

NONFICTION

THOMAS G. ALEXANDER

Brigham Young and the Expansion of the Mormon Faith

University of Oklahoma Press
Hardcover, 392 pages, \$29.95
OUPress.com

Thomas Alexander's biography is a new entry in the University of Oklahoma Press's Oklahoma Western Biographies Series. A noted scholar in Mormon and Western history, Alexander has written a biography intended for the general reader, though specialists will find much of value in his book. Given that much of what is out there is either anti-Young or adulatory, Alexander carefully sifts fact from legend as he examines the numerous controversies in which Brigham Young was embroiled. These include the issue of plural marriage, the real guilty parties in the Mountain Meadows massacre, and the so-called Mormon War of 1857. Readers might be surprised at the number of excommunications of dissident Mormons in the early years after the revelations of Joseph Smith. For anyone unfamiliar with Young's leadership and the growth of the Mormon church this biography will prove both informative and fascinating.

– Abraham Hoffman

GARY CLAYTON ANDERSON

Gabriel Renville: From the Dakota War to the Creation of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Reservation, 1825-1892

South Dakota Historical Society Press
Hardcover, 220 pages, \$29.95
SDHSPress.com

Gabriel Renville (1825-1892) played a key role in establishing the Lake Traverse Reservation for the Sisseton and Wahpeton Dakota people in northeastern South Dakota stretching into southeastern North Dakota. This biography of Renville recounts not only events of Renville's life but also the struggles of the Dakota peoples to maintain their way of life as the influx of settlers and demands of the federal government forced changes upon them. Renville, who was of mixed Dakota and

white heritage, straddled both cultures, working tirelessly to protect the Dakota culture while accepting new ways such as farming, raising cattle and schools to survive the new realities. Extensive end-notes and a detailed bibliography are included. Every student of the Dakota peoples should read this book.

– Bill Markley

NATHAN E. BENDER

The Art of the English Trade Gun in North America

McFarland & Company
Paperback, 171 pages, \$45
McFarlandBooks.com

This detailed and meticulously researched book "directly addresses the question of why particular ornamental patterns of known symbolic significance were chosen for Native American trade items." The narrative draws from the works of 17th and 18th Century English rifle-makers, whose guns were used by early American fur men for bargaining with their Indian clients and neighbors. The book is heavily illustrated with clear, black-and-white photographs of some of the weapons as well as by the design elements engraved upon them. This book will be enjoyed by anyone interested in American fur-trade history, Indian trade guns and the artistic abilities of the gunmakers who produced these beautiful firearms.

– James A. Crutchfield

JOHN BRANCH

The Last Cowboys: A Pioneer Family in the New West

W.W. Norton & Co.
Hardcover, 288 pages, \$26.95
WWNorton.com

This intimate and unflinching account of the Wright family of Utah's attempt to sustain their ranching heritage in changing times benefits tremendously from *New York Times* reporter-at-large John Branch's ability to capture the lyricism of the American West and the hard realities of modern "cowboy" living. The compelling narrative juxtaposes the challenges faced by patriarch Bill Wright to preserve the family's holdings against encroachment with the competition between his sons and grandsons,

heirs to one of the greatest family dynasties in rodeo history. In this Spur finalist for contemporary nonfiction, the writing is simple, direct and urgent, evincing a veteran reporter's eye for the telling detail. Heart-pounding scenes of rodeo action convey the adrenaline-stoked atmosphere with the immediacy of a documentary film.

– Kirk Ellis

JULIA BRICKLIN

Polly Pry: The Woman Who Wrote the West

TwoDot Books
Hardcover, 206 pages, \$24.95
GlobePequot.com

Polly Pry, first female journalist for the *Denver Post*, was adventurous, outspoken and perhaps a creator of fake news. "Polly" (Leonel Ross Campbell) might have invented some of the stories her readers avidly followed. Did she really travel to Paris and Moscow or interview Pancho Villa in Mexico? Author Julia Bricklin expertly offers all of the evidence and sums up Pry's six-decade career: "Above all, Polly Pry showed that a woman wielding a pen could shape the West as well as any man holding a gun." Pry ruffled feathers, and some wanted her dead, going so far as to shoot as she opened her front door. Bricklin put in thorough work on this 2019 Spur finalist for biography, neatly presenting all of the research while at the same time giving readers an entertaining glimpse into what made Leonel Ross Campbell tick.

– Denise F. McAllister

KEVIN BRITZ and ROGER L. NICHOLS

Tombstone, Deadwood and Dodge City: Re-Creating the Frontier West

University of Oklahoma Press
Hardcover, 266 pages, \$32.95
OUPress.com

In this absorbing book, Kevin Britz, professor emeritus of history at the University of Arizona, and Roger L. Nichols, a museum professional and writer who died in 2011, chronicle how three iconic Old West towns – Tombstone, Arizona; Deadwood, South Dakota; and Dodge City, Kansas – used that

heritage to boost struggling economies. But it took time before citizens in those three former boomtowns accepted that historical images of violence weren't necessarily bad for business. "To present their cities as modern, promoters tried to deny that picture or to present it as just an early step in local development," the authors write. "Those efforts failed." As anyone who has visited Tombstone, Deadwood or Dodge City recently know.

— Johnny D. Boggs

FRANCISCO CANTÚ

The Line Becomes a River: Dispatches from the Border

Riverhead Books
Hardcover, 256 pages, \$26
PenguinRandomHouse.com

Son of a park ranger in Texas's Guadalupe Mountains and a four-year Border Patrol veteran, Francisco Cantú brings unique insight to this beautifully written account of immigration and backlash. In evocative, impassioned, often aching personal language, the author succeeds in putting a universal human face onto both sides of the most contentious issue of our times. Cantú's parallel focus on his own law enforce-

ment experiences and the hardships of a Mexican friend who journeys home to visit his dying mother, only to be forced into an illegal return crossing, goes beyond politics to portray the heart and spirit of the individual people who inhabit our Southwestern borderlands. The region's forbidding yet magnificent landscapes come alive on every page of the book, a deserved double Spur winner for contemporary nonfiction and first nonfiction book.

— Kirk Ellis

JIM DeFELICE

West Like Lightning: The Brief, Legendary Ride of the Pony Express

William Morrow
Hardcover, 357 pages, \$27.99
HarperCollins.com

That William Russell, Alexander Majors and William Waddell's Pony Express flashed in the historic spotlight for only 18 months, April 1860-October 1861, was no surprise to the enterprising trio. They knew from the start their rapid horseback mail service would be a short-lived project because transcontinental telegraph and railroad services loomed on the horizon. Their goal, ultimately unrealized, was to get enough

federal financing to construct a Western transportation empire that had, as Jim DeFelice puts it, "a veritable monopoly over delivery in an area they expected to boom in population." Their effort was not soon forgotten, in no small part due to Buffalo Billy Cody's featuring the Pony Express in his Wild West extravaganza. Although records have been lost and tall tales told (Cody most likely was no young rider), DeFelice smoothly delivers all the truths, myths and uncertainties in this Spur finalist for historical nonfiction.

— Gregory Lalire

BENJAMIN DREYER

Dreyer's English: An Utterly Correct Guide to Clarity and Style

Random House
Hardcover, 291 pages, \$25
RandomHouseBooks.com

A new punctuation/grammar book wouldn't normally get attention, let alone an enthusiastic review in *The New York Times*, except that in this case the book is by Benjamin Dreyer, copy chief at Random House. This informative, sometimes hilarious discussion about copy-editing is a page-turner as the mysteries of serial commas, problematic

THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE BEAUTIFUL DISCOVER HOW THEIR TRAILS CROSSED

TOM HORN: BLOOD ON THE MOON by Chip Carlson

Horn was a death sentence to rustlers and the devil incarnate to homesteaders. When he was arrested for the murder of 14-year-old Willie Nickell, it ignited a firestorm of controversy which has raged for over 100 years. Chip Carlson's research into this true crime story leads the reader to ask if justice was served.

trade paper • 384 pp • \$19.95

BUTCH CASSIDY: MY UNCLE

"Bill Betenson is the great-grandson of Butch Cassidy's younger sister, Lula Parker Betenson. His own quest for answers has been a lifelong pursuit. His writing reveals a comprehensive, objective, and balanced approach, an open discourse of reason. He equally covers the various, and at times conflicting, accounts and fairly reconsiders the evidence of record."

—Larry Pointer—

author of *In Search of Butch Cassidy*

trade paper • 192 pp • \$19.95

NIGHTHAWK RISING

A BIOGRAPHY OF ACCUSED CATTLE RUSTLER
QUEEN ANN BASSETT OF BROWNS PARK

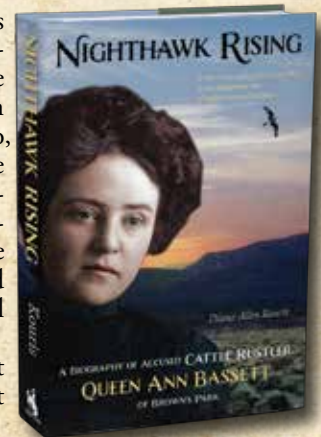
by Diana Allen Kouris

Ann Bassett was known as the "Queen of the Cattle Rustlers." Queen Ann lived a life adventure and controversy on the Outlaw Trail in Colorado, Wyoming, and Utah. She broke bread with Butch Cassidy, had her life turned upside down by notorious range detective Tom Horn, and stood tall against powerful cattle barons.

Anyone with an interest in Western History will want this comprehensive book!

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apostrophes and subject-predicate agreement are solved. For writers of everything from e-mails to books, this is a must-have, to be placed next to Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style*.

– David Morrell

JOHN FARKIS

The Making of Tombstone: Behind the Scenes of the Classic Modern Western

McFarland & Company
Paperback, 250 pages, \$39.95
McFarlandBooks.com

John Farkis takes readers behind the scenes of the making of a movie that is not a “Classic Modern Western” by any means but certainly a cult favorite. (If you're not familiar with every miracle it took to get this 1993 movie made, read Michael F. Blake's article in the December 2017 *Roundup*.) Farkis is the type of historian who leaves out no fact (case in point, *Not Thinkin' ... Just Rememberin' ...: The Making of John Wayne's The Alamo*, his 990-page look on that 1960 box-office dud). Quotes go on forever in his latest film history, filled with a lot of good information but far too much minutia and way too many viewpoints. Yet considering how rabidly passionate fans are about this movie, those readers likely won't get enough.

– Johnny D. Boggs

FORREST FENN and CARLEEN MILBURN

Leon Gaspard: The Call of Distant Places

The TIA Collection/Fenn Archive
Hardcover, 411 pages, \$125
OldSantaFeTradingCo.com

Born in Russia, Leon Gaspard (1882-1964) studied art in Odessa, Moscow and Paris, where he met American ballet student Evelyn Adell, whom he married and took on a two-year pack trip through Siberia for a honeymoon. Yes, they weren't your typical couple. Forrest Fenn and Carleen Milburn tell the story of the Gaspards, who settled in the thriving art community of Taos, New Mexico, in 1924 in this beautifully conceived book filled with color reproductions of the artist's works, all revealing Gaspard's incredible life, art and legacy. As Gaspard said, “Absolute happiness can be achieved by good fellowship, and good conversation, and a drink of vodka.”

– Johnny D. Boggs

GAIL L. JENNER

One Room: Schools and Schoolteachers in the Pioneer West

TwoDot Books
Trade paperback, 160 pages, \$22
GlobePequot.com

At one time, almost every child not taught at home was educated in a small, often isolated, one-room school. Its furnishings, school materials, curriculum and teaching quality varied from one locale to another. Filled with amazing photos and descriptions, *One Room* illustrates how much our educational system has changed in 100-plus years. A fascinating study of schools in the West, this book takes the reader into a world of yesteryear, making the reader both glad and sad those days have faded. Stories range from Nebraska blizzards in which children perished to glorious days of small

classes and individual attention. A lively, fascinating book.

– Melody Groves

CYNTHIA LEANNE LANDRUM

The Dakota Sioux Experience at Flandreau and Pipestone Indian Schools

University of Nebraska Press
Hardcover, 312 pages, \$55
NebraskaPress.unl.edu

In this in-depth, well-researched, and scholarly book, the author begins by describing American Indian and white prophesies, relationships and family ties from the 1500s to the present and how those led to the development of Indian Schools across the United States. The author also gives a short description of the organization and location of the Lakota, Dakota and Nakota tribes before detailing the history of – and making comparisons of, and contrasts between – Flandreau Indian School in South Dakota and Pipestone Indian School in Minnesota. Facts and figures are given, along with positive and negative personal stories and feedback from students and staff. An excellent book for anyone who has had family at Flandreau or Pipestone Indian Schools, anyone researching Indian school history, or anyone interested in what Indian school life was like during different time periods.

– Jean A. Lukesh

HOMER McCARTY (writer) and CORALIE M. BEYERS (editor)

Chasing Good Sense: A Boy's Life on the Frontier

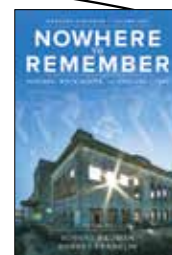
UNDENIABLY NORTHWEST READS

Nowhere to Remember

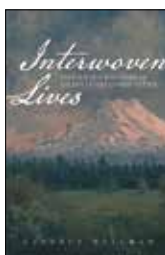
Hanford, White Bluffs, and Richland to 1943

Edited by Robert Bauman and Robert Franklin

Drawn from Hanford History Project personal narratives, *Nowhere to Remember* highlights life in three small close-knit eastern Washington agricultural communities until the Manhattan Project forced a permanent, mandatory evacuation.



Paperback • \$24.95
978-0-87422-360-6



Paperback • \$27.95
978-0-87422-364-4

Interwoven Lives

Indigenous Mothers of Salish Coast Communities
Candace Wellman

Meet Jenny Wynn, Elizabeth Patterson, Mary Allen, and Mrs. Pickett—four intermarried indigenous women who influenced mid-1800s Bellingham Bay area settlement, and discover new details about Confederate general George E. Pickett.

Available at bookstores,
at wsupress.wsu.edu, or by
phone at 800-354-7360



WSU PRESS
WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

University of Utah Press
Paperback, 374 pages, \$19.95
UofUPress.com

Coralie Beyers ran into her grandfather on the bus in 1948 when she was a senior at the University of Utah and he was going to a writer's conference at the University of Utah. Under his arm, the 80-year-old man carried a bulky manuscript of the story of his life as a 5- to 8-year-old in Southern Utah of 1873-1876. The manuscript passed through famous hands before Beyers brought it to the University of Utah Press. Written in a Huck Finn patois, the difficult-to-read book unfolds in a gentle pace that reflects the pace of life as it was lived. Forty-two stories in four parts make the book not so much a page-turner as a bit of a reference book. But it took courage to write and it took courage to publish.

— Edward Massey

RALPH A. MONACO II

The Bandit Rides Again: Jesse James, Whiskeyhead Ryan, and the Glendale Train Robbery

Monaco Publishing
Trade paperback, 240 pages, \$20
MonacoPublishing.net

In 1879, Jesse James and a handful of gang members robbed a Chicago & Alton Railroad train at Glendale, Missouri. In collaboration with the Jackson County Historical Society, the author details the robbery and its aftermath, which led to arrests, confessions, convictions and the downfall of the James Gang. A solid collection of facts, but with poor writing, bad photo reproductions and amateurish production values.

— Johnny D. Boggs

BRENDEN W. RENSINK

Native but Foreign: Indigenous Immigrants and Refugees in the North American Borderlands

Texas A&M University Press
Hardcover, 304 pages, \$40
TAMUPress.com

There is probably no greater artificial geographical concept than a national border, especially for people whose lives and culture predate the imposition of borders. Brigham Young University historian Brenden W. Rensink has spent a decade examining how indigenous people were affected by the establishment of North American boundaries, first for his doctoral dissertation and now the resulting book *Native But For-*

eign: Indigenous Immigrants and Refugees in the North American Borderlands. The 10 years were well spent. Rensink has produced a clearly written, imaginatively researched and thought-provoking account of indigenous people encountering borders, and living in borderland, sometimes even bisected by the international boundary. The result, the 2019 Spur winner for historical nonfiction, will be of use not just to academicians but to the subjects of his research who, in Rensink's words, continued to assert their own identity until they were "native, but foreign no longer."

— James McGrath Morris

MARK J. NELSON

White Hat: The Military Career of Captain William Philo Clark

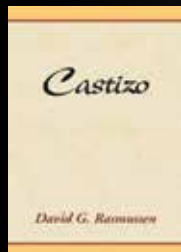
University of Oklahoma Press
Hardcover, 280 pages, \$29.95
OUPress.com

Since Lieutenant William Philo Clark wore a white hat, the Indian scouts he commanded in the mid-1870's gave him the name "White Hat." This 2019 Spur winner for biography details Clark's military service from West Point to his adventures on the Great Plains and his duties at Army headquarters. Clark

STORIES WRITTEN AND NARRATED BY DAVID G. RASMUSSEN

HISTORICAL FICTIONS WITH TRUTHS AS TO WHERE AND WHEN

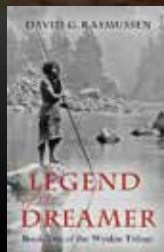
CASTIZO



CASTIZO

Modern and ancient New Mexico cultures clash when an elderly direct decedent of the original Spanish settlers (CASTIZOS) chooses to escape an Albuquerque rest home and return to his land grant ranch in the wilderness. He is pursued by his successful son across the desert area west of Albuquerque as hunter and prey.

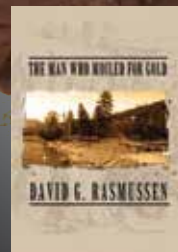
THE WYAKIN TRILOGY



THE WYAKIN TRILOGY

A terrifying time-shift with apparitions is experienced by a fictitious writer in the wild Missouri River Breaks of central Montana. This was described in the Prologue of "Legend of The Wyakin." The Writer is driven by the experience to create "Legend of The Dreamer and Legend of The Shaman" where an epilogue completes the story arc back at the Missouri River Breaks.

THE MAN WHO MOILED FOR GOLD



THE MAN WHO MOILED FOR GOLD

Hardrock miner, Charley Marten, names himself: after the famous line from the poem: "The Cremation of Sam McGee" by Robert W. Service in 1912; after recounting his gold mining life to his family. They are amazed when he told of being a vigilante and hanging the notorious Montana road agents.

www.dgrasmussen.com | www.wyakinspirit.com | davidr585@aol.com

Available as Audio Books, Paper Back and E-Books from Amazon, Kindle and Audio. Com

played a major role in Crazy Horse's surrender and the events resulting in Crazy Horse's death. He led an adventurous 39 years of life, participating in Indian fights, exploration surveys and other actions on the northern plains. Clark became interested in the Indians' use of sign language, resulting in the posthumous publication of his book, *The Indian Sign Language*. Anyone interested in the army's interactions with the northern plains' tribes and Clark's role will want to read *White Hat*.

– Bill Markley

RENYA K. RAMIREZ

Standing Up to Colonial Power: The Lives of Henry Roe and Elizabeth Bender Cloud

University of Nebraska Press
Hardcover, 304 pages, \$29.95
NebraskaPress.unl.edu.

In this personal account of the author's Ho-Chunk and Ojibwe ancestors' creative combination of traditional and white environments we discover the genius of the Clouds. Their leadership in the battle for native rights has had immense impact on the government's relationship to American Indians. Their skill at blending native warrior and modern identities in the course of their careers serve as an example for those engaged in civil rights activism.

– Vernon Schmid

KERMIT SCHWEIDEL

Folly Cove: A Smuggler's Tale of the Pot Rebellion

Cinco Puntos Press
Trade paperback, 266 pages, \$16.95
CincoPuntos.com

Kermit Schweidel ran a successful ad agency in Dallas and then, midcareer, returned to his hometown of El Paso, Texas, and became embroiled in one of the biggest pot heists of the 1970s. In this witty, engaging Spur finalist for contemporary nonfiction book, Schweidel recounts the amazing episode, weaving in the voices of the border rats who signed on – a kind of “Oceans 11” of marijuana smuggling set against the turbulent context of the era's foreign and domestic wars. This tale has everything, from wayward officials to smuggling via air and sea to murder, the mafia and the Drug Enforcement Agency. But more importantly, we get to know a band of brothers who just wanted to get high. It's hard to believe that marijuana – what Schweidel calls “the human equivalent of catnip” – once caused

so much trouble, considering that it's now legal in various states. But it's easy to believe that the crew that waged this caper came from the physical and metaphorical borderlands – possibly the DNA of America's future.

– Deanne Stillman

DAVID TREUER

The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee: Native America from 1890 to the Present

Riverhead Books
Hardcover, 512 pages, \$28
PenguinRandomHouse.com

Whereas Dee Brown's book *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* ended at 1890, David Treuer picks up the story and continues through to the present day. He gathered material to formulate his thoughts by studying the written record, traveling to significant sites and looking inward to his Indian self. Born and raised “on the rez,” of an Ojibwe mother and a Jewish Holocaust survivor father, he brings a unique background to his thoughts and writing. He seems to restate the theory of a self-fulfilling prophecy when he writes, “And I worry that if we tell the story of the past as a tragedy we consign ourselves to a tragic future” This is an important book that belongs on the shelves of students of the American Indian story.

– Lynn Bueling

ALIREZA VAHDANI

The Hero and the Grave: The Theme of Death in the Films of John Ford, Akira Kurosawa and Sergio Leone

McFarland & Company
Paperback, 175 pages, \$39.95
McFarlandBooks.com

Violent death is as essential a part of the Western genre as heroes, horses and six-shooters. Not only is it usually a key plot element supplying conflict, tension and resolution, but as Alireza Vahdani points out, it also helps imbue Westerns with social and political meaning and clarifies their moral outlook. Some characters fear death, while others take its threat in stride, but it is the great cleanser of illusions and lies, forcing the community to confront the forces that threaten its safety and define its character. Vahdani, a film analyst and fiction writer, knows intimately the works of his three masters and the links between them, and he deftly invokes philosophy, religion, anthropology, sociology, and history as he rides the range. But it's a dry, dense journey, best suited for film

and cultural studies graduate seminars and those who enjoy such pursuits.

– Glenn Frankel

JOSHUA WHEELER

Acid West: Essays

FSG Originals
Trade paperback, 416 pages, \$17
FSGOriginals.com

Alamogordo, New Mexico-based Joshua Wheeler's debut book is a gorgeously crafted meditation on some of the more bizarre corners of his home turf, by turns hilarious and disturbing, and always thought provoking. Subjects range from cattle bleached white by the world's first nuclear blast at Trinity, a treasure hunt for buried *Star Wars* video games and (of course) the annual UFO festival in Roswell, in addition to more autobiographical accounts of the author's eccentric family. Unlike many essay collections, which suffer from a sense of randomness, Wheeler's stories are linked by a unifying theme: how our vision of the West has metastasized from the frontier to the outer limits of space, and how infrequently reality verifies the myth.

– Kirk Ellis

PLAYS

RED SHUTTLEWORTH

1970: Wagon Mound, New Mexico; 1971: Liberal, Kansas; 1972: Hobart, Oklahoma; 1973: Gerlach, Nevada; 1974: Plainview, Texas; 1975: Glenwood Springs, Colorado; 1976: Rattlesnake Station, Idaho; 1977: Devils Den, California; 1978: Gascoyne, North Dakota; 1979: Missoula, Montana

Bunchgrass Press
Chapbooks, no prices listed
PoetRedshuttleWorth.blogspot.com

For the decade of the 1970s, these short plays and monologues from Red Shuttleworth's “Americana West” series stretch from Wagon Mound, New Mexico, to Missoula, Montana. Featuring his dry wit and ear for dialogue, Shuttleworth gives us President Richard Nixon discussing America with a waiter at a Gerlach, Nevada, café; a burglary gone wrong at an ice-cream shop; and a middle-aged divorcee walking around Liberal, Kansas, in an astronaut suit. A brilliant mix of theater of the absurd and touching portraits of small-town America.

– Johnny D. Boggs

JUVENILE

JEAN ABERNETHY (author and illustrator)

Fergus and The Night Before Christmas

Trafalgar Press

Hardcover, 40 pages, \$15.95
HorseAndRiderBooks.com

To the sing-song rhythm of the original *Night Before Christmas* comes this laugh-out-loud tale about the cartoon horse, Fergus. In this instance, Santa's sleigh is haphazardly drawn by the most hodge-podge team of 11 horses (not reindeer) that one will ever see. The team is led, of course, by Fergus. As in, "With a snowy-faced leader so spooky and quick, I started to worry about old St. Nick! This horse had ONE SHOE, and a little hay belly, and googley eyes that were utterly silly." This engaging, comically illustrated book, a 2019 Storyteller Spur finalist, engages the reader, ages toddler to old folks. All will be especially thrilled with the warmhearted surprise at the end.

— Irene Bennett Brown

FRANCIE M. BERG

Buffalo Heartbeats Across the Plains: The Last Great Hunts and Saving the Buffalo

Dakota Buttes Visitors Council
Hardcover, 256 pages, \$34.95
HettingerND.com

The winner of this year's Spur for best juvenile nonfiction is a superb achievement. It covers everything about buffalo you can imagine and some things you hadn't even imagined – from the development stages of a buffalo bull's horns, to the uses Plains Indians made of different parts of a buffalo's body, to how a buffalo bull would fare in showdowns with Mexican fighting bulls. A pleasure to read and beautifully illustrated with paintings by the likes of Charlie Russell and George Catlin, contemporary photographs, drawings and charts, this is a difficult-to-resist invitation to young readers to learn about the great American bison from early on to near extinction to thundering herd once more. And adult readers will find it a valuable addition to their shelf of Western history reference books.

— Ollie Reed Jr.

JOHNNY D. BOGGS

Taos Lightning

Center Point Large Print
Hardcover, 316 pages, \$34.95
CenterPointLargePrint.com

Evan Kendrick didn't set out to ride 1,800 miles across the United States on his father's ornery, home-brew-colored mustang. But when dad bets his New Mexico home on winning a cross-country race from Galveston to New England – and can't ride, Evan has no choice but to join his new friends, Dindie Remo and Arena Lancaster, on the starting line. With quirky characters and a course rooted deep in American history, Boggs proves he's a master of dialog and setting, and his choice of present-tense narrative offers an immediacy to the story's mounting suspense. Through saddle sores, ruffians, rainstorms and rivers to cross, the young – and young at heart – will thrill to Evan's trek in the 2019 Spur winner for juvenile fiction.

— Richard Prosch

JONI FRANKS (author) **RAQUEL RODRIGUEZ** (illustrator)

Corky Tails: Tales of a Tailless Dog Named Sagebrush: Sagebrush and the Butterfly Creek Flood

Xlibris
Paperback, 54 pages, \$24.99
Xlibris.com

In this story for third and fourth graders, tiny fairy people called Shuns – a married couple named Acorn and Rainbow and their baby, Termite – are in danger from a terrible storm and flooded Butterfly Creek. Luckily, Sagebrush, the lovable talking Corgi puppy, and his brave and capable human, Young Miss, engage in search and rescue. A human, Mr. Hiker Man, having fallen in the flooded creek and thinking only of himself, demands that Young Miss and Sagebrush rescue him first and forget the Shuns. But will they? Attractive illustrations and thoughtful action fulfill the message that "all lives matter – even those of fairies." Side note: The Big Cottonwood Flood followed by the Hayden Pass Creek Fire in Colorado moved Joni Franks to write this story.

— Irene Bennett Brown

STEPHEN L. HARDIN

Lust for Glory: An Epic Story of Early Texas and the Sacrifice That Defined a Nation

State House Press
Paperback, 382 pages, \$39.95
TAMUPress.com

This 2019 Spur finalist in juvenile nonfiction tells the story of Texas from Mexico's independence from Spain in 1821 until Texas's annexation by the United States in 1846. Hardin, a professor at McMurry University in Abilene, opens with the immediate aftermath of the fall of the Alamo, but his history starts well before and goes way beyond that battle, the massacre of Texas prisoners at Goliad and the Texas victory at San Jacinto. In short, easy-to-digest chapters aimed at general readers and students grades seven through 12, he lays out the political intrigues leading up to the fight for Texas independence, the continuing hostilities between Texan and Mexican forces after San Jacinto, the birth of the Texas Rangers, bloody conflicts with Comanches and much more. In his effort to achieve accessibility, Hardin includes no footnotes. But the book boasts an extensive bibliography and is generously illustrated with drawings and maps.

— Ollie Reed Jr.

ALLEN MORRIS JONES (author and illustrator)

Montana for Kids, The Story of Our State

Bangtail Press
Hardcover, paperback, 48 pages, \$19.95, \$12.59
BangtailPress.com

This is history kids will go for. Written in a fun way that's easy for kids to understand, each story is just long enough to entertain, hold interest and inform. Montana's great history comes to life, not just for readers who live in Montana, but also for those who visit Montana, want to learn about Montana or simply love Montana. Here are the first peoples, when horses came, bison, Lewis & Clark, mountain men, Indian wars, steamboats, miners, the railroad, homesteaders, vigilantes, ranchers. Historical photos and cutwork illustrations by the author enrich the whole. The author has long experience in writing books for adults, in writing magazine articles and work as a book editor. (For example, he co-edited with William Kittredge *The Best of Montana Short Fiction*.) *Montana for Kids*, his first book for children, is this year's Spur winner for illustrated children's book.

— Irene Bennett Brown

POETRY

JOHN D. NESBITT

Rangeland and Prairie: Western Poems

RR Productions

Paperback, 23 pages, price not listed

The poems in award-winning author John D. Nesbitt's chapbook offer rediscoveries of forgotten familiars, layers of truths, humor and love, often with twists that amuse and surprise. Nesbitt's Spur Award-winning poem, "Prairie Center," is an honest, spot-on depiction of the cycles of life and death and love and loss in a quintessential Western landscape, written by someone who knows it, and of it, intimately. Several of these poems are novels in miniature, revealing lives loved, lived and unloved, and lost. Nesbitt's understated, smooth depictions linger in the mind and refuse to leave, reminders that life goes on long after closing time. This choice chapbook is now included in a recent second edition of Nesbitt's Western poetry collection, *Thorns on the Rose*.

– Matthew P. Mayo

FICTION

C.K. CRIGGER

The Woman Who Built a Bridge

Wolfpack Publishing

Paperback, 294 pages, \$8.99

WolfpackPublishing.com

The 2019 Spur winner for romance novel is a different sort of historical romance, and the heroine is a decidedly different sort of woman. No shrinking violet, enterprising January Schutt is a woman bent on making her own way. She wants to be left alone, not drawn into the political struggles facing others in the small valley where she has settled. When Shay Billings, who discovers a newly built bridge across the river on his way home, is ambushed and left for dead, January rescues him. Through this encounter, the pair soon becomes involved in a larger conflict surrounding them and their neighbors along with a powerful adversary who is determined to confiscate their water and property rights.

– Gail L. Jenner

PATRICK DEAREN

Apache Lament

Five Star Publishing

Hardcover, 274 pages, \$25.95

Gale.Cengage.com/FiveStar

Ranger Company A, made up of eight men – each with his own dark secret – pursues a small band of free-ranging Mescalero Apaches who have been raiding and killing white settlers. As they travel, conflicts develop among the Rangers. The book is full of twists that will keep you guessing what is going to happen next. The book will hold your interests to the end. An entertaining read.

– Lowell F. Volk

SAM FADALA

Death Stalks Apache Oro

Sundown Press

Trade paperback, 307 pages, \$14.99

SundownPress.com

Arizona Ranger John Briggs is sent to Apache Oro to find the killer of the women who lived at the Citadel. This story will keep you guessing as Briggs interviews the men of Apache Oro, searching for information and a lead to the killer's identity. Sam Fadala has done an outstanding job in entertaining the reader. The surprise comes at the end when the killer is revealed. A must read.

– Lowell F. Volk

W. MICHAEL GEAR

Flight of the Hawk: The Plains

Five Star Publishing

Hardcover, 275 pages, \$25.95

Gale.Cengage.com/FiveStar

This novel, part two in a series, is set around the time of the War of 1812 and among the fur trappers and Indians. John Tylor, having been accused of treason for taking part in the Aaron Burr conspiracy, has fled into the wilderness. He is being pursued by Fenway McKeever, one of the vilest villains to grace the pages of a novel. McKeever will stop at nothing to capture, torture and kill his quarry. This taut, nerve-wracking story of pursuit has more twists and turns than a mountain road, more characters than the population of many small towns. A list of English translations of Indian words would be helpful. However, Gear clearly has done his research, and his knowledge of the time and people he writes



about rings true. An excellent work on a period not nearly enough covered in Western fiction.

– James J. Griffin

JON GOSCH

Deep Fire Rise

Latah Books

Trade paperback, 219 pages, \$16.50

LatahBooks.com

The day Mount St. Helens blew (May 18, 1980) is a historical event that will remain in memory as long as those of us close enough to be covered in ash live. Jon Gosch has written a vivid and compelling story of the characters who lived around the volcano: the foolhardy, the criminals, the unbelievers and those with a strong sense of duty, all of whom have a place in history. The small-town atmosphere during tough times as depicted in this novel is spot on. As the tension ramps up to the mountain's actual explosion, the reader gets to know Deputy Tom Wilson, who suddenly and tragically has to deal with the murder of his best friend and mentor. Riveting.

– Carol Crigger

THERESE GREENWOOD

Kill as You Go

Coffin Hop Press

Trade paperback, 217 pages, \$14.99

CoffinHop.com

Therese Greenwood's editor accurately describes her writing as "Just good, solid, sharp, tight, entertaining storytelling." *Kill as You Go*, a title deriving from the card game Euchre, contains 14 stories of murder and mayhem in Canada assembled from her work in *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine* and other anthologies. Greenwood is a two-time finalist for the Crime Writers of Canada's Arthur Ellis Award and winner of the Bony Pete Award from the Bloody Words Festival. She adds to her laurels with the final story of this collection, "Buck's Last Ride," 2019's Spur Award winner for short fiction. This story alone is worth the price of admission.

– William Groneman III

JAMES J. GRIFFIN

Tough Month for a Ranger

Fire Star Press

Trade paperback, 274 pages, \$14.99

FireStarPress.com

Packed full of action, this novel gives "trials and tribulations" a new definition. This modern-day tale of a Texas

Ranger, and all that happens in a single month, reminds readers of the stories of Royal Canadian Mounted Police who "always get their man." As a Western, it's refreshing to see it set in the modern day. The investigative procedures of the Rangers come across well. Griffin has obviously done his homework, but the story would have been helped by a good editor eliminating redundant conversations (no need to have the action recounted several times) and changing the protagonist's name (Blawczyk) to one readers can pronounce.

– Melody Groves

SUSAN HENDERSON

The Flicker of Old Dreams

Harper Collins

Trade paperback, 299 pages, \$15.99

HarperCollins.com

Mary Crampton has always been someone who doesn't quite fit into her small, Montana town, perhaps because her father owns the local funeral home where, as an adult, Mary is the embalmer. Her clearest memory as a child was the day the town's star athlete died in an accident at the grain elevator. The town blamed Robert, the victim's younger brother, and, as time wore on, the incident tore the town apart. Now Robert is back to care for his dying mother and Mary is attracted to him, although he's still ostracized by the locals. Mary must decide whether to stay where she is or leave a decaying town and take up a wider life with Robert.

– Carol Crigger

ANNE HILLERMAN

The Tale Teller: A Leaphorn, Chee & Manuelito Novel

Harper Collins

Hardcover, 304 pages, \$26.99

HarperCollins.com

Joe Leaphorn is back on the job. Bored with not only retirement, but his recovery after being shot in the head, Leaphorn takes a consulting job for a museum. A box of artifacts from an anonymous donor is missing some items and the museum wants to know what happened. Especially since the person in charge of the box dies suddenly and rather mysteriously. Joe, using his awesome intellect, while fighting a difficulty speaking English after his injury, finds that Chee and Manuelito each have cases that tie in with this one. Anne Hillerman's stories always show

the reader something new about the Navajo Nation and life on the reservation, and the setting will sit you right down to experience it all for yourself.

– Carol Crigger

JAMES HITT

Bodie

Black Horse

Hardcover, 160 pages, \$18.43

BHWesterns.com

Engaged to the attractive daughter of the wealthiest man in the town, Josh Thorn is a lawyer with a bright future in the town of Bodie, California. But when an equally attractive prostitute is beaten, raped and dares to fight back against a wealthy and powerful man, Josh is faced with a thorny decision. The author has written a short but excellent tale that chronicles the lawyer's principled decision and the bloody aftermath which follows it. This book is the kind of Western that every traditional novelist seeks to pen.

– R.G. Yoho

M.J. HOLT

Confessions to Mr. Roosevelt

Five Star Publishing

Hardcover, 200 pages, \$25.95

Gale.Cengage.com/FiveStar

During the not so Great Depression, the Roosevelt administration created the Federal Writers Project to provide writers an income. They recorded the experiences of older Americans, primarily in rural areas. This historical novel addresses the experience of Ellen Hartley, a fresh-out-of-college unemployed journalist. Her interviews in a small Kansas town uncover five decades of tensions among some of the pioneers. Discovery of a skeleton at a Civilian Conservation Corps construction site explains the decades of angst in the community. Embedded in the community, her fortunes turn and leads to unsuspected career opportunities.

– Vernon Schmid

JEFF HULL

Broken Field

Arcade Publishing

Hardcover, 351 pages, \$24.99

SkyhorsePublishing.com

In rural Montana, one might think the issues are the weather, the commodities market or the everyday problem of keeping the machinery running. And they are. But there's also the rivalry

between school athletes, the bullying and the overt racism too many people refuse to see. There comes a time when “boys will be boys” is no longer an excuse for bad behavior. *Broken Field* deals with all of that, mostly seen through the eyes of the football coach, who is dealing with his own deep-seated problems, and a high school girl who wants more than her small community offers. It’s a story that will tear at your heart and that you won’t forget.

– Carol Crigger

BETH KANELL

The Long Shadow: The Winds of Freedom, Book One

Five Star Publishing
Hardcover, 300 pages, \$25.95
Gale.Cengage.com/FiveStar

Beth Kanell has mastered the craft of writing. She not only knows her characters, she is familiar with the lay of the land. As a native Vermonter, she is well acquainted with the topography and the flora and fauna of the Green Mountain State. What raises *The Long Shadow*, a Spur finalist for historical novel, above a merely entertaining tale is its strong story line, sense of place, historical references, literary virtuosity and the strategic interposition of the unexpected. Kanell feels the heartbeat and knows the rhythms of the region in which she resides. Kannel reveals the presence of slavery in New England and Vermont’s long history to end it. *The Long Shadow* is worth reading and getting a taste of maple syrup.

– Cowboy Mike Searles

ELMER KELTON

Hard Ride

Forge Books
Hardcover, 411 pages, \$27.99
Tor-Forge.com

This collection of stories, written by the late Elmer Kelton between 1951 and 1955, at the beginning of his fiction-writing career, reveals early evidence of his eye for detail, ear for dialogue, and gift for storytelling. With two exceptions, all the stories appeared in one pulp magazine, *Ranch Romances*. I have one quibble. The collection lacks a foreword or introduction. What you get is the editorial equivalent of: Here are 14 stories by an author you enjoyed. Stop. Fortunately, Mark Boardman’s 2006 article in *True West*, easily found online if you search “Ranch Romances,” provides

a well-written introduction to *Ranch Romances* and its first editor, Fanny Ellsworth. Kelton is quoted expressing his appreciation of her influence on his career. With *that* context, you’ll gain a deeper appreciation for this collection.

– Tom Carpenter

EDWARD MASSEY

Fugitive Sheriff

Five Star Publishing
Hardcover, 373 pages, \$25.95
Gale.Cengage.com/FiveStar

Fugitive Sheriff opens with the murder of Luke Willford Simms, sheriff of Summit County in Utah Territory. His son, Deputy John Willford Simms, determined to bring the killer to justice, pins on his father’s sheriff’s badge. One year prior to the sheriff’s murder, the Edmunds Act of 1882 became the law, and things are changing in Utah. Under this act, polygamy has become a felony, and cohabitation, the living with or supporting a second family, has become a misdemeanor. John Willford Simms has a second family, and while he pursues his father’s killer, he is pursued by marshals of the federal government. Edward Massey writes a gripping, historically accurate tale of a stalwart man’s search for justice in a turbulent time of politics and greed.

– Robert D. McKee

ELLEN NOTBOHM

The River by Starlight

She Writes Press
Trade paperback, 344 pages, \$16.95
SheWritesPress.com

Ellen Notbohm’s exquisite prose shines in this historical novel, a Spur finalist this year for best traditional novel and a Spur winner for best first novel. It’s about a vibrant heroic woman whose brains and ambition would have led to prosperity and self-fulfillment in another era. Instead, she is victimized by an unenlightened medical profession. Her Phoenix-like ability to repeatedly meet the challenges of the unforgiving West is a magnificent testimony to the resiliency of the human spirit. She is married to her soul-mate, but their union is threatened by her reluctance to admit to her medical history. She convinces herself the only way to preserve their precious relationship is to dissolve the marriage. Highly recommended for readers who can bear a dash of realistic West.

– Charlotte Hinger

TRACIE PETERSON and KIMBERLEY WOODHOUSE

Out of the Ashes

Bethany House
Hardcover, 356 pages, \$22.99
BakerPublishingGroup.com

Out of the Ashes, a 2019 Spur finalist for romance, is a story of redemption. Having survived the Syrian Revolt of 1925, Jean-Michel Langelier has been left devastated by the horrors of war and the loss of a woman who was forced to marry a powerful but abusive man. When he and his sister Collette are invited to visit Curry, Alaska, at the foot of Mount Denali, he reluctantly agrees. Meanwhile, Katherine Demarchis is struggling to recover from her disastrous marriage. Now a widow, she joins her grandmother on a trip that eventually takes them to Alaska and the Curry Hotel. The historic hotel and the Alaskan frontier become the vehicles through which the main, and lesser characters, rediscover themselves and each other.

– Gail L. Jenner

ERIC RED

Hanging Fire

Pinnacle
Mass-market paperback, 308 pages, \$7.99
KensingtonBooks.com

Can we say hyperbole? *Hanging Fire* needs no exclamation marks. This teeth-grinding, bare-knuckling, wash-buckling adventure keeps readers turning pages long into the night. Yes, it’s over the top in violence and gore. Yes, there are scenes that are not only improbable, but impossible. Yes, it’s a terrific read. Eric Red, a screenwriter and author of horror and suspense stories, brings that background to this novel. Set in 1888 Wyoming’s Grand Tetons, it’s a story of one man who knows right from wrong, a man of his word – a rather refreshing notion today. Allow plenty of time to read this. It’s hard to put down.

– Melody Groves

HAZEL RUMNEY (editor)

Contention and Other Frontier Stories

Five Star Publishing
Hardcover, 345 pages, \$25.95
Gale.Cengage.com/FiveStar

Seventeen stories from a wide selection of writers with perceived and fascinating outlooks on the Old West. Baseball, cowardice, cannibalism, malice and revenge are coupled with blistering heat and high plains blizzards. One

writer from the past has ventured to say, "You can't write about any place unless you've tasted the dirt." These writers have tasted the dirt. Fans of Western historical fiction will find some of these stories a little frightening, others will surely think a psychiatrist would have had a field day with some of the characters. All in all a pleasant ride.

– Vernon Schmid

L.J. WASHBURN (editor)

The Untamed West

The Western Fictioneers
Trade paperback, 565 pages, \$22.99
WesternFictioneers.com

Western, mystery, romance and historical author L.J. Washburn edits *The Untamed West*, the third anthology of The Western Fictioneers. This substantial collection features 29 stories that will take a reader back to the golden age of television and Republic Pictures Westerns. There is action, pathos, humor, shoot-outs, snake farms and pig wars. "Byrd's Luck" by Jeffrey J. Mariotte, a 2019 Spur finalist for short fiction, opens the anthology. Other standouts include "Earthy Riches" by McKendree Long and "A Deadly Decision at Adobe Wells" by Big Jim Williams.

– William Groneman III

GINA WELBORN and BECCA WHITHAM

The Kitchen Marriage

Zebra
Mass-market paperback, 352 pages, \$7.99
Kensingtonbooks.com

In this Spur finalist for romance, Zoe de Fleur, a French immigrant, finds herself fired from her job in New York, and, unable to read or write in English, responds to an advertisement that Nico, a young lad who has befriended her, lets her think is a request for a cook. She and Nico travel west, where she discovers she has answered the call for a mail-order bride. Recognizing she has few options, Zoe consents to a courtship contract to Jakob Gunderson and travels to raucous Helena, Montana, in 1887. She also meets Jakob's brother Isaak, who believes Zoe is a gold-digging fraud. At the same time, he finds himself attracted to his brother's intended. Sparks fly in this light-hearted Western romance with interesting twists.

– Gail L. Jenner

CHARLES G. WEST

No Justice in Hell

Pinnacle
Mass-Market paperback, 309 pages, \$7.99
KensingtonBooks.com

The task for John Hawk was simple enough. Go find his friend Chief Walking Owl, convince him to return his Blackfoot tribe to the reservation and then report back to Fort Ellis. With mixed results and his conscience weighing heavy on his mind, the veteran Army scout starts back. Then he meets Bertie, Blossom and JoJo, three women who would change his focus and his entire trip. They are running from the notorious outlaw killer Zach Dubose, who wants them dead. There was no way Hawk could leave them alone. Justice must prevail. The result takes the reader on a wild and engaging ride through the Montana landscape. Charles G. West will have you hanging on for dear life in this Spur finalist for original mass-market paperback.

– Phil Mills Jr.

JULIE WESTON

Moonscape: A Nellie Burns and Moonshine Mystery

Five Star Publishing
Hardcover, 250 pages, \$25.95
Gale.Cengage.com/FiveStar

In the third mystery about Nellie Burns and her dog, Moonshine, dead bodies are turning up, there's a strange religious cult, craggy lava fields and ominous caves to navigate, and an ensemble of quirky characters. It's the early 1920s, and Burns, a field photographer, is adventurous, a natural sleuth and not afraid of getting dirty, and speaks her mind. Julie Weston writes quick dialogue, keeps the drama moving at breakneck speed and leaves readers on the edge of their seats.

– Denise F. McAllister

ETHAN J. WOLFE

The Reckoning

Five Star Publishing
Hardcover, 281 pages, \$25.95
Gale.Cengage.com/FiveStar

Marshals Jack and Emmet Youngblood take you on a fast action adventure when Judge Issac Parker sends them after outlaws who took a cattle herd intended for the reservation. While tracking the outlaws who killed the drovers and took the cattle, Jack keeps getting sidetracked, going to help others,

including Tom Horn. The story will keep you reading to find out what happens not only on the trail but back at home. Ethan Wolfe's knowledge of the West provides several historical references of people and places.

– Lowell F. Volk

JAMES C. WORK

Ranger McIntyre: Small Delightful Murders

Five Star Publishing
Hardcover, 229 pages, \$25.95
Gale.Cengage.com/FiveStar

Small Delightful Murders takes us to post World War I. It's Prohibition, when times were simpler and people more trusting. Or were they? James Work's latest story makes me think those folks were just more apt to cover their tracks in sneaky, inventive ways. This story shows us how, stirring laughter along the way. Rocky Mountain National Park ranger Tim McIntyre is a sincere and hardworking fellow, although you might get the impression he does nothing but think of food and a woman with long legs and red lips. When the Chicago mob tries taking over a beautiful Rocky Mountain park resort and starting a high-roller speakeasy, it takes Tim, FBI agent Vi and a female MacGyver to give them and their dastardly deeds the boot.

– Carol Crigger

REAVIS Z. WORTHAM

Hawke's War

Pinnacle
Mass-Market paperback, 422 pages, \$9.99
KensingtonBooks.com

This Spur Award winner could have been taken directly from today's headlines. This engaging and exciting story starts with a sniper attack on four hikers in the Big Bend National Park in West Texas. And the reader is immediately launched into a thrilling and emotional roller coaster ride of spellbinding adventure. This contemporary Western takes you along as Texas Ranger Sonny Hawke goes to investigate and becomes a sniper target himself. Hawke must fight to survive in the rugged terrain of this massive park. Making matters worse, he's being hunted by members of the Coyotes Rabiosos, a drug smuggling cartel working both sides of the U.S.-Mexican border. Descriptions of both the characters and landscape put you in the story ... up close and personal. A page turner of the highest level.

– Phil Mills Jr.