red-light districts were unconcerned with literary immortality. "Nice people"

who did leave reminiscences usually disclaimed any familiarity with the districts of their denizens. This fear of guilt by association has led to the loss of valuable historical information.

Transcripts from court cases, a primary source of oral history, are rare. It was unusual for testimony to be transcribed from the court clerk's shorthand notes unless a case was appealed. Most of the offending parties never appealed, they simply paid their inconsequential fines (often sham licensing fees) and continued with business as usual.

Tracing individuals is difficult because of the common use of pseudonyms, frequent fictionalization of personal histories, and sudden, inexplicable disappearances. Determining whether a woman was really a "milliner" or "dressmaker" often requires checking the arrest records for prostitution convictions. Selcer does an admirable job of reconstructing the shady side of Fort Worth from thousands of fragmentary references. He describes the "nymphs" of the district, many of whom were addicted to narcotics and spent their days in drug-induced fogs. To his credit, they are not glamorized, although the affluence of the parlor houses and the affectation of the Three Madams of Fort Worth are duly noted.

The requisite bad men and law men are there as well—Luke Short, Butch Cassidy, Bat Masterson, and Wyatt Earp. They are not relegated to legend, but placed in historical perspective with their vanities and foibles intact. One notable passage recounts the mistake the "Hole in the Wall" gang made when they visited Swartz' photo gallery in Fort Worth. Instead of opting for a cheap, one-of-a-kind tintype they chose to sit for an expensive dry-plate negative and ordered fifty copies. The resulting negative enabled Swartz to reproduce innumerable prints for the Pinkertons and other law enforcement authorities.

Hell's Half Acre is a model study, one that should be repeated for many towns of the Old West. It offers valuable comparative information for students of the nineteenth-century American West.

Byron A. Johnson
Tampa Bay History Center

From the Mouth of the Dark Cave: Commemorative Sculpture of the Late Classic Maya. By Karen Bassie-Sweet. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991. xv + 287 pp. Illustrations, tables, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. $29.95.)

Essentially this book offers another iconographic interpretation for the extraordinary Maya monuments, the Cross Group relief-carved tablets (there are three) at the site of Palenque in the modern Mexican state of Chiapas. Bassie-Sweet believes these tables visually record a ritual event in the life of the Palenque ruler, Chan Bahlum, which took place before his ascendancy to power (a "first lineage event"). According to Bassie-Sweet this ritual was sequential and took place in three different caves. Her arguments for this interpretation make up the content of the book.

Two separate lines of analysis are used: the elucidation of a particular and integrated relationship between image and text (Chapter 2), and the importance of caves and cave iconography in Classic Maya imagery (Chapters 3, 4, and

6). Both her analyses of cave iconography and image/text are coherent and considerable.

Oddly enough, however, her careful analyses do not come together to make her iconographic interpretation of the Cross Group tablets convincing. The three, large, relief-carved wall panels that are the heart of the Cross Group have been the object of many interpretations published since the turn of the century. Bassie-Sweet's interpretation is persuasive, but no more so than some of the others that have been put forward. Interpretations based mainly on the iconography and epigraphy (text) of an art work will always be subject to contention and revision. (This certainly holds true for iconographic interpretations of European art works.) Bassie-Sweet's assumption that the meaning of an art work is located in its iconographic content (the "proper" identification of the work's images) is shared by many Mayanists, but this does not alter the fact that iconography is only an ingredient of meaning, not the thing itself. Nonetheless, her proposal that cave rituals were an important part of the meaning embedded in the Cross Group tablets is significant.

From the Mouth of the Dark Cave is not for the general reader. Its detailed arguments about text and image and about the importance of caves in the lives of the ancient Maya require a professional interest in these ancient peoples as well as a developed concern for the fine points of certain iconographic and epigraphic debates that are current in the field of Maya studies. For dedicated students of the ancient Maya, however, the book contains provocative insights within these debates.

Flora S. Clancy
University of New Mexico

I'll Gather My Geese. By Hallie Crawford Stillwell. (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1991. xii + 153 pp. Illustrations. $18.50.)

While teaching school in Marathon, Texas, in 1918, Hallie Crawford married a local rancher named Roy Stillwell. She was twenty years old, he was forty. They began life together in a one-room house on Stillwell's ranch, a structure outfitted with a wood cook stove but no electricity or indoor plumbing. Their bed consisted of Roy's cowboy bedroll rolled out on the floor.

I'll Gather My Geese is Hallie Stillwell's memoir of her life with her husband on the ranch located in the Big Bend country of Texas. It was a family operation that often demanded that Mrs. Stillwell work cattle on horseback with her husband and his two cowboys, something she had never done before. She recounts the many lessons she learned on horseback, most of them on her own. Roy Stillwell was one of those old-time cowmen who was used to working with experienced cowpunchers that didn't need to be told what to do. He rarely explained to his wife what her assignment was to be, and thus she had to figure out how she could best help by watching and imitating what the cowboys did. Although frequently frustrated over the lack of communication, she eventually learned the work and became an indispensable part of the ranch operation. Her experience is not unlike that of countless women in the West who have married into ranch families.

As time went on the Stillwells added rooms to their ranch house to make it more comfortable. They also bought a house in Marathon, forty-six miles away, to facilitate the raising and educating of their three children. Life on the isolated ranch was, nevertheless, still difficult what with period illnesses, accidents, low stock prices, and droughts. Mrs. Stillwell poignantly describes how she and her husband weathered the hardships of running the ranch through the Depression and drought of the 1930s and the subsequent upheaval caused by American involvement in World War II. Hers is the story of the survival and eventual prosperity of a family-owned ranch business based entirely on cattle and unable to derive income from oil wells or outside investments in times of economic adversity.

Roy Stillwell was killed in a truck accident while hauling hay to the ranch in 1948. Although Mrs. Stillwell ends her narrative with his death, it would have been interesting to read how she and her children have kept the ranch together to the present day. Perhaps that story will someday also be a book.

Stephen Zimmer
Cimarron, New Mexico

Southern New Mexico Empire: The First National Bank of Doña Ana County. By Leon C. Metz. (El Paso: Mangan Books, 1990. xii + 205 pp. Illustrations, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. $21.00.)

Biographies of regional and local businesses have provided considerable grist for the mills of historians in the last two decades. Some businesses have sponsored their own corporate histories for public relations purposes; others have sought to record their past out of concerns that subsequent management may not appreciate the efforts of its predecessors as fully as it should. Still others arise when a local researcher or writer finds a truly interesting case study that cries out for telling. In the case of *Southern New Mexico Empire,* all three factors likely played a part in bringing this work to fruition. Although not "sponsored" by the bank insofar as the bank commissioned Leon Metz to detail its past, this book nevertheless bears the name of the First National Bank of Doña Ana County as the holder of the copyright. Obviously corporate support was involved, but Metz, a veteran western writer, policymaker, and fine historian in his own right, hardly seems a researcher who would allow any of his work to be biased by his subject's financial contribution to the project.

Metz traces this small but resilient bank through a number of internal struggles and external difficulties from its 1905 founding to its transformation as Rio Grande Bankshares in 1981. He excels at providing detail on its founders and makers, offering a useful multiple biography of businessmen who moved into banking. During the bank's early years, two issues dominated its internal politics: its relationship with the university and "insider lending." Metz covers each in detail, but seems at a loss to explain why the loans to directors and stockholders constituted a problem. In fact, such loans not only were commonplace, they were any decent bank's *raison d'être.* Why else would wealthy local merchants and farmers start a bank but to grant themselves loans? In his subsequent discussions of stock ownership and control of the bank during the

next thirty years, Metz provides intricate detail on who owned how many shares, but seldom puts the issue of ownership into broader perspective. For example, how would things have been different if ownership battles had turned out differently? This constitutes more than cosmetics. Metz notes that in the 1930s "Overdrawn accounts either no longer existed, or represented insignificant amounts. No heated exchanges erupted between directors and bank examiners" (p. 88). In fact, however, the absence of such battles may have represented the victory of the Roosevelt-era regulators over entrepreneurial institutions and probably accounted for the dramatic slowdown in lending during the Great Depression. Metz indirectly adds support to the view that the so-called tougher regulatory stance of the Roosevelt administration succeeded only in choking off any potential recovery.

Metz does a fine job of placing the bank's activities in the perspective of national and international developments, and he introduces the reader to a number of colorful westerners, some famous, such as Pat Garrett, others less well known but perhaps equally important, such as Frank Papen. He candidly details the bank's shortcomings, such as its lack of aggressiveness in establishing a branch at White Sands Missile Range, but celebrates its triumphs. In short, Metz is a good storyteller who has written a competent history.

Larry Schweikart
University of Dayton

Book Notes

Following the Indian Wars: The Story of the Newspaper Correspondents Among the Indian Campaigners. By Oliver Knight. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993. xix + 348 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. $17.95 paper.) Reprint of the 1960 edition with a new foreword by Sherry L. Smith.

Spanish Roots of America. By Bishop Dabid Arias. (Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, 1992. 352 pp. Illustrations, maps, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. $9.95 paper.)

North American Indian Life: Customs and Traditions of 23 Tribes. Edited by Elsie Clews Parsons. (New York: Dover Publications, 1992. 419 pp. Illustrations, map, appendix, notes, bibliographies. $10.95 paper.) Reprint of the 1922 edition.

The Adventures of The Woman Homesteader: The Life and Letters of Elinore Pruitt Stewart. By Susanne K. George. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992. xiv + 218 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. $25.00.) New research on Elinore Pruitt Stewart, including previously unpublished letters.

The Destruction of California Indians: A Collection of Documents from the Period 1847 to 1865 in Which Are Described Some of the Things that Happened to Some of the Indians of California. Edited by Robert F. Heizer. (Lincoln:

University of Nebraska Press, 1993. xxi + 321 pp. Illustrations, bibliography. $12.95 paper.) Reprint of the 1974 edition with a new introduction by Albert L. Hurtado.

Life and Manners in the Frontier Army. By Oliver Knight. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978. x + 280 pp. Note, bibliography, index. $13.95 paper.) Paperback reprint of the 1978 edition.

Kachina Tales From the Indian Pueblos. Collected by Gene Meany Hodge. (Santa Fe, New Mexico: Sunstone Press, 1993. 64 pp. Illustrations, bibliography. $8.95 paper.)

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