

## 2020 Spur deadlines

October 1 is the entry deadline for the 2020 Spur Awards for any work first published or released between January 1, 2019 and August 31, 2019.

Entry deadline for works first published or released between October 1, 2019 and December 31, 2019 is January 15, 2020.

Log on to [WesternWriters.org](http://WesternWriters.org) for more information.

## JUVENILE

**DAWN NELSON** (author) and **CANDICE ASHBY** (illustrator)  
*Lollypop and Laren – A Tale of Two Friends*

Crazy Cow Press  
Paperback, no page numbers, no price given

Told in pleasant but amateurish verse, the reader follows the ups and downs in the ranch life of Laren, a “wild” girl (according to the description) and her sidekick – an orphan calf named Lollypop. Illustrations are colorful and well-done. Young readers can decide if it’s OK that the story is from the mother’s viewpoint.

**VAUNDA MICHEAUX NELSON** (author) and **GORDON C. JAMES** (illustrator)

*Let ‘Er Buck: George Fletcher, the People’s Champion*

Carolrhoda Books  
Hardcover, 40 pages, \$18.99  
[LernerBooks.com](http://LernerBooks.com)

In 1911, there were three finalists for the saddle-bronc championship at the Pendleton (Oregon) Roundup rodeo – John Spain, a white rancher; Jackson Sundown, a Nez Perce Indian; and George Fletcher, a 21-year-old black cowboy. In this compelling, candid and well-researched book, aimed at readers ages 8 to 11, Vaunda Micheaux Nelson and illustrator Gordon C. James tell and show how that played out to an ending more surprising than the rodeo

judges’ controversial decision. In *Let ‘Er Buck*, Nelson writes about Fletcher’s childhood, racial prejudice and the nobility and courage of Tillman Taylor, a white sheriff. James’s illustrations, taken from his oil-on-board paintings, are a vital element, showing not only the muscular brute force and wild eyes of bucking horses but also gentle and humorous aspects of Fletcher’s boyhood.

– *Ollie Reed Jr.*

## POETRY

**ADAM FAGIN**  
*Furthest Ecology: Poems*

The Center for Literary Publishing, Colorado State University  
Paperback, 72 pages, \$16.95  
[ColoradoReview.colostate.edu](http://ColoradoReview.colostate.edu)

Through the lens of poetry, Adam Fagin looks at the life of Abbott Thayer, the American painter and naturalist who, during World War I, was nicknamed “the father of camouflage.” Thayer studied the theory of animal coloration, which Fagin’s poems attempt to interpret in free verse form. The book caused this reviewer to mull over Thayer’s words: “I bring evidence of concealing power.”

– *Lynn Bueling*

## NONFICTION

**FRANK BERGON**  
*Two-Buck Chuck and the Marlboro Man: The New Old West*

University of Nevada Press  
Hardcover, 264 pages, \$24.95  
[UNPress.nevada.edu](http://UNPress.nevada.edu)

In these closely linked essays, Frank Bergon, a novelist with farming roots in California’s San Joaquin Valley, takes up for Westerners in California, Nevada and Wyoming. They are mostly minorities or of immigrant stock: Chicanos, American Indians, Italians, African-Americans and Okies. He portrays the shrewd, rich Fred Franzia, “Two-Buck Chuck,” who famously marketed wines for \$2 a bottle and consistently won quality awards. With firsthand knowledge, Bergon ventures fearlessly into the violent realm of characters who demonstrate against

turning over federal land to ranchers. He offers an affectionate portrait of the Marlboro Man, Darrell Winfield, a real cowboy who whimsically and joyously lived, tobacco- and alcohol-free, into 2015. Most alarmingly, in country where it takes one gallon of water to produce one almond, Bergon portrays California’s attack on the prehistoric waters of its aquifer, suggesting the imminent doom of the world’s most wondrous farming region.

– *John Mort*

**PETER BREWITT**  
*Same River Twice: The Politics of Dam Removal and River Restoration*

Oregon State University Press  
Paperback, 288 pages, \$24.95  
[OSUPress.oregonstate.edu](http://OSUPress.oregonstate.edu)

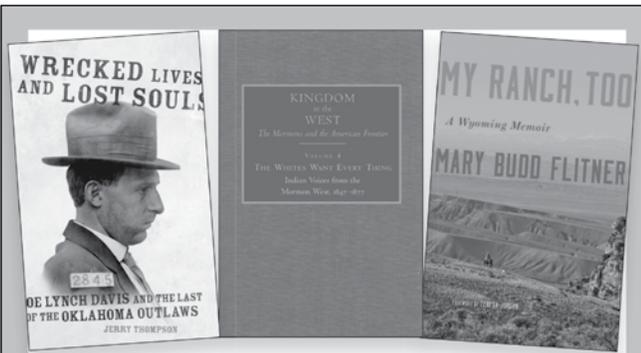
Peter Brewitt draws from many interviews and published works to produce a timely volume dealing with environmental politics. His take on the removal of three dams in the Pacific Northwest and the subsequent restoration of natural river flow was that interested parties needed to form mega-coalitions to move forward. Interestingly, he found in every case that the loss of recreational lakes was the key controversy. He concludes that ecological restoration is becoming a nationwide political priority and we need to learn how to do it.

– *Lynn Bueling*

**RICHARD BROOKHISER**  
*John Marshall: The Man Who Made the Supreme Court*

Basic Books  
Hardcover, 324 pages, \$30  
[BasicBooks.com](http://BasicBooks.com)

John Marshall’s nomination as chief justice of the Supreme Court in 1801 was pretty much a last-minute decision, and, by the time he retired 34 years later, he had transformed the nation’s highest court from an afterthought to a serious branch of the government – often to the consternation of presidents such as Thomas Jefferson, Marshall’s cousin, and Andrew Jackson. Richard Brookhiser, despite scant letters and documents from his subject, paints a detailed portrait of the



## Wrecked Lives and Lost Souls

*Joe Lynch Davis and the Last of the Oklahoma Outlaws*

By Jerry Thompson

*Wrecked Lives and Lost Souls*, the result of Jerry Thompson's sleuthing into his family's past, uncovers the lawless life and times of a man at the center of systematic cattle rustling, feuding, gun battles, a bloody range war, bank robberies, and train heists in early 1900s Indian Territory and Oklahoma.

.....  
\$24.95 PAPERBACK · 320 PAGES · 22 B&W ILLUS.

## The Whites Want Every Thing

*Indian-Mormon Relations, 1847–1877*

Edited by Will Bagley

American Indians have been at the center of Mormon doctrine from its very beginnings, recast as among the Children of Israel and thereby destined to play a central role in the earthly triumph of the new faith. The settling of the Mormons among the Indians presented a different story—a story that, as told by the settlers, robbed the Native people of their voices along with their homelands. *The Whites Want Everything* restores those Native voices to the history of colonization of the American Southwest.

.....  
\$55.00 HARDCOVER · 568 PAGES · 19 B&W AND 8 COLOR ILLUS.

## My Ranch, Too

*A Wyoming Memoir*

By Mary Budd Flitner

For many outsiders, the word “ranching” conjures romantic images of riding on horseback through rolling grasslands while living and working against a backdrop of breathtaking mountain vistas. In this absorbing memoir of life in the Wyoming high country, Mary Budd Flitner offers a more authentic glimpse into the daily realities of ranch life—and what it takes to survive in the ranching world.

.....  
\$24.95 HARDCOVER · 232 PAGES · 23 B&W ILLUS



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justice likely best remembered for his 1832 decision in *Worcester v. Georgia*, in which the court “explicitly recognize[d] the national character of the Cherokees and their right of self government.” To which Jackson allegedly replied: “Well, John Marshall has made his decision, now let him enforce it,” before removing the Cherokee to present-day Oklahoma. A timely read in this polarized age of politics.

## ROBERT A. CARO

*Working: Researching, Interviewing, Writing*

Alfred A. Knopf  
Hardcover, 207 pages, \$25  
KnopfDoubleday.com

Master biographer Robert A. Caro (two Pulitzer Prizes, two National Book Awards and three National Book Critics Circle Awards, for starters) describes the inspirational research methods behind his monumental studies of Robert Moses and former President Lyndon Johnson. Every author (fiction, nonfiction, Western or any other genre) can benefit from advice Caro received early in his career: Don't think with your fingers, and turn every page of documents you're studying. Caro's heroic approach to finding secrets in the millions of pages at the Johnson Library is a model of determination. His interview techniques (remembering to shut up, for example) are exemplary. Few writing books are this fascinating and dramatic as well as informative.

— David Morrell

## J. EDWARD CHAMBERLIN

*The Banker and the Blackfoot: An Untold Story of Friendship, Trust, and Broken Promises in the Old West*

BlueBridge  
Hardcover, 238 pages, \$24.95  
BlueBridgeBooks.com

The author tells the story of his grandfather, Jack Cowdry, while blending in a portrait of Alberta from the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century through about 1905. The Blackfeet held sovereignty until the founding of Fort Macleod, a police barracks that is today a small town in southwestern Alberta. The Mounties gained favor with the Blackfeet by shutting down whiskey smuggling from Montana and through fair dealing generally. In contrast to the American story, there followed a period of relative peace and harmony between immigrants and the First Nations. Jack Cowdry himself became lifelong friends with Crop Eared Wolf, who rose to become chief of the Blackfeet even as Jack filled a vacuum in Fort Macleod and became its first banker. A gentle, ironic, hopeful story.

— John Mort

## CLINT E. CHAMBERS and PAUL H. CARLSON

*Comanche Jack Stilwell: Army Scout and Plainsman*

University of Oklahoma Press  
Paperback, 280 pages, \$24.95  
OUPress.com

Simpson E. “Jack” Stilwell, aka Comanche Jack, was employed as a Santa Fe Trail teamster, cowboy, Army scout and plainsman, and also served as a police officer, deputy federal marshal, U.S. commissioner, lawyer and judge. But when remembered, if at all, it is for bringing support to the besieged scouts at Beecher Island and for attempting to avenge the death of his brother, Frank, during Wyatt Earp's Tombstone

vendetta. Now, Stilwell's "diverse career" is brought to the forefront and successfully charted by Clint E. Chambers, a descendant, and Paul H. Carlson, who "bring the scattered experiences of his short life together in a readable, straightforward biography." Select maps would have helped the reader, but their absence is no distraction to this informative and well-documented book.

– Stan "Tex" Banash

## DIANA HINOJOSA DeLUGAN

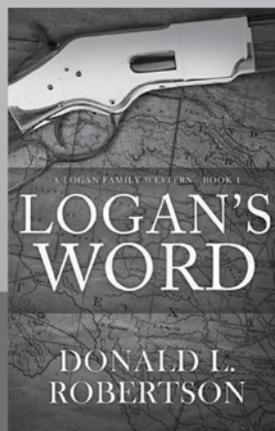
*Terrenos: Illustrated History of the Otero Land Grant*

Arizonac Publishing

Trade paperback, 436 pages, no price listed

Pieces of the Otero family story are scattered across the borderlands. Descendant Diana Hinojosa DeLugan connects the dots in her exhaustively researched history of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Spanish grant — the first privately owned land in Arizona — and the family's 148-year operation of the Rancho de Otero (today's Tubac Golf Resort), describing how successive generations of Otero men and women defended the grant in court, squabbled over inheritances and expanded their landholdings in southern Arizona. She also explains how subsequent owners and part owners — including aviatrix Joan Schankle Davis and celebrities Will Rogers Jr. and Bing Crosby — helped preserve the Otero legacy into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. A skilled practitioner of what C.L. Sonnichsen described as "grassroots history," DeLugan spotlights the accomplishments of a prominent Arizona family and sheds light on the Hispanic ranching heritage of the Southwest.

– Bruce J. Dinges



## Logan's Word

Book one of the Logan Family Western Series has received a 4.8 rating out of 5 with 176 reviews.

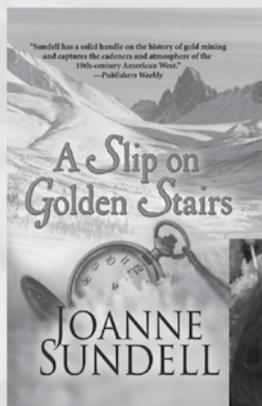
**If you enjoy a good traditional western, this one is for you.**

**One reviewer said:** "Major Joshua Logan is a man who is as big, brave, and relentless as I have ever read about. I finished the novel in 5 hours and only put it down to eat supper. Great story line and very good character development. The story had many twists and turns and some great subplots that just surprised me."

You can find this book on [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) and [donaldrobertson.com](http://donaldrobertson.com)

DONALD L. ROBERTSON

*A Writer of Western Novels and Short Stories*



Joanne Sundell

## NEW from Frontier Fiction author JOANNE SUNDELL

# A SLIP ON GOLDEN STAIRS

(Wanted, Dead or Alive ghost town series)

"Two love stories intertwine across the centuries in Sundell's spooky tale set in an Alaska ghost town...Sundell has a solid handle on the history of gold mining and captures the cadences and atmosphere of the 19th century American West...a nostalgic and fun ghost story."

–Publishers Weekly

"...at its heart, (this) novel is a paean to Sundell's beloved Klondike, brought vividly to life through the eyes of her time-crossed lovers."

–Michael Zimmer, Wrangler Award-winning author of *Hard Ride Across Texas*

"...Sundell's characters move seamlessly between 2017 and 1898...Is it possible to love someone from a different time? *A Slip on Golden Stairs* will keep you up all night to find out."

–Candace Simar, Spur Award-winning author of *The Abercrombie Trail Series*

"This is another star in Sundell's Alaska crown...Sundell delivers with her research and her storytelling..."

–Anne Schroeder, Award-winning author of *Cholama Moon and the Central Coast Series*

"A haunting tale of the hazards and horrors faced by adventurers a century ago, who struggled up the Chilkoot Golden Stairs in pursuit of Klondike gold..."

–Robert Lee Murphy, Will Rogers Medallion Award winner for the *Iron Horse Chronicles*

"When Abby sets out on a self-imposed history trek through the gold-rush mining camps of yesteryear, the past becomes her present. A wonderful ghostly story of lost love."

–Linda Wommack, Colorado historian

"...Sundell pours magic and warmth onto the page, capturing the entwined journey of two women from different centuries, both struggling up the Golden Staircase to find treasures of gold and lost love. An inspiring read."

–Vonn Mckee, Multiple Spur Award Finalist, Western Writers of America



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# WESTERN MUSIC



“New San Antonio Rose” by Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys was the first song I learned by heart because my Grandmother Stallone had a record of it that I played over and over. I never tired of it, and if Maw Maw did she never said so.

The song is a classic of Western swing, an infectious – usually up-tempo – dance tune that mixes cowboy, polka, Dixieland jazz and other musical styles with swing.

Western swing, a genre pioneered by Wills, hit its high point in the 1940s. But it’s still stirring up feet on dance floors today. Think Asleep at the Wheel and consider also the artists who recorded the albums below.

## LEELEE ROBERT

### *Swing Set*

Musikode Records, \$20  
LeeLeeMusic.com

Arizona-native LeeLee Robert is known for her very personal cowgirl jazz music, but she kicks things up a few notches in this 12-cut Western swing album that includes seven songs written or – in one case – co-written by Robert.

It’s tough to pick favorites here – they’re all a pleasure – but I’ll point to “Finger Lickin’ Music,” written by Robert, Peggy Malone and Marvin O’Dell, which pays tribute to “finger-lickin’, guitar-pickin’, boot-kickin’ blues;” “Blue Bonnet Breeze” by Paul Kelly and Robert’s “Big Hair,” about a waitress with big hands, long arms, a big heart and big hair that “puts her that much closer to God.”



## STEEL HORSE SWING

### *Swing Time Baby*

Steel Horse Productions, \$15  
SteelHorseSwing.com

This Colorado group, featuring Carlos Williams on lead vocals, aspires to a mixture of Western swing and cowboy and rodeo classics.

There’s some of all that among this CD’s 11 offerings, starting with Williams’s “Swing Time Baby,” about a dance with more “sauce” than a two-step or waltz.

Other gems are the compelling “I’ve Got a Feelin’ for You,” written by Joni Harms and Hobo Jim Varsos; the rowdy “Let the Cowboy Dance,” by Michael Martin Murphey, Don Cook and Chick Rains; and Tom Russell and Paul Zarzyski’s change-of-pace crooner “Bucking Horse Moon,” about a bronc buster who falls for a blue-eyed twister with a smoky whisper.

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E-mail Ollie at [oreedjr@gmail.com](mailto:oreedjr@gmail.com) and send CDs to him at P.O. Box 2381, Corrales, NM 87048.

## MALCOLM EBRIGHT and RICK HENDRICKS

### *Pueblo Sovereignty: Indian Land and Water in New Mexico and Texas*

University of Oklahoma Press  
Hardcover, 245 pages, \$45  
OUPress.com

This is a case study of five pueblos – Pojoaque, Nambé, Tesuque and Isleta in New Mexico and Ysleta del Sur in Texas – and their centuries-long struggle to retain their land and water rights against the encroachments of Spanish, Mexican, and United States authorities. The authors devote each chapter to one of the pueblos, detailing how the tribe fought their battles in the courts, often facing adverse decisions from judges and juries that favored powerful business interests. Contrary to the usual stereotypes, Indian agents, including Abraham Mayer, John Ward, Benjamin Thomas and James Calhoun, attempted to defend the tribes from fraudulent and incompetent land surveyors and disinterested or biased federal officials. The authors take their narrative to the present day and end on a cautiously optimistic note as the tribes have endured, survived and managed with some compromises to keep their sovereignty.

– Abraham Hoffman

## SEAN J. FLYNN

### *Without Reservation: Benjamin Reifel and American Indian Acculturation*

South Dakota Historical Society Press  
Hardcover, 281 pages, \$29.95  
SDHSPress.com

Ben Reifel (1906-1990) was the first Lakota to serve in the U.S. Congress. Many people stereotype American Indians in their pre-reservation roles or see their plight of poverty in modern-day reservation life, but each person must follow his or her own path, and Ben Reifel charted his own. Sean Flynn, a member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, details Reifel’s life, leaving the Rosebud Sioux reservation, graduating from high school and then college. Reifel worked for the Bureau of Indian Affairs and served in the Army during World War II. He represented South Dakota for five terms in the House of Representatives. He worked tirelessly to improve the lives of American Indians, believing education was the key to better lives for all.

– Bill Markley

## SCOTT HARRIS

### *A Novel Journey: Writing Your First Western (52 Essays to Help You Get to “The End”)*

Dusty Saddle Publishing  
Hardcover, 589 pages, \$14.99  
DSPublishingNetwork.com

The first part of this collection includes essays derived from Scott Harris’s blogs on writing. There is good general advice for first-time writers (he kindly reminds us to “find a way that works for you”), plus links to Facebook pages and writing organizations specifically directed at the Western genre. (One misstep in this book, other than the handful of typos, is the inclusion and veiled challenge of a previously published *Roundup* review.) The real treat comes in Part Two, as Harris invites several award-winning Western authors to share their writing savvy. A complete novel penned by the author makes

up Part Three, accounting for roughly half the book's nearly 600 pages.

— Micki Fuhrman

## JOHN HART

*Bluecoat and Pioneer: The Recollections of John Benton Hart 1864-1868*

University of Oklahoma Press  
Hardcover, 240 pages, \$32.95  
OUPress.com

John Hart presents a brief span in the life of his great grandfather, John Benton Hart. The book begins in 1864 when Hart, a young Union cavalryman, takes part in ending the last Confederate effort, under the leadership of General Sterling Price, to reclaim Missouri. Once Price is chased south into Arkansas, Hart's 11<sup>th</sup> Kansas Regiment is sent west to deal with growing Indian insurrections in Kansas, Wyoming and Montana. Working from his great-grandfather's verbal memoirs, recorded starting in 1918 by his son Harry, the author provides a unique, ground-level view of what life was like for the ordinary soldier during these dangerous and fascinating times. For accuracy's sake, the book intersperses John Benton Hart's 50-year-old recollections with short excerpts of actual history. But even when the old soldier's memories sometimes miss the mark, the overall story still rings true.

— Greg Hunt

## ROBERT R. LAVEN

*A Burned Land: The Trans-Mississippi in the Civil War*

McFarland & Company  
Paperback, 186 pages, \$35  
McFarlandBooks.com

Robert R. Laven draws a stark picture of the varying and unconventional ways that the Civil War was conducted in Missouri. Pro-slavery Missouri and abolitionist Kansas Territory had already been entangled in a ruthless, undeclared border war for years before the Civil War started, and the fact that Missouri, a slave state, remained in Union hands when war split the nation only made the conflict there more bitter and divisive. Laven, clearly a deep historical researcher, does a fine job explaining the major battles and campaigns, the reasons for victories and defeats, the mistakes and repercussions, and the ongoing struggles by the Confederacy to take over the state for the South. Researchers and history buffs will also

find the series of detailed appendices at the end of the book interesting and informative.

— Greg Hunt

## CHRISTOPHER KETCHAM

*This Land: How Cowboys, Capitalism, and Corruption are Ruining the American West*

Viking  
Hardcover, 406 pages, \$29  
PenguinRandomHouse.com

It's one thing to write a polemic; it's another to write one based on statistics, facts, interviews and extensive field research. That's what Christopher Ketcham has done in his exposure of government agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency and the Fish and Wildlife Service turning a blind eye and even siding with mining, oil and gas, logging and the cattle industry in wreaking havoc on America's public lands. He finds the public largely unaware of the destruction of wolves, cougars, eagles and other predators whose decline has upset the balance of nature. Plants as well as animals have been plowed under for the profits of corporations that prize cattle as a marketable commodity, even though the industry contributes little to the national economy. Ketcham also has little use for the image of the cowboy as the reality of herding is a difficult, dirty and unglamorous job. This book minces no words on how environmental deterioration has created a situation that will make our descendants wonder what corporations were thinking about besides making money.

— Abraham Hoffman

## WAYNE LUDWIG

*The Old Chisholm Trail: From Cow Path to Tourist Stop*

Texas A&M University Press  
Hardcover, 307 pages, \$37  
TAMUPress.com

Perhaps you are interested in cattle drives, but don't care if the Chisholm Trail was named after Jesse Chisholm or John Chisum. Or that a rich Texan went about hither and yonder wherever he wished marking the trail, much to the dismay of the Old Time Trail Drivers' Association. Or perhaps your interests lie in the Goodnight-Loving Trail or the Western Trail. That doesn't mean you won't benefit by the intensive research that went into this book. If you

are deeply interested in cattle drives or thinking of writing a book on one, buy this book. The text, appendix, notes and bibliography provide a wealth of detailed information that can save you hours of research.

— Vicky J. Rose

## DAVID McCULLOUGH

*The Pioneers: The Heroic Story of the Settlers Who Brought the American Ideal West*

Simon & Schuster  
Hardcover, 331 pages, \$30  
SimonandSchuster.com

Historian David McCullough (*John Adams* and *1776*, etc.) has two Pulitzer Prizes and two National Book Awards, along with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, America's highest civilian honor. A new work by him is a publishing event. Here, he describes a little-known saga in America's westward migration: the first government-sanctioned pioneer expedition. After the Revolutionary War, the United States acquired from Great Britain the vast wooded wilderness between the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers (eventually to contain Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin). In a nonfiction version of Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*, McCullough focuses on five historical figures as they set out in 1788 to establish a frontier community based on the principles of religious freedom, free universal education and the prohibition of slavery. Within 20 years, a few hundred pioneers in the area became a half million. The book's highlights include Aaron Burr's plot to persuade the territory to secede from the Union and form a new nation. Some critics wished McCullough had emphasized the injustice the westward expansion inflicted on Native Americans. McCullough, a traditional historian, leaves it to his readers to make judgments.

— David Morrell

## CHRISTOPHER R. MORTENSON

*Politician in Uniform: General Lew Wallace and the Civil War*

University of Oklahoma Press  
Hardcover, 298 pages, \$34.95  
OUPress.com

A political appointee, Lew Wallace's record as a combat general is spotty and less than glorious. Temperamental, paranoid and critical of superiors, all of

whom were West Point graduates, his best service was as a military governor in Maryland and Delaware. His fame as an author of such books as *Ben-Hur* would have suited most. He was appointed ambassador to Turkey and governor of New Mexico Territory, where he negotiated with Billy the Kid. But he would have surrendered all that to have had a moment of military glory in the Civil War. A nice piece of little known history.

– Vernon Schmid

## CANDY MOULTON

*The Mormon Handcart Migration: 'Toungue nor Pen Can Never Tell the Sorrow'*

University of Oklahoma Press  
Hardcover, 296 pages, \$29.95  
OUPress.com

Comprehensive and challenging, as scholarly as it could be, Candy Moulton's book presents facts that paint an inspiring and chilling story. Inspiring because for four years, these 10 companies, totaling 2,888 people, walked from outfitting posts in Nebraska and Iowa the 1,178 miles required to make it to their Zion. Chilling because – and this is not fiction – “I hear there are saints who fear on account of the lateness of the season and may suffer in crossing the Rocky Mts. in snow storms ... God will keep the way open to the faithful at heart.” This is perverse, like the witch trials. Those who died lost their faith. (My great-grandmother did not die.) This dense, fact-filled book uses no elaboration to show the most extraordinary tales of heroism, trauma and tragedy.

– Edward Massey

## MARK SANTIAGO

*A Bad Peace and a Good War: Spain and the Mescalero Apache Uprising of 1795-1799*

University of Oklahoma Press  
Hardcover, 248 pages, \$27.95  
OUPress.com

In summer 1795, Mescalero Apache warriors struck Spanish ranches. Troops tracked the raiders north across the Rio Grande, where large Mescalero forces ambushed and almost destroyed the Spanish columns. The book details the aggressive efforts orchestrated by Spanish Commandant General Pedro de Nava to punish and subdue the Mescaleros. Mark Santiago weaves drama and suspense into the narrative while keeping it on firm historical ground.

His approach should satisfy both the military historian and the average reader alike. He treats both sides evenhandedly, something difficult to do when writing of Indian/European conflicts.

– Loyd Uglow

## GREGORY D. SMITHERS

*Native Southerners: Indigenous History from Origins to Removal*

University of Oklahoma Press  
Paperback, 270 pages, \$29.95  
OUPress.com

A careful historical exploration of the origins of many southeastern Indian tribes and their experience prior to and after the *diaspora*. The author's scholarship is especially helpful to those with interest in both the voluntary and forced removal of native nations to new trans-Mississippi locations. Actions by the federal government dating to the founding of the United States is accurately illustrated and reflects the ongoing federal policies designed to eliminate tribal identity, culture and history.

– Vernon Schmid

## CLIFFORD E. TRAFZER

*Fighting Invisible Enemies: Health and Medical Transitions among Southern California Indians*

University of Oklahoma Press  
Hardcover, 377 pages, \$34.95  
OUPress.com

Focusing primarily on the Mission Indian Agency in Southern California, this book assesses the federal government's failure to provide health care for the agency's 29 reservations during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Not until the late 1920s and the efforts of Interior Secretary Hubert Work did the Indian Health Service begin to work effectively with agency tribes. Clifford Trafzer includes an important chapter on indigenous practices of healing “staying sickness.” “Traveling sicknesses” such as tuberculosis and smallpox inflicted severe losses to indigenous populations, but Indians recognized the importance of Western medicine for diseases where Indians lacked immunity. TB rates among American Indians declined significantly between 1926 and 1946, but after World War II a conservative Congress's termination policy adversely affected medical treatment for Indians. Often repetitious, Trafzer nonetheless provides a well-documented indictment of federal policies, but also notes the dedication of doctors

and nurses who convinced many Indians that Western medicine could coexist with Native customs.

– Abraham Hoffman

## WEST VIRGINIA WRITERS

*Writerly Advice: Tips & Techniques from West Virginia Writers*

Headline Books  
Paperback, 135 pages, \$16.95  
HeadlineBooks.com

West Virginia Writers Inc., which calls itself the “largest all-volunteer, writers' resource and service organization serving literary interests in West Virginia,” has put together an anthology of tips on a wide range of genres and subjects, including memoir, poetry, magazine writing, true crime and, yes, Western. No surprise on the latter since the organization's president is WWA member R.G. Yoho, who notes in his chapter on writing Westerns that “it is critically important that you first kindle a genuine respect, almost a reverence, for this largely unique, albeit brief, period in American history.”

## DAVID WOLMAN and JULIAN SMITH

*Aloha Rodeo: Three Hawaiian Cowboys, the World's Greatest Rodeo, and a Hidden History of the American West*

William Morrow  
Hardcover, 256 pages, \$27.95  
HarperCollins.com

*Aloha Rodeo* tells more than the story of three Hawaiian cowboys in Cheyenne in 1908. In a style reminiscent of James A. Michener, the authors weave rodeo history, Westward expansion and Hawaii's political transitions into a bright tapestry. The story vividly depicts the cultural forge and environmental anvil that shaped the paniolo – horsemen who maneuvered jagged lava fields and dense forests long before mainland cowboys worked the great cattle drives. Rodeo narrative stays true to the era with lasso, bronco and ring rather than rope, bronc and arena. And “tough” takes on a Polynesian flavor in the paniolos of the Parker Ranch and other Hawaiian spreads. For them, it wasn't enough to rope a steer in quick order. They had to swim it out to the boat to be taken aboard by sling while hoping the sharks didn't take the legs off their horses in the meantime.

– Davalynn Spencer

# FICTION

## FEDORA AMIS

*Have Your Ticket Punched* by Frank James

Five Star Publishing  
Hardcover, 311 pages, \$25.95  
Gale.Cengage.com/FiveStar

Set in 1898 St. Louis, this is a Victorian novel with witty narrative and snappy dialogue that fits the era. The light-hearted mystery is filled with whimsically named characters and conversation. Young Jemima “Jemmy” McBustle, cub reporter for the *Illuminator* under her Ann O’Nimity byline, endures a series of near calamities and the attentions of a host of cantankerous admirers in her investigation of the murder of the actor, Quisenberry Sproat. The pace early on is measured as Jemmy works through puzzling leads, but suspense builds to a climax that settles the case and promises another Jemima McBustle volume. In spite of the book’s title, Frank James makes a cameo and somewhat puzzling appearance. He gets about as much coverage as an ugly calico cat with a broken leg.

– Harlan Hague

## CAROLE T. BEERS

*Night Rides: A Pepper Kane Mystery - Book #4*

W&B Publishers  
Trade paperback, 326 pages, \$17.99

Former reporter Pepper Kane is in Seattle, riding in one of the Northwest’s most important horse shows –prestige, reputation and money at stake. The fierce competition turns murderous when one of the competition’s judges is found dead. Having some detecting experience, Kane takes a hand. When a second person is murdered – neither of them the most sympathetic of victims – what happens next has you wondering if Kane should’ve backed away. Kane takes what seem like a few wrong turns as the story proceeds to an action-filled and twisty conclusion. I appreciated the show scenes with the horses riding in the ring, feeling the well-depicted excitement and thrill of the show.

– Carol Crigger

## KARI BOVÉE

*Peccadillo at the Palace:  
An Annie Oakley Mystery*

SparkPress  
Trade paperback, 349 pages, \$16.95

An invitation from Queen Victoria’s special emissary to perform before the queen has Buffalo Bill Cody’s Wild West show packing up and taking ship for England. It proves to be a dangerous voyage as first, Annie Oakley’s horse Buck becomes upset and plunges overboard. Then, Frank Butler, Annie’s husband, along with Mr. Bhakta, the queen’s emissary, are pushed into the ocean, and while Buck and Frank are saved, Mr. Bhakta is dead. So begins a story fraught with mysteries at every turn. Annie will have a difficult time sorting it all out, as she is plagued by constant ill-health and a recalcitrant younger sister. Kari Bovée peoples her story with plenty of suspects, which is sure to keep you guessing to the very end.

– Carol Crigger



## Bronco Billy

Warner Archive  
Blu-ray, \$21.99  
WBShop.com



According to Clint Eastwood, it all started with a mistake. Hanging around his office late one Friday afternoon, waiting for the L.A. traffic to clear, he began to flip through a script by Dennis Hackin that Eastwood thought was a

biography of *The Great Train Robbery* star, Bronco Billy Anderson.

What he found instead was this odd little tale of a shoe clerk from New Jersey who starred in his own ragtag Wild West Show. The show’s other performers were fellow dreamers, all of whom were escaping something in their lives but were devoted to Billy.



C. COURTNEY JOYNER

Made between Don Siegel’s tough

*Escape from Alcatraz* and the ape-lunacy of *Any Which Way You Can*, *Bronco Billy* (1980) remains a neglected Eastwood effort, perhaps ignored because its gentle lampooning of the star’s image wasn’t wild or extreme enough for his fans to appreciate, as they did his Orangutan adventures.

Eastwood said he saw the film as in the mold of “something [Frank] Capra might have made,” and although that comparison might be seen as wish fulfillment, like the best of Capra, *Bronco Billy* is about family. Not blood relatives held at a distance, but the friends who are with you through good times and bad, giving the movie a sweet countenance, even when it treads into surprisingly dark shadows.

Cast with Eastwood’s own family of actors from his 1970s period – Geoffrey Lewis, Tim Bottoms, Woodrow Parfrey and Bill McKinney – the movie’s wild card is also its other central character played, of course, by Sondra Locke. As much as I loved the actress in *The Outlaw Josey Wales*, I find her a bit shrill as the spoiled heiress who’s forced to join Billy’s troupe, but later she perfectly inhabits the character’s gentler side when trying to talk Billy out of the insane idea of robbing a train à la Jesse James.

Later, there’s an extraordinarily dark and dramatic moment with her character that is relieved by a comedic punctuation that Locke pulls off beautifully, saving the tone of the film.

Scatman Crothers is the show’s ringmaster and Billy’s voice of hope. He’s marvelous, as is the cameo by Hank Worden.

Beautifully shot by David Worth, *Bronco Billy* is all heart and humor and a fine example of Eastwood using his clout to transition from star to filmmaking artist.

## NORMA ELIA CANTÚ

### *Cabanuelas: A Novel*

University of New Mexico Press  
Paperback, 304 pages, \$19.95  
UNMPress.com

Ethnography is the heart of this exploration of folklore, fiesta, linguistics and personal relationships. The author and the protagonist are one and the same as Spain, Mexico and the border town of Laredo are blended in one woman's search for authenticity. Historical and cultural roots shape the Latina's belonging to *la frontera*, where family and tradition shape lives. Cantú uses a fictionalized memoir style, for which she is known, that illustrates the passionate connection of soul to place. Cantú continues to be major source for understanding life on the border.

– Vernon Schmid

## JEROME CHARYN

### *The Perilous Adventures of the Cowboy King: A Novel of Teddy Roosevelt and His Times*

Liveright  
Hardcover, 304 pages, \$26.95  
WWNorton.com

A new novel appears about Theodore Roosevelt in which it is asked if he were “the perfect bull in a china shop.” Jerome Charyn spins his tale of Roosevelt's life up to the assassination of President McKinley and gives voice to a large cast of TR's acquaintances, including Josephine the cougar. A book that fits into the historical fiction category, it is an easy, enjoyable read that could also appeal to young adults.

– Lynn Bueling

## PAUL COLT

### *Friends Call Me Bat*

Five Star Publishing  
Hardcover, 237 pages, \$25.95  
Gale.Cengage.com/FiveStar

Paul Colt gives us the imagined musings of Bat Masterson, as he relates his incredible life story to newspaperman/humorist Damon Runyon. In truth, the two knew each other and Runyon's short story, “The Idyll of Miss Sarah Brown,” the tale of a sweet missionary girl who falls for a gambler named Masterson, was the basis for the musical *Guys and Dolls*. Colt's novel rings with authentic dialogue and historic details, as the aging gunfighter/gambler/prize-fighter/writer reminisces with Runyon over steaks and drinks during early

1900s New York. Great storytelling here, based on fact, but capped with a fancied funeral parlor scene that ties Masterson's Western luminary-studded adventures into a satisfying bow.

– Micki Fuhrman

## C.K. CRIGGER

### *Yester's Ride*

Five Star Publishing  
Hardcover, 258 pages, \$25.95  
Gale.Cengage.com/Fivestar

When his part-Chinese half-sister is kidnapped by her rapist father, teenager Yester Noonan lights out on a revenge-rescue mission. The 16-year-old boy is soon joined by his Metis friend, Nat Fontaine. The novel alternates viewpoints between the determined half-brother and the tough girl as they are forced to grow up on a treacherous trail from the Palouse country to Lewiston, Idaho. Although the heroes are teenagers, the story might be too graphic for younger readers. But adults will be drawn into Crigger's hard prose and uncompromising look at the West.

## MARK LEE GARDNER and NATE OLSON

### *Shot All to Hell: A Graphic Novel*

Insight Comics  
Hardcover, 127 pages, \$24.99  
InsightComics.com

This compelling graphic novel comes from Mark Lee Gardner's Spur-award-winning *Shot All to Hell: Jesse James, the Northfield Raid, and the Wild West's Greatest Escape*. Gardner and Nate Olson adapted the book. Olson also provided stunning artwork, while Nic Chapuis added arresting colors. This collaboration is so eye-pleasing that readers will flip through the pages again and again. The story is told in a documentary style, with times, dates and locations adding realism to the almost tactile illustrations of the “most famous bank robbery in Western history” and the epic retreat of the James-Younger Gang into the nightmarish Big Woods of Minnesota. Oversized, hard-hitting and impressive.

– David Morrell

## SCOTT GASTINEAU

### *Tillman's Bounty*

Five Star Publishing  
Hardcover, 398 pages, \$25.95  
Gale.Cengage.com/FiveStar

Max Tillman worked as a miner until the company went broke and he lost

his job. By accident, he kills a wanted man and collects the bounty, which gets him thinking about a new way of life. With the reward money, he continues his quest to collect bounties until he saves a preacher's daughter and marries her. The story has several highlights that will keep your interest with some moral connotations. A pleasant read.

– Lowell F. Volk

## ROBERT FRANKLIN GISH

### *Twilight Troubadour: Stories Serenading the American Southwest*

Sunstone Press  
Trade paperback, 149 pages, \$18.95  
SunstonePress.com

Thirteen short stories, seemingly drawn from the author's own life, recount the difficulties and rewards of growing up in multi-cultural New Mexico – first guitar, attraction to girls, scuffles with friends, shooting birds. Sort of a *deja vu* trip for the reader, reminding of sweet and bittersweet memories from one's youth. The tales are short enough to be comfortable reading on a flight. Robert Gish's purpose may not be simply to entertain or amuse. He teaches writing at the University of New Mexico, so I imagine that he uses these stories in his classes (there's a set of questions for each story). I liked this one: “Why is the guitar associated so much with the West and its cowboy traditions?”

– Ralph Estes

## HARLAN HAGUE

### *Leaving Ah-wah-nee*

Graycatbird Books  
Paperback, 240 pages, \$9  
HarlanHague.us

This novel takes time getting to the real plot: the unlikely romance between a Yosemite Indian woman and a transplanted Eastern widower. The theme of how the “white man” pushed the native tribes off their land is powerful. After his wife and children die, Jason finds new love with Tahnee, who has been abused by prospectors. Jason shuns the white man and sides with the natives. A band of men forces Tahnee's tribe off their land, burning shelters, looting whatever appeals. Harlan Hague's research into California history is spot on.

## ROBERT KNOTT

### *Robert B. Parker's Buckskin*

G.P. Putnam's Sons  
Hardcover, 336 pages, \$27  
PenguinRandomHouse.com

Marshals Virgil Cole and Everett Hitch are back with another tale taking place in the town of Appaloosa. Gold has been discovered, and two factions are fighting over possession. Some men from one side have disappeared and now both are ramping up their gun hands as the town waits for war to break out. Mix in a psychotic young gunfighter with a grudge against the world, and Appaloosa is doomed to lethal mayhem just as an Appaloosa Days celebration is due. As anticipated in a Robert Knott/Robert B. Parker story, there's plenty of violence, gun play, sex, cussing and all the usual deadly sins. The villains are over the top, and Virgil and Everett's sharp three-word sentence conversations carry the action along.

— Carol Crigger

### KRIS LACKEY

*Greasy Bend: A Bill Maytubby & Hannah Bond Mystery*

Blackstone Publishing  
Hardcover, 226 pages, \$25.99  
BlackstonePublishing.com

Johnson County Deputy Hannah Bond is flagged down by a farmer, who has discovered a body floating in the Washita River that turns out to be a friend of Hannah's. Concurrently, detective Bill Maytubby of the Chickasaw Lighthouse Police is called to the Golden Play Casino. There has been a robbery and his friend, an electrician working there, has been shot and killed. All this finds these two lawmen, working together, scouring the Oklahoma countryside to fit the clues they garner together. From schools, airstrips and casinos, they connect the deaths, only to find themselves facing deadly opponents as they converge at Greasy Bend Bridge. An excellent action-filled mystery with wonderful characters and a well-depicted setting.

— Carol Crigger

### GREGORY J. LALIRE

*Our Frontier Pastime: 1804-1815*

Five Star Publishing  
Hardcover, 423 pages, \$25.95  
Gale.Cengage.com/FiveStar

Greg Lalire, editor of *Wild West* magazine, won a Stirrup Award in 2015 for his *Roundup* article about baseball in the West, so I was expecting this book to be an expanded history of that subject. Boy, was I off base about that. The pub-

lisher lists the book as historical fiction, but, although it is filled with historic characters and refers to actual events, this is fiction as tall tale. It tells the story of one Benjamin Batman Bunt (1779-1815), who claims to have invented the game of base ball (he spelled it as two words) while he was a member of the Lewis and Clark Expedition of 1804 to 1806. You don't have to go beyond the main character's name to get an inkling of the over-the-top humor employed by Lalire in his novel. But if you can manage to read while rolling your eyes, you just might have a ball with this.

— Ollie Reed Jr.

### JON LAND

*Strong As Steel: A Caitlin Strong Novel*

Forge Books  
Hardcover, 336 pages, \$27.99  
US.macmillan.com

As in every Caitlin Strong thriller, there are two parts to the story. What happened in history, and what is happening right now. In this novel, the past is as near as 1994 and concerns Caitlin's father, Texas Ranger Jim Strong, who investigates several inexplicable deaths and a cargo gone missing from a freight train. In the present, Texas Ranger Caitlin Strong is involved in a crime and a story hearkening back to her father's long-ago case. Only the violence is even more lethal this time around. As far as the woman who seduces Cort Wesley Masters's son Dylan goes, well, her connection to all this will come as a surprise. Nonstop action will keep you turning the pages in this adventure.

— Carol Crigger

### ROBERT S. LEVINSON

*Tap Dance*

Five Star Publishing  
Hardcover, 231 pages, \$25.95  
Gale.Cengage.com/FiveStar

*Tap Dance* is presented as a fictional collection of events that occur in the West and involve the exploits of partners Swaney and McDukes. Their wild adventures and encounters lead them in and out of prison. There is a lot of action that will keep you guessing what will happen next. It is interesting how the author connects different stories of the West together.

— Lowell F. Volk

### TERRENCE McCAULEY

*Dark Territory, A Sheriff Aaron Mackey Western*

Pinnacle  
Mass-market paperback, 320 pages, \$7.99  
KensingtonBooks.com

In boomtown Dover Station, Montana, everyone's out to make a fortune from the train's arrival. However, Sheriff Aaron Mackey and Deputy Billy Sunday have something to say about it. There is not much to admire about sullen Mackey, who is quick to shoot and ask questions later. Even the townspeople step aside when he walks past. However, with so much lawlessness about, he can't afford to be nice. A convoluted plot, involving orchestrated train robberies by a wanna-be mayor who wants to replace Mackey, keeps the pages turning and the reader wondering. Many references to a previous plot make for the need to read the first novel.

— Melody Groves

### RICHARD PROSCH

*The Scalper*

Lohman Hills Creative  
Paperback, 183 pages, \$9.99  
LohmanHills.com

This compilation of short fiction, including the Spur-winning title story, is slathered with Richard Prosch's pleasing, folksy style. Peopled by hucksters, hopefuls and almost-heroes, these tales remind readers of life's inherent unpredictability – the schemes that go wrong, the occasional happy accidents and the unknowable recesses of human nature. An entertaining, deftly written collection.

— Micki Fuhrman

### JAMES REASONER and L.J. WASHBURN

*Six Gun Law*

Five Star Publishing  
Hardcover, 319 pages, \$25.95  
Gale.Cengage.com/FiveStar

Husband-and-wife team James Reasoner and L.J. Washburn have been penning good, solid traditional Westerns, both individually and as a team, for years. *Six Gun Law* is no exception. In the first novella, "Ransom Valley," written by Reasoner, Marshal Cole Tyler has to stop a gang of vicious bank robbers, who end up kidnapping Brenda Durand, the young, beautiful,

**BOOK REVIEWS** (continued on page 47)



## BOOK REVIEWS (from page 39)

but ruthless heiress to much of the town of Wind River, Wyoming. In *Outlaw Blood*, written by Washburn, outlaw Blade Kendrick returns, looking for his older two sons, both of whom had been taken from him by his wife when she ran away from him years previously. The reader will keep the pages turning until they find out who survives ... or doesn't.

– James J. Griffin

### JOANNE SUNDELL

#### *A Slip on Golden Stairs*

Five Star Publishing  
Hardcover, 275 pages, \$25.95  
Gale.Cengage.com/FiveStar

The Alaskan Gold Rush is backdrop to this time-bending story by Joanne Sundell, whose writings have been compared to Jack London's adventure novels – and rightly so. Abigail Grayce, from 1898, and Abby Gray, from 2017, make the same arduous trip up the treacherous Golden Staircase, an ice-carved pathway leading to the Alaskan gold fields. The two women reach out to each other through tenuous slips in time portals, with the help of a handsome Western man. One careless step could mean destiny, or death.

– Micki Fuhrman

### CONSTANCE SQUIRES

#### *Hit Your Brights*

University of Oklahoma Press  
Trade paperback, 184 pages, \$19.99  
OUPress.com

A collection of razor-sharp modern fiction, showcasing desperate souls at the outermost reaches of their sanity and ability to cope: an Oklahoma oil-

field worker grapples with Parkinson's, a girl singer is drawn to hookups with Elvis impersonators, a grandmother and daughter travel to Vietnam to claim the body of a son and father, along with his demons. Addiction is a frequent theme, as are grief and estrangement.

– Micki Fuhrman

## PLAYS

### RED SHUTTLEWORTH

1980: *Kingman, Arizona*; 1981: *Mount Vernon, Oregon*; 1982: *Rawlins, Wyoming*; 1983: *Vernal, Utah*; 1984: *Washtucna, Washington*; 1985: *Winside, Nebraska*; 1986: *Vermillion, South Dakota*; 1987: *Raton, New Mexico*; 1988: *St. Francis, Kansas*; 1989: *Laverne, Oklahoma*

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

Two women sit amid the ruins of a house consumed by flames. A 40-year-old prison guard notes that “Whiskey and coffee bring me to life every evening ... as I wait. I don't really know what or who I'm waiting for.” A 20-year-old woman hiking in Kansas discovers that “this is a world where you have to put your own Pop Tarts into your toaster.” And a young policeman regrets giving a newspaper reporter an interview, saying that the next time “I am gonna grin-stupid and walk away.” In Red Shuttleworth's “Americana West” series of short plays and monologues, men and women still need grit to survive in Reagan's America.