

G.T. HURLEY. *War Horse*. Silver Bit Music, \$15, gthurley.com.

In his second album, G.T. Hurley – family man, former Marine, Montana horse breeder – follows the trail he broke with his debut CD *Tough Horses* by sticking close to what he knows best.



OLLIE REED JR.

The 11 cuts here, all but one written by Hurley, span love, war and the West and, as is the case with the title track, are sometimes based on true stories he has heard.

“War Horse” is about a World War II combat veteran who passes on his treasured 1911 Colt .45 to his Texas Ranger son, who, in turn, passes it on to his Marine son-in-law, both of whom understand they have inherited more than blue steel and walnut grips.

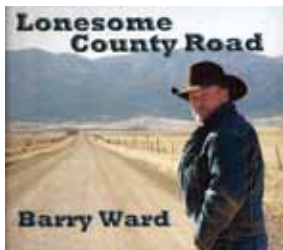
“Six String Mistress” tells of a love affair, which turns out to be more innocent than the lyrics at first imply, and “Ever-clear Strong” is about a young man’s not-so-innocent obsession with a girl in a white tank top and skintight Wrangler jeans. Both songs are rousing fun.



Still, the cuts I like best are those most solidly rooted in the West – songs in which prairie grass waves like a palomino’s mane in “Montana Wind,” a working cowboy trades security and prosperity for “Sunrises and Sunsets,” and a military veteran rubs out the bloodstains of war and the hurt of lost love with “Horse Sweat and Texas Dirt.”

BARRY WARD. *Lonesome County Road*. Flying W Productions, \$12.97, barrywardmusic.com.

Barry Ward, a Kansas farmer/rancher and 2013 Western Music Association Male Performer of the Year, takes on history (“Roman Nose”), longing (“I Hear Her Calling”), parody (“Ghost Chickens in the Sky”) and faith (“The Trail You Ride”) in 14 tracks, seven covers and seven by the singer.



My love of Western history makes me partial to Ward’s “Roman Nose,” the story of the 1868 Beecher Island fight between the Army and Indian warriors in Colorado.

But my favorites here, all written by Ward, are “Beyond the Western Sky,” a song reminiscent of “Moonlight on the Trail” and “Tumbling Tumbleweeds”; “The Hills of Ireland,” about a rancher’s wife who never stops missing her childhood home; and the title track, a tender, haunting tune about lost times, desolate places and the stories they could tell.

FICTION

CHRISTINE ECHEVERRIA BENDER. *Aboard Cabrillo’s Galleon*. Caxton Press. Trade paperback, 334 pages, \$16.95, caxtonpress.com.

Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo figures prominently in California history as the first Spaniard to explore and map the Pacific Coast in 1542. The historical record of his life and accomplishments, however, offers little information about him. In fact, Sebastian Vizcaino renamed many of the landmarks Cabrillo had named 60 years earlier. Christine Echeverria Bender brings Cabrillo to life in a way the historical record can’t do. Her research into the voyage provides an excellent background in describing the challenges Cabrillo faced in dealing with contrary winds and severe storms, and in dealing diplomatically with the Native people he encountered. If the events don’t exactly match the way things were, readers may well conclude that her novel tells the story the way it should have been.

– Abraham Hoffman

MATT BRAUN. *WesternLore*. Cactus Country. Trade paperback, 290 pages, \$16.95, highhillpress.com.

In a collection long overdue, the two-time Spur winner and Owen Wister recipient has compiled nine short stories. Wyatt Earp, Wild Bill Hickok, Billy the Kid, Doc Holliday, Sitting Bull and Buffalo Bill Cody ride across the West again, interspersing the stories by answering a few questions, such as “Who was the deadliest pistol shot?” and “What was the most unusual gunfight?” Braun’s prose is as hard and tough – and honest – as the men and women he writes about, blending fact, fiction and myth.

BILL BROOKS. *Men of Violence: A John Henry Cole story*. Five Star. Hardcover, 234 pages. \$25.95, gale.cengage.com/fivestar.

More than a typical Western novel, with *Men of Violence*, Bill Brooks has written a meditation on violence, its manifestations and the dysfunctional roots from which it stems. This is the fourth book in his well-received John Henry Cole series. This time, an attempt to apprehend the outlaw (and Cole’s half-brother) Sam Starr and his gang goes wrong. Cole is wounded, and three of his men are killed. The outlaws get away, but Starr vows to return and finish off Cole. There is plenty of well-wrought action, but the bleak, perverted backstories of many characters may tax the sensibilities of some readers. That aside, if fighting and fornicating Western fiction is for you, *Men of Violence* is an entertaining book.

– Tom Carpenter

JOHN DUNCKLEE. *Tales From Corral Fences.* Western Trail Blazer. Trade paperback, eBook, 286 pages, \$9, westerntrailblazer.com.

Author/professor/cowboy/cattleman/horseman John Duncklee invites you to share half a century of great short stories in his new anthology, *Tales From Corral Fences*. Most of them are true, some of them are partly true, but all of them are told with wit, candor, and a cowboy's no-holds-barred approach to the truth. He'll touch your heart in a story called "Silent Mike." He will awaken the philosopher within you in "Lessons From A Shovel." But most of all, Duncklee's artfully constructed collection of short stories preserves a way of life as seen through the eyes of the man who lived it. This is life in the West, unvarnished, well written and a must-read.

– D.B. Jackson

EUNICE BOEVE. *The Summer of the Crow.* Rowe. Trade paperback, eBook, 298 pages, \$14.95, \$6.95, rowepublishing.com.

Sadness and hopelessness permeates

teenager Brady Lee Foster's life until he comes to terms with the fact that life isn't always fair. To cope, Brady puts himself in harm's way just to prove that he can make it on his own with no help from the family he feels no longer wants him. This is a well-written story, told through the angst that only a teen can understand. One could hope, however, for a tiny slice of happiness somewhere in this young teen's life. Historically accurate to the time, it gives a glimpse of life in Kansas and other Dust Bowl states during the prolonged drought of the 1930s.

– Sandy Whiting

JAMES CLAY. *Reverend Colt.* Robert Hale Ltd., Hardcover, 159 pages, 13.75 British pounds, halebooks.com.

In *Reverend Colt*, James Clay has taken several characters that have been standards in traditional Westerns for decades. There's the preacher-turned-gunslinger, haunted by his past; the crusading newspaper editor; the evil, land-grabbing, town-controlling cattle baron; and of course the beautiful young woman love interest. While

Reverend Colt breaks no new ground, it is a well-written story, and if you like traditional Western novels, as I do, I'd bet my hat you'll like this book.

– James J. Griffin

LOREN D. ESTLEMAN. *Ragtime Cowboys.* Forge. Hardcover, 272 pages, \$24.99, us.macmillan.com/forge.aspx.

With 70-plus books in his career, the venerable and always reliable Loren D. Estleman has waited until now to pair aging cowboy detective Charlie Siringo with the young and aspiring writer, Dashiell Hammett. It's a perfect match for both of the ex-Pinkerton detectives, and the wait was well worth it. All of Estleman's award-winning skills are spotlighted in this delightful novel. There isn't a beat missed in the rollicking, spot-on, mystery set in 1921 Hollywood. What starts out as a simple horse theft, Wyatt Earp's horse, no less, takes the pair to Jack London's Beauty Ranch, into deeper political waters churned by the rising Tea Pot Dome scandal and a conspiracy with Joseph P. Kennedy pulling all of the levers. A mix of Old West and new,

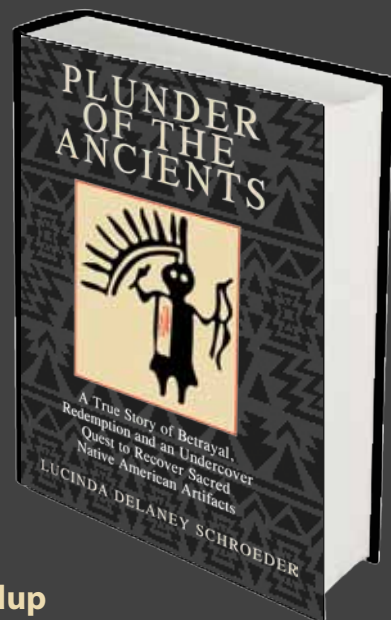
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suspense, historical accuracy and the wit and charm that readers have come to expect from Estleman add up to a book that shouldn't be missed.

– Larry D. Sweazy

ANDREW J. FENADY. *The Range Wolf*. Kensington. Mass-market paperback, 407 pages, \$6.99, kensingtonbooks.com.

Pampered Easterner Christopher Guthrie is thrown into a hell on earth after a stagecoach wreck finds him rescued – or is it imprisoned? – on a cattle drive from Texas to Kansas. The trail crew is led by tyrannical Wolf Riker. Owen Wister recipient Andrew Fenady has reimagined Jack London's classic novel *The Sea Wolf* as a Western. It's a traditional Western that is anything but ordinary. Intelligently written, and larger than life – much like Fenady himself.

– Johnny D. Boggs

MIKE FLAX. *A Better Place*. Alondra. Trade paperback, 254 pages, \$12.95, alondrapress.com.

A runaway slave makes his way from Louisiana to Texas to find the love of his life. He is accompanied by a kind-hearted militiaman recovering from several wounds. But their pursuer, Captain Knox, hard, demented and relentless, is bound to make things difficult. Mike Flax's smooth handling of prose and subject matter make this an easy-to-read novel.

DAVID FULLER. *Sundance*. Riverhead. Hardcover, 338 pages, \$27.95, penguin.com.

The story starts in the West as the Sundance Kid, locked up for years under a false name, steps out of a Wyoming prison in 1913. But by page 49 he is in New York City, searching for Etta Place in an unfamiliar world of skyscrapers and electric lights. Etta, on the run from men who wish her ill, proves hard to find. The Kid is persistent, pursuing his true love through a maze of anarchists and sandhogs, mobsters and modern art while pursued by tenacious Western lawman Charlie Siringo. There are plenty of stories, fiction and

non, exploring the uncertain fate of Sundance, and this novel offers a fresh and interesting alternative.

– Rod Miller

JAMES J. GRIFFIN. *A Ranger to Ride With*. Painted Pony. Trade paperback, 120 pages, \$8.99, paintedponybooks.com.

An outlaw raid on a ranch kills all in a family except a 14-year-old boy. Found and nurtured by a group of Texas Rangers, he quickly learns lessons of self-reliance that will serve him and his new friends well in the days to come. *A Ranger to Ride With* is of novella length and will provide a satisfactory read for younger readers. Intended as the first story in a series, readers can next look for *A Ranger to Reckon With*.

– Lynn Bueling

JEFF GUINN. *Glorious: A Novel of the American West*. G.P. Putnam's Sons. Hardcover, 406 pages, \$26.95, penguin.com.

Chances are you won't stop with just this first book of a trilogy set in the silver-mining country of Arizona Territory. Cash McLendon arrives in *Glorious* on the run from a tragic marriage and an unforgiving father-in-law. In *Glorious* lives his first love, a girl who Cash knows he should never have jilted. She does not welcome him, he plans to move on, but other circumstances keep him there just awhile longer. Place into the mix an unscrupulous rancher, Chinese laborers, dispossessed Apaches and a lot of common folks who just want to get along. *Glorious* is a page-turner that leaves open issues you'll want to see resolved in the second and third installments. Jeff Guinn authored this historical novel after his well-received nonfiction books about Charles Manson, Bonnie and Clyde and the OK Corral.

– Lynn Bueling

HARLAN HAGUE. *The People*. Five Star. Hardcover, 213 pages, \$25.95, gale.cengage.com/fivestar.

In his afterword to *The People*, Harlan Hague describes his novel as “an alternate history” in which he takes “liber-

ties with time and place” and therefore does not make specific references.

Although some readers may want to correlate the story line of a historical novel with dates and places, one should be willing to allow the writer his own premises and his own aesthetic. Hague has written an imaginative work about a confederation of Native American tribes who resist the incursions of the *wasichus*. The narrative includes an ample amount of detail regarding Indian customs and Indian beliefs, all in support of the created world of the novel. The story is humane and inclusive, with a wonderful Indian heroine, and it offers an enjoyable reading experience.

– John D. Nesbitt

DOUG HOCKING. *Massacre at Point of Rocks*. Sundowners. Trade paperback, eBook, 371 pages, \$13.99, \$3.99.

Chock full of vivid details about the historic Southwest along the Santa Fe Trail and the many Indians inhabiting the area, along with weapons, buffalo hunting, various traditions and folk stories, Doug Hocking packs this novel full to the brim. Based on a true incident, the novel's young protagonist, Danny, accompanies Kit Carson in an attempt to rescue a captive white woman and her child in 1849 New Mexico.

– Meg Mims

CRAIG JOHNSON. *Any Other Name*. Viking. Hardcover, 336 pages, \$26.95, penguin.com/meet/publishers/vikingbooks/.

Any Other Name, the 10th entry in the popular *Longmire* mystery series, wastes no time getting going. That's one of the great things about author Craig Johnson; he's a born storyteller. The man knows Wyoming like the back of his hand, and he has an easy, laid-back Western voice to pull the reader in no matter their pleasure in genres. There's no need to have read the previous novels, or to have watched the A&E-TV series, *Longmire*. Johnson opens the story in Walt's pickup truck and off you go with his mentor, Lucian Connelly, aboard to investigate the suicide

of an old friend. If you think this a simple case, or a simple book, you're sadly mistaking. The human condition is always thoroughly examined, warts and all, in the *Longmire* books. This is an especially strong entry into an already durable series, which can, and should, go on for a long time to come.

– Larry D. Sweazy

CARLA KELLY. *Marco and the Devil's Bargain*. Camel Press. Trade paperback, 236 pages, \$14.95, camelpress.com.

Marco and the Devil's Bargain is Book Two of the "Spanish Brand" series, but it stands alone well. The time period is 1782 on the Spanish frontier of New Mexico, and Marco Mondragon has settled in on his land grant with his new wife Paloma Vega. All seems well, until the Dark Wind, smallpox, comes barreling down on them from the Comancheria. The Indians got it from the white man, who is busy sorting out the results of the American Revolution. A fascinating and different premise, with an arrogant English physician as the antagonist, and Comanches as surprising allies – a romance in the middle of a really good Western novel.

– Linda Jacobs

JANE KIRKPATRICK. *A Light in the Wilderness*. Revell. Trade paperback, 320 pages, \$14.99, [website](http://website.com).

Jane Kirkpatrick has again turned to an historical character to tell the story of the early settlement of Oregon Country. *A Light in the Wilderness* is based on the true story of Letitia Carson, who became one of the first African-American women to cross the Oregon Trail. Kirkpatrick carefully researched the life of this freed-slave who settled in Oregon with her common law white husband. Clearly and crisply written, emotional, evocative and will linger long after you turn the last page.

– Candy Moulton

GREGORY J. LALIRE. *Captured: From the Frontier Diary of Infant Danny Duly*. Five Star. Hardcover, 404 pages, \$25.95, gale.cengage.com/fivestar.

Greg Lalire, editor of *Wild West* magazine, is a stickler for accuracy, and his historical novel *Captured* does not disappoint. Having said that, the story's point of view is offbeat. You see, it's from a fetus, Danny Duly, who is able to perceive what is going on around him. Danny is later born, July 4, 1866, on the Oregon Trail and continues his chronology of events as he and his mother travel the Bozeman Trail to the Montana goldfields.

Intriguing characters fill the story as it relates the attitude of the pioneers and soldiers who want to settle the country and counterbalances that with the point of view of the Lakotas, who want to maintain their way of life. A well-written, fun novel.

– Bill Markley

JD MARCH. *Dance with the Devil: Book 1, The Devil's Own*. Five Star. Hardcover, 356 pages, \$25.95, gale.cengage.com/fivestar.

A range war is in the offing, and Johnny Fierro is a gunfighter for hire. He's also the long-lost half-breed son of one of the biggest ranchers in New Mexico. Fierro believes that his father kicked him and his mother out when he was a baby and has vowed vengeance. However, when he arrives at the ranch and discovers not only that his father has searched for him all these years, but that he has a brother eager to claim kinship. The range war is only part of the battle he will face. I liked Johnny as a character, with "Harvard," his brother a close second. Other players in the yarn were not so well-developed, but as a whole, although repetitious in parts, the story held my interest. I'll look forward to seeing how Johnny Fierro develops.

– C.K. Crigger

LEE MARTIN. *Shadow on the Mesa*. Five Star. Hardcover, 197 pages, \$25.95, gale.cengage.com/fivestar.

When hired gunman Wes Montana's Arapaho mother is murdered, he sets out to find the killer. Not expecting the suspect to be the white father who abandoned his mother before he was born, he discovers his father has a

new family. Wes becomes involved in a bloody range war on behalf of the family.

Shadow on the Mesa, was the second-highest rated and second-most watched original movie in Hallmark Movie Channel's network history. The movie was released on DVD in 2013.

– Monty McCord

KEITH McCAFFERTY. *Dead Man's Fancy: A Sean Stranahan Mystery*. Viking. Hardcover, 316 pages, \$26.95, penguin.com.

An engaging, well-constructed mystery set in and around Yellowstone Park, this novel contains plenty of clues sprinkled throughout that can make readers think they should have seen it coming when the conclusion is revealed. A private detective possessing personal quirks, beautiful women, a victim impaled on an elk antler, a psychopath wearing a "mask of sanity," wolf haters and lovers, and fly-fishing elements add up to a page-turner. *Dead Man's Fancy* is McCafferty's third novel in his Sean Stranahan series.

– Lynn Bueling

LARRY McMURTRY. *The Last Kind Words Saloon*. Liveright. Hardcover, 224 pages, \$24.95, liverightpub.tumblr.com.

The *Lonesome Dove* author's first novel in five years will come as a disappointment to readers expecting the breadth and complexity of that seminal work. This is Larry McMurtry in a minor vein, a frontier buddy comedy that finds Wyatt Earp and Doc Holliday meandering from Texas to Tombstone, with plenty of detours along the way, including a stint as performing gunfighters in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show – one of many episodes that lead nowhere. The better half of the book revolves around cattleman Charles Goodnight and his attempts to form a mega-ranch in Palo Duro Canyon. *The Last Kind Words Saloon* isn't without pleasures: Wyatt and Doc's banter has an entertaining jocular quality, the women are vividly rendered and a stampede sequence ranks with McMurtry's best writing. There's not much of a story

to speak of, though, only a series of vignettes of varying quality. The book doesn't so much end as just fizzle out, with a characteristically contrary account of the famed OK Corral gunfight guaranteed to raise hackles.

– Kirk Ellis

JOHN D. NESBITT. *Across the Cheyenne River.* Five Star. Hardcover, 248 pages, \$25.95, gale.cengage.com/fivestar.

Cowboy Russell Archer arrives in Wyoming and goes to work for rancher Lidge Mercer, eventually becoming Mercer's junior partner. But when Mercer is murdered, Archer is determined to find the killer.

Far from your typical shoot-em-up or formula mystery, John Nesbitt's patiently plotted novel focuses on characters and the Wyoming landscape long before the mystery begins. Another solid novel from a master of the craft.

– Johnny D. Boggs

HANK NUWER. *Sons of the Dawn: A Basque Odyssey.* Shalako. Trade paperback, 311 pages, \$15.95, shalakopress.com.

Two Basque brothers fled certain military conscription in Spain during the Spanish-American War and migrated to a sheep-herding job in Idaho. Filled with moral strength learned from a Spanish padre's influence, they adapted quickly to the challenges set by a bullying cattle rancher and grew to manhood while facing them. The Nazi destruction of their hometown Guernica, so aptly depicted by Picasso, eventually visits the family. Nuwer has an established reputation for speaking out against hazing and bullying and that is reflected in this novel. Needing no off-color language to tell a good story it can be recommended for young adults as well as older readers. For this old sheep man, *Sons of the Dawn* was eye-candy that tasted good.

– Lynn Bueling

VERNON SCHMID. *St. Elmo's Ghost: A Colorado Mystery.* Self-published. Trade paperback, 217 pages, \$19.99.

Vernon Schmid offers this light-reading mystery set in the mountains of Colorado. It centers on a skeleton found in an abandoned mine and a cast of characters who quickly engage in its mystery. An actual mining town, St. Elmo died when the mining industry declined. The strongest scene in the book occurs when the marshal and his wife drive near Trinidad and detour to the site of the Ludlow Massacre. Here state militia attacked striking miners and caused the deaths of several women and children hiding in a cellar over which a shelter was torched.

– Lynn Bueling

LARRY D SWEAZY. *Vengeance at Sundown.* Berkley. Mass market paperback, eBook, 320 pages, \$7.99, penguin.com/meet/publishers/berkley/.

Vengeance at Sundown has all the necessary elements of a classic Western: adventure, intrigue, romance, mystery and even a touch of poetry. The author weaves them all into a story worthy of its genre. Lucas Fume is a man imprisoned, not only in the Tennessee State Prison for the crime of murder, but also imprisoned in his own mind, a mind filled with confusion, distrust, fear and hatred. His crime of murder was of an evil man, John Barlow, the only evidence of which is a pair of severed hands. Lucas is found guilty based solely on this flimsy evidence and is subsequently sentenced to life in dungeon-like conditions. During a prison riot, Lucas is helped to escape by Zeke Henry, a black man, who, because of his color, makes trusting him difficult for a born and bred Southerner. Henry, sent to prison for supposedly nearly beating a white woman to death, becomes the reluctant Lucas's savior, whether Lucas wants to follow him or not.

The intrigue builds as Lucas and Zeke make their way to St. Louis to try freeing Lucas's love, Charlotte, a woman who is now firmly in the clutches of a man named Lanford Grips. Once it is revealed that Grips has hooks for hands, the man's true identity becomes evident and the plot is free to slip from a mystery into a fast-paced adventure.

Short chapters and constant action make for an easy and enjoyable read. Also, the dialogue between characters rings true to that of the 19th Century. It feels as though the author did a great deal of research to capture the appropriateness of post-War exchanges. An appealing story, coupled with fascinating characters, makes *Vengeance at Sundown* a winner.

– Phil Dunlap

LOYD UGLOW, *Marksman's Trinity,* Fireship Press. Paperback, 430 pages, \$16.95, fireshippress.com.

Marksman's Trinity does a terrific job describing military tactics and strategies during battle. Loyd Uglow's main characters depict military life and chain of command so well that those of us with limited prior knowledge can "get it." Set in 1916 West Texas, this story straddles the more modern world (electricity, cars, wristwatches) with its feet still in the Wild West (kerosene lanterns, horses). The Plan of San Diego, which this story revolves around, followed on the heels of Pancho Villa's raid into Columbus, New Mexico. Uglow recounts the history behind it in detail without relying on Villa's raid as fallback material. A couple of the main characters didn't ring true to this reviewer, but overall it was an enjoyable, entertaining and educational read.

– Melody Groves

ETHAN J. WOLFE. *The Last Ride.* Five Star. Hardcover, 247 pages, \$25.95, gale.cengage.com/fivestar.

The story Ethan Wolfe tells is an intriguing one. A long-in-the-tooth former Pony Express rider and bounty hunter, escorting his frail New York nephew to San Francisco to be raised by relatives as his late sister wished, decides to go horseback to toughen up the boy. But the boy's conniving stepfather kidnaps him, leading to all kinds of adventures. While the story is strong, the book suffers from the author's obvious unfamiliarity with all things pertaining to horses and a snarled sense of time, distance and Western geography.

– Rod Miller

JIM R. WOOLARD. *Raiding With Morgan.* Kensington. Hardcover, 314 pages, \$24, kensingtonbooks.com.

Raiding With Morgan is another great yarn from Jim Woolard. The story takes place during the Civil War in Kentucky, Indiana and Ohio. People considered anything west of the Appalachian Mountains the West. During the summer of 1863, Confederate General John Morgan's troops raided into the North, wreaking havoc over a thousand miles until trapped and captured along the Ohio River. Ty Mattson joined Morgan's Raiders to find the father he never knew. His misadventures led him into not only battle, but also a narrow escape from murder, the brutality of a Yankee prisoner of war camp and the possibility of love.

– Bill Markley

POETRY

DEANNA DICKINSON McCALL. *Mustang Spring.* The Frontier Project. Trade paperback, 153 pages, \$25, frontierprojectinc.com.

Cattle ranching is bred in the bone of this author, having spent her life living and working on isolated ranches around the West, often without modern conveniences. The stories and poems do not create or perpetuate the romantic mythology of ranch life; instead, we get unflinching portraits of hardship and hard work, and determined people battling the elements and, sometimes, other people. But the stories and poems are also infused with hope and optimism, qualities inherent in those who struggle to make a living off the land. Written with clarity and creativity, this book makes an outstanding contribution to Western literature.

– Rod Miller

NONFICTION

DAVID L. CAFFEY. *Chasing the Santa Fe Ring.* University of New Mexico Press. Hardcover, 320 pages, \$34.95, unmpress.com.

Did the Santa Fe Ring exist? Was there a cabal of businessmen and politicians in New Mexico Territory who collaborated to use their official powers for personal benefit? Author David L. Caffey tries to answer that in this well-written, comprehensive and informative book. He states “there’s an abundance of opinion and a dearth of facts.” Territorial newspapers coined the name Santa Fe Ring. Those accused of being Ring members, like Thomas Catron and Stephen Elkins, denied any such association. However, Caffey reveals a pattern of collusion and influence between men linked with the Ring that resulted in transactions and controversies – some violent but all corrupt – that, as one witness to events during the Colfax and Lincoln County Wars said, had “a political odor.” Whether it was a Ring, alliance or gentlemen bandits, Caffey cites bountiful evidence that a political machine endorsed public corruption and government malfeasance during New Mexico’s struggle for statehood.

– Thomas D. Clagett

JEFFREY DANE and ROD TIMANUS. *Creating Texas: A Brief History of the Revolution.* Lauric. Paperback, 306 pages, \$17.95, LauricPress.com.

Creating Texas, written clearly and succinctly, provides details and fascinating trivia rarely seen in other publications. The subtitle, “A Brief History of the Revolution,” doesn’t do it justice. This fact-packed book, which includes newly uncovered information, goes beyond the superficial “who shot whom” by explaining motives and personalities. The first 30 pages are author introductions and a fascinating look at the beginning of photography. The next chunk is the nitty-gritty battles and military machinations. A delightful addition in closing out the story are biographies of all the important players.

– Melody Groves

MARK C. DILLON. *The Montana Vigilantes, 1863-1870: Gold, Guns, and Gallows.* Utah State University Press. Hardcover, 449 pages, \$34.95, usupress.com.

Mark C. Dillon, an associate justice in the Appellate Division of the New York State Supreme Court, has written what might well be the definitive account of the vigilante movement in Montana Territory in the 1860s. Deeply researched and well written, the book focuses on two vigilante episodes, Alder Gulch citizens forming a vigilance committee and hanging members of the notorious Henry Plummer gang (including crooked Sheriff Plummer), and a similar movement based in Helena later in the decade. Dillon digs much deeper than recounting who was on the committee and the men they hanged. He assesses the rough-hewn government of the new territory and observes that the law was quite different from jurisprudence today. Whatever the vigilantes intended, they ignored due process, condemned men without allowing them a defense, and hanged at least one innocent man.

– Abraham Hoffman

SCOTT EYMAN. *John Wayne: The Life and Legend.* Simon & Schuster. Hardcover, 658 pages, \$32.50, simonandschuster.com.

This is the first major John Wayne biography since the mid-1990s. Scott Eyman (also a John Ford biographer – *Print the Legend*) draws on previously unpublished reminiscences from Wayne’s family, friends and business associates as well as until-now unavailable documents from Wayne’s production company. The emphasis is on Wayne’s movies as opposed to the political analysis of the previous biography, Gary Wills’s *John Wayne’s America* (1997). Although there aren’t any major revelations here, this is a fresh, interesting, informative study of this iconic Western-film actor. Of particular note is the fascinating process by which chess-player and Shakespeare-quoter Marion Robert Morrison (Wayne’s real name and the one on his passport) created the film persona of John “Duke” Wayne.

– David Morrell

JEFFERSON GLASS. *Reshaw: The Life and Times of John Baptiste Richard.*

High Plains Press. Paperback, 288 pages, \$19.95, highplainspress.com.

Jefferson Glass calls the subject of his book “an extraordinary entrepreneur and scoundrel of the western frontier.” Initially he wanted to learn more about the history of the Richard Bridge located near his home but soon turned his attention to its namesake after uncovering the story of a unique frontier character. Reshaw, as Richard is pronounced in the French language, charged toll fees to pioneers to cross his bridge, and then saw the potential for further business activity, including the establishment of trading posts where he profited by supplying the needs of the great western migration. Several years of research by the author yielded this excellent, well-written biography.

– Lynn Bueling

ABRAHAM HOFFMAN. *Mono Lake: From Dead Sea to Environmental Treasure.* University of New Mexico Press. Hardcover, 184 pages, \$34.95, unmpress.com.

Abraham Hoffman adds to the growing body of environmental literature with this study of Mono Lake in California. Using a time frame commencing in the 1830s through to the present day, he ably tells of the use and abuse of the lake. While the city of Los Angeles eyes it as a water supply, conservationists keep their eye on preserving its cultural and recreational importance. An exploitable resource for decades, he describes the work of concerned environmental groups standing watch for further abuses.

– Lynn Bueling

DON LAGO. *Canyon of Dreams Stories from Grand Canyon History* University of Utah Press. Trade paperback, 351 pages, \$19.95, uofupress.com.

In the first line of his introduction, Don Lago writes, “Powerful landscapes have always held great power over the human mind.” It has always been so with the Grand Canyon of Arizona. In this collection of true stories about the Canyon, some well known and some not, Lago introduces the reader to an array of characters ranging from

hucksters to heroes. Along the way he presents tales that will amuse and amaze -- from ancient Egyptians hiding treasure and mummies in caves to a burro named Brighty who becomes the hero of a novel and then a movie. This well-researched book will surely delight students of obscure Grand Canyon and Arizona history.

– Rod Timanus

DAVID J. LANGUM SR. *Quite Contrary: The Litigious Life of Mary Bennett Love.* Texas Tech University Press. Hardcover, 212 pages, \$34.95, ttupress.org.

In his latest book, author and law professor David J. Langum Sr. gives readers a detailed look at Mary Bennett Love, a big frontier personality who took advantage of the legal system to gain money, status and land in California’s Gold Rush country. Langum handles this controversial character well, particularly in terms of explaining the complicated court process Bennett employed to maintain land grants she illegally obtained. Most of her relationships were volatile, including the one she had with her famous second husband, Captain Harry Love, the California ranger who allegedly killed the notorious bandit Joaquin Murietta. Readers will be provided with an expertly documented look at a fascinating woman.

– Chris Enss

LLOYD L. LEE (editor) and **GREGORY CAJETE** (foreword). *Diné Perspectives: Revitalizing and Reclaiming Navajo Thought.* University of Arizona Press. Trade paperback, 196 pages, \$29.95, uapress.arizona.edu.

Contributors to this work are largely Diné academics and educators who relate their integrations of personal experiences and scholarly conceptions according to the fundamental philosophy “one’s journey of striving to live a long, harmonious life.” The collected works reflect indigenous perspectives that serve as steps of decolonization through the affirmation and iteration of culturally based knowledge and ways of knowing that reaffirm identity, meaning and world view. Certainly this

work will resonate with indigenous people of various backgrounds, but is generally informative for students, educators and others interested in ways of knowing as embedded in culture, history and tradition.

– Carol A. Markstrom

SHIRLEY AYN LINDER. *Doc Holliday in Film and Literature.* McFarland. Paperback, 200 pages, \$40, mcfarlandpub.com.

Just about everybody knows about Doc Holliday, and from reading Shirley Ayn Linder’s book, just about everyone has written about him or talked about him or played him on film. Linder gives readers a brief biography of the dentist-turned-gunman, and then examines – in often witty, always opinionated fashion – just about every bit of literature and every portrayal on film. This is a worthy companion to Michael F. Blake’s excellent book (also published by McFarland), *Hollywood and the O.K. Corral*. Includes a foreword by Paul Andrew Hutton.

CHARLES M. ROBINSON III (editor and annotator). *The Diaries of John Gregory Bourke, Volume Five, May 23, 1881-August 26, 1881.* University of North Texas Press. Hardcover, 482 pages, \$55, untpress.unt.edu.

Many officers on the American frontier were naturalists and ethnographers. John Bourke was exceptionally talented in the latter field. From May through August 1881, he was able to devote himself totally to his avocation. In this short span of time he visited the Navajo and Zuñi, stopping to learn from Frank Cushman, attended the great Sioux Sundance, returned to the Southwest and visited the Rio Grande Pueblos. Along the way he took a perceptive look at the people, including the Penitentes, of northern New Mexico and at the behaviors of Mormon settlers in Arizona. The editor includes biographical notes on many of the people met along the way.

– Doug Hocking

JOANN ROE. *The Columbia River: An Historical Travel Guide.* Caxton. Trade paperback, 228 pages, \$16.95, caxtonpress.com.

Anyone who has traveled the Columbia River Gorge has seen the majesty of the river, the hills that hold it in and perhaps know the part this river has played in the history of the western expansion. JoAnn Roe's book is exactly what the subtitle suggests – a travel guide through history. Beginning with the source of the river far to the north in Canada, going down through Washington State and finally to the mouth of the Pacific Ocean, Roe takes the reader on a historical journey 1,214 miles long. She describes the geology and wildlife as well as the Indian and folk histories before early exploration, seasons the story with little-known historical facts and first-person accounts and adds good imagery as to what the river must have been like before expansion came and before the dams were built.

– Randall Platt

RACHEL McLEAN SAILOR. *Meaningful Places: Landscape Photographers in the Nineteenth-Century American West.* University of New Mexico Press. Hardcover, 207 pages, \$45, unmpress.com.

Rachel Sailor, an art history professor at the University of Wyoming, has written an in-depth analysis of Western landscape photography and its differing effects on viewers regionally and nationwide. In the 1850s, Thomas Easterly's daguerreotypes chronicled the rapidly growing environs of St. Louis and attracted emigrants from the East. In the 20th Century, Ansel Adams brought his reverence for the land into the modern era of photography. Sailor shows how photographers not only recorded America's changing landscape but how they actually shaped attitudes about the West. A scholarly and informative book.

– Nancy Plain

JOSEPH P. SANCHEZ, ROBERT L. SPUDE and ART GOMEZ. *New Mexico: A History.* University of Oklahoma Press. Hardcover, 384 pages, \$26.95, oupress.com.

Authors Joseph Sanchez, Robert Spude and Art Gomez offer a concise, informative historical primer of New Mexico, from the early Puebloan culture to the election of the state's first Hispanic female governor in 2011. Covering more than 500 years is no easy task, and on the plus side, the authors give us plenty of insight. Unfortunately, there's a problem and it's about as big as the state, the fifth-largest geographically in the Union. The authors tell us, for example: "During the Lincoln County War, Santa Fe lawyer Thomas Catron temporarily jailed cattleman John Chisum for unpaid invoices." It isn't that it's false, it's that it can't be verified, as there are no source notes. Dispensing with this standard of nonfiction always cheats both author and reader.

– Thomas D. Clagett

RICHARD L. SAUNDERS (editor). *Dale Morgan on the Mormons, Collected Works, Part 2, 1949-1970.* University of Oklahoma Press. Hardcover, 475 pages, \$45, oupress.com.

Noted historian Dale Morgan wrote much about Mormon influence in the West, including compiling detailed and definitive bibliographic studies of writings by and about the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and its many offshoots. This book continues the compilation started in Part One, and includes essays and articles and book reviews from Morgan's hand as well as more of the bibliography. Aficionados of Mormon history and fans of Morgan will certainly want this work for study and reference, as well as enjoyment of Morgan's fine writing.

– Rod Miller

ROBERT BARR SMITH. *The Outlaws: Tales of the Bad Guys Who Shaped the West.* Two Dot/Globe Pequot. Trade paperback, 217 pages, \$18.95, globepequot.com.

While you'll read about a few well-known outlaws in this book, most of the accounts feature obscure bandits, many of whom plied their trade in Indian Territory. The author makes no attempt to portray his subjects as

heroic or romantic; rather, he misses few opportunities to point out their stupidity and ineptitude. Robert Barr Smith writes with enthusiasm in a fast-paced style and pulls no punches in recounting the activities of the outlaws or their fates.

– Rod Miller

DOUG SWANSON. *Blood Aces: The Wild Ride Of Benny Binion, The Texas Gangster Who Created Vegas Poker.* Viking. Hardcover, 310 pages, \$27.95, us.penguin.com.

Benny Binion portrayed himself as an uneducated Texas yokel, full of cornpone and clabber pie. In reality, he was a calculating and cold-blooded killer, capable of blowing up an opponent's car with enough explosives to shred a Sherman tank. Doug Swanson does a suburb job of telling the Binion story in a thoroughly researched book that traces his subject from early days in North Texas to his reign at the Horseshoe casino and his role as czar of casino racketeers. Swanson's *Blood Aces* is a true-crime tour de force, told with just the right touch of gallows humor.

– G.R. Williamson

ROBERT H. WEBB, JULIO L. BETANCOURT, R. ROY JOHNSON and RAYMOND M. TURNER. *Requiem for the Santa Cruz: An Environmental History of an Arizona River.* University of Arizona Press. Hardcover, 296 pages, \$80, uapress.arizona.edu.

Four authors, each representing a different discipline of science, have collaborated to write this scholarly work concerning the disruption of the ecological balance of Arizona's Santa Cruz River. They conclude that irreversible changes have occurred through urbanization plus slack husbandry of the water supply. It's not an easy read but will be looked to as an accurate and well-researched resource.

– Lynn Bueling

WESTERN DVDs

BOOK NOTES

Klondike. Discover – Gaiam, \$16.99, store.discovery.com. Executive Producer Ridley Scott's production *Klondike* received a great deal of notice as the Discovery Channel's first scripted drama, and a period miniseries to boot. Beautifully



C. COURTNEY JOYNER

made, but sluggish viewing, *Klondike* can also claim to be interactive, since viewers have to search for their own gold among the show's missteps and excessive length.

Following two buddies, Richard Madden of *Game of Thrones* and Augustus Prew, into the Yukon during the 1897 gold rush is the stuff of Rex Beach and Jack London. The problem here is

that the grand action and sense of adventure of those writers is a lesson to be learned by *Klondike*, which mires itself in an odd, lifeless approach.

That is, until Part Three, when the action of the story finally takes hold, and the energy level of the series is elevated. For some, it might be too little, too late, but *Klondike* is no failure. The visuals are sometimes stunning, and the performances solid, with nice turns by villain Tim Roth and preacher Sam Shepard.

To be fair, I was yearning for *The Spoilers*, even the one with Jeff Chandler, but if you have the patience to stick with *Klondike*, there are rewards to be mined.

Randolph Scott Western Collection. Turner Classic, \$39.99, shop.tcm.com.

TCM's *Randolph Scott Western Collection* features four Westerns he made for Columbia during the late '40s and '50s. None of these titles has the arid feeling of the great Budd Boetticher films, or the noirish violence of the actor's work with Andre de Toth, but this is a solid collection of programmers, showing Scott in fine form.

The set includes Ray Enright's *Coroner's Creek*, a dark tale of revenge that points toward *Seven Men from Now*; John Sturges directed *The*

Walking Hills, a stark gold and greed story, written by Alan LeMay; *The Doolins of Oklahoma* is the first Scott Western directed by Gordon Douglas, who takes the story down dark pathways, and features George Macready as a near-psycho lawyer; Joseph Lewis' *7th Cavalry* was based on the superior novel by Glendon Swarthout, offering a different view of the Little Big Horn. Produced by Scott's partner Harry Joe Brown, it feels thread-bare, and is a mediocre adaptation of the book.

The transfer quality of the films is superb.

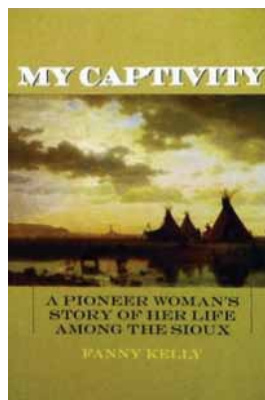
MAX ALVAREZ. *The Crime Films of Anthony Mann*. University Press of Mississippi. Hardcover, 324 pages, \$60, upress.state.ms.us.

WWA fans probably know Anthony Mann as the director of several James Stewart Westerns in the 1950s, including *Winchester '73*, *Bend of the River* and *The Naked Spur*. But before he turned to that genre, he earned a reputation as a solid craftsman of crime films, including great film noirs like *T-Men*, *Raw Deal*, *Side Street* and *Border Incident* and the underrated *The Tall Target*, a Dick Powell noir about a plot to assassinate Abraham Lincoln before his inauguration. Max Alvarez gives an incredibly detailed but highly readable examination of Mann's 1942-1951 foray into crime thrillers.

MAX BRAND. *The Tracker*. Five Star. Hardcover, 270 pages, \$25.95, gale.cengage.com/fivestar.

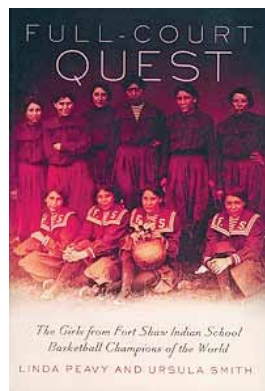
Restored novel, originally published as *The Trail to Manhood* as a six-part serial in Street & Smith's Western Story Magazine in 1929.

FANNY KELLY. *My Captivity: A Pioneer Woman's Story of Her Life Among the Sioux*. Skyhorse. Trade paperback, 285 pages, \$14.95, skyhorsepublishing.com.



Fanny Kelly, a Canadian native who was born in 1845 but moved to Kansas in 1856, was taken hostage by Indians when her wagon train was attacked when she was 19 years old. Her husband spent five months attempting to rescue her. Kelly's memoir, first published in 1872, has been reprinted by Skyhorse.

LINDA PEAVY and URSULA SMITH. *Full-Court Quest: The Girls from Fort Shaw Indian School, Basketball Champions of the World*. University of Oklahoma Press. Trade paperback, 480 pages, \$19.95, oupress.com.



The 2009 Spur Award winner – and winner of the Montana Book Award and Oklahoma Book Award – about the 1904 world champions from an Indian boarding school in Fort Shaw, Montana, is now available as a trade paperback.