

## NONFICTION

**WILL BAGLEY**

*River Fever: Adventures on the Mississippi, 1969-1972*

Signature Books

Trade paperback, \$18.95, 269 pages

SignatureBooks.com

Most WWA members know 2019 Owen Wister Award recipient Will Bagley as the diligent historian of Western trails, but back in the day of Vietnam War protests, free love, The Grass Roots and Woodstock, Bagley was a free-spirit/hippie/California college student allegedly doing research by floating down American rivers on what some people might have called boats. In the spirit of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn, Bagley recounts his discovery of a rapidly changing America. Sometimes charming, sometimes harrowing, sometimes hilarious, and always engaging, *River Fever* blends *The African Queen* with *Life on the Mississippi*.

– Johnny D. Boggs

**JOHN BOESSENECKER**

*Ride the Devil's Herd: Wyatt Earp's Epic Battle Against the West's Biggest Outlaw Gang*

Hanover Square Press

Hardcover, 496 pages, \$29.99

HanoverSqPress.com

The author paints the big picture of the famous Earp brothers and their activities, including their shady lifestyles that somewhat regularly landed them behind bars. Not as well known is the history behind the country's largest criminal enterprise in which the Earps would find themselves knee-deep. During the mid-1870s a network of loose-knit criminal gangs, headed by John Kinney and Jesse Evans, ravaged southern New Mexico and Arizona territories. The gangs even caused a series of international incidents due to their raids into Mexico, which aroused the attention of President Chester A. Arthur. Referred to derogatorily as *cowboys*, the gangs would number upwards of 200 men and include such notables as Curly Bill Brocius, John Ringo, the Clantons and McLaurys. Their fatal mistake was tangling with the Earps.

– Monty McCord

**TOM CLAVIN**

*Tombstone: The Earp Brothers, Doc Holliday and the Vendetta Ride from Hell*

St. Martin's Press

Hardcover, 373 pages, \$29.99

Us.Macmillan.com/smp/

Do we need another book on this subject? Publishers think so (Earp and Tombstone make money) and, of course, the author thinks so. Tom Clavin aimed to complete a "Frontier Lawmen" trilogy after his *Dodge City* and *Wild Bill* found popular success, and he wanted the Tombstone story "refracted through my lens" to provide new and previously overlooked characters and details. Clavin sifted through a wealth of material and cites other authors within his text, giving extra credit to Wyatt Earp biographer Casey Tefertiller and Doc Holliday biographer Gary L. Roberts. Readers, even Earp enthusiasts and Gunfight at the O.K. Corral cognoscenti, are likely to think Clavin's book is needed too, because he smoothly covers familiar ground the way Wyatt's posse did during his post-gunfight vendetta ride. This telling comes in five acts – The Territory, The Brothers, The Cowboys, The Gunfight and The Vendetta – and offers solid mini-bios and fine entertainment even if the story is one often told.

– Gregory Lalire

**CHRIS ENSS**

*No Place for a Woman: The Struggle for Suffrage in the Wild West*

TwoDot Books

Hardcover, 182 pages, \$16.95

TwoDotBooks.com

Women like Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony spent decades promoting the cause of woman suffrage, but it was pioneer settlers like Abigail Scott Duniway in Oregon Territory and Esther Hobart Morris in Wyoming Territory who first achieved suffrage for women in the West. Sparsely populated Wyoming Territory led the suffrage movement when territorial legislators approved the measure that was signed into law on December 10, 1869, more than 50 years before women across the nation achieved voting rights. Chris

Enss lays out a progression of efforts that led to suffrage in states across the West long before the grant of rights to women occurred in the East. Esther Hobart Morris, credited with influencing lawmakers in Wyoming, became the first female justice of the peace in the country after the suffrage bill was approved. But her efforts were short-lived when compared to the years of dedication by other women in the West, notably Duniway, California's Ellen Sargent and Montana's Jeannette Rankin. Despite no inclusion of women's suffrage in Texas, this book shows how civic engagement often takes years of perseverance to achieve a goal.

– Candy Moulton

**GENE FREESE**

*The Western Films of Robert Mitchum, Hollywood's Cowboy Rebel*

McFarland and Company

Paperback, 236 pages, \$39.95

McFarlandBooks.com

"I got three expressions: looking left, looking right and looking straight ahead," the late actor Robert Mitchum once said – self-deprecating, as usual. But Gene Freese's sharp analysis of Mitchum's Western film career reminds us that Mitchum was a man and artist of contradictions, a workhorse given to more intelligent interpretations of gunmen, lawmen, frontiersmen, bad men and lost men than you may initially think. He made about 30 Westerns, and those titles comprise about a third of his entire film career. Freese wisely places each film in the overall context of Mitchum's career and life, reminding us of some of the actor's non-Western hits and misses, his love of women, brawling, liquor and marijuana, and his increasing boredom with making films that, he liked to say, were really just about a bunch of gorillas beating up a guy for eight reels before the love of a good woman saved him in the ninth. "Mitchum was noir," Freese rightly notes, "and in the subgenera of the edgy noir western he was the undisputed king." Good stuff for Mitchum fans.

– Robert Nott

**JOSH GARRETT-DAVIS**

*What Is a Western?*

University of Oklahoma Press  
Paperback, 171 pages, \$24.95  
OUPress.com

Josh Garrett-Davis, a curator at the Autry Museum of the American West, kicks off the introduction with this statement: “The title of this book is a question. Not a rhetorical question but an open-ended one that will not be answered by the last page.” So why read a book that doesn’t fulfill its own premise? The title perhaps should have been “What Is Western?,” since the collection of loosely connected essays leads the reader down some winding, unpredictable trails, examining aspects of not Western literature per se, but facets of history, pop culture, music, poetry, art and ingrained beliefs about what represents the West. The essays are accompanied by images of seemingly related objects from the Autry collection. I found some passages to be intriguing but often Delphic, made even more challenging by the miniscule font size. This isn’t a breezy read, but the author delves into areas of Western influence not usually explored.

– Micki Fuhrman

**DAYTON DUNCAN and KEN BURNS**

*Country Music: An Illustrated History*

Alfred A. Knopf  
Hardcover, 537 pages, \$55  
AAKnopf.com

“Country music was not invented; it emerged.” So begins this monumental history of a great American experience: country music. The reader is immersed in the story from its early roots in the 1920s with Southerners John Carson and Emmett Miller to modern-day favorites Garth Brooks, George Strait and Reba McEntire – and many, many in between. It is the story of the musicians, who were singing about their lives, and ours. It’s the raw story of Sara and A.P. Carter’s marital problems and Johnny Cash’s drug addiction. It is also a collective scrapbook, making the story even more personal and real. The family photos, community promotional posters and the handwritten words to a song on a piece of cardboard remind us that country music has always been about real people. This beautifully illustrated book, a well-written story of a purely American phenomenon, is one for the ages.

– Ann Noble

**PEKKA HÄMÄLÄINEN**

*Lakota America: A New History of Indigenous Power*

Yale University Press  
Hardcover, 544 pages, \$35  
YaleBooks.yale.edu

A tour de force of historical exposition, deep original research, and integrative interpretation, the 2020 Spur winner for historical nonfiction is an outstanding new account of American Indian history. Jim Ronda, when addressing the Lewis and Clark historical

community, asked that we move our perspective out of the Corps of Discovery’s boat and onto the river bank with the indigenous people in order to reinterpret the historical impact of the expedition. In this excellent work, Pekka Hämäläinen does just that, eschewing the Euro-American perspective and creating a strikingly original study of the indigenous nomads of the upper Great Plains. In doing so, he offers a sweeping history of a people too often marginalized by our reliance on the conventional viewpoint of conquest and colonialism. Combining clear and compelling writing with nuanced interpretations based on a broad survey of original sources, this work is a must for our bookshelves.

– Robert Clark

**THOM HATCH**

*The Father of American Conservation: George Bird Grinnell: Adventurer, Activist, and Author*

Turner  
Hardcover, paperback, 304 pages, \$31.99, \$21.99  
TurnerPublishing.com

In 1870, when he was young man, George Bird Grinnell joined Yale University’s archeological expedition to Nebraska, the Dakotas and Wyoming to extract exhibits that remain important. Later, Grinnell accompanied the Pawnee on one of the last traditional buffalo hunts. Grinnell isn’t as famous as John Muir or John James Audubon, though maybe he should be. He crossed paths with luminaries such as Theodore

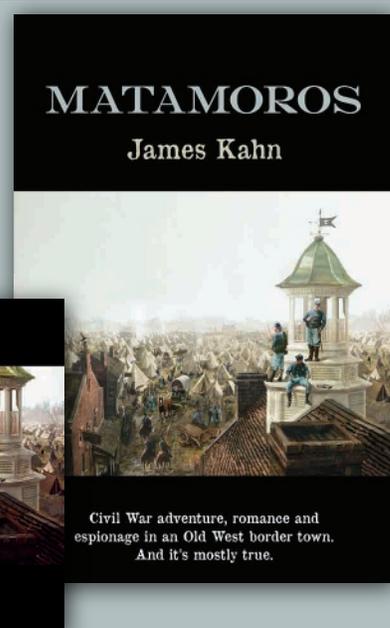
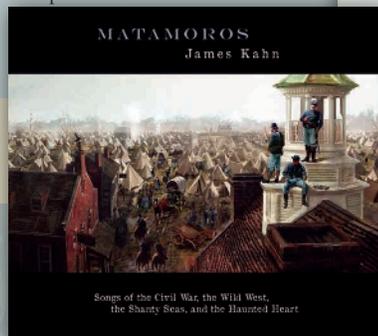
“Kahn’s...descriptive prose delivers powerful images... lively, often gripping action.”

– Kirkus Reviews

www.ThatJamesKahn.com  
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Roosevelt and George Armstrong Custer. He created the Audubon Society, worked hard to save the buffalo, argued for sensible hunting laws and became a tireless advocate for American Indians. Not least, he was for many years editor of *Forest and Stream*, a conservation-minded periodical that eventually became *Field and Stream*. Hatch does a fine job bringing Grinnell to life.

– John Mort

**JEFFREY P. HAVENS**

*Fraught with Difficulties:  
A Photographic Trip on the Lewis and Clark Trail*

FWD

Paperback, 174 pages, \$35  
FraughtWithDifficulties.com

This is a photobook meant as a companion to the earlier novel of the same name. The author states the photographs are an effort to visually complement his novel about the Lewis and Clark expedition. Every effort was made, he says, to take photos that correspond with the approximate time of year the expedition was at each site, which Jeffrey P. Havens did over the course of several years.

– Lynn Bueling

**JIM HINCKLEY**

*Murder and Mayhem on the Main Street of America:  
Tales from Bloody 66*

Rio Nuevo Publishers  
Trade paperback, 256 pages, \$15.95  
RioNuevo.com

Jim Hinckley catalogs crimes, wrecks and natural disasters along America’s most famous highway, going state by state from Illinois to California. In Chicago, where the route officially began in 1926, Hinckley details the taxicab wars of Prohibition days, then drives on to portray the infamous Joliet prison, an ammunition factory explosion in Elwood, bloody union battles in Virden and race riots in East St. Louis. Using Hinckley’s guide, you can pick a state and tour its Route 66 history. One of his many provocative photographs is of the Joplin, Missouri, house that Bonnie and Clyde shot their way out of. You’ll see how faithfully the famous 1967 movie recreated it. Interestingly, particularly in the Western states, you’ll have a sense of the bloody frontier, crumbling before bloody modernity.

– John Mort

**DOUG HOCKING**

*Terror on the Santa Fe Trail:  
Kit Carson and the Jicarilla Apache*

TwoDot Books  
Hardcover, 408 pages, \$29.95  
TwoDotBooks.com

The story of the Jicarilla Apaches’ conflict with the U.S. Army, and Kit Carson’s role in that conflict, has been told before. But Doug Hocking digs into the details and offers an engaging and dramatic account of that strife, including a history of the specific region and times. The strong treatment of contextual setting helps clarify events, and good use is made of primary and secondary sources in this Spur finalist for historical nonfiction. This is an original work on a relationship between Carson and the Apache not explored previously. Though the story line has been treated practically in other books and articles, this unique focus offers new insights.

– Robert Clark

**MARC C. JOHNSON**

*Political Hell-Raiser:  
The Life and Times of Senator Burton K. Wheeler of Montana*

University of Oklahoma Press  
Hardcover, 370 pages, \$34.95  
OUPress.com

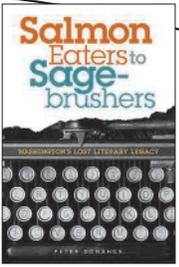
Maverick – definition: a motherless calf, or, someone who takes an independent, sometimes unpopular stand. Random House could add: “or, Burton K. Wheeler.” Marc Johnson takes the reader on a seemingly perpetual roller coaster as he documents the history of Montana’s most controversial politician. Born in Massachusetts, young Wheeler would land in Butte with a law degree and ascend to the pinnacle of that state’s elite. He brought with him a resolve against the powerful. His political career proved to be a battleground against just about anything and everyone that wielded authority. Anacoda Copper, which practically owned Montana, was the first. Eventually, as a four-term senator, he took on his party’s most powerful leader ever, Franklin D. Roosevelt. Wheeler loved to fight, but ironically, he was a staunch pacifist who abhorred war of any stripe. In his waning years, Wheeler wrapped up his clashes with the power brokers: “I regret none of them.” This Spur finalist for biography captures the underbelly of the true Western experience.

– Scott Dyke

## UNDENIABLY NORTHWEST READS

**Salmon Eaters to Sagebrushers**  
*Washington’s Lost Literary Legacy*  
Peter Donahue

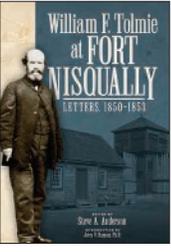
A hybrid of literary criticism, history, and biography, *Salmon Eaters to Sagebrushers* examines an impressive legacy—significant Washington State novels, memoirs, and poetry from the late 1800s to the mid-1960s. Essays pair reappraisals of more than forty works with short excerpts and author profiles.



**Paperback • \$26.95**  
978-0-87422-370-5

**William F. Tolmie at Fort Nisqually**  
*Letters, 1850–1853*  
Edited by Steve A. Anderson  
Introduction by Jerry V. Ramsey, Ph.D

The Hudson’s Bay Company Chief Trader kept letter books that, transcribed in this volume by a former Fort Nisqually Living History Museum manager, provide insight into life and business at Puget Sound’s first white settlement.



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phone at 800-354-7360



**WSU PRESS**  
WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

**BRIAN KILMEADE**

*Sam Houston & the Alamo Avengers:  
The Texas Victory that Changed American History*

Sentinel

Hardcover, 272 pages, \$28

PenguinRandomHouse.com

The story of Texian defenders annihilated at the Alamo by General Santa Anna’s Mexican army is well known to many Americans. Lesser known are the events prior to and immediately afterward that propelled a ragtag army of Texian volunteers under General Sam Houston to exercise restraint and retreat for six weeks until courageously trapping and defeating Santa Anna’s Army at the San Jacinto River. Filled with fast-paced descriptive action that carries the reader through the events of 1835-36, Brian Kilmeade describes the battles of Gonzales, Goliad, Concepcion, Bexar, the Alamo and San Jacinto; internal political struggles leading to Texas independence; formation of a republic; and ultimately statehood. The author’s well-crafted presentation reflects his keen understanding of this period in American history.

– Stan “Tex” Banash

**DIANA ALLEN KOURIS**

*Nighthawk Rising: A Biography of Accused Cattle Rustler Queen Ann Bassett of Brown’s Park*

High Plains Press

Trade paperback, 390 pages, \$19.95

HighPlainsPress.com

Browns Park, an expanse overlapping Colorado and Utah, just south of Wyoming, has long had a stake in Western lore. Butch Cassidy and Tom Horn were known to inhabit the wild country. A less-written-about but significant player on this vast stage was Ann Bassett. Dubbed “Queen Ann,” her life was spectacularly western and more than a bit controversial. Diana Kouris meticulously documents this rancher woman and her battles to survive a raw unforgiving 19th Century cow country. Ann was the quintessential woman of the West, brought up on the back of a horse. Her exploits included accusations of rustling, a trade normally not inclusive of her gender. *Nighthawk Rising*, this year’s Spur winner for biography, is a comprehensive look at a woman who stood tall and a needed addition for all those who cherish the Old West. Let’s put it this way: The reader would not want Kouris to detail his or her back trail.

– Scott Dyke

**BYRON E. PEARSON**

*Saving Grand Canyon: Dams, Deals, and a Noble Myth*

University of Nevada Press

Hardcover, 345 pages, \$39.95

UNPress.nevada.edu

In this thoroughly researched and well-written history, Byron E. Pearson methodically writes an extensive history of the decision not to dam Grand Canyon. This was not the case for many other Western rivers, where dams were constructed in America’s quest to “settle” the West. Why wasn’t the Grand Canyon dammed? The answer is political. Pearson takes his reader to the board rooms and back rooms where legislation was written or killed. He gives us the opportunity to get to know the many personalities involved from all sides of the debate. We also get an insight into the developers of

the West, environmental groups and, importantly, the American Indians directly impacted by the Western dams. If you still believe in the commonly held belief that the grassroots effort saved the Grand Canyon, read this book. It’s worth it.

– Ann Noble

**JULIE McDONALD ZANDER**

*Washington Territory’s Grand Lady:  
The Story of Matilda (Glover) Koontz Jackson*

Chapters of Life Memory Books

Paperback, 364 pages, \$27

ChaptersOfLife.com

Lots of folks crossed the country on the Oregon Trail and left legacies of the journey. The saga of Matilda Glover Koontz Jackson’s trip and subsequent settlement in Washington is without peer. She and her family left for Willamette Valley in 1847 from Independence, Missouri, accompanied by six oxen. The train, at times, sported 80 other wagons. Julie McDonald Zander covers all the details of the harrowing adventure. Broken wagons, grave sites and pregnancies are well documented. The trip cost Matilda dearly. She lost her husband and baby along the way. Hardships aside, this book is a celebration of the triumph, determination and grit shown by the woman who became immortalized as the First Lady of Washington state. This 2020 Spur finalist for biography is a riveting testimony of the pioneer spirit that defined the West.

– Scott Dyke

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## FICTION

**PETER BRANDVOLD**

*The Cost of Dying*

Pinnacle

Mass-market paperback, 432 pages, \$7.99  
KensingtonBooks.com

“Mean Pete” offers up another two-fisted, take-no-prisoners tale with this third in his “Lou Prophet, Bounty Hunter” series, and it’s a corker – and a Spur finalist this year in the original mass-market paperback category. Prophet saves a saloon girl by gunning down a brute with a badge, forcing the bounty man to flee into Mexico with a price on his own head. South of the border he ends up throwing in with a fellow man-on-the-run, red-headed *pistolero* Colter Farrow, the young hotspur from one of Brandvold’s series written as Frank Leslie. It’s a perfect pairing. The two have real chemistry, and their dialogue’s as engaging as the action that follows as they ride hard through a rough, rowdy and racy adventure with twists, suspense and gunplay galore.

– J.R. Sanders

**DEREK BURNETT**

*The Fortunes and Vicissitudes of Stern Whitman*

Five Star Publishing

Hardcover, 247 pages, \$25.95

Gale.Cengage.com/FiveStar

This tale of the California gold rush centers on a murder and a search for justice. When local miners take positions that could lead to bloodshed, Stern Whitman decides that only a judge can find a solution. He travels to the settlements where he finds an arbiter, but he finds something else there. He brought ore samples from the diggings and receives confirmation that he is a rich man. The measured pace of the narrative permits a careful examination of events and of the characters. Burnett employs skillful, perhaps excessive, use of the vernacular in dialogue and narration, which can be suggestive. The protagonist’s pursuit of the sweet, young Indian woman, Honey, is thoughtful and delightful, though Stern is troubled by societal and his own prejudices.

– Harlan Hague

**MARC CAMERON**

*Stone Cross*

Kensington

Hardcover, 326 pages, \$26

KensingtonBooks.com

Like a warm fire on a cold, dark Alaska night, *Stone Cross* pulls the reader into a world of mystery and indigenous beliefs in a book that is hard to put down. Arliss Cutter and deputy Lola Teariki find themselves on dignitary protection detail in the isolated native community of Stone Cross. They are responsible for federal judge Anthony Markham, who has a case to hear in Stone Cross in spite of a death threat received before he departed Anchorage. Arriving at the native village in a storm, the judge and his protectors soon find themselves isolated by harsh weather, and facing a storm of a different kind when a young couple at an isolated hunting lodge goes missing. Move over, Sheriff Walt Longmire and game warden Joe Pickett. There is a new man in the West – way up north in Alaska, and Arliss Cutter is smart, tough and undeniably genuine. Cameron’s prose will hook you with its authenticity and use of landscape to propel a riveting story.

– Candy Moulton

**PAUL COX**

*Destiny*

Five Star Publishing

Hardcover, 310 pages, \$25.95

Gale.Cengage.com/FiveStar

*Destiny* follows three people – neophyte reporter William Cabot Weston III, lumberjack Monte Segundo and *Vil-lista* captain Rosa Bustamonte – who are plunged into the middle of General John J. Pershing’s expedition into Mexico to capture Pancho Villa. All three have their secrets, which are revealed during the course of the story. While the ending is improbable, the author makes the tale work. You actually feel as if you are with the characters as they ride toward their fates. Cox does an admirable job with Pershing in this book, and I look forward to reading more of his work. Personal note: By coincidence, my maternal grandfather, John Blanchard, was Pershing’s personal valet during World War I, so I know a bit about Pershing. Sadly, the family either lost or discarded the letters and notes Pershing gave to my grandfather. A great loss.

– James J. Griffin

**MAX EVANS**

*The King of Taos*

University of New Mexico Press

Hardcover, 165 pages, \$24.95

UNMPress.com

Western Writers Hall of Fame inductee Ol’ Max Evans returns to his beloved Taos, New Mexico – where he lived after World War II – and delivers one of his wittiest works in years – a throwback to his masterpieces *My Pardner*, *The Rounders* and *Xavier’s Folly*. In the late 1950s, aspiring artist Shawn Spencer arrives in Taos, but once he starts hanging out with Zacharias Chacon and other losers, Spencer’s career gets sidetracked in a series of brawls, drunken debauchery and misadventures. Told with humor and a touch of pathos, this short novel is engaging from start to finish. Started in the late 1950s, shelved in the 1960s, rediscovered in the early 2000s and finished after Ol’ Max turned 95, *The King of Taos* is an irreverent, whimsical look at Taos and the characters the town drew (and still draws). Evans’s characters would feel at home with John Steinbeck’s *paisanos*.

– Johnny D. Boggs

**HARLAN HAGUE**

*This New Day: A Novel*

Graycatbird Books

Trade paperback, 294 pages, \$16.25

Amazon.com

When Molly’s husband unexpectedly dies while traveling the Oregon Trail, indecision seeks to overwhelm her. What would be best for her small family? Join the “Gobacks” or continue? Leaning heavily on the dream she and her late husband shared, she forges ahead. Now determined, failure is not an option. Enter Micah McQueen, a man with a painful past. Together Molly and Micah inch toward a love that was meant to be. With this 2020 Spur Award finalist for Western romance, I felt like I was on the trail with the travelers and glad I wasn’t. (I don’t do snakes or mosquitoes).

– Sandy Whiting

**MATTHEW P. MAYO**

*Dilly*

Five Star Publishing

Hardcover, 204 pages, \$25.95

Gale.Cengage.com/FiveStar

Matthew Mayo, an old hand at writing, has penned a gripping story about conflict fought over grazing rights,

namely the historical sheep and cattle wars. Mayo's story speaks of a boy escaping an abusive situation. He heads west only to find himself in the middle of a deadly conflict in which a lot of men died and thousands of sheep are killed. Now, after reaching old age, he writes his memoir at the urging of his wife, even though he thinks only great men should write their life stories. She insists, "You are a great man to me." What unfolds will keep you reading.

– Lynn Bueling

### JOHN D. NESBITT

#### *Great Lonesome*

Five Star Publishing  
Hardcover, 246 pages, \$25.95  
Gale.Cengage.com/FiveStar

Reese Hartley is a man of principle. When his cattleman boss strongly implies that Reese needs to buy a homestead claim and then deed it over to him, Reese goes searching for another job. What he finds instead are murders and accusations – and a woman he cares about. Reese joins a posse to hunt the real killer and, after a chase, comes back where he and his girl make plans to buy homesteads in the Great Lonesome. This slow-paced novel, set in Wyoming, paints a beautiful picture of the Western plains. When Reese rides across the territory in search of a place to call his own, readers can almost reach out and touch the landscape.

– Melody Groves

### SHANNON PUFAHL

#### *On Swift Horses*

Riverhead Books  
Hardcover, 310 pages, \$27  
PenguinRandomHouse.com

In graceful prose, Shannon Pufahl draws an arresting portrait of a woman finding her way in the changing mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century West. In 1956, Muriel and her husband, Lee, arrive in San Diego from Kansas, as part of the postwar migration, eager to fulfill their dreams in tract housing just beginning to climb the Southern California hillsides. Freed from her rural upbringing, Muriel finds excitement among the jockeys and gamblers at the Del Mar Fairgrounds, where she develops a talent for betting the horses. She also ponders her attraction to her roguish brother-in-law, who has a mysterious past and an uncertain future that leads him on his own quest from the Las Vegas casinos to the backstreets

of Tijuana. Pufahl's remarkable novel, a double Spur winner this year for Best First Novel and Best Western Contemporary Novel, brilliantly captures a pivotal time in Western history while sensitively exploring themes of alienation and identity and challenging the ways in which we view cultural norms and self-realization.

– Bruce J. Dinges

### R.V. SCHMIDT

#### *Virgil Cooper*

Tenacity Press  
Trade paperback, 300 pages, no price listed

R.V. Schmidt chronicles the life of the hard knocks, busted bones and bruising career of a rodeo cowboy named Virgil Cooper. Escaping an abusive home situation after his brother's accidental death, Cooper joins the rodeo. Schmidt follows Cooper's life from the early 1940s to the mid-1980s, not always chronologically, but with a poet's ear for language and an artist's eye for places. No surprise, considering that Schmidt is a Lake County, California, poet laureate and award-winning artist. A solid contemporary Western.

### SIDNEY THOMPSON

#### *Follow the Angels, Follow the Doves: The Bass Reeves Trilogy, Book One*

University of Nebraska Press  
Trade paperback, 240 pages, \$19.95  
NebraskaPress.unl.edu

Sidney Thompson begins his epic tale of Bass Reeves, a black deputy U.S. marshal west of the Mississippi, with a bucolic account of antebellum Arkansas. Bass is a young slave loyal to Old Master Reeves, who discovers Bass's incredible marksmanship and bets on him at turkey shoots. Bass's world is thrown into disarray when the master gives Bass to his son, Young Master Reeves, a brilliant, cruel man from Texas. He takes Bass along to the battles of Wilson's Creek and Pea Ridge, where Reeves breaks precedent and loads rifles for Bass. Back in Texas, Bass's consciousness has grown more sophisticated and he contemplates running for his freedom to Oklahoma Territory. How he outwits Young Master Reeves and protects his sweetheart brings this first installment to a rousing finish.

– John Mort

### RON SCHWAB

#### *Cut Nose*

Uplands Press/Leafcutter Publishing Group  
Trade paperback, 464 pages, \$16.49  
UplandsPress.com

This remarkable novel entertains the reader with one of the most fascinating stories of the Civil War American West. Ron Schwab spares no quarter as he takes us through the interracial complexities and delicate sociological balances that preceded and followed the 1862 Great Sioux Uprising in Minnesota. In this setting, hundreds died on both sides, and only the intervention of President Lincoln, in the aftermath, limited an even a worse tally for the greatest mass execution in American history. Schwab tells his often violent story in gruesome detail but manages to keep the reader in suspense on matters of love and family, offsetting the gore. The historical characters are believable and the most important one, Cut Nose, is real and unforgettable. This Spur Award finalist for historical fiction is a winner all around.

– Sally (*The Spoiled Dove*)  
and Jim (*JP TruDoc*) Kornberg

### J. TODD SCOTT

#### *This Side of Night*

G.P. Putnam's Sons  
Hardcover, 454 pages, \$26  
PenguinRandomHouse.com

The murder of a busload of students outside the border town of Ojinaga, Mexico, sets in motion a complex plot involving a pair of survivors, rival drug cartels, corrupt Texas law enforcement officers, a tarnished DEA agent and the beleaguered sheriff's department of sprawling Big Bend County. J. Todd Scott makes impressive use of his experience as a drug-enforcement officer in West Texas to spin a compelling story of honor and persistence set against the backdrop of a harsh and unforgiving landscape. Readers of this and the previous two volumes in his Big Bend saga will recognize a master storyteller who deftly combines gritty realism with nail-biting action to produce a totally satisfying read – and a 2020 Spur finalist for contemporary fiction.

– Bruce J. Dinges

**LORETTA MILES TOLLEFSON**  
*Not My Father's House: A Novel of Old New Mexico*

Palo Flechado Press  
Trade paperback, 324 pages, \$14.99  
PaloFlechadoPress.com

Suzanna hates everything about her New Mexico mountain home. The isolation. The long snow-bound winters in a dimly lit cabin. But she loves Gerald, who loves this valley. In the 1840s, Suzanna is a teenage bride who finds herself far from family and friends. She wants success for her new marriage and her husband, but she hates her life, compounded by the arrival of a baby. Tension comes in the form of a man many believed dead. He stalks Suzanna, timing his attack after the birth of her second child. The “bad guy” is truly bad and is a relief from the tedium of Suzanna’s complaining.

– Melody Groves

**MARGARET VERBLE**  
*Cherokee America*

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt  
Hardcover, 400 pages, \$27  
HMHBooks.com

Margaret Verble’s prequel to her Pulitzer Prize finalist novel, *Maud’s Line*, is set in post-Civil War Oklahoma, the Cherokee Nation at the time. The story revolves around Check Singer, a half-breed Cherokee woman, and her five sons. The narrative chronicles life in the Cherokee Nation, its traditions and racial tensions, all under siege by a larger world and outlaws on the run. This is not a Western epic, but a complicated tale of one place and one family. Verble, a member of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, is certainly qualified to spin this yarn. The mystery of an unsolved murder drives the story, an excellent historical saga – and this year’s Spur winner for traditional Western – that immerses the reader into a unique time and place in the American West.

– Randy Denmon

**ANN WEISGARBER**  
*The Glovemaker*

Skyhorse Publishing  
Hardcover, 296 pages, \$24.99  
SkyhorsePublishing.com

In 1888 Utah, as Sister Deborah awaits her Mormon husband Samuel’s return home, a stranger arrives at her frontier home in a remote area near

what is now Capitol Reef National Park. Trouble is only beginning for Deborah and her community. Her husband does not return, and conflict between the polygamous and monogamous families escalates. Meticulously documented research and stunning execution of landscape and characters enhance this 2020 Spur finalist for historical fiction. The novel offers a window into the Mormon culture and conflicts over polygamy. A truly fresh perspective to a little-known era of history.

– Linda Jacobs

**GINA WELBORN and BECCA WHITHAM**

*The Telegraph Proposal*

Zebra  
Mass-market paperback, 304 pages, \$7.99  
KensingtonBooks.com.

Contrary to popular depictions of the Old West, not every life-changing event was a shootout or hanging of the “baddie.” Romance and intrigue played a steamship-sized part of the settlement of the frontier. Enter a friend who decides to play matchmaker to a couple unwilling to overlook shortcomings and past disasters. The pair the matchmaker wants to mate are convinced the other would be best suited for outhouse cleaning. This 2020 Spur finalist for Western romance is an easy read with dozens of twists thrown in to keep the reader tantalized for the next page.

– Sandy Whiting

**JAMES C. WORK**  
*Ranger McIntyre: The Dunraven Hoard Murders*

Five Star Publishing  
Hardcover, 249 pages, \$25.95  
Gale.Cengage.com/FiveStar

In 1922, three college boys embark on a search for hidden treasure in the old mines around the just established Rocky Mountain National Park. They all end up dead, two apparent victims of brutal homicides, the third an apparent suicide. After the first death, the third boy’s wealthy father enlists the help of park ranger Tim McIntyre, who has a knack for solving crimes and jigsaw puzzles, to get to the bottom of the mystery. Aply assisted by the lovely Vi Coteau, FBI secretary, McIntyre gets to work. This is a fun, lighthearted read. Although I knew who the killer was early on, following McIntyre and Coteau as they worked their way to the killer’s

identity and motives keeps the reader engaged. They are easy to relate to. The notes state the Earl of Dunraven was Irish. While he did reside in Ireland, he was, in fact, British. The English ruled Ireland in the 1870s and any titles of nobility were established by the Crown.

– James J. Griffin

**REAVIS Z. WORTHAM**  
*Hawke’s Target*

Pinnacle  
Mass-market paperback, 402 pages, \$9.99  
KensingtonBooks.com

Buckle up. This contemporary action adventure crossover, the 2020 Spur winner for Best Western Original Mass-Market Paperback Novel, is a wild ride for readers who never thought of picking up a Western. When a failed criminal justice system turns killers loose, one man with a score to settle takes the law into his own hands, executing those he thinks need it. Where will the assassin strike next? How to stop him? Texas Ranger Sonny Hawke’s life hangs in the balance as he careens toward a hair trigger showdown of diabolical design. If you haven’t taken a trip with Wortham before, climb-aboard, but like I said, buckle up. You’re in for a ride.

– Paul Colt

## JUVENILE

**TEAL BLAKE** (author and illustrator)  
*J is for Jackalope*

Teal Blake Studios  
Hardcover, 48 pages, \$22.95  
TealBlake.com

This beautiful picture book, told in rhyme, is about a brave young cowboy named Samuel C.B. and how he tames and befriends one of the elusive mythical Western creatures known as a jackalope. A glossary helps explain cowboying terms like kak, cayuse and reata. Blake began painting professionally in 2005 and in 2014 was invited to join the prestigious and coveted Cowboy Artists of America. The foreword by Bill Reynolds includes this line: “Charlie Russell may have said it best about ‘the West that has passed,’ in that life may have changed but with the help of the likes of Teal Blake, the stories will live on.” A 2020 Spur finalist for Storyteller (illustrated children’s book).

– Rocky Gibbons

## CORINNE JOY BROWN

### *Finding Home*

Loose Cayuse Productions  
Trade paperback, 130 pages, \$14.95  
CorinneJoyBrown.com

Born in the flatlands of Rock Springs, Wyoming, newborn mustang Pahaska tells the heart-wrenching story of her separation from her mother and the wild horse herd she was born into. Captured by strangers, her entire world has disintegrated. Penned in the filthy, manure-filled confines of a horse hauler's trailer, her life is changed forever. *Finding Home*, a 2020 Spur finalist for juvenile fiction, is a brilliantly written story about the adoption of the mustang "Curly Jesse" by a girl who has always dreamed of having her own horse. Ginny McDonald's illustrations convey fine detail and emotion in the images of the horses, bringing each one to life. This heart-warming tale will appeal to those with a love for animals.

– Joni Franks

## BRAD McLELLAND and LOUIS SYLVESTER

### *The Fang of Bonfire Crossing: Legends of the Lost Causes*

Henry Holt and Company  
Hardcover, 375 pages, \$16.99  
us.macmillan.com/HenryHolt

Keech Blackwood and his band of fellow orphans, named the Lost Causes, demand justice for their fallen families in this 2020 Spur Award finalist for juvenile fiction. The story is filled with cowboys and magic. During the journey to Bonfire Crossing, this resourceful group of kids encounter shapeshifters, river monsters and desperados as they join forces to fight evil. The customs and practices of the Osages are well researched for accuracy through the Osage Heritage Center in Pawhuska, Oklahoma. This magical fantasy is full of adventure but at the same time lends awareness to the cultures in 1850s America.

– Joni Franks

## CASEY DAY RISLOV (author) and ZACHARY PULLEN (illustrator)

### *Rowdy Randy*

Casey Rislov Books  
Hardcover, 32 pages, \$18.95  
CaseyRislovBooks.com

Rowdy Randy is indeed the toughest cowgirl around, even if she *is* a horsefly.

Nothing gets under her skin or scares her, as she spends her days buzzing, biting and even riding the creatures she encounters. She joins a cattle roundup, starts a stampede and after a hard day's work relaxes by strumming her tiny guitar and crooning a tune. This delightful book, sure to enchant young readers, features laugh-out-loud illustrations of Rowdy Randy and her enviable natural green eye shadow. The author is a true Wyoming cowgirl who has written award-winning children's books, including this 2020 Spur finalist for Storyteller.

– Rocky Gibbons

## DAVID HESKA WANBLI WEIDEN (author) and JIM YELLOWHAWK and PAT KINSELLA (illustrators)

### *Spotted Tail*

Reycraft Books  
Paperback, 50 pages, \$9.95  
ReycraftBooks.com

*Spotted Tail*, this year's Spur Award winner for juvenile nonfiction, tells the life story of a remarkable man and his people, the Sicangu Lakotas. In precise, accessible language, readers journey from the peaceful years of Spotted Tail's youth (born in 1823) to battles with the U.S. Army to his efforts for peace as chief of the Sicangu Lakota Nation. Keeping peace with the fickle U.S. government proved challenging, yet through it all, the resilience, fortitude and stamina of the Lakotas shines through these pages. Not only is *Spotted Tail* well researched and informative, this powerful book is visually bold and engaging, with layers of combined artwork, including ledger pages, illustrations, paintings, historic and contemporary photographs and more. Highly recommended for all ages.

– Matthew P. Mayo

## PLAYS

### RED SHUTTLEWORTH

#### *Tumbledown*

Humanitas Media Publishing  
Trade paperback, 134 pages, \$14.99  
HumanitasMedia.com

Red Shuttleworth rips the façade off human situations, leaving readers squirming in their seat as they view the dripping apparition of Red Shuttleworth reality, the way Red interprets it. He is not kind. He solves nothing for you in the end. His *Waiting for Godot*-ish cast of miscreants returns us to the early

"Theatre of the Absurd." What is good and evil? What justifies murder, good or bad? Red dishes up cold turkey, pulled from the steamy cauldron of his mind and plops it on your plate. "You figure it out for yourself!" I fidgeted through every reading.

– Michael Lee

## POETRY

### MARK SANDERS

#### *In a Good Time: Poems by Mark Sanders*

WSC Press  
Trade paperback, 97 pages, \$16  
WSCPress.com

Nebraska native (now Texas resident) Mark Sanders delivers a beautiful collection – and a wide range – of verse. Sanders's Americana – not just Western – poems reveal his ear for composition and eye for imagery. "Let there always be a horse," he writes in "The Horse as the Letter L," "to clarify the landscape of love, being what it is and nothing more ...." Or in "Ghost": "The cynic is an artist whose pallet/is eggshell, whose purpose is to squint/and paint nothing." His Spur-winning "Three Kinds of Pleasure" is particularly delightful: "Beyond the fence, yaupon, sweet gum white pine/congregate for midnight mass, and the coyote choir/circles around." With a 2019 Western Heritage Wrangler Award and now a Spur, Sanders is a rising voice in Western poetry.

– Johnny D. Boggs

## BOOK NOTES

### VINE DELORIA JR.

#### *The World We Used to Live In: Remembering the Powers of the Medicine Men*

Indigenous Audiobooks  
Digital download audiobook, \$20  
IndigenousAudiobooks.com

The last book by Vine Deloria Jr. (1933-2005), best remembered for *Custer Died For Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto*, uses eyewitness accounts to chronicle the powers of American Indian medicine men. *Library Journal* called it "Well researched, lucidly written, and full of passion ... an outstanding resource on Native American thought" when it was first published in 2006. Cherokee actor Wes Studi, recipient of an honorary Academy Award, reads this audiobook that singer-songwriter-historian Bobby Bridger helped produce. Deloria's son,

Harvard University professor Philip J. Deloria, reads the preface.

**LEIGH JONES HANDAL**

*Lost Charleston*

Pavilion

Hardcover, 144 pages, \$22.50

PavilionBooks.com

Historical novelists interested in the colonial, antebellum or Civil War South will find plenty of useful photographs and information in this coffee-table book that illustrates the not-always-pretty history of beautiful Charleston, South Carolina. Longtime Charleston resident Leigh Jones Handal reveals historical buildings and sites that have been lost to history due to man, war, carelessness, time and nature. The history is absorbing, but *Lost Charleston* also reveals how fleeting physical history can be.

**ELLEN KLINKEL** (photographer) and **NICK GERLICH** (author)

*A Matter of Time: Route 66 through the Lens of Change*

University of Oklahoma Press

Hardcover, 258 pages, \$34.95

OUPress.com

Readers can travel historic Route 66 From Chicago to Santa Monica, California, without leaving their homes. Germany-based photographer Ellen Klinkel illustrates the sights – from her multiyear travels – and Nick Gerlich, a professor of marketing at West Texas A&M University, gives a historical overview of Klinkel’s photographs and that grand highway of American highways.

**JOHN WITTE** (editor)

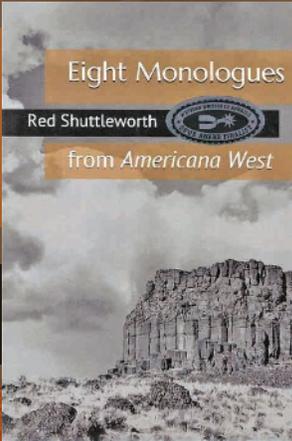
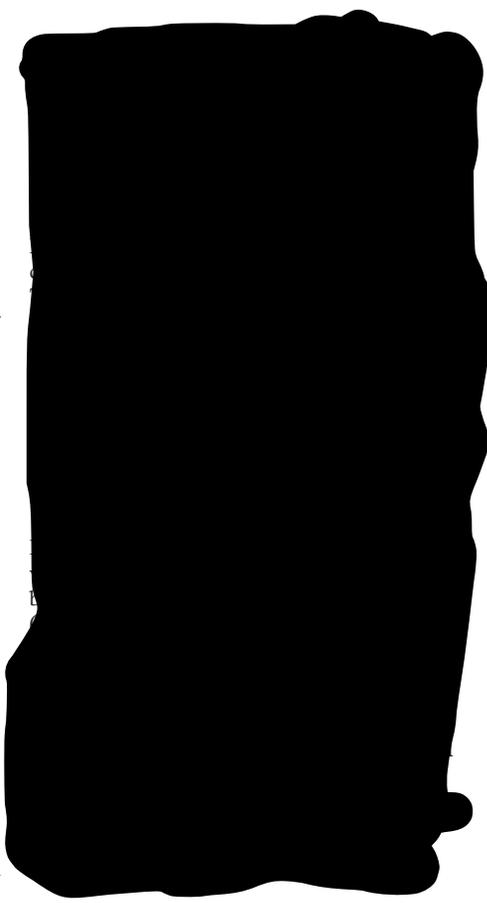
*The Collected Poems of Hazel Hall*

Oregon State University Press

Trade paperback, 256 pages, \$19.95

OSUPress.oregonstate.edu

Originally published in hardcover, this collection of poems by Hazel Hall (1886-1924), has been released in conjunction with the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her debut poetry collection, *Curtains* (1920). That collection and two other Hall books of poems published in the 1920s are included, with an introduction by Oregon poet John Witte and an afterword by Oregon State University professor Anita Helle.



Many thanks to the cast and to the director, Kirk Ellis, of Spur Award in Drama Finalist, *Eight Monologues from Americana West*.

The paperback is presented by Humanitas Media Publishing.

Available on Amazon.com

# One Last Look

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