

# New Mexico Historical Review

---

Volume 64 | Number 2

Article 1

---

4-1-1989

## Full Issue

New Mexico Historical Review

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmhr>

---

### Recommended Citation

New Mexico Historical Review. "Full Issue." *New Mexico Historical Review* 64, 2 (1989).  
<https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmhr/vol64/iss2/1>

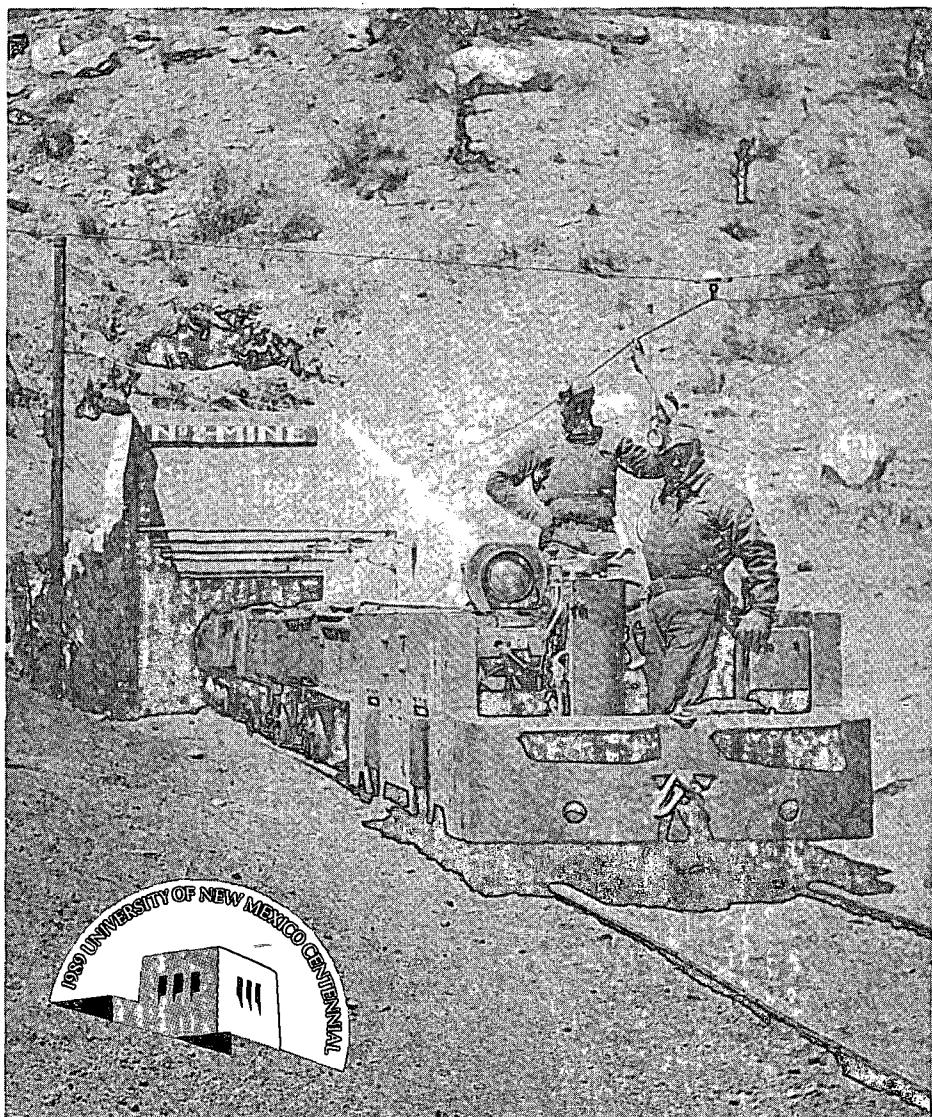
This Full Issue is brought to you for free and open access by UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in New Mexico Historical Review by an authorized editor of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact [disc@unm.edu](mailto:disc@unm.edu).

# New Mexico Historical Review

VOLUME 64

APRIL 1989

NUMBER 2



---

## Staff

**Editor:** Paul Andrew Hutton

**Associate Editor:** Charles E. Rankin

**Office Manager:** Nancy M. Brown

**Editorial Assistant:** Ruby L. Molinar

**Editorial Assistant:** Kyle B. Norwood

---

## Editorial Board

Adrian H. Bustamante

Thomas E. Chavez

Donald C. Cutter

Richard N. Ellis

Janet R. Fireman

Stanley M. Hordes

Myra Ellen Jenkins

Oakah L. Jones, Jr.

John L. Kessell

Robert W. Larson

Janet Lecompte

Darlis Miller

Alfonso Ortiz

Martin Ridge

Joseph P. Sánchez

Marc Simmons

Robert M. Utley

David J. Weber

**Cover:** Two miners ride a motorized coal train out of the No. 2 Mine at Dawson, New Mexico, in 1922. Work in such mines grew safer in the twentieth century, but James Whiteside explains in an article in this issue how such mining has always been dangerous. Photo courtesy of Special Collections, Zimmerman Library, University of New Mexico.

The *New Mexico Historical Review* is owned and published quarterly by the University of New Mexico. Copyright 1989 by the Regents of the University of New Mexico. The *New Mexico Historical Review* disclaims responsibility for views expressed by contributors.

**Subscriptions:** \$15 per year for individuals; \$18 for institutions; \$50 for sponsors; \$100 for patrons. Individual copies are \$5. Subscriptions and other business communications should be addressed to the Subscription Manager, *New Mexico Historical Review*, Mesa Vista 1013, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131. Telephone (505) 277-5839.

**Manuscripts** in two copies and editorial correspondence should be addressed to the Editor, *New Mexico Historical Review*, Mesa Vista 1013, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131. A postpaid return envelope should accompany manuscripts.

**Entered** as second-class postage paid at Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131. Publication number 381340 before composed. Composed, printed, and bound in the U.S.A. at the University of New Mexico Printing Plant. ISSN: 0028-6206, USPS 381-340.

# *New Mexico Historical Review*

---

VOLUME 64

APRIL 1989

NUMBER 2

## CONTENTS

The American West: From Frontier to Region MARTIN RIDGE	125
Bronson Cutting and the Early Years of the American Legion in New Mexico RICHARD LOWITT	143
Coal Mining, Safety, and Regulation in New Mexico, 1882- 1933 JAMES WHITESIDE	159
Cultural and Environmental Change on the Pajarito Plateau HAL ROTHMAN	185
Taking It Seriously: Western Frontier Violence. A Review Essay RICHARD MAXWELL BROWN	213
Willa Cather in New Mexico: A Review Essay ROBERT F. GISH	221
<b>Book Reviews</b>	231
<b>Book Notes</b>	269
<b>News Notes</b>	273

## Book Reviews

- Deutsch, Sarah, *No Separate Refuge: Culture, Class, and Gender on an Anglo-Hispanic Frontier in the American Southwest, 1880–1940*, by Albert L. Hurtado 231
- Scadron, Arlene, ed., *On Their Own: Widows and Widowhood in the American Southwest 1848–1939*, by Jane Slaughter 232
- French, Emily, ed. by Janet Lecompte, *Emily: The Diary of a Hard-Worked Woman*, by Anne M. Butler 233
- Otero, Miguel Antonio, *My Life on the Frontier 1864–1882*, by Michael Olsen 234
- Baker, Richard Allan, *Conservation Politics: The Senate Career of Clinton P. Anderson*, by Gerald D. Nash 235
- McLean, Malcolm D., comp. and ed., *Papers Concerning Robertson's Colony in Texas: Introductory Volume, Robert Leftwich's Mexican Diary and Letterbook, 1822–1824*, by Felix D. Almaraz, Jr. 236
- Crockett, David, *A Narrative of the Life of David Crockett*, and Lofaro, Michael A., ed., *The Tall Tales of Davy Crockett: The Second Nashville Series of Crockett Almanacs, 1839–1841*, by Michael Allen 238
- Bergeron, Paul H., *The Presidency of James K. Polk*, by Daniel Feller 239
- Guarneri, Carl, and David Alvarez, eds., *Religion and Society in the American West: Historical Essays*, by Ferenc M. Szasz 240
- Bitton, Davis, and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, eds., *New Views of Mormon History: A Collection of Essays in Honor of Leonard J. Arrington*, by Martin Ridge 241
- Quinn, D. Michael, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, by Charles S. Peterson 242
- Van Wagoner, Richard S., *Mormon Polygamy: A History*, by Ronald W. Walker 243
- Embry, Jessie L., *Mormon Polygamous Families, Life in the Principle*, by F. Ross Peterson 244
- Southwest Mission Research Center, *Tucson: A Short History*, by Stephen J. Pyne 246
- Bullard, Robert D., *Invisible Houston: The Black Experience in Boom and Bust*, by Howard N. Rabinowitz 246
- Hoffman, Abraham, *An Oklahoma Tragedy: The Shooting of the Mexican Students, 1931*, by Phillip B. Gonzales 247

Morris, Roger, <i>The Devil's Butcher Shop: The New Mexico Prison Uprising</i> , and	
Walker, Donald R., <i>Penology for Profit: A History of the Texas Prison System 1867–1912</i> , by Judith R. Johnson	249
Hunt, William R., <i>Distant Justice: Policing the Alaskan Frontier</i> , by Gordon Morris Bakken	250
Spidle, Jake W., Jr., <i>The Lovelace Medical Center: Pioneer in American Health Care</i> , by Robert K. Sutton	251
McLoughlin, William G., <i>Cherokee Renascence in the New Republic</i> , by Christopher L. Miller	253
Samek, Hana, <i>The Blackfoot Confederacy 1880–1920: A Comparative Study of Canadian and U.S. Indian Policy</i> , by John C. Ewers	254
Ferg, Alan, ed., <i>Western Apache Material Culture: The Goodwin and Guenther Collections</i> , by Joseph C. Porter	255
Buchanan, Kimberly Moore, <i>Apache Women Warriors</i> , by D. C. Cole	257
Schilz, Thomas F., <i>Lipan Apaches in Texas</i> , by Morris Opler	257
Swann, Brian, and Arnold Krupat, eds., <i>I Tell You Now: Autobiographical Essays by Native American Writers</i> , by David Reed Miller	258
Bruchac, Joseph, <i>Survival This Way: Interviews with American Indian Poets</i> , by Andrew Gulliford	259
Bartlett, Mary Dougherty, ed., <i>The New Native American Novel: Works in Progress</i> , by Ronald McCoy	260
Hanna, Warren L., <i>The Life and Times of James Willard Schultz (Apikuni)</i> , by William P. Corbett	260
Bohlke, L. Brent, ed., <i>Willa Cather in Person: Interviews, Speeches, and Letters</i> , by David Harrell	261
Stephens, Hal G., and Eugene M. Shoemaker, <i>In the Footsteps of John Wesley Powell: An Album of Comparative Photographs of the Green and Colorado Rivers, 1871–72 and 1968</i> , and	
Mutel, Cornelia Fleischer, and John C. Emerick, <i>From Grassland to Glacier: The Natural History of Colorado</i> , and	
McNulty, Tim, <i>Grand Canyon National Park: Window on the River of Time</i> , by Robert W. Righter	262
Conlin, Joseph R., <i>Bacon, Beans, and Galantines: Food and Foodways on the Western Mining Frontier</i> , by Byron A. Johnson	265
Gerdts, William H., and Mark Thistlethwaite, <i>Grand Illusions: History Painting in America</i> , by Eric von Schmidt	266

# New Mexico Historical Review



## INSTITUTIONAL SPONSORS

Adolph Coors Company  
UNM Centennial Center  
University of Nebraska Press  
University of New Mexico Press

## PATRONS

H. Paul Daulton  
Donald S. Dreesen  
Mrs. Gilberto Espinosa  
J. Manuel Espinosa  
Janet Lecompte

## SPONSORS

B. B. Armstrong	Victor A. Moitoret
Pauline C. Bent	Morgan Nelson
Mary D. Bledsoe	Hal Rothman
Kerry Boyd	David A. Sanchez
L. Bryce Boyer	<i>The Santa Fean Magazine</i>
Michael A. Harris	George A. Schneider
Fidel T. Hinojosa	Charles E. Seth
Ray E. Jenkins	Larry M. Southwick
Oakah L. Jones, Jr.	J. Penrod Toles
Francis C. Kajencki	Twila F. Turpen
Daniel T. Kipp	Eugene and Carol Venturini
Susan McGreevy	Charles I. Wellborn
E. L. Mechem	

# The American West: From Frontier to Region

---

MARTIN RIDGE

We are fast approaching the centennial of the Bureau of the Census' 1890 declaration of the closing of the frontier. It would seem appropriate to mark that centennial by asking why and how American historians became interested in the history of the American frontier, and why and how, in recent years, there has been increasing attention paid to the West as a region. And why studying the West as a region poses special problems. The history of the frontier and the regional West are not the same, but there is a significant intellectual overlay that warrants examination.

A little more than a century ago the scholarly discipline of American history was in its formative stages. The tradition of gifted authors—men like Francis Parkman, Brooks Adams, Theodore Roosevelt,

---

Martin Ridge, Senior Research Associate and Director of Research at the Huntington Library, San Marino, California, and professor of history at the California Institute of Technology, served as editor of the *Journal of American History* for eleven years. He is the author of *Ignatius Donnelly: The Portrait of a Politician* (1962), co-author, with the late Ray Allen Billington, of *Westward Expansion: A History of the American Frontier* (5th edition, 1982), the preeminent text in the field of frontier history, and editor of *The New Bilingualism: An American Dilemma* (1981), *Frederick Jackson Turner: Wisconsin's Historian of the Frontier* (1986), and *Children of Ol' Man River: The Life and Times of a Showboat Trouper* (1988). This essay was first delivered as an address at the conference inaugurating the Andrew V. Tackes Chair in History at the University of Notre Dame, and installing Walter Nugent as the first Tackes Professor.





Frederick Jackson Turner stands before the doors of the Huntington Library in this 1928 photograph. Courtesy of the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, California.

John Fiske, and James Ford Rhodes—who wrote romantic narratives, philosophical tracts, and often partisan political history—was well entrenched. They were separated from the handful of academically trained historians in several ways. They wrote engrossing books on large subjects that were intended for a general audience while the professional historians selected arcane subjects and wrote for themselves. More important, the popular writers, even the very best of them, often overlooked the institutional dynamics of American society because they tended to focus on dramatic episodes and personalities; while professionally trained academic historians who studied American history, especially those influenced by the modern German scientific school, embraced a structural approach to their subject—they were less interested in dramatic events and personalities and more concerned with seeking the origins of American institutions. The popular writers often offered explicit interpretations of the past or philosophies of history; the academic historians, fascinated by the techniques for proving the validity of the facts, were intrigued with formal, especially legal, documents because they were easily subjected to scientific tests. The academicians boasted that they not only built their work on the “true facts” but also that they were scientific, dispassionate, and objective in their analyses, albeit many admitted that the final products of their labors were rather ponderous and dull studies. Nor were the scientific historians immune from turning to the philosophy of history. Many of them sought general laws to explain all of the past, and, as Brooks Adams once observed, every historian’s inkstand held a potential theory or universal law of history.

Despite its scholarly strengths, the primary shortcoming of this burgeoning scientific school was not its literary inadequacies, great as some of them were—people are willing to read a lot of almost deadly stuff if it is meaningful—or its inability to draft general laws, but its failure to provide an organizing principle with the intellectual power necessary to explain American history. Moreover, almost by consensus, the quest for origins of American institutions was predetermined. Since the major colonies in North America had been English, the historians searched for the origin or germs of American institutions deep in the Anglo-Saxon and Germanic past. The “germ theory,” which so strongly stressed the continuity of institutions, minimized change and deemphasized the significance of the American experience. Almost invariably its American focus was on colonial New England and Virginia or the early national period of the Republic. Of course, the division between the gifted writers and the scientific professionals was sometimes blurred as in the case of Henry Adams, but one point is clear—there

was no accepted explanatory hypothesis around which to organize many important aspects of the American past. For that reason, much American historical scholarship was narrow, parochial, and filiopietistic.

This state of historical development could not persist. American scholars—especially those who were born in the Middle West, the Deep South, or the Far West and those who came of age toward the close of the nineteenth century, when the rise of nationalistic historical writing profoundly influenced many Western European intellectuals from the Black Sea to the North Sea—were dissatisfied when they confronted an American history that denied their own experience as citizens of an emerging world power and democratic nation. Whether of old-line American stock or of new immigrant extraction, they were acutely aware that they matured in a continental rather than a coastal nation. They looked for American historical explanations that turned on an axis of the more recent past—explanations more area specific to their own experience than the forests of medieval Europe, the fens of England, or even the English colonial plantations. They wanted an American history that spoke to all Americans, that addressed recent problems in the nation's internal development, that explained the process of Americanization which created a nation out of diverse peoples and geographic fragments, and that set forth the meaning or ethos of America in terms equal to those propounded by Europe's national historians.

Such a theory was first offered to the historical profession at an international historical conference held during the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 by a young professor from the University of Wisconsin named Frederick Jackson Turner. Turner's conference paper—"The Significance of the Frontier in American History"—suggested that the process and experience of settling the continent was so unique that it profoundly influenced virtually every aspect of national life and character. It was an organizing principle for a history of the United States that addressed the questions of its internal development and escaped both the "germ theory" and the colonial and Atlantic coastal emphasis.

When Turner published his essay on the significance of the frontier, there was a sense of immediacy about his work because parts of the United States had not yet achieved statehood. In fact, Turner fastened on the idea of the importance of the closing of the frontier after the Bureau of the Census reported in 1890 that it was no longer possible, as it had been in the past, to draw an unbroken frontier line on an American census map. This was the beginning of the formal study of the frontier in the United States.

Turner sometimes defined the frontier as the point of contact between civilization and savagery. The experience of white men and women—both native and foreign born—as they seized the opportunity to wrench land from the Indian and exploit it with the active support of the government, or with only a minimum of governmental restraint, highlighted the idea that the contact points of white society and the virtually limitless exploitable natural resources on the edges of, or in advance of settled areas, offered a wholly new way to look at the American past. This was a history that began on the borders of the colonial world and extended across a continent, looking as much for examples of American exceptionalism as for evidence of historical continuities.

It is important to understand that many of the ideas that Turner expressed about the characteristics of the frontier and its impact—even the word frontier—had been used earlier by scholars and writers so diverse as the political economist William Graham Sumner, the social gospel preacher Josiah Strong, the publicist Edwin L. Godkin, and that moody New England Brahmin, Brooks Adams. Whatever the sources of Turner's thought (and it has been traced to innumerable historical writings, including the Italian political economist Achilles Loria), it is Turner's idea of the frontier that is transcendent. It differs significantly from that of any other single individual (for example, read carefully and compare Turner with Brooks Adams), and it emerged eventually as the most evocative explanatory hypothesis for American historians for almost half a century. Turner purported to explain why the United States and its people were unique. Unlike earlier American authors who had expressed similar notions about the character of America, Turner's was a secular doctrine to be demonstrated by inductive research rather than, for example, an act of faith as was Walt Whitman's expression of the same idea.

Although Turner expressed himself with the imagery of a poet and speculated about the past with the language of a seer, he was at heart a scientific historian who believed in economic and political history. But he also realized that by studying the behavior of masses of the people, as distinct from the actions of the articulate elite, he could explain the larger aspects of American human history as clearly as evolutionary geologists or Darwinian biologists could interpret its natural history. This quest drove him and his followers to seek evidence from a variety of sources—maps, census records, climatic studies, congressional records, diaries, and election data, to name only a few—and to endeavor to draw correlations from among them. They borrowed ideas and models from other social sciences, too. Their methods

by today's standards were primitive, but they did yield insights that no one had before suggested; and they pointed up the importance of studying change over time as well as structure if the historian wanted to achieve a deeper understanding of the past.

Even more important than Turner's own research, which was concentrated on the Middle West and the Old Southwest, was the new kind of American historian that followed him and the new type of neopositivistic evolutionary American history they wrote. If, as Turner speculated, for example, American institutions underwent a series of rebirths each time white men and women encountered a new frontier and passed through the stages of social evolution from primitivism to civilization, his ideas required testing in various settings—among miners, farmers, and cattlemen as well as in different physical and climatic areas such as the near-rain forests of the Northwest, the arid regions of Nevada and Utah, or the semi-arid Great Plains. If, for example, eastern and foreign institutions—like churches—were changed when they became part of the steady march of the moving frontier, each must be studied in a new context. And how did immigrants become Americanized, for Turner postulated the idea that the frontier played a significant role in the process. Congressional votes on such issues as the tariff, road construction, land prices, and declarations of war were correlated with the home state and place of birth of each congressman as well as party to see the influence of region on political behavior. Institutions, too, such as the army and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, now warranted a quite different analysis. New fields of historical research, such as agricultural history, were born of frontier study and assumed major importance. Thus, the story of the establishment of even the smallest community, in fact of every human activity on the frontier, became part of a large and significant narrative—the making of the American national character and the formation and function of a democratic society.

Turner's variety of history demanded that American historians write analytical studies of institutions and give them meaning and significance by placing them in the widest national and even international context. He raised the level of the study of the pioneer period of local and regional history—whether in Indiana, Iowa, Texas, California, or the Great Basin—from a parochial or antiquarian exercise to make it part of the national pageant. The legislative and constitutional history of the United States as well as the story of the nation's wars and diplomacy were depicted in terms of their interrelationship with the struggle to acquire and settle western lands. Moreover, neither

Turner nor some of his followers hesitated to employ statistical methods.

Although Turner was interested in the broadest implications of the westward movement of masses of people, he often wrote in terms of archetypes and applied them in an evolutionary context. Thus, for him, not only did communities and regions pass through various stages of development until they attained levels of civilization comparable to those of the East or Europe but also his archetypes passed in evolutionary order over the natural landscape. Here was an American history as clear as evolutionary science. "Stand at the Cumberland Gap," he wrote, "and watch the procession of civilization, marching in single file—the buffalo following the trail to the salt springs, the Indian, the fur trader and hunter, the cattle-raiser, the pioneer farmer—and the frontier has passed by. Stand at South Pass in the Rockies a century later and see the same procession with wider intervals between. The unequal rate of advance compels us to distinguish the frontier into the trader's frontier, the rancher's frontier, or the miner's frontier, and the farmer's frontier."

This kind of archetypal generalization opened the way for the mythologizing and romanticizing of the American pioneering experience that captured the imagination of the general public. For example, even after research proved that the evolutionary historical model was flawed—that people of all economic and social groups appeared almost simultaneously in virtually every frontier setting—Turner's evolutionary model remains, larger than life, especially in fiction and the movies. Serious scholarship about western archetypes has never been able to displace the myths and romantic images conjured in the public mind by publicists, even those contemporaries most familiar with the frontier experience. Whether cowboy, investment banker, Indian, homesteader, hunter, farm laborer, soldier, hurdy-gurdy girl, or gambler they are all fair game for the author of fiction. Nothing, for example, is further from the truth than the depiction of the American farmer as a sort of virtuous yeoman living happily in nature's garden, gathering her fruits in a life devoid of the stresses and constraints of the urban world and the market economy. Farmers were the linchpin of the Turner evolutionary scheme because they were the last frontier stage, but they enjoyed anything but the generous bounty of nature's garden: they were re-makers of the natural landscape who struggled to overcome the hardships of the configuration of the land as well as the uncertainties of the weather and the economy. They were in reality anything but autonomous and independent.

Romantic myths aside, the study of frontier periods in American

history proved immensely popular among serious historians from the outset and has continued to be so, not only because it is a convenient and informed way to look at how a laissez-faire society exploited an underdeveloped country in the nineteenth century but also because so many historians lived in regions of the country which had, within the memory of living man, recently emerged from, or were still part of, such a society. Therefore, they could write the history of their own communities or regions. It was no longer necessary to travel to a distant archive to write about an important subject.

But even more germane, for a later generation of regional historians, whether in New Mexico, Utah, or California, the frontier paradigm called for the study of the interrelationship of local and national institutions over time, for comparative analysis, and for a plethora of demographic work that could be correlated to a host of other variables. It challenged historians to avoid simplistic chronological political narratives and narrow institutional studies, and to substitute, at least at the outset, geographic, cultural, and economic contexts in which to write. It called for measurement of the extent of universality over particularity as an area emerged from partial to complete integration within the national economy and social culture.

By no means have all of the questions raised by the study of the frontier been exhausted. The analysis of the internal migration of peoples and institutions within the United States continues to attract serious attention, albeit historians may be more interested in social institutions, such as the family or the family farm. All kinds of issues, including religion, urbanization, native peoples, the environment, and politics, are still far from settled.

The idea of the frontier, however, has achieved so celebrated a status in American society that the very word frontier in itself has become a metaphor, encompassing public feeling about both the national character and the national past. As a metaphor frontier has come to describe a people whose national character was formed in an environment of economic opportunity based on vast areas of readily available underdeveloped land, rich mineral resources, individualism, pragmatism, political democracy, equality, an unrestrained society, courage, wastefulness of natural resources, geographic migration and rapid social mobility, personal and communal regeneration, personal violence, and vigilantism as well as a host of other factors, especially the greatest personal liberty.

Even Europeans accept the metaphor and see Americans in this way, accustomed as they are, and we are not, to believing that individuals demonstrate national character traits. In addition, so far as

Europeans and we ourselves employ the word regarding the nation's past, the metaphor also includes the near genocide of the Indians, the repression of racial and ethnic minorities, the intimidation of, or wars on, neighboring nations in the name of manifest destiny, the opening of virgin lands, and the ruthless, if not mindless, assault on the natural environment for personal gain without consideration of the consequences for future generations.

Metaphors, assert anthropologists, have a way of becoming self-fulfilling prophecies. This is certainly true of the frontier for both the American people and their leaders. From Thomas Jefferson to Ronald Reagan, presidents have not only spoken of the nation in terms of frontier values but also of national and personal traits of citizens in the same way. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, for example, acknowledged the existence of this tradition and urged its abandonment in a 1935 radio address advocating the need for governmental planning. "Today," he declared, "we can no longer escape into virgin territory: we must master our environment. . . . We have been compelled by stark necessity [of the depression] to unlearn the too uncomfortable superstition that the American soil was mystically blessed with every kind of immunity to grave economic maladjustments, and that the American spirit of individualism—all alone and unhelped by the cooperative efforts of government—could withstand and repel every form of economic disarrangement or crisis."

The more traditional example of the metaphor's self-fulfilling quality—always evident among frontier politicians—is the so-called Sage Brush Rebellion, which recently swept the Rocky Mountain and high country states. When the 1973 oil shortage held out the promise for the rapid exploitation of coal and shale oil, western political and economic conservatives, who have long sought control over ranch lands, demanded that the federal government release into the hands of western states control over petroleum resources so they could be developed without current federal environmental and other governmental restraints. The power of the frontier as a metaphor is such that it compels continued serious study of the actual past lest the metaphorical interpretation overwhelm or distort reality.

Regardless of its current power as a metaphor, and attractive and valuable as the idea of the frontier was during the first quarter of the twentieth century for historians who were studying both the frontier and the history of the United States, it had many limitations. The most important limitation on the frontier as an organizing principle is that it offered little or no guidance for understanding the internal history of the United States in the post-frontier period or the twentieth-century



West. In fact, scholars were quick to realize that, by accepting the passing of the frontier line in 1890 as a paradigm, they really defined much of the post-frontier trans-Mississippi and twentieth-century West as a separate historical problem that was not directly part of their basic organizing principle. This did not, however, affect historians who tried to organize the frontier in the context of the Hispanic advance into the West.

What had struck Turner and his colleagues, however, as extremely significant as they studied the advance of the frontier was little more than a Bureau of the Census statistical curiosity. The idea of the frontier is still important as an organizing principle for studying the internal history of the United States in the nineteenth century, but the passing of the frontier, in the context of the Bureau of Census maps, has a quite different meaning than Turner and his immediate disciples attached to it. There is no doubt that it was a national historical, psychological, and demographic watershed, and the fact that it occurred on the eve of the greatest depression the nation had yet known certainly appeared to enhance its importance. This was especially so because many intellectuals of Turner's generation associated landed proprietorship with personal political independence. But it never represented a genuine discontinuity. All problems and opportunities that existed in the areas of sparse settlement of the western United States before 1890 existed after 1890 as well. The rise of Populism, for example, more closely correlates with national demographic trends and the world economy than with the disappearance of the frontier line. And the vast amounts of land alienated under the Homestead Law did not diminish after 1890.

Turner wondered what would nurture a democratic society when the free or cheap arable lands in the nation were all taken up. The idea, deeply rooted in the seventeenth-century republican concept, that personal political freedom and independence were inseparable from landed proprietorship, was of greater importance to Turner and his critics than to historians of the frontier or scholars interested in the post-frontier and twentieth-century West. It became part of an argument about the heritage or legacy of the frontier that interested primarily intellectual historians and students of American nationality and national character.

The material and social consequences of the frontier experience loomed far larger for most regional historians. From the point of view of studying parts of the country where frontier conditions no longer existed, Turner's initial questions, archetypes, and typologies were of limited value, since they pertained to periods only before or during

settlement. Oddly enough, Turner himself stumbled early on the same basic problem. To understand the role of frontier political and economic issues in national affairs, he decided to analyze the development of the American states during the years 1830 to 1850. These were years when frontier conditions gradually ceased to exist in the Middle West and the South. He required a new principle of historical organization, and he found it in what he called sectionalism. He divided the nation into several parts, which he called sections: Northeast, Southeast, Old Northwest, and Old Southwest—the latter two were in the process of transition from frontier to settled areas during those two decades.

For scholarly purposes Turner was compelled to define his sections when he began to analyze their institutions over time. His definitions, partly based on physical geography, partly on a variety of socio-economic factors, centered primarily on how the people in each area responded to a set of political and economic variables. Sectional interests he came to believe would eventually become so strong that American public policy would demonstrate sectional compromises on national issues. The Congress, he felt, would be a brokering agency for competing geographical entities. Since Turner was interested in the expansion of political democracy and economic equality, his initial concern was how the sections interacted to create an increasingly egalitarian national policy. Terminology aside, geographers recognized Turner's sections were socio-physiographic provinces or regions.

As a scientific and Progressive historian for whom American history was a study of the growth of freedom and equality through conflict and resolution, Turner looked to institutions within regions that addressed those questions—mostly but not entirely political parties. Thus, Turner explained his interest in sections as a natural outgrowth of studying the frontier. In fact, there is a very charming exchange of letters in the Huntington Library between Turner and his brilliant student, Carl Becker—a leading scholar of the eighteenth century who taught at Cornell University and who chided Turner for abandoning frontier studies to look at sectionalism—in which Turner explains that the frontier cannot be studied except by various forms of regional analyses and that the post-frontier period must be part of this work if historians are to understand critical relationships.

Historians of the trans-Mississippi West as a region confronted a similar problem because virtually all of their history is that of a modernizing society in the post-frontier era. Like the generation to which Turner belonged, they wanted an American history that addressed their concerns and was area specific rather than vaguely national. They pointed out that the post-frontier internal history of the United States

deserved as much attention today as the frontier warranted a century ago. They realized that, except for the South with its legacy of slavery, the modernization of America has not meant its homogenization. One should never confuse the existence of trans-local or inter-regional institutions, they insisted, with the absence of local and regional differences.

There is a distinct regional history of the United States, and it is seldom masked by national organizations and institutions. Anyone familiar with American folk music, folklore, language, material culture, religious customs, food, marketing, governmental planning, census study, or ethnic and racial identity will readily attest to regional differences. These regional distinctions have been in the making since the years of early settlement and the heavy in-migration of diverse peoples into physically different geographic settings. In fact, the United States is virtually a blanket of regional divisions, even if one ignores the way governmental agencies have carved it up.

Most scholars of the West as a region, except for being interdisciplinary, are little like the early followers of Turner. They do not assert that any specific regional history is in itself a valid organizing principle for understanding the whole of twentieth-century American history. They are far less likely to be seen as geographic or economic determinists. Nor would they assert that our national character or democratic institutions hinge on the political or economic nature of the region. But they do point out that the post-frontier development of the eleven western states—the area stretching from Texas and the High Plains to the Pacific Ocean—affords a unit for study that covers almost a century in time and that this unit, because of its size and complexity, is unique.

They have as good or better case than scholars of other regions because of the West's nature and rate of change. The nation has seen an accelerated westward tilt in population distribution since 1900. Because of the nature of its industry and agriculture, the West, throughout the past century, has been the most urbanized portion of the country. More new large cities have grown up in the West than anywhere else. It is hard for people in the Midwest and East to believe that places named San Jose, Phoenix, Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles, and San Diego are listed among the ten largest cities in the nation.

The West contains the area with the largest amount of federally owned land. Today, most of the American Indian population lives in the West. The West is also the region that has spawned the environmental movement perhaps because westerners were among the first

to recognize the fragility of ecosystems. Some portions of western states are the most water deficient in the nation; others are surfeited.

The West in the last half century has been the portal for a whole new immigrant population, and there has been an obvious social impact. Under the current state law requiring bilingual education, for example, the City of Los Angeles must provide teachers in eighty languages and dialects—only one of which, Spanish—is a major European tongue. Los Angeles' multicultural character is a microcosm of what has happened from San Antonio to Seattle, and makes what historians once called the new immigration—people from Southern and Eastern Europe—pale by comparison. American Roman Catholicism may soon find its basis in western rather than eastern population centers. Los Angeles is already the largest diocese in the nation.

Meanwhile, because of changes in technology, mining, resource depletion, erosion, and new industries, the population in some western states has plummeted, while in others it has soared, gaining more rapidly than ever in the past. Los Angeles County's population, for example, has increased by more than eight hundred thousand people since the 1980 census. And because all of this is so recent, a scholar has available the best records and data for studying the structure, persistence, and change of political, economic, and social institutions—from criminal justice to family structure. It also allows for a renewed look at the complex relationships that exist between the West and the nation's political and financial centers in the East.

All of this sounds like a bonanza for a new group of regionalists or the less traditional scholars of the Turner school, who have moved to incorporate the regional history of the post-frontier West into their research. But the study of the regional West is a field with significant pitfalls. Perhaps the most obvious is also the most critical—how to define the West and around what principle can it be organized for study. This has proven far from an easy task.

The complexity of the issue was recognized years ago by the followers of Herbert Eugene Bolton—the leader in the study of Latin American Borderlands—who conceived of the history of the trans-Mississippi West within the context of Spanish expansion and then attempted to continue it in terms of Anglo-American penetration, state-making, and economic development. So long as the Boltonians worked on the Southwest and the Pacific Rim prior to the American war on Mexico their scheme had viability, but when they moved forward chronologically into the American period, the result was a disjointed narrative and an analysis without a thesis. Bolton hinted at the idea of a spiritual dissension between the Spanish Borderlands and the areas

where Spain had not conquered, but this insight was never fully examined. Oddly enough, militant Chicano intellectuals in the 1960s took it up in the battle cry *Aztlan*—by which they meant the lands of the bronze people or where the Spanish had settled—which is essentially a Boltonian Borderlands concept. They want to reclaim the Southwest from the English-speaking population whom they see as foreign oppressors. This idea, however dramatic, has never spread widely even within the Hispanic community.

At present there are a host of competing approaches to the study of the West as a region, some quite simplistic, others very sophisticated. One of the most popular is the assertion that the West is a desert, and what exists there is an oasis culture. The difficulty with the oasis theory is that it does not fit the whole West, parts of which are well watered. The most imaginative presentation of this organizing principle remains Walter Prescott Webb's magisterial *The Great Plains*, which attempts to correlate western culture exclusively with water. Although much that Webb said was true, the theory was highly vulnerable. As one sharp, but facetious, critic of this idea once observed: If the shortage of water is the key to understanding western culture, why is the total immersion Baptist church so strong in Texas?

Actually, scholars who think exclusively of water often fall into the trap of viewing the West from the perspective that defines the norm as the amount of water necessary for the production of corn. Certainly the location, amount, and distribution of water remain significant factors in western life and culture, but water cannot be the single organizing principle, unless one is concerned with its quality.

An equally popular thesis regarding the West is that it is a province exploited by eastern interests within a capitalist system. This idea is associated with a theory of internal colonialism. This is a neo-Turnerian concept stemming from the economic conflicts between frontier people and the metropolitan centers on which they were often dependent. Today, it is freighted with an ethnic and racial component that sees non-whites as the laboring class within an exploitative system. Although intriguing as a hypothesis, it often breaks down into an argument not over whether there should be exploitation of the West but who should exploit it, and how, and for whose benefit. It is the familiar story of the world we lost—a make-believe time and place in the past when local communities presumably controlled their own resources and developed them for the common good. This is an angry history because it emphasizes the misuse of resources and the struggle for the recapture of the control of the West by groups that feel alienated from

the system. It is a history where ideology is too often substituted for evidence.

Much more useful are suggestions that environmental factors and cultural patterns can be correlated to provide unique insight. Such work allows for the incorporation of a variety of significant variables that have influenced life in the West but do not fit into the simple oasis context or the exploitative developmental model. It also affords an opportunity to study space, social structure, and change over time. Cultural geographers have pioneered this approach. This approach tends to break the West down into smaller, more coherent, and more manageable units of study. This is the kind of study that D. W. Meinig has done so well. It also provides the basis for comparative work.

Another organizing principle emphasizes modernization, and may call for the study of institutions and organizations with or without regard to the environment but highly sensitive to larger and often technological changes in society as a whole. The primary stress is on the gradual integration of regional organizations or institutions into their national counterpart, and how an institution or organization functions during periods of transformation. The simplest example of this is the impact of containerization on transportation, which was developed by the Southern Pacific Railway and has now become part of the nation railroad systems.

These examples are merely illustrative of the dynamic character of the field. Paradigms based on the environment, demographic analysis, and even politics could also be mentioned. Historians, geographers, and sociologists have offered a spate of constructs with which to study the West and about which they still debate. There is no clear consensus among them. In fact, today there is almost as much chaos among historians in quest of a synthesis as there was when Turner wrote. And if every historian lacks Brooks Adams' inkstand holding a potential theory of historical explanation, he or she has a computer with comparable capabilities.

I am an intolerant pluralist so far as an interpretative basis of the twentieth-century West is concerned. I want every hypothesis given a fair hearing. I am willing to listen attentively to anyone who suggests how we can better recognize, interpret, and study what the westerners themselves have defined as the region.

It is ironic, at least to me, that the boundaries of the West seem best defined not by academics studying it but by the people who live there. A delineation exists in the minds of women and men, and it is strangely physiographic. There is a location on the plains of the West where, for some undetermined reason, people think of themselves as

being westerners and not middle westerners or southerners. It would be convenient if it were at the one-hundredth meridian—the so-called line of semi-aridity—but it is not. There is a psychological and not a physiographic fault line that separates regions. As these people see it, they are not from the South but from the Southwest; not from the Middle West but from the West; not from the prairies but from the High Plains; and they think of St. Louis, not Denver, as being in the East. They may or may not be part of the nation's middle-class dominant cultural group, but they do have a sense of identity, which is regionally specific and even evokes a kind of pride and loyalty. The West retains a sense of particularity despite the enormous power of the forces working to create a universal national culture.

This prompts me to suggest—but not insist upon—my own organizing principle. Since I have come to the study of the West from the Turnerian tradition—with an interest in national character and American exceptionalism—it is the sense of identity—the western ethos—that intrigues me and that I employ in defining the West. Unlike the nation, the West does not have a shared purpose, but it does have the advantages of shared special experiences. The West is a cultural phenomenon. It involves, “all the things that a group of people inhabiting a common geographical area do, the way they do things . . . and their values and symbols.” And this culture serves a profoundly conservative function. This gives the post-frontier West some of the metaphoric power of the term frontier but opens the way for the broadest basis of analysis. The cultural West permits, as well as subsumes within it, almost any approach to the subject. This is evident in historical work so diverse as the changing attitudes of western women toward the cult of domesticity when their labor was no longer needed in the field or on the range on the one hand and the social basis for the California State Supreme Court's significant modifications of tort law on the other. Webb found it in the *mentalité* of the man with a six-gun. I confess that as an organizing principle culture may say virtually everything and yet nothing. But it does urge the thesis that there is a culturally defined public entity with geographic boundaries that is part of the larger national whole to which it contributes and with which it interacts in a significant fashion.

How do you write this kind of history? Frederick Jackson Turner each year asked his seminar students to write two papers—the first on a narrow frontier subject and the second on why it was important in the nation's history. His theory is valid today: there is no western history without a national context. We no longer need two essays, but we must always keep in mind the two ideas. Any other kind of writing

will doom the field to a parochialism from which it was rescued a century ago.

Turner made the history of the frontier so vital a part of American history that it virtually became our national narrative. After Turner there was a rise of other perspectives that gave the study of American history its depth and richness. The frontier became a sub-field within the history of the nation. But it also provided the basis for a western regional history to explain the internal history of a large portion of the nation in the post-frontier period. Unlike the study of the frontier, which offers both an explanation of national character and the internal history of early settlement, the study of the regional West is in a more fluid state with no consensus as yet regarding its boundaries or means to organize material within them. A cultural basis not only for fixing boundaries of the West but also for giving it meaning and significance may well prove to be that organizing principle.



# *New Mexico Historical Review*



John P. Wilson

## *Gilberto Espinosa Prize 1988*

John P. Wilson, professional consultant in historical archaeological research, has received the 1988 Gilberto Espinosa Prize for the best article appearing in volume 63 of the *New Mexico Historical Review*. Wilson's article, "How the Settlers Farmed: Hispanic Villages and Irrigation Systems in Early Sierra County, 1850-1900," appeared in the October 1988 issue.

Wilson, who lives in Las Cruces, holds a doctorate in anthropology from Harvard University and is on the board of directors for the Historical Society of New Mexico. He is author of two books, including his most recent work, *Merchants, Guns, and Money: The Saga of Lincoln County and Its Wars*, which won the Gaspar Perez de Villagra Award from the Historical Society of New Mexico last year.

Gilberto Espinosa, researcher, writer, well-known New Mexico lawyer, and strong supporter of New Mexico state history, served as a consultant to the *New Mexico Historical Review* for many years. Following his death in 1983, Mr. Espinosa's family and friends established the award in his honor. This is the sixth year for the award, which includes a \$100 prize. Previous winners include John O. Baxter, Michael C. Meyer, Robert M. Utley, Jake Spidle, and Robert A. Trennert.

Subscriptions to the *New Mexico Historical Review*, a scholarly journal affiliated with the University of New Mexico, are \$15 a year, \$50 for sponsors, and \$100 for patrons. For information on the journal, or to subscribe, write *New Mexico Historical Review*, 1013 Mesa Vista, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131, or call (505) 277-5839.

# Bronson Cutting and the Early Years of the American Legion in New Mexico

---

RICHARD LOWITT

It was Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., charged by a group meeting in Paris in February and March 1919 to return home and launch a veterans' organization, who involved Bronson Cutting in the American Legion. He asked Cutting to assist in identifying possible New Mexico delegates for a caucus to be held in St. Louis. Cutting wired Roosevelt the names of forty men representing all branches of the armed forces. From this list two names, those of Lieutenant Colonel Charles M. de Bremond of Roswell and Private Canuto Trujillo of Chimayo, were selected by the national organization and included in the formal call issued by the temporary national committee.

Roosevelt then requested that a temporary secretary and a temporary central committee be selected in New Mexico and that a state caucus elect delegates for the St. Louis meeting. In late April in Albuquerque, delegates from throughout the state selected twelve veterans, ten of whom attended, to represent the state at the St. Louis caucus. Thus when Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., on the morning of May 8, 1919 called the caucus of the American Legion to order in the packed Shubert-Jefferson Theater at St. Louis, Bronson Cutting was participating in the general pandemonium.

---

Richard Lowitt is professor of history in Iowa State University and author of *The New Deal and the West* (1985), as well as other works on twentieth-century politics. This essay is part of a larger biographical work on Bronson Cutting.



Bronson Cutting. Photo by T. Harmon Parkhurst, courtesy of the Museum of New Mexico, negative number 51494.

The New Mexico delegation, though small, was neither inactive nor inconspicuous. Cutting, recently discharged as Captain in Military Intelligence, held the second highest rank among the ten delegates, four of whom had Hispanic surnames. One of their number, a former Seaman First Class, was elected second vice chairman to serve until the first national convention scheduled for Minneapolis convened in November, 1919. Minneapolis received the bid when Chicago was eliminated from consideration because its newly elected mayor, William Hale Thompson, was considered too pro-German after having boasted that Chicago was the largest German city in the world except Berlin.<sup>1</sup>

When the first annual convention of the American Legion of New Mexico was held in the Armory Building in Albuquerque in October 1919, New Mexico had been a state less than eight years. The pattern and structure of the "chaotic factionalism" (Kenneth Owens's term) or "politics of disunity" (Howard Lamar's term) that prevailed throughout the territorial period (1850–1912), longest for any state, was still evident.<sup>2</sup> The state was sparsely populated (360,350 people in 1920) and several of the last territorial political leaders were still active. Much of the state's wealth was controlled by a handful of individuals, Hispanic and Anglo, and by corporations. Two cultures and two religions, leaving aside the Native Americans, helped complicate the political mix. And the unravelling of land grants, some going back to the sixteenth century, brought an unduly large number of lawyers to the territory in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Communities were widely dispersed, and only Albuquerque, with a population of 11,020 in 1910, had any pretense of being a city. Most communities were isolated, and some in the northern counties were not markedly different from what they had been when New Mexico became part of the United States following the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. While a social and political infra-structure was in place, it was heavily faction-ridden, poorly funded, and largely unable to sustain the needs of its people. The economy was extractive, exploitative of the state's abundant natural resources, and politics was concerned in many instances in furthering such endeavors, while entrepreneurs all too often sought rapid development through governmental favors.

Though not as outrageous as when "the Santa Fe Ring" dominated

---

1. "American Legion: Department of New Mexico, Report of the Department Historian: April 1919 to August 1920," copy in box 5, Bronson Murray Cutting Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

2. Alaska achieved full territorial status in 1912; Hawaii became an unincorporated territory in 1900. Both entered the Union in 1959.

public policy, remnants of the "old gang" continued to seek political power for control of natural resources and for privileges. Factionalism within the Republican party had become so contentious that the Democrats were able to elect the first two governors and Woodrow Wilson, likewise, won the state in 1912 and 1916. The third governor, Washington E. Lindsey, an independent Republican, was elevated to the post following the death of the second governor, Ezequiel de Baca, shortly after entering office. Lindsey was unable to secure his party's nomination in 1918, however, and it went to another independent Republican, a former Democrat and a Hispanic, who won the election and who, before the end of his term was thoroughly disillusioned with the faction-ridden groups within his party. By 1920 ethnic and class divisions had become important factors in New Mexico politics.

It was the large and largely illiterate native Hispanic population that added a distinctly unique dimension to life in New Mexico. U.S. citizens since 1848, most New Mexicans lived in rural isolation and found meaning in their lives through their church and family, and through the *patrons* who assisted them when they were in need and who saw that they voted as they should. In a pastoral economy unable to offer adequate educational or material opportunities for advancement, vast numbers of native-born Hispanic New Mexicans had been entombed in a tradition of poverty for generations. The English language, new codes of competition ushered in by the railroad, mining corporations, large cattle ranches, dry-farming homesteaders, assorted land grabbers, and federal guidelines all were slowly impinging upon the isolation of native-born Hispanic New Mexicans, who in 1916 constituted, according to then Senator Albert B. Fall, a slight majority of the voting population.<sup>3</sup> While such forces were diminishing traditional Hispanic culture by the time New Mexico entered the Union in 1912, they had not become dominant by the end of the first world war.

Sixty percent of the New Mexicans volunteering for military service during the first world war were of Spanish descent. Many could not speak English. Despite this handicap the state had so many volunteers that it was unable to fill its draft quotas completely. Those Hispanic veterans who joined the American Legion would never again become totally engulfed in the restricted world from whence they came. Service in the armed forces had brought them in contact with the modern world; joining the American Legion kept them in contact with portions of it and made them aware of aspects of the New Mexico scene that

---

3. Albert B. Fall to Thomas F. Cole, September 19, 1916, box 16, Albert B. Fall Papers, Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

never previously concerned them. A traditional prescribed view of the world and their place in it, already in the process of being fractured, could now be shattered.<sup>4</sup>

Bronson Cutting in his role as a prominent figure in the New Mexico American Legion served as a catalyst in this process. Like numerous other Anglos, he arrived in New Mexico in 1910 as a "lunger," a victim of tuberculosis seeking to regain his health. Unlike most other health seekers, thanks to family wealth he was able to purchase in 1912 the Santa Fe *New Mexican*, the state's oldest newspaper, and become involved in public life. Prior to entering military service he was involved in litigation stemming from charges published in his paper that implicated prominent Republican political figures. In addition, he had played a prominent role in Progressive Party politics since 1912, becoming state chairman in 1914. His activities in the American Legion would keep him a prominent public figure and would contribute to continued chaotic factionalism and disharmony in New Mexico politics.

In 1916, following the critical election in which New Mexico again cast its electoral vote for Woodrow Wilson, Cutting attempted to explain New Mexico to Theodore Roosevelt in a penetrating letter and in doing so, gave some indication of why he would later play the role he did in the American Legion. "The fundamental fact about New Mexico," he explained, "is that it is not an American community at all." Conditions in the state, he told the former Rough Rider, were more feudal than they were Latin, analogous, for example, to "medieval Portugal or modern Nicaragua." While the great mass of native New Mexicans, comprising more than half the voters, had been "systematically robbed, degraded and corrupted by the Republican ring," Cutting believed "the best type of native New Mexican has no superior anywhere" and that the only way to make New Mexico an American state was to eliminate all remnants of the Republican ring, an opportunity the American Legion would provide several years later.<sup>5</sup>

In 1919 Cutting was thirty-one years old, a bit older than most who joined the organization and still concerned about his health. He found that he enjoyed the camaraderie and fellowship the American Legion provided in bridging class and ethnic lines, something to which his privileged and sheltered previous experience had not exposed him.

---

4. George I. Sanchez, *Forgotten People* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1940), 26. James Baca, New Mexico's Adjutant General, commented on the difficulty with English among Hispanic soldiers, James Baca to Newton D. Baker, October 5, 1917, box 14, Fall Papers.

5. Bronson Cutting to Theodore Roosevelt, November 17, 1916, box 3, Cutting Papers.

To be sure, he had served as a leader of the Progressive Party but he had spent most of his time in Santa Fe. And his military service was spent operating out of the American embassy in London, an assignment that called for meeting with his counterparts in British military intelligence. Through the American Legion Cutting gained a wide range of friends and acquaintances who would serve him well when he sought public office.

At the outset, however, Cutting's involvement with the American Legion centered about organizing local posts. Less than a week after the St. Louis meeting, Cutting wrote the acting secretary of the New Mexico organization: "We made such a big show at St. Louis that I don't want to fall down over enrolled membership. We have a hard state to start posts in, particularly in the Northern counties." What was needed was a "real hustler" who could speak Spanish, be "keen on the whole proposition," and whose honesty must be beyond question, since that person might have to handle money at some of the posts. Cutting had such a person in mind and was willing to "stand for the expenses" involved. A willingness to organize American Legion posts and shoulder some of the expenses was a major preoccupation with Cutting throughout his involvement with the organization.<sup>6</sup>

At the St. Louis meeting, in which Cutting served as chairman of the New Mexico delegation, he and the son of New Mexico governor Octaviano A. Larrazolo, Jr., were elected permanent executive committee members for New Mexico, though neither was elected to office at the first state convention in October. At that meeting a constitution was adopted and, after extended debate, the delegates selected Santa Fe over Albuquerque as the site for their state headquarters. The state chairman, a former lieutenant colonel who had been gassed during the war, appointed Cutting vice chairman and resigned his post shortly thereafter. In addition to filling out the chairman's unexpired term, Cutting served the national American Legion as organizer for Zone Ten, comprising New Mexico, Arizona, Texas, and Oklahoma. His assignment was to provide speakers for posts throughout these states when asked to do so. As acting state chairman, Cutting was determined that New Mexico "get busy at once with the foundation of Posts in all

---

6. Bronson Cutting to Miguel Antonio Otero, Jr., May 16, 1919, box 13, Cutting Papers. For a report on the progress of Donald Blevins in organizing American Legion posts see Otero to Bronson Cutting, June 2, 1919, box 4, Cutting Papers. For a discussion of organizational efforts in Roswell and eastern New Mexico, see Fred B. Humphries to Bronson Cutting, May 29, 1919, and Dillard Wyatt to Bronson Cutting, June 10, 1919, box 4, Cutting Papers.

possible parts of the state" and that it send "a representative delegation" to the Minneapolis convention.

During the St. Louis caucus a resolution was introduced "asking the Federal Government to turn over to the Western States the public lands held in the arid sections of the country." Although supported by delegates from New Mexico and other western states, the resolution failed because a majority held that "all controversial matters and specific resolutions" be postponed until the Minneapolis meeting in November. Since the governor of New Mexico and the chairman of the State Council of Defense had sent him telegrams endorsing the resolution, Cutting thought that if the governors of all the western states urged the matter upon their state delegates, it could be adopted at the Minneapolis convention.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile, if the national organization was not yet ready to consider resolutions affecting national concerns, perhaps Congress would. With this end in view, Cutting endorsed compulsory military training as a program that would insure preparedness and benefit the nation's youth. Though preparedness made no headway, three years later Cutting's belated interest in another issue, that of pensions, drew him more directly into the maelstrom of New Mexico politics.<sup>8</sup>

In 1919, however, the organization was just getting underway. Its first commander, Herman Baca, relied heavily on Cutting, a fellow member of the executive committee. Writing Cutting in November, 1919, Baca said, "Don't fail to tell me what's right and what's wrong, remember you're the Doctor as far as I am concerned and I always take your good word." All was not work for the young veterans, however, and Cutting got drunk with fellow delegates at conventions. Nevertheless, he maintained an active interest in Legion affairs by endorsing, for example, resolutions adopted by the 1919 state convention favoring land settlement for New Mexico veterans. The legislature responded with a land settlement bill but did not provide adequate funding and tied its endorsement to a measure pending in the Congress that was never approved. The chief political concern of the New Mexico American Legion did not deviate early on from its focus on a meaningful soldiers' settlement measure. Cutting made this point clear when, at a May 1920 meeting of the national executive committee in Washington,

---

7. Bronson Cutting to Octaviano A. Larrazolo, Jr., May 16, 1919, box 13, Cutting Papers. Cutting served as acting chairman until October 1919 when the first state convention meeting in Albuquerque selected Herman G. Baca as Commander.

8. Benigno C. Hernandez to Bronson Cutting, October 20, 1919, box 17, Cutting Papers. Hernandez was New Mexico's Congressional Representative.



he insisted that New Mexico was more interested in effective land settlement and home aid measures than in cash payments to veterans in the form of bonuses.<sup>9</sup>

Bonus legislation apparently was not an immediate concern of the national organization. The Minneapolis convention refused to make any demands on Congress, and the New Mexico executive committee, following the decision of the Albuquerque Convention, went on record against bonuses. A land settlement measure was their primary legislative concern, though Cutting personally believed a vocational training provision would be a valuable additional feature. While the Legion lobbied for legislation in Santa Fe and members of local posts endorsed candidates, the organization's national charter prohibited the Legion from entering the political arena directly. In New Mexico this issue came to the fore in 1920 when it became known that Herman Baca, Legion department commander, was a candidate for mayor of Belen on a citizens ticket. Cutting tried to play down the incident, claiming that "all Baca did was to allow the use of his name in what amounted merely to a protest against local conditions in the town." What troubled Cutting was that the national charter provided that a Legion officer should not be a candidate for "a salaried elective office," which implied that he might seek non-salaried posts such as chairman or secretary of political committees. He would have preferred a provision stating that Legion officers "should not be conspicuous in partisan politics," thereby leaving it to the veteran's conscience how to live up to the obligation.<sup>10</sup>

---

9. For a discussion of state affairs, see Herman G. Baca to Bronson Cutting, February 4 and February 27, 1920, box 5, Cutting Papers. For an analysis of the Soldiers Settlement Bill enacted by the state legislature, see Otero to Bronson Cutting, March 1, 1920, box 5, Cutting Papers. Frank E. Samuel to Jonathan R. Cunningham, May 19, 1939, American Legion Archives, Indianapolis, Indiana. Frank E. Samuel was National Adjutant; Jonathan R. Cunningham was a graduate student at the University of New Mexico seeking a master's degree in political science. Jefferson D. Atwood, a member of the Legion's national executive committee with Cutting, tried to get the committee to include an amendment offering veterans "the option of purchasing public land and receiving credit on same for their period of service" in the soldier relief measure submitted to Congress. See Jefferson D. Atwood to Herman G. Baca, April 2, 1920, copy in box 13, Cutting Papers. For an indication of drinking habits among New Mexico delegates at Minneapolis, see Roy H. Flamm to Bronson Cutting, August 9, 1920, box 5, Cutting Papers. (The 18th Amendment to the Constitution, though ratified on January 29, 1919, did not go into effect until a year later.) Cutting provided the liquor consumed by the delegates and one member appeared drunk on the convention floor, made "an ass of himself before the convention," and embarrassed his fellow delegates.

10. Bronson Cutting to Atwood, March 17, 1920, box 13, Cutting Papers; Bronson Cutting to Wyatt, n.d. [1920], box 5, Cutting Papers. The mayor's post that Herman G.

It should be emphasized, however, that a major concern of the Legion in its first year was increasing membership and establishing posts throughout the state. Prizes of one hundred dollars and fifty dollars were awarded to Valencia and McKinley counties for enrolling the largest percentage of their ex-servicemen. Organization was no easy task given the great distances involved, lack of adequate finances, scattered population, absence of accurate lists or records, and inability to reach many veterans by mail or telegraph. Thanks to the efforts of Cutting and one or two others, financial support was secured. In addition, Lansing B. Bloom, secretary of the historical service of the state council of defense, rendered great assistance in furnishing names of ex-servicemen. The funds and names enabled the organizing secretary to better carry out his difficult assignment of helping to found thirty-nine of the fifty-one American Legion posts in New Mexico noted in the first annual report of the department prepared in August 1920. At that time there were 2,557 American Legion members in the state, which ranked sixth in the nation among those states subscribing their quota of new members within the time frame set by the national executive committee.<sup>11</sup>

At the outset the Legion was drawn into New Mexico political affairs not because of any direct action on the part of Cutting or the Legion, but rather because of accusations leveled by the controversial editor of the *New Mexico State Tribune*. Carl C. Magee severely censured the proceedings of the Legion's 1920 annual meeting. Magee charged that Cutting controlled the election of officers "by reason of spending his money to round up and bring in from over the state enough of the men he OWNS to have a majority." Similar charges had bedeviled Cutting since he arrived in New Mexico in 1910 and would continue to haunt him the remainder of his life. Magee had a long record of maligning public figures in the state and in a fracas with a former judge in 1925 accidentally shot and killed an innocent bystander. In maligning

---

Baca sought on a non-partisan ticket carried no salary. Baca did not win the race. Through an August 1920 editorial in the Santa Fe *New Mexican*, Cutting criticized the Democrats for giving ex-servicemen only one place on their ticket, the lone example that I found of his indicating in a partisan way a possible Legion concern in 1920. See Bronson Cutting to Atwood, August 29, 1920, copy in box 5, Cutting Papers.

11. Report of the Legion historian, April 1919 to August 1920, copy in box 5, Cutting Papers. For a state breakdown of American Legion membership by five-year periods, see Richard Seelye Jones, *A History of the American Legion* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1946), 345. Following the first state convention in October 1919, an executive committee member claimed 2,500 dues-paying members and that "within two months we are positive that our own membership will reach 3,500 to 4,000." See Edward L. Safford to Fall, October 28, 1919, box 13, Fall Papers.

Cutting, however, Magee struck out. Several Legion posts condemned Magee, and Cutting, after a meeting of the state committee early in 1921, reported that he was "greatly pleased and rather surprised to find that the intense political propaganda against me carried no weight in that quarter. . . ." <sup>12</sup>

These charges are not meant to suggest that Cutting, a member of the executive committee, was losing influence in the Legion. The newly elected department commander, like his predecessor, continued to seek Cutting's advice. And as chairman of the Americanism committee, Cutting took a strong stand against a uniform measure proposed by the American Legion that called for instruction in the public schools of every state to be in the English language. Cutting noted its inapplicability to New Mexico where a majority of the people spoke Spanish and where a teacher "equipped with only English was unable to teach English—or anything else." Progress occurred because instruction was offered in Spanish, and English was taught "by people who understood the native language of their pupils." As a result, Cutting argued, the goal of the Legion's Americanization program—the "spread of American ideas and patriotism"—was being furthered in New Mexico. For the present, however, Cutting insisted that "Spanish is still the only possible vehicle by which English can be brought to the people." <sup>13</sup>

Moreover, Cutting insisted that the reasons impelling the American Legion to call for an Americanization program were not meaningful to New Mexico. "We have no anti-American propaganda, no Bolshevism, no I.W.W., no disloyalty, and no organized group of foreign born inhabitants." As for Spanish-speaking natives of New Mexico, citizens "for more than seventy years," despite their difficulties in learning English, there was no more loyal or patriotic group in any state. At least half of the most active Legion members in the state were Hispanic and, Cutting added, "the best war records made by men from this state were made by the same element." <sup>14</sup>

Inevitably and inexorably, however, the Legion was drawn into

---

12. Copy of "Resolutions of Condemnation," n.d., prepared by members of Pantalion Madrid Post No. 36, and Bronson Cutting to Olivia Murray Cutting, January 24, 1921, box 5, Cutting Papers.

13. J. W. Chapman to Bronson Cutting, January 20, 1921, box 5, Cutting Papers. Bronson Cutting to Henry J. Ryan, May 6, 1921, box 13, Cutting Papers. Edwin K. Errett remarked that Cutting was regarded as the "daddy of the New Mexico Legion," see Edwin K. Errett to Bronson Cutting, March 27, 1920, box 13, Cutting Papers.

14. Bronson Cutting to Henry J. Ryan, May 6, 1921, box 13, Cutting Papers. That some individuals hoped to use the Legion to pursue "slackers" and draft dodgers is evident from the anonymous letter titled "To the Members of the American Legion," copy in box 5, Cutting Papers.

state politics. By the end of 1921, the New Mexico Legion followed the national organization in giving up its call for a land settlement bill and supported proposals for adjusted compensation or a bonus for veterans. The fact that the state's senior U.S. senator, Andrieus A. Jones, author of an adjusted compensation bill, was concluding his first term meant that veterans most likely would be involved in his reelection campaign. And Jones, of course, was eager for their support and wrote Cutting in August 1921 expressing appreciation for the attention given a speech he delivered on the Adjusted Compensation Bill in the *New Mexican*.<sup>15</sup>

But all was placid until fall 1922. Prior to that time Cutting, now serving a term as commander of the Montoya Post in Santa Fe and continuing member of the state executive committee, was more involved with Legion affairs than with state politics. In 1922 the New Mexico American Legion revised its constitution to conform to that of the national organization and to give small posts better voting strength to prevent the domination of a convention by any one large post. Cutting assisted with drafting the new charter and thus was party to innumerable and seemingly endless discussions lasting until the state convention adopted the document.<sup>16</sup>

By October the Legion and Cutting were deeply involved in state political campaigns. A form letter, either in English or Spanish, went to every ex-serviceman in New Mexico endorsing Senator Jones as one who "has fought for us and can be counted upon to do it again." Although the bulk of the letter was devoted to endorsing Jones, a Democrat, two other candidates, Hilario Delgado, a Republican ex-serviceman and a Hispanic, and M. J. Helmick, a Democratic ex-serviceman and an Anglo, also were endorsed. The letter concluded, "Forget the party labels, comrades! Vote for the Man!" Although the letter in English was signed by E. B. Healy and the one in Spanish by Jose G. Rivera, both letters expressed the non-partisan fusion view that characterized Cutting's approach to politics. There is reason to believe Cutting helped draft both form letters, which were mailed to "more than 14,300 ex-servicemen." Moreover, it was Cutting who assumed responsibility for furthering the cause of Senator Jones among veterans.<sup>17</sup>

---

15. Andrieus A. Jones to Bronson Cutting, August 27, 1921, box 5, Cutting Papers.

16. Ed L. Tafoya to Mrs. W. Bayard Cutting, copy of telegram, December 7, 1921, and Bronson Cutting to Edgar F. Puryear, July 6, 1922, box 5, Cutting Papers.

17. Copies of letters titled "To the Ex-Service Men and Women of New Mexico: Santa Fe, N.M., October 9, 1922" and "A Los Exsoldados de Nuevo Mexico, Santa Fe, N.M.,

To win an election in New Mexico four things were necessary: organization; dissemination of arguments in both Spanish and English; protection of voters at the polls; and prevention of actual fraud. Accomplishing these goals required funding, and this Cutting was able to provide. In effect, it could be said that Cutting managed Jones's reelection campaign. He wired Washington for Jones's complete voting record, provided information to veterans speaking on Jones's behalf, requested that ex-servicemen serve as poll-watchers on election day and insisted that each veteran, after visiting a precinct, file a report giving local organization plans and names of promised workers. Cutting supervised mailing of form letters and kept abreast of editorial opinion, noting the letters' impact and the controversy they engendered when endorsing Jones. He carefully read letters from veterans relating to their efforts on behalf of the senator. In addition, Cutting provided funds to campaign workers, at least one of whom intended to use some of the money to pay "the right man to do some pre-election work for Jones" in Republican precincts in his community. By the end of the campaign Cutting had in place a political machine that conceivably could hold the balance of power in the state. His was a personal campaign, rather than one conducted through a general organization. It was expensive, but it was also effective, and it was made more so by a powerful ally that Cutting controlled: his newspaper, the *Santa Fe New Mexican*.<sup>18</sup>

When the results were tallied, Jones had a majority of 12,248 votes,<sup>19</sup> the largest ever accorded any candidate to that time. Moreover, Jones's majority helped elect the entire Democratic ticket. Cutting believed that at least five thousand Republican veterans voted the straight Democratic ticket to make sure that their votes for Jones would not be discounted. Both Jones and Governor-elect James F. Hinkle appreciated Cutting's efforts. So grateful were they that several days after the election, Cutting was offered the Democratic state chairmanship. Though

---

October 14, 1922," and Melvin R. Chapin to Bronson Cutting, October 23, 1922, box 5, Cutting Papers.

18. Puryear to Bronson Cutting, October 12, 1922, Bronson Cutting to Puryear, October 17, 1922, Herman Lindauer to Bronson Cutting, October 21, 1922, Joseph W. Hodges to Bronson Cutting, October 17, 1922, Holmer Holmes to Bronson Cutting, October 29, 1922, box 5, Cutting Papers. A report prepared for Andrieus A. Jones after his reelection concluded that the role of ex-servicemen, supervised by Bronson Cutting, was "the most important, if not the deciding factor of the campaign." A copy of the report can be found in box 5, Cutting Papers.

19. Jones received 60,969 votes to 48,721 votes for S. B. Davis, Jr. A canvass of the election returns can be found in the *Official Manual or Blue Book of the State of New Mexico, 1923-24*, issued by Mrs. Soledad Chacon, Secretary of State, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

he declined the offer, Cutting was tempted because the Democratic Party was "so thoroughly disorganized that it would be easy to take it over and control it for a good many years, whereas there will never be any chance of breaking into the Republican ring with any decent element." Rather than play a direct role in the Democratic Party, Cutting's immediate concern was to see that the new governor appoint worthy individuals, including veterans, to public office. With the election over, Cutting shifted attention from Jones, who was "most sincerely grateful" for the support extended him, to Hinkle, in whom Cutting had shown little interest in the recently concluded campaign.<sup>20</sup>

By 1923 Cutting had emerged as an individual to be reckoned with in New Mexico politics. This is not to say he was an unknown figure previously. Almost since his arrival in New Mexico at the end of the territorial period he had been known. His wealth, his ownership of the *Santa Fe New Mexican*, and his role in endorsing the Progressive cause made him a prominent public figure. In addition, for several years prior to his emergence as a central figure in the American Legion, Cutting and his newspaper associates had been involved in litigation which they believed challenged their first amendment rights and which their opposition called character defamation. Begun in 1916, the litigation finally was resolved to Cutting's satisfaction in 1919. In short, while a known figure, Cutting had exerted little direct influence on the course of public life in New Mexico.<sup>21</sup>

Though Cutting emerged after the 1922 election as one of the more significant political figures in New Mexico, he held no prominent public office until his appointment to the U.S. Senate in December 1927. Still he played an advisory role, first in the Hinkle administration and then in that of his successor, Arthur T. Hannett, also a Democrat. After he broke with Hannett, he enjoyed the confidence of Republican Governor Richard C. Dillon, who appointed him to the Senate upon the death of Andrieus A. Jones, the individual who launched Cutting's political career through the American Legion.<sup>22</sup>

---

20. Bronson Cutting to Olivia Murray Cutting, November 18, 1922, box 5, Cutting Papers.

21. Harry P. Jeffrey, "New Mexico's Dreyfus Affair: Bronson Cutting and the Freedom of the Press Cases," paper presented at the 19th Annual Meeting of the Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association, August 14, 1986. Harry P. Jeffrey kindly provided a copy of this paper to the author.

22. Governor Arthur T. Hannett appointed Cutting a member of the State Penitentiary Board but when disagreement with Hannett developed over Cutting's reform efforts Cutting shifted his support to Hannett's opponent in the 1926 gubernatorial campaign.

Several patterns emerge pertaining to Cutting's role in the American Legion by 1923. First, true to his background, he was not seeking power primarily to further or advance his own career. His concern was to encourage and promote social change. But, as his father and uncle learned previously in New York City, before that could occur, reforms were imperative, such as electing governors who would appoint qualified individuals to the various boards, commissions, and agencies administering the state. Individuals, more than partisan political organizations, were basic to reform in Cutting's view.<sup>23</sup>

A second point is that the New Mexico American Legion allowed Hispanic veterans to enter the political process on an equal footing with other veterans, with few if any ties to a patron or boss, and without needing to abandon their more traditional familial-community base. By playing active roles in all phases of Legion activities, Spanish-speaking veterans began to overcome rural isolation and traditional ways of life that had kept them apart previously. Thus, the American Legion helped provide Spanish-speaking veterans with a greater sense of group identity and personal worth. Whereas their religion, language and ethnicity were responsible for their sense of identity and personal worth, their role in the American Legion helped them gain meaningful recognition in the state in a way never experienced before.

To further this process, Cutting's immediate goal, after helping reelect Senator Jones as a friend of the veteran, was to make sure that qualified Hispanic candidates were not ignored when Governor Hinkle filled appointive offices. In a multi-cultural state with an inadequate educational system, politics characterized by disharmony or chaotic factionalism, and a rural population that was poor and at best semi-literate, Cutting inevitably fell into the role of a don or patron in his efforts to promote the welfare of the state's Hispanic citizenry. His constituency, if that is the correct term, was based not on ties of kinship, county rings, or courthouse machines, but rather on American Legion posts, even though in 1923 Cutting had yet to serve as commander of the New Mexico American Legion. The reason Cutting and the Legion were able to play such prominent roles relates to the New Mexico political structure, with its weak party attachments, which encouraged

---

23. Cutting's father, William Bayard Cutting, had been a Civil Service commissioner in the fusion administration of William L. Strong, mayor of New York City, 1895-1899. Cutting's uncle, Robert Fulton Cutting, headed the Charity Organization Society and later the Citizens Union, prominent reform organizations at the turn of the century.

veterans and other voters to cast their ballots on the basis of an identification other than party. An unstable party structure enabled a short-term factor, the American Legion, to play a prominent role in determining voter choices in 1922.

The election of 1922 emerges as the turning point in Cutting's career. What makes that fact so fascinating is that Cutting did not make the decision to support Jones's candidacy in the *New Mexican* and to work through the American Legion on his behalf until the end of September or early October, a little more than a month before the election. Earlier, along with other members of the Independent State Republican Committee, Cutting met with Republican State Chairman O. L. Phillips and other Republican leaders in Albuquerque. The meeting was called at Phillips's invitation prior to either party's nominating convention. After a series of conferences covering a period of several days, Phillips charged that the Independent Republicans had been offered four places on the still-to-be-chosen Democratic ticket and had delayed responding in order to give the regular Republicans an opportunity to present a counter proposal. Cutting and his associates on the Independent [Progressive] Republican state committee, noting that Phillips had initiated the meetings, denied the charges while admitting that they had conferred with the Democrats. The Democratic State chairman likewise denied the charges, which created a furor throughout New Mexico prior to convening the nominating conventions in September.<sup>24</sup>

After turning down the effort of former governor Octaviano Larrazolo to secure renomination the Democrats nominated a slate of political novices. It was Larrazolo's second attempt, having previously failed to secure renomination in 1920. Since Larrazolo, a native of Mexico, had made significant efforts as governor (1918–1920) to further the welfare of Spanish-speaking citizens, Cutting had supported him. Meanwhile, the Republicans had selected what a former territorial governor and prominent Republican said "was not a strong ticket and from the first, faced an uphill and all but hopeless battle." Consequently, Cutting looked at the Democratic ticket, selected in mid-September, and found no Democratic candidates expressing concerns similar to those voiced by Larrazolo. He thought the Republican ticket "as far as

---

24. *Albuquerque Herald*, August 22, 1922; *Santa Fe New Mexican*, August 24, 1922; *Raton Range*, August 25, 1922. Cutting's statement is presented in his own newspaper, the *Santa Fe New Mexican*, August 24, 1922. The other newspapers accepted Phillips' version.



personalities the least objectionable they have ever put up," adding that "one might support it on that ground alone." But after pondering the matter, Cutting concluded, "their candidates have not breathed a word on the unspeakable conditions at present existing in the state" and that it would be difficult under these circumstances to support the party that had opposed almost everything progressive Republicans had endorsed. On September 29 Cutting wrote his mother that he had decided to support Jones for reelection. He would participate in the campaign through the American Legion, endorsing Jones as a friend of the veterans, and not get heavily involved in any other way. Less than six weeks before the November 7, 1922, election Cutting made a decision that changed the course of his career in New Mexico and allowed him to emerge as the political figure who sought to provide equal opportunities as well as more equitable services to all citizens in his adopted state. The American Legion provided the vehicle to launch these endeavors.<sup>25</sup>

---

25. H. B. Hering, ed., *George Curry 1861-1947: An Autobiography* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1958), 306; Bronson Cutting to Olivia Murray Cutting, September 29, 1922, box 5, Cutting Papers.

# Coal Mining, Safety, and Regulation in New Mexico, 1882–1933

---

JAMES WHITESIDE

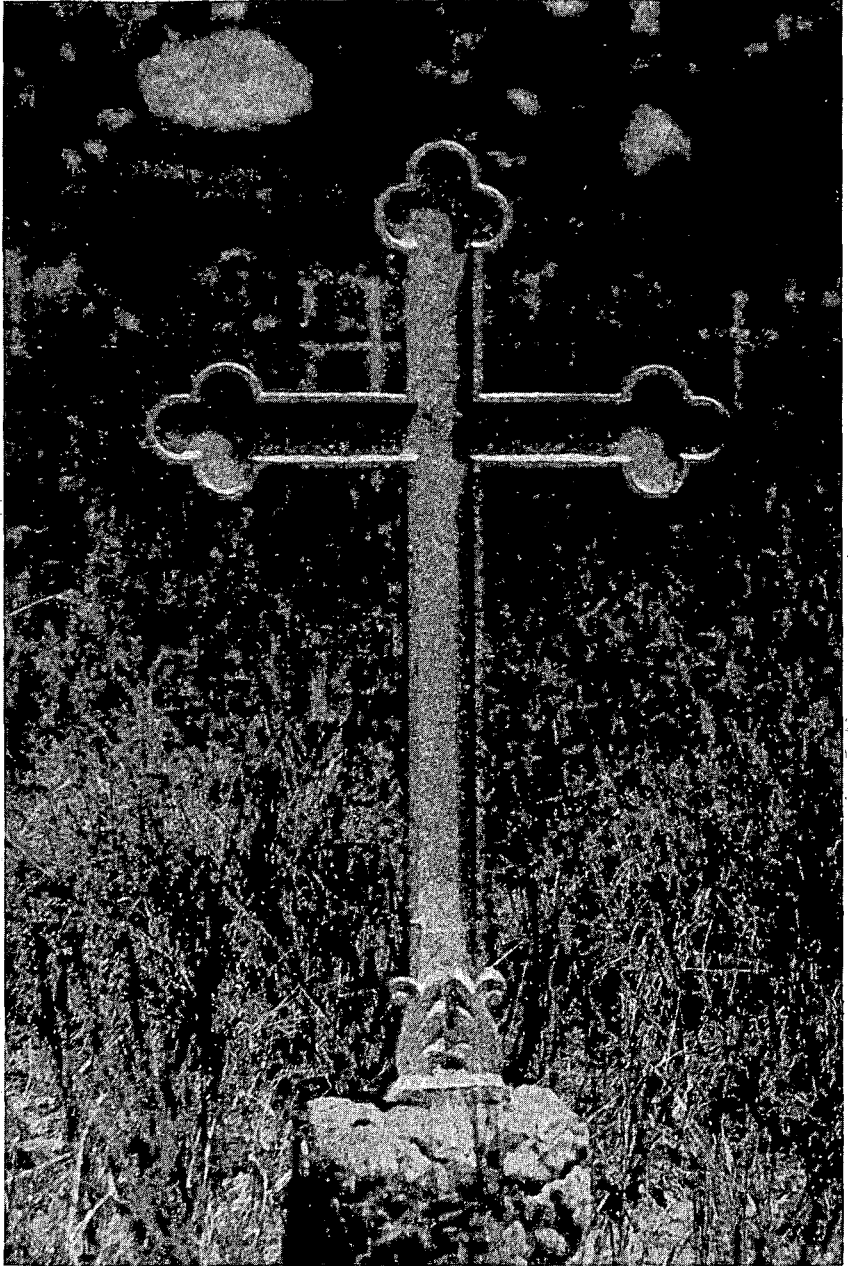
Row after row of identical crosses stand on the hillside at Dawson, marking the graves of victims of the worst coal mine disaster in the history of New Mexico and the Rocky Mountain West. On October 22, 1913, a blown-out shot ignited coal dust in the Phelps-Dodge Company's Stag Canyon Number 2 mine. The disaster killed 261 employees and 2 would-be rescuers. The state coal mine inspector concluded that a miner anxious "to load a few more cars of coal that day" fired the shot, illegally, while his fellow miners were still in the mine. The force of the shot ignited the dust, and the blast quickly spread throughout the mine. Although the mine was "a modern one in every respect," it was very dusty. Mining, blasting, and haulage operations, the state inspector noted, generated large amounts of dust, which the ventilating system spread throughout the mine.<sup>1</sup>

Other people offered different explanations. A report in the *New*

---

James Whiteside is an instructor of history in the University of Colorado, Boulder, and holds a doctorate from the same university. He is author of a book forthcoming from the University of Nebraska Press on safety and regulation in the Rocky Mountain coal mining industry, 1870–1970. He also is co-author of a study on energy resource development and utilization in the American West, forthcoming from Indiana University Press as part of the American West in the Twentieth Century series, Martin Ridge, editor.

1. New Mexico Inspector of Mines, *Second Annual Report, 1913*, pp. 5–7.



Rows of identical crosses on a hillside at Dawson, New Mexico, stand in silent tribute to many of the 263 men killed in a coal mine explosion at the mining community in October 1913. Photo taken and provided courtesy of the author.

*Mexican* suggested that use of coal mining machines may have led to the disaster. The company recently installed machines to increase production to meet the greater demand for Dawson's coal stimulated by a coal mining strike in Colorado. The machines may have generated more dust than the mine's ventilation fans could handle. Former employees blamed the disaster on economy measures instituted by the mine superintendent who, they claimed, cut back on gas, dust, and ventilation inspections, reduced sprinkling, and ignored reports of gas in the mine. The *United Mine Workers Journal* criticized Phelps-Dodge, charging that the Dawson tragedy was "another example of what depths greed can push human nature to." Against the desire to produce more and more coal, the lives of coal miners "mattered nothing." Nature, the union paper said, had given the industry "one more warning that she had a limit which could not be passed with impunity."<sup>2</sup>

At the time of the Dawson tragedy, New Mexico had a law that was supposed to prevent such disasters by requiring adequate ventilation and other safety precautions, but the law was ineffective. Clearly, the Dawson disaster, and a succession of coal mine explosions including another incident at Dawson in 1923 in which 120 people died, showed that the state law did not fulfill its major purpose. Worse, the law did not address, in any meaningful way, other major causes of injury and death in the mines. Horrible as the great mine explosions were, they did not account for the majority of fatalities in the industry. Historically, more mine workers died, by ones and twos, in accidents involving mine haulage, electricity and, especially, falls of roof, coal, and sides. In New Mexico, the records of federal and state mine inspectors reveal that in the ninety years between 1893 and 1983 1,132 miners died as the result of coal mining accidents. Of them, 508, or 45 percent, died in explosions. The remainder were killed in other types of accidents.

The percentage of explosion fatalities was higher in New Mexico than the national average, accounting for 45 percent of all fatalities versus 16 percent nationally. In most states, falls of rock and coal alone caused more than half of all coal mining deaths, while in New Mexico they accounted for "only" 36 percent. Significantly, 90 percent of New Mexico's coal mining fatalities occurred in the years before 1934, in the pick-mining and hand-loading era. In the period from 1893 through 1933 a total of 1,021 coal miners died at an average annual rate of 7.67 per thousand. In contrast, in the years from 1934 through 1983, 111 miners died at an average rate of 1.67 per thousand.

---

2. Santa Fe *New Mexican*, October 30, 1913, p. 3; *United Mine Workers Journal*, November 6, 1913, p. 4.

Blaming high fatality rates on greedy operators or careless miners was, and remains, easy and popular but oversimplifies a terribly complex industrial problem. The causes of danger in the mines, and answers to the question of why coal mining laws failed to remedy high death rates, are to be found in the total industrial, work, legal, and political environment of coal mining. Coal mining laws failed because they did not adequately address the major overt causes of death, and because they did not reach important underlying causes in the conditions of work in the pick-mining and hand-loading era. Compounding the failure of regulation were the attitudes of those responsible for enforcing the laws, attitudes which persistently held coal miners primarily responsible for their own safety, and for their own deaths. Ultimately, improvements in coal mine safety owed more to basic changes in the work environment than to laws and regulations.

Coal mining became a major industry in New Mexico with the arrival of the railroad. The early control exercised by the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad established a pattern of domination by major operators that has characterized the industry throughout its history. By the early twentieth century the Santa Fe, with a steady supply of coal assured, yielded its control and, in succeeding years, companies such as the St. Louis, Rocky Mountain, and Pacific Company, Phelps-Dodge, Victor-American, and the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company became leading operators. In more recent times the names have changed—Utah International, Kaiser Steel, Pittsburgh-Midway—but the pattern of consolidation has continued.

General economic growth made for sustained expansion in coal mining throughout the West and lasted through the first two decades of the twentieth century. Production in New Mexico peaked in 1917 at 4.1 million tons. After World War I, declining industrial activity and competition from other fuels made for two decades of decline in coal mining. World War II brought a brief comeback, but the general decline resumed in the post-war years. In 1954, when production fell to 255,399 tons, the state coal mine inspector pronounced coal mining in New Mexico a "dead industry" and expected it to "remain dead for a long, long time."<sup>3</sup> Since the 1960s, however, the industry has enjoyed a revival, with New Mexico production reaching twenty million tons by 1983. Much of the new demand for coal came from the coal-fired electrical plants built in recent years in the Four Corners area. The energy crisis of the 1970s also helped by encouraging industry and utility companies to convert from fuel oil to coal.

---

3. New Mexico Inspector of Mines, *Forty-Second Annual Report, 1954*, p. 10.

Coal mining was, and remains, a dangerous occupation. The risk of injury or death on the job owed as much or more, however, to the economic, technical, and human relations of work in the mines as to the inherent hazards in the physical environment. In the "room and pillar" system of mining, miners worked, usually in teams of two, in "rooms" turned off of main tunnels, or "entries." Before, and even after, the intrusion of machinery, the coal miner was considered to be a skilled tradesman, expected to perform most of the tasks necessary to produce coal. In the pick-mining and hand-loading days, the coal miner's basic task was to break down a quantity of coal from the seam and load it into a car for transport to the surface. That rather straightforward production goal belies the complexity of the miner's work and work environment.

Getting the coal out of the seam required explosives. Generally, miners prepared the coal for blasting by undercutting it with a pick, though occasionally they would "shoot off the solid" without undercutting. The miner then drilled a series of holes into the coal near the top of the seam and tamped explosive charges into them. After placing the charge, the miner inserted a long copper or iron needle into it and "stemmed" the hole by packing in dirt, mud, or clay. He then withdrew the needle, leaving a channel into the charge. Until reliable fuses were developed, miners used a "squib," a small tube of paper packed with powder and inserted it into the channel left by the needle to set off the charge. The miner lit the squib and ran for cover. Before the employment of shot firers, whose sole job was to inspect and set off charges after the mine was cleared of other workers, miners fired their shots whenever they were ready.

After the smoke and dust cleared, the miner returned to the room and began loading the broken coal into cars. Loading was something of an art, and a well "chunked up" car could carry two to three tons of coal piled several feet above the sides. Once loaded, the miner pushed the car to the entry where a driver picked it up to haul to the surface. There it was weighed and credited to the miner whose "check" (a small disk with a number inscribed on it) hung on the side.

Miners were paid according to how much coal they produced. Usually, they received a tonnage rate which, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, could vary from fifty-five cents to one dollar, according to quality of coal and the difficulty of mining it. Sometimes employers calculated wages on the "run of mine" basis so that miners were paid according to the total output of the mine.

In addition to undermining, drilling, shooting, and loading, there were a number of secondary tasks the miner had to complete as part

of his regular duties. As the working face advanced, he had to remove or "brush" the material above and below the seam so that men, cars, and in later years, machines could approach the face. The miner then had to remove the refuse from brushing and mining from the work area and store it in "gobs" (worked out areas). After brushing the floor of the room up to the face, the miner laid track so that he could push cars in close.

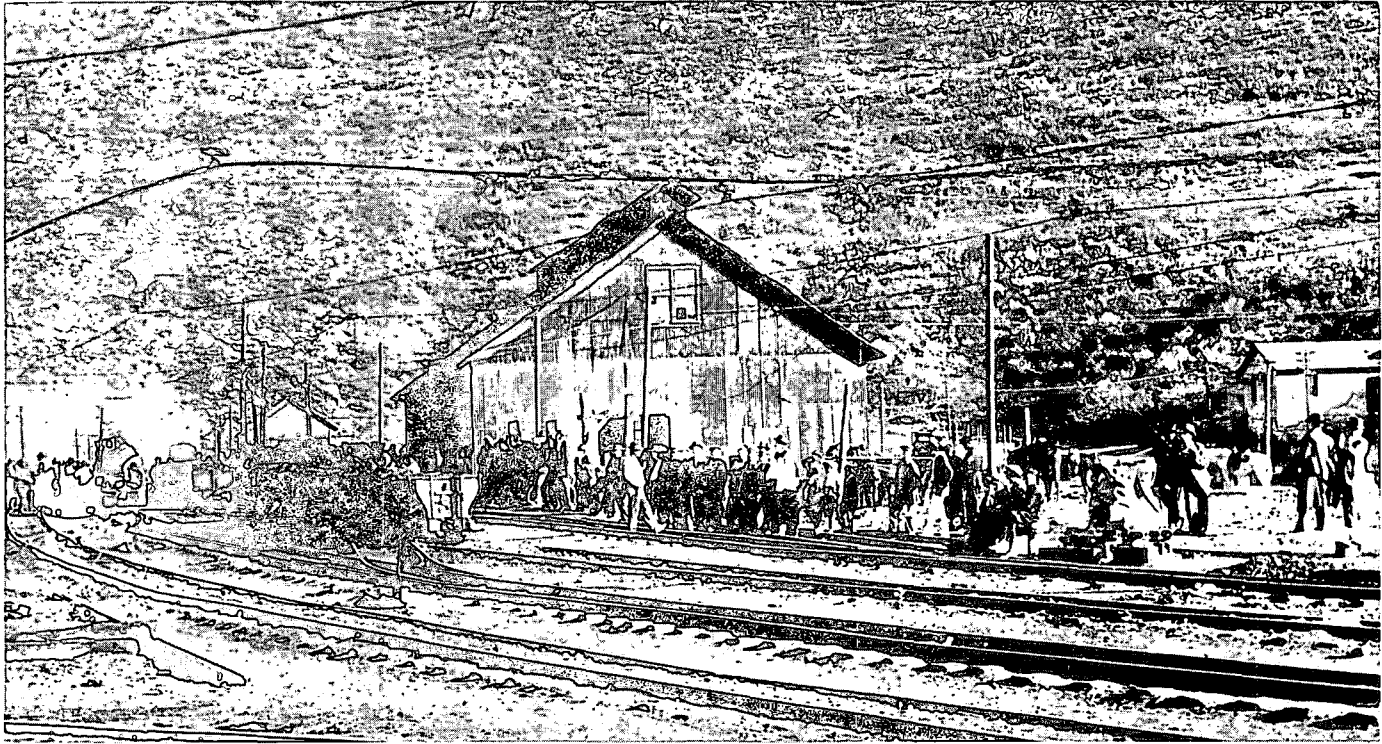
An extremely important part of a miner's work was taking care of the roof in his room. As the room advanced, and after each round of shots, the men used their picks to "sound" the roof to detect any loose rock, which they pried down and stored in the gob. Suspicious looking areas, or areas too large to take down safely, had to be supported by installing heavy timbers. Timbering might involve simply setting a single prop and cap piece, or putting up two or more timbers spanned by large cross pieces.

Although operators supposedly calculated tonnage rates to include brushing, track laying, and timbering, miners resented the long hours they devoted to this "deadwork." Especially maddening were delays caused when track and timber were not delivered. The question of pay for deadwork was a persistent irritant in labor relations. Miners claimed that tonnage rates did not adequately compensate them for their efforts. Deadwork and the tonnage rate also were underlying factors in the problem of mine safety.

In time, changes in the organization of work and in technology altered the cycle of work. By the second decade of the twentieth century shot firers were widely employed. When the miners arrived for work in mines using shot firers, they inspected rooms for bad roofs, set new props if needed, and repaired any other damage from the night's blasting. Only then could they load their coal and begin again the work of undercutting, drilling, and placing shots.

Undercutting was the first part of the miner's job to be mechanized, but mechanization came to New Mexico gradually. While machines were in use in some places in the West by the 1880s, New Mexico lagged in using machines. Only twenty-nine percent of New Mexico's coal was cut by machines in 1933. After 1933, however, coal mining in New Mexico mechanized rapidly. Machine operators and drivers exercised a kind of informal authority over miners. A miner who was disliked or who refused to provide bribes or favors on demand might find that the driver or the machine man by-passed his room. That meant that he could not shoot his coal, send it to the top, set props, or lay track.

Superintendents, foremen, and fire bosses exercised more formal



A crowd gathers above ground at the Phelps-Dodge Company's Stag Canon #1 mine in February 1923 and awaits word of the fate of those underground after an explosion rocked the coal mine. One hundred twenty men died in the blast. International Newsreel Photo, courtesy of Museum of New Mexico, Neg. No. 138143.



authority in the mine. Together, these officials formed not so much a chain of command as divisions of authority—divisions which materially affected the environment, including safety conditions, in which miners worked. The superintendent had overall responsibility for management of mine and camp. As business manager, he supervised the other officials, had general charge over mine personnel, oversaw the operation of camp stores, schools, and saloons, allotted housing to miners, prepared payrolls, and saw to it that mine equipment and supplies were maintained. Although the superintendent had general authority, his practical authority usually stopped at the mine portal. Underground, the foreman, or mine boss, had authority over hiring and firing, allotment of rooms, assignment of deadwork, and all other aspects of work in the mine.

The fire boss was the official nominally most responsible for safety conditions in the mine. Every morning, before the miners reported to work, the fire boss was supposed to inspect all working areas of the mine for hazardous conditions, particularly gas pockets and bad roofs. He reported hazards to the foreman, who then ordered the miners to correct them before they did any other work. If he found particularly dangerous conditions the fire boss could close an area until the hazard was corrected.

Miners, and all the other underground employees and supervisors, worked in an environment in which danger was a constant fact of life. The very process of mining coal could create an atmosphere of death. Coal is partially decomposed organic matter, and a by-product of that decomposition is explosive methane gas trapped in the coal. Mining the coal releases the gas into the atmosphere of the mine. Odorless and colorless, methane, or "fire-damp," could be detected only with a flame safety lamp, constructed with a fine screen or baffles to allow only a small quantity of air, or gas, to contact the flame. If ventilation currents were not adequate to dilute and carry the gas away, pockets of fire-damp could be detonated by the open flame of a miner's lamp, a "blown-out shot" (in which the force and flame of a shot fired out of the hole—usually the result of improper stemming), or by a spark.

Local explosions of fire-damp usually did little harm—it was said that most mine mules had singed ears. However, when exploding methane mixed with coal dust the result could be disaster. Once ignited, an explosion of coal dust seemed to set the very air on fire. Survivors of gas and dust explosions sometimes described a tongue of flame racing through the mine. On the surface, the report of an explosion might sound like a gigantic cannon, or it might be felt, more

than heard, as a muffled shudder. Usually, more men died of suffocation than from the actual flame and concussion of an explosion. As a blast moved through a mine it consumed all the oxygen and left behind a deadly mixture of carbon monoxide ("white-damp") and carbon dioxide ("black-damp"), known to miners as "after-damp." Men caught in the after-damp usually lost consciousness in a few seconds and died quickly. Rescuers would find them sitting with tools, or even food and drink, in their hands; kneeling as if in prayer; or lying down as though they had just gone to sleep.

It was this deadly environment that territorial, federal, and state laws were supposed to control. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, coal mining states and territories responded to rising fatality rates by enacting laws that usually included ventilation standards and rules—generally ineffective—pertaining to roof control and haulage. Such laws authorized a mine inspector to visit the mines and see to it that operators and miners followed the regulations. These inspections occurred as often as every three months or as infrequently as once a year. The federal government began inspecting coal mines in 1891 under a statute governing coal mining in the territories. In response to a series of disasters in 1907–1909 in West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Illinois in which more than 1,000 miners died, Congress created the U.S. Bureau of Mines in 1910. Major coal operators in the eastern states favored establishing the bureau as a means of forestalling more stringent state regulation. The bureau's mandate included conducting research and education projects on mine safety, focusing especially on the problem of preventing explosion disasters. Congress gave the agency no regulatory authority, however.<sup>4</sup>

In the early years of the industry in New Mexico, territorial legislators, concerned with maintaining a hospitable business environment, spared New Mexico's coal operators from stringent regulation. New Mexico's first coal mining law, enacted in 1882, might charitably be called a weak measure. It was, in fact, a fraud. Not quite covering three pages in the *Session Laws* of 1882, the act set minimum ventilation standards and spelled out certain requirements for mine bosses. Coal mine operators were to provide ventilation at the rate of fifty-five cubic feet per minute for each fifty workers. Mine bosses were responsible

---

4. See K. Austin Kerr, "The Movement for State Regulation of Coal Mines in the Nineteenth Century," in Paul Uselding, ed., *Business and Economic History. Papers Presented at the Twenty-first Annual Meeting of the Business History Conference* (Urbana: Bureau of Economic and Business Research, College of Commerce and Business Administration, University of Illinois, 1975); and William S. Graebner, *Coal Mining Safety in the Progressive Period: The Political Economy of Reform* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1976).

for supervising ventilation, seeing to the maintenance of entries, overseeing timbering in the rooms, conducting daily inspections for gas, and seeing to the maintenance of equipment.<sup>5</sup> While it provided that mine bosses could be charged with misdemeanors for willful negligence, or manslaughter if their negligence led to a death, the act failed to specify any penalties.

Not only did the law omit penalties, it provided no means for enforcement of its few provisions. The act did not provide a mine inspector for the territory, nor did it grant the right of inspection to other persons. Mine employees were allowed to inspect mine maps only, not the mines themselves. Most surprisingly, section eleven of the law provided that "this act shall not apply to the opening of new coal mines." This ambiguous provision might be construed as waiving the provisions of the law during the process of driving entries and installing equipment in new mines. In fact, it was taken to mean that, just as New Mexico's coal industry entered its first major period of development, mines opened after the effective date of the law (June 1, 1882), including many of those controlled by the Santa Fe railroad, were exempt from its provisions.<sup>6</sup>

Coal mines in New Mexico were regulated, or not regulated, by this non-law for a decade, although an attempt was made in 1889 to appoint a mine inspector. One worried mine owner wrote to Governor Edmund G. Ross to express the concern of operators that such a law might be "injurious and malicious" and that they might be "compelled to submit to being blackmailed out of a fee" each time the inspector paid them a visit. Most revealing of the operators' fears, however, was the assertion that "we do not think that we in our infancy and weak state as mine operators should be subject to the rigid and severe restriction of older and more firmly established localities."<sup>7</sup> Coal operators in New Mexico, in short, feared that serious regulation of working conditions in the mines might put their infant industry at a competitive disadvantage.

In 1891 Congress finally took the matter out of the hands of the

---

5. New Mexico, *Session Laws, 1882*, pp. 96-98.

6. *Ibid.*, 98. In 1902 Governor Miguel A. Otero said that "Sec. 11 of the act of our legislature, [sic] expressly limits its operation to mines then in operation." Miguel A. Otero to Secretary of the Interior, April 20, 1902, letters received, Territorial Papers of New Mexico, microform M-364, reel 7, Record Group (RG) 48, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

7. C. W. Kennedy to Edmund G. Ross, January 4, 1889, letters received, Edmund G. Ross Papers, microfilm roll 101, frames 788-91, Territorial Archives of New Mexico, Santa Fe, New Mexico.



Straining to pull carts laden with coal, these mules and others like them spent most of their lives below ground. Intelligent and hard working, coal mine mules often knew their way around the tunnels better than the miners. Photo courtesy of CF&I Steel Corporation.



Picks and sledges in hand and faces blackened with soot, a group of miners pauses for the camera. A young driver, standing at center with his mule, is one of several who posed with his open-flame lamp lit. Photo courtesy of Colorado Historical Society, Negative No. F-43365.

territorial legislature by enacting a federal law for the "Protection of the Lives of Miners in the Territories." Originally intended to regulate all mines, the bill was revised to apply only to coal mines because it was feared that "too stringent regulation must have the direct effect of retarding the development of mining interests" in the territories. Because "the dangers to life are far greater in coal mines . . . and of a better defined and more clearly recognized character," Congress deemed it more practical to limit the law regarding coal mines.<sup>8</sup>

This first federal coal mining law was passed with surprisingly little debate, though some congressmen and senators worried that it would usurp the authority of territorial legislatures. The bill's sponsor said the measure was "very similar to regulations provided in the various States," and that "it only applies where there are no regulations."<sup>9</sup> Since all of the territories, except Indian Territory, already had coal mining laws, the effect of the new law supposedly would be minimal.

The federal law required an annual inspection of every mine by a territorial mine inspector who would examine ventilation and safety equipment, see that clean air reached all working areas and that all mines had escape shafts for emergency exit. The law required mine operators to provide 3,300 cubic feet of air per minute for every 50 men, or 66 cubic feet per minute for each man, so that all working areas remained free of gas. The act did not require daily inspections for gas or other hazards. The law held superintendents and other officials personally liable for compliance. Failure to comply with the law, or with orders to correct defects, was a misdemeanor punishable by fines.

The act's enforcement procedures were extremely cumbersome. When the mine inspector discovered unsafe conditions in a mine he was to report them to the Secretary of the Interior who then would notify the operator of the needed repairs and set a period of time for compliance. If the operator failed to comply within the time allowed it was unlawful for him to continue to operate the mine. To actually close a dangerous mine, however, it was necessary for the mine inspector, with the support of the secretary or the governor of the territory, to apply to the courts for an injunction prohibiting the mine

---

8. Act of March 3, 1891, chapter 564, secs. 1-19; 26 Stat. L. 1104; Supp. to Revised Statutes, vol. 1, pp. 948-50, in Daniel M. Barringer and John Stokes Adams, *The Law of Mines and Mining in the United States* (St. Paul: Keef-Davidson, 1897, 1900), 811-14; U.S., Congress, House Report 2588, 51st Cong., 1st Sess., 1890, pp. 1, 2.

9. *Congressional Record*, vol. 22, February 28, 1891, p. 3557.

operation until needed repairs were made. So cumbersome was this procedure that it was used only once during the two decades that the federal act was in force in New Mexico. In that case, which involved an order to open a second shaft, final compliance took two years.<sup>10</sup>

Because the federal law was intended to apply only in territories which had no laws protecting coal miners, it was not immediately clear whether it would apply in New Mexico because of the territory's 1882 law. The first territorial mine inspector, John C. Spears, did not receive his commission and begin work until August 29, 1892, eighteen months after the law was enacted. Even then, it was unclear whether the federal or the New Mexico law would prevail. One month prior to assuming his duties, Spears warned Governor L. Bradford Prince that "some of Santa Fe's business men who are interested in coal lands" would resist his appointment on the grounds that the law did not apply to New Mexico. Spears reminded Prince that the New Mexico law made "no provision for an inspector to enforce what law we have on the subject," meaning that it could not effectively protect coal miners and thus must be superceded by the federal statute.<sup>11</sup>

Late in 1892, territorial officials resolved the issue in favor of the federal law. Solicitor General Edward L. Bartlett gave his opinion that the 1882 law did not provide for safe operation of New Mexico's coal mines because it did not provide for a mine inspector to enforce it, nor any penalties for violations, "by reason of which failure the law is practically a dead letter, [and] has never been operative or enforced." Following Bartlett's advice, acting governor Silas Alexander informed the Interior Department that because the act of 1882 did not provide for the safe operation of coal mines in New Mexico the federal statute would supercede it. Governor Prince followed up by telling the territorial legislature that the 1882 law "had little or no effect." Prince added: "It is certain that the miners should be fully protected in some way," and that the mine owners were "to apt to neglect proper precautions which may be expensive." The governor concluded that the 1882 statute should either be "made fully effective by proper amendments, or should be repealed so as not to interfere with the benefits now secured to us under the U.S. statute."<sup>12</sup>

---

10. Letters received relating to Inspection of Coal Mines, microform M-364, reel 7, RG 48, National Archives.

11. John C. Spears to L. Bradford Prince, July 31, 1892, letters received, May-December, 1892, L. Bradford Prince Papers, microfilm 112, frame 523, Territorial Archives.

12. Edward L. Bartlett to Silas Alexander, December 16, 1892, Alexander to Secretary of the Interior, letters received, Territorial Papers of New Mexico, microform M-364, reel

The territorial legislature neither amended nor repealed the 1882 law, but it was a dead letter. In 1895, mine inspector John Fleming reported that "as there are no Territorial laws governing the working of coal mines I have been guided wholly by the act of Congress." Once the issue of the applicability of the federal law was settled, U.S. mine inspectors reported that most coal operators were cooperative in its implementation and that conditions in the mines were improving.<sup>13</sup>

Granting that most operators cooperated with the inspector and obeyed the law, the claim of improved conditions was, to say the least, optimistic. Fatality rates in the coal mines during the years that the federal act was in force in New Mexico were quite high and did not compare well with national rates. In the period from 1893 through 1912, a total of 287 coal mine workers died in New Mexico as the result of accidents. This represents an average annual fatality rate of 6.42 per thousand. Explosions caused 72 deaths at an average rate of 1.84 per thousand, while 146 died in falls of rock and coal at the rate of 3.27 per thousand. Haulage accidents killed 40 workers, a rate of 0.89 per thousand, and 29 died from other, mainly surface, accidents at the rate of 0.42 per thousand. Of the 72 explosion deaths, 50 occurred in accidents involving 5 or more fatalities, indicating that the federal coal mining statute did not achieve its principal goal of preventing major disasters. More significant, though, is the failure to prevent other accidents, especially falls of rock and coal which alone accounted for a fatality rate almost as high as the national rate of deaths from all causes.

Coal mines in New Mexico and the West were more dangerous than in other regions during this period when compared to national averages. The total average annual fatality rate in the U.S. was 3.35 per thousand, slightly more than half the rate in New Mexico. Falls of rock and coal killed miners at the rate of 1.60 per thousand, explosions 0.65 deaths per thousand, and haulage accidents 0.40 per thousand. The territory's record is favorable only in comparison with neighboring states. Colorado had a total fatality rate of 6.82 per thousand and Wyoming, 6.52. Only Utah, with a fatality rate of 10.08 per thousand, was more dangerous than New Mexico.<sup>14</sup>

---

5, RG 48, National Archives; Governor's message, December 28, 1892, pp. xxiv-xxv, Prince Papers, microfilm 121, frame 418, Territorial Archives.

13. U.S. Inspector of Coal Mines for the Territory of New Mexico, *Third Annual Report, 1894-1895*, p. 673, Territorial Papers of New Mexico, microform M-364, RG 48, National Archives; U.S. Inspector of Mines, *First Annual Report, 1893*, p. 2.

14. *Explosions in New Mexico Coal Mines, 1895 to 1932*, circular 6760 (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, 1933), 3. No data are available on New Mexico fatality rates prior to 1893. Fatality data is derived from the annual reports of the United States



Whip in hand, a coal car driver pauses with his team of mules. Drivers usually relied on voice commands to guide their animals but resorted to whips or sprags occasionally to muster a balky animal. Photo courtesy of Colorado Historical Society, Negative No. F-42847.



With hardhats and electric lamps, which had long since replaced caps and open-flame lamps, miners set timbers at the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company's Morely Mine in 1956. Photo courtesy of CF&I Steel Corporation.



With statehood, lawmakers in New Mexico got the chance to remedy this appalling record. The state's new coal mining law, passed in 1912, contained many new regulations governing operators, supervisors, and miners. The act raised the basic ventilation standard to one hundred cubic feet of air per man per minute and three hundred cubic feet per minute for each animal. In addition, it required operators of gassy mines to hire fire bosses to make daily inspections. The law forbade miners to enter their rooms before the fire boss made his daily inspection and, once at work, required them to take down all dangerous rock and coal and make their rooms safe by proper timbering. If a miner discovered his room to be dangerous he was forbidden to stay there except to remove the hazard. Miners also were forbidden to ride on coal cars unless they first notified the haulage operator. The act also banned shooting off the solid and required shot firers in mines employing more than twenty men.

The law had problems built into it. To enforce the law, the state mine inspector was authorized to notify operators of any violations, specify measures to correct them, and determine the time allowed for making corrections. The chance that the state inspector would detect hazards was diminished, however, because the law required only that he visit mines "as often as in his opinion may be necessary."<sup>15</sup> Moreover, the mine inspector had no authority to close dangerous mines or to remove workers from dangerous places, as was the case under the federal statute. Though it substituted the inspector's discretion for regular, annual inspections, thus risking less frequent government inspection, the law promised more daily supervision through the required daily inspections by fire bosses. Still, the act's emphasis on ventilation, inspection for gas, and shot firing indicates that the state's legislators were interested mainly in trying to prevent major explosion disasters. Provisions requiring miners to maintain roofs and limiting access to coal cars addressed the causes of most coal mining deaths, but did so inadequately.

The entire law proved to be inadequate. Coal mine death rates in New Mexico increased during the two decades it was in force. In the period from 1913 through 1933 the average annual rate of death from

---

Mine Inspector for the Territory of New Mexico, annual reports of the state coal mine inspectors of Colorado, Wyoming, and Utah, the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Mines, Bulletin 115, *Coal Mine Fatalities in the U.S., 1870-1914* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, 1916), and *ibid.*, Mine Enforcement and Safety Administration, *Injury Experience in Coal Mining, 1975*, report 1077 (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, 1978).

15. New Mexico, *Laws, 1912*, p. 149.

all causes rose to 8.81 per thousand, with a total of 734 fatalities. The two disasters at Dawson, in 1913 and 1923, account for much of this increase, contributing 383 of the state's 430 explosion deaths. The explosion death rate in those years was 5.03 per thousand. Deaths from falls of rock declined to 2.49 per thousand, and the haulage death rate fell slightly to 0.81. Machinery and electrical accidents together caused a fatality rate of 0.18. Thus, the state law failed to prevent explosion disasters and was only marginally successful in reducing deaths from the other major causes.

Not surprisingly, coal mining death rates in New Mexico continued to outpace national and regional averages. Between 1913 and 1933 the U.S. rate of death from all causes was 2.96 per thousand, about one-third the rate in New Mexico. Falls of rock and coal led as the major cause of death in the mines, nationally killing miners at the rate of 1.46 per thousand. Explosions followed with the rate of 0.49 per thousand, and haulage accidents caused fatalities at the rate of 0.50 per thousand. Machinery and electrical accidents caused a fatality rate of 0.11. New Mexico's coal mines also continued to be more dangerous than those in neighboring states, including Utah. The average annual fatality rate in Colorado from 1913 through 1933 was 5.01 per thousand; in Wyoming, 4.72; and in Utah, 7.51.

That the early coal mining laws failed to prevent or remedy extremely high rates of death is obvious. Why they failed is a complex question. Disasters such as those at Dawson should not have occurred. Had mine officials seen to it that the level of coal dust in the mines was kept at a safe level those explosions might have been localized, whatever the source of ignition. Ultimately, the blame for such disasters must be laid at the feet of operators, supervisors, and government officials who failed to observe and enforce ventilation and dust control regulations adequately.

Why the laws emphasized explosion prevention is not difficult to explain. They protected the operators' interests and reflected basic attitudes on work relations in the industry, which helps explain the absence of operator opposition to the enactment of New Mexico's coal mining laws. Statutes requiring investment in equipment and procedures to insure adequate ventilation and dust control had the obvious beneficial goal, if not the result, of preventing financially ruinous disasters. A coal mine explosion not only killed but caused extensive damage to plant and equipment. A second, less obvious benefit for large operators was the competitive advantage such requirements gave them in relation to smaller operators who often could not afford to comply. Thus, the emphasis on explosions is explainable in terms of

the structure of the industry itself and the tendency toward consolidation.

More important to day-to-day safety in the mines, the laws also reflected prevailing attitudes on the basic relations of work in the industry; namely, that coal miners, as skilled tradesmen, were independent contractors. Implicit was the assumption that miners were primarily responsible for their own safety and for their own deaths on the job, a view expressed persistently by territorial and state mine inspectors and shared by operators.<sup>16</sup> Time after time, New Mexico's mine inspectors complained of the carelessness exhibited by coal miners—a carelessness that they believed explained most coal mining deaths. While complimenting operators for their willingness to comply with the federal coal mining law, territorial mine inspector John Fleming in 1895 complained that the main problem he confronted was “to get the miners impressed with the necessity of looking out for themselves and to use ordinary precaution in their own behalf.” Carelessness, especially in the matter of timbering, created hazards not only for the individual man in his room, “but works to the injury of other miners and to the detriment of the management.” Quite simply, a miner who inadequately timbered his room created a threat not only to himself, but to other workers and to the productivity of the mine. That led inspector Jo E. Sheridan to complain of the “gross absurdity” of a law “which imposes upon the mine owner the protection of the miner from physical danger, while the miner interposes his negligence as an obstacle to the process of protection.”<sup>17</sup>

Judging from inspectors' comments, more than a quarter century of federal and state regulation made little impression on New Mexico's coal miners. In 1919 inspector Sheridan attributed a rising death rate to the “greater carelessness of the men in general,” and to their “resentment at strict safety discipline in the mines.” Sheridan claimed that frequently, when he pointed out to a miner the danger of some careless act, the miner would tell him, “I do not think it is anybody else's business but my own; if I want to take the chance of being hurt, it will not hurt you.” An exasperated inspector, Warren Bracewell, concluded in 1925 that the state law requiring miners to look after their own safety,

---

16. James Whiteside, “Protecting the Life and Limb of Our Workmen: Coal Mining Regulation in Colorado, 1883–1920,” *Essays and Monographs in Colorado History*, 4 (1986); and *ibid.*, “Protecting the Life and Limb of Our Workmen: Work, Death, and Regulation in the Rocky Mountain Coal Mining Industry” (doctoral dissertation, University of Colorado, 1986).

17. U.S. Inspector of Mines, *Third Annual Report, 1894–1895*, p. 699; *ibid.*, *Sixth Annual Report, 1897–1898*, p. 486; *ibid.*, *Ninth Annual Report, 1900–1901*, p. 719.



Inspecting a potential investment could be dirty business, as these investors discovered while touring a coal mine in Lincoln County, New Mexico, in 1904. Photo courtesy of Special Collections, Zimmerman Library, University of New Mexico.

especially in regard to roof control, had "no effect so far as the workman is concerned." In fact, he said, "very few of them know anything of the law."<sup>18</sup>

Why so many miners seemed hell-bent on killing themselves was no great mystery to mine inspectors. Noting that the majority of accidents involved roof and side falls, inspector Sheridan asserted that "in many instances familiarity with the danger, coupled with fortunate escapes," rendered the miner "absolutely indifferent to his peril." Inducing miners to protect themselves from falls was, said Sheridan, "a

---

18. New Mexico Inspector of Mines, *Annual Report*, 1919, p. 15; *ibid.*, *Fourteenth Annual Report*, 1925, p. 6.

most ungracious task." Sheridan went on to explain that "procrastination appears to be the miner's great weakness." Instead of taking the time to properly clean his roof and sides and set timbers, the miner would "just drill another hole or two, pick down some loose coal, or load another car or two of coal."<sup>19</sup> Here, Sheridan touched upon the fundamental cause of the coal miner's supposed carelessness, the basic relation of work in the pick-mining and hand-loading era: the contract or tonnage rate.

Mine inspectors were at least dimly aware of the relationship between the tonnage rate and coal mine accidents early on, and the Hobson's choice that miners faced between safety and earnings. As early as 1895 John Fleming noted that the majority of accidents were "probably caused by the overanxious miner trying to get out as much coal per day as possible without regard for his own safety." The temptation to sacrifice safety for more coal was "too great."<sup>20</sup> Inspectors found that miners resisted deadwork, such as timbering, even when they were ordered to do the work. The result very often was that the men were injured or killed trying to load another car of coal before setting up timbers.

This incentive to "carelessness" built into the tonnage rate system was by no means unique to New Mexico. In its study of the coal industry in the 1920s, the U.S. Coal Commission found it to be a problem throughout the industry. The commission noted that "the miner naturally looks to his own self-preservation, but he considers also his wages, and when a tonnage or contract worker puts in an extra timber or takes an extra safety precaution he cuts down his earning power." Thus, the commission concluded, "he is likely to take perilous chances; and if he often takes them successfully his practice becomes a habit." The commission also found that miners suspected and resisted purported safety measures, believing they really only served to reduce their earnings or introduced "new conditions that are of advantage to the operator only."<sup>21</sup>

Just as they were aware of the underlying economic cause of miners' "carelessness," mine inspectors also seemed to recognize that the solution to the problem of death in the mines lay in changes in the industry and in working conditions beyond their control. One way to reduce accidents was through more and stricter supervision. Typical

---

19. U.S. Inspector of Mines, *Ninth Annual Report, 1900-1901*, p. 719.

20. U.S. Inspector of Mines, *Third Annual Report, 1894-1895*, p. 699.

21. "Report of the United States Coal Commission," Senate Exec. Doc. 195, 68th Cong., 2nd sess., part III, 1683-84.

was inspector W. W. Risdon's comment in 1923 that the best way to prevent roof falls was "frequent inspections of each place the men are at work and strict discipline." Risdon emphasized that miners were legally responsible for making their rooms safe and that mine bosses were legally responsible for seeing to it that they did so.<sup>22</sup>

Nevertheless, there were formidable obstacles to close supervision, not the least of which was the large scale of many operations. With workers scattered about in rooms through miles of entries, foremen and fire bosses were hard pressed to make even one visit per day to each working room. In addition, unless a supervisor stayed to see that his orders were obeyed, there was no way to insure that miners took the time to secure their roofs and take other measures to protect themselves. Constant supervision could require a force of supervisors nearly as large as the number of workers employed.

Moreover, even the most safety-conscious mine boss found himself in an ambiguous position. Responsible for enforcing the coal mining law, he was, nevertheless, an employee of the mine owner. A mine boss who rigidly enforced safety rules at the expense of production might soon find himself out of work. Miners were aware of this and insisted that "hired managers, hard driven by the knowledge that their jobs depend on their ability to produce coal cheaply, take chances in order that they may save expenses." A miner could do little to protest if a mine boss chose greater production over safety. Mine bosses had virtually absolute authority underground and could easily punish or get rid of a complainer. Such power meant that "the individual miners cannot insist on the enforcement of the laws, or even the well-known commonest safeguards," and allowed mine bosses to "take chances with human life that result in the deplorable percentage of casualties the statistics reveal." Mine inspectors were aware of this problem but even though they encouraged miners to come forward with complaints, they were helpless to do anything about it.<sup>23</sup>

What was the solution, then, to the problem of better coal mine supervision and safety? In 1925 inspector Warren Bracewell noted that falling demand and a shortage of experienced miners had "caused some companies to look to the mechanization of their mines so that the lesser experienced labor" could be employed. New methods of mining were being introduced, he noted, including the use of automatic conveyors

---

22. New Mexico Inspector of Mines, *Twelfth Annual Report, 1923*, pp. 6-7.

23. *United Mine Workers Journal*, December 17, 1914, p. 4; U.S. Inspector of Mines, *Third Annual Report, 1894-1895*, p. 699.

instead of cars to carry coal to the surface. With more extensive mechanization, workers could be "concentrated and kept under constant supervision." Moreover, deadwork, including timbering and other safety work, could be transferred to "company men" who received set daily wages. "It is believed," Bracewell said, "that with closer concentration of the workmen, better supervision can be maintained with a great saving in accidents."<sup>24</sup>

Bracewell described changes in the work environment associated with mechanization that would bring about safer conditions and significantly lower fatality rates. With mechanization, especially the introduction of loaders and conveyors, the pick miner's skills became less valuable. Eventually, continuous mining machines, which cut coal from the seam and loaded it onto cars or conveyors, made the pick miner obsolete. Ultimately, machines took the mine worker out of the darkness of the earth and put him at the controls of a huge earth mover.

While miners continued to work underground, they did so in a changed environment. Instead of working in pairs in rooms scattered throughout the mine, teams of machine operators and day men worked under the eyes of foremen, cutting and loading the coal, laying track, and timbering rooms and entries. And, they did so for set daily wages, not tonnage rates.

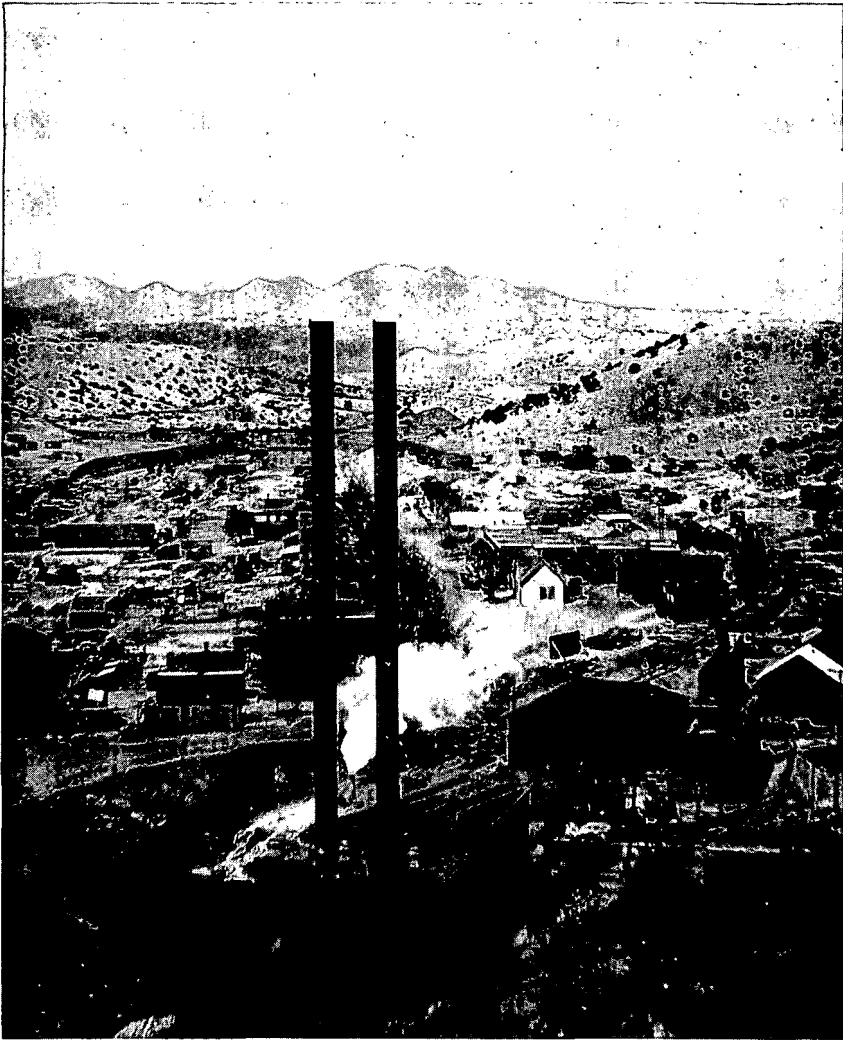
The change did not come immediately nor in all mines, but with mechanization the important elements in safety problems—inadequate supervision and the tonnage rate—gradually were eliminated. In New Mexico, the years of the Great Depression and World War II constituted an era of transition from pick mining and hand loading to mechanized mining. Mechanized mining spread during the 1930s as operators replaced humans with more productive machines. The stimulus of World War II and a shortage of skilled miners added further incentive to mechanize.<sup>25</sup> In 1942, machine production of coal exceeded hand mining, and in 1947, 84 percent of New Mexico's coal was produced by machines and at least 76 percent was loaded mechanically.

In the years between 1934 and 1947 New Mexico's coal mining fatality rates fell dramatically and to zero in 1947. The average rate for these years was 3.11 per thousand, with falls of rock and coal accounting for a rate of 1.81 and explosions 0.24 per thousand. Haulage accidents, at the rate of 0.64 per thousand, killed more workers than did

---

24. New Mexico Inspector of Mines, *Fourteenth Annual Report*, 1925, pp. 5–6.

25. *Ibid.*, *Thirty-first Annual Report*, 1942, p. 7.



Twin smokestacks dominate the vista of Madrid, New Mexico, a coal mining community twenty-four miles southwest of Santa Fe. Photo courtesy of New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, Neg. No. 23265.

explosions. Machinery and electricity together killed miners at the rate of 0.25 per thousand.

Though it rose only slightly, the rate of death from machinery and electrical accidents indicates a negative side of mechanization. While mechanization held the key to better mine safety, machines also introduced new hazards. New Mexico's first death from an accident in-



volving a mining machine occurred in 1922, and the state's first electrical fatality came in 1923, just as mechanization began to account for a significant percentage of the state's production. A spokesman for the United Mine Workers in 1939 told a U.S. Senate committee that "the rates of fatalities caused by transportation, hauling equipment and electrical equipment widely introduced with the mechanization of mines, show a definitely upward trend, so as practically to destroy the good effect in the increased safety in handling explosions and explosives."<sup>26</sup>

Noise and vibrations from cutting machines complicated the problem of roof control. The din of machines made it difficult for miners to sound roofs and detect dangerous loose rock. The vibrations from machines tearing into the coal seam sometimes loosened roof material that the miners thought secure. To make room for a machine the miners sometimes had to remove timbers and either take down loose roof or hope that it would not fall. Thus, mechanization helps to explain the continued high rate of falls of rock and coal between 1934–1947.

Mining machines also exacerbated ventilation and explosion problems. As they cut into the coal, machines generated enormous quantities of coal dust, taxing the capacity of ventilating systems and increasing the potential for explosions. Mining machines also were a potential source of ignition. Sparks from cutters striking a piece of rock or from improperly installed or poorly insulated electrical cable could easily set off a pocket of methane gas, which in turn could ignite a dust explosion. Indeed, a U.S. Bureau of Mines study found that in the period from 1931 through 1950 only open flame lights and smoking caused more explosions than did electric arcs.<sup>27</sup>

Fortunately, technological improvements and training have remedied most of the hazards associated with mechanization. Hazards have been minimized by better roof control methods, including roof bolting; longwall mining equipment with self-contained overhead protection; dust suppression methods including systematic sprinkling and dust barriers (containers of pulverized stone designed to empty in an explosion to suppress flames); guard devices and dead-man switches on machines; and more emphasis on training miners in the proper installation and use of machinery and electricity.

Because of the significant decline in coal mine fatality rates during the depression and war years it is worth considering what factors other

---

26. "Inspections and Investigations in Coal Mines," Senate Committee on Mines and Mining, 76th Cong. 1st sess., 6.

27. *Historical Summary of Coal Mine Explosions in the United States*, circular 7900 (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, 1959), 43.

than mechanization contributed to improved fatality rates. One was the Great Depression itself, which caused lower employment and production, meaning that fewer workers were exposed to work hazards less often. During the decade of the 1930s the average annual fatality rate was 3.42 per thousand. In the war years, as activity in the industry increased, fatality rates rose, averaging 3.89 per thousand, suggesting that economic factors did play a role in rising and declining rates of death in the mines. It should be noted, however, that the Great Depression actually only extended and accelerated a pattern of declining production and employment in New Mexico's coal mines that began after World War I. During the decade of the 1920s, as activity in the industry fell off, the state nevertheless continued to experience very high fatality rates, averaging 7.29 per thousand. Thus, the economic decline of the 1930s at best only partly accounts for lower death rates.

Another factor that made conditions in the mines safer was a new coal mining law passed in 1933. The new law included improved regulations in the areas of inspection and enforcement, ventilation and dust control, explosives and shot firing, timbering, and haulage. It also took into account technological developments and included regulations governing the installation and use of machinery and electricity. It also required that foremen, assistant foremen, fire bosses, and shot firers be examined and certified by the state mine inspector.<sup>28</sup> Although the law attempted to address changing conditions in the industry, including mechanization, its basic goal remained the prevention of major explosion disasters. Most important, it did nothing to alter the basic relations of work, including the tonnage rate, or the attitude that miners were primarily responsible for their own safety and deaths.

Of more immediate importance in bringing about safer conditions in the mines perhaps was the unionization of coal miners during the 1930s. With the coming of the New Deal and the defeat of the radical National Miners' Union in the Gallup strike, the way was opened for the United Mine Workers of America to organize New Mexico's coal miners. In addition to fixing wage scales, defining rules for deadwork, and protecting workers from harassment from mine officials, union contracts included agreements to observe state mining laws and to implement other safety measures. Early contracts did not do away with the tonnage rate, however, and thus did not completely eliminate the economic incentive for miners to risk their lives for more coal.

In sum, while economic conditions, regulation, and unionization undoubtedly contributed to better safety conditions in New Mexico's

---

28. *New Mexico, Laws, 1933*, pp. 303-52.

coal mines, it was the fundamental change in work and work relations brought about by mechanization—better supervision and the end of the tonnage rate system—that best explains declining rates of death after 1933.

# Cultural and Environmental Change on the Pajarito Plateau

---

HAL ROTHMAN

When Stephen E. McElroy and Daniel Sawyer surveyed the Ramón Vigil Grant on the Pajarito Plateau for the General Land Office of the Department of the Interior in 1877, they found land that appealed to their instincts. The western portion of the area contained "fine growth of large Pine timber," while piñon and cedar trees covered the area closer to the Rio Grande. The grazing potential of the region also impressed the surveyors, "the grass being of good quality and plentiful," and the two men "saw considerable live stock herds of sheep and cattle grazing in different parts of the tract." In the eyes of these men who routinely assessed the economic potential of land, the area was "valuable for its excellent grazing capacity and its large timber supply." Regardless of their predisposition to encourage settlement, Sawyer and McElroy seemed genuinely impressed with the area they surveyed.<sup>1</sup>

---

Hal Rothman is assistant professor of history in Wichita State University, where he directs the public history program. He has worked as a historian for the National Park Service and for Futurepast, a historical research company based in Spokane, Washington. He is the author of numerous articles on the interaction of humans and the physical environment in the West and of *Preserving Different Pasts: The National Monuments and the Antiquities Act of 1906* (1989).

1. Daniel Sawyer and Stephen C. McElroy, "Survey of the Ramon Vigil Grant," April 2-6, 1877, Bureau of Land Management, Santa Fe, vol. 0101, pp. 584-88.

But by 1913, observers noticed distinct changes in the environment of the region. Famed archaeologist Edgar L. Hewett, a veteran of nearly twenty years on the plateau, reported the "upbuilding of the general mesa level about the walls of ancient buildings [archaeological ruins] to an extent that is not explicable under present conditions." What he saw but did not recognize was the erosion of the thin topsoil that characterized the region. In 1912, William B. Douglass, a government surveyor with much experience in the West, noted that grass on the entire Vigil Grant was "quite scarce." The grazing potential that Sawyer and McElroy had seen in 1877 had disappeared. Douglass also remarked that the stands of Ponderosa Pine reported by earlier surveyors were also gone, replaced "chiefly [by] piñon and juniper, without value for lumber."<sup>2</sup>

In the thirty-six-year period that followed the Sawyer and McElroy survey, the environment of the Pajarito Plateau underwent change that was radical enough to be visible to the human eye. With the coming of the railroad in 1880, the economic, social, and cultural institutions of American society that transformed the West also became a significant force in a peripheral area. These forces were part of a dynamic process that altered both the physical environment of the region and the lives of Hispanos and Native Americans in the region.

In the vicinity of the Pajarito Plateau, Hispanos bore the brunt of these changes. They lacked the land base, however threatened, of their Native American neighbors. Like indigenous peoples around the globe who faced the impact of European-based industrial culture, the majority of Hispanos found themselves confronted with a set of forces that their culture had not taught them to address.

The environmental change wrought by the application of nineteenth-century American values to fragile land accelerated an ecological process that had begun as soon as Spaniards arrived in New Mexico. American influence telescoped into a few years much more environmental and cultural change than Spanish practices had produced in nearly three hundred years. The technological advantages of the nineteenth century changed long-standing patterns of land use, sharply altering the physical environment of remote areas of northern New Mexico. The cultural systems that preceded Anglo commerce ceased

---

2. Edgar L. Hewett, Junius Henderson, and Wilfred William Robbins, *The Physiography of the Rio Grande Valley, New Mexico, In Relation to Pueblo Culture* [Bureau of Ethnology Bulletin no. 54] (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1913), 20. See also William B. Douglass, "Resurvey of the Ramon Vigil Grant," August 25, 1913, Bureau of Land Management, Santa Fe, vol. 0039, pp. 63-109.

to function effectively, and American institutions, shaped by the values of an industrial society, filled the economic gap, often to the long-term detriment of the people that preceded Anglo-Americans in the region.

Environmental changes in northern New Mexico were part of a larger process that began the day Christopher Columbus set foot in the New World. Old World plants, animals, humans, and microbes rapidly overwhelmed the parts of the New World that bore the greatest ecological resemblance to the old. Throughout the Americas, fast-spreading European flora and fauna replaced native species, in some cases threatening the survival of native peoples as well as their biotas. In these "Neo-Europes," places like the pampas of Argentina, the Australian grasslands, and the agricultural cornucopia of North America, the "portmanteau biota" of Europeans—everything from the domesticated and soon to become feral animals they brought, to their breathborne and venereal diseases—facilitated wholesale environmental and cultural change.<sup>3</sup>

In the New World climates most like Europe, the transformation was a relatively simple process. Elsewhere, in the swamps of South Carolina, the tropical rain forests of Central America, or the deserts of New Mexico, European peoples, plants, and animals found conditions much less suited to their health and welfare. In eighteenth-century South Carolina, malaria decimated whites, while their slaves, who possessed a hereditary West African resistance carried in the same gene responsible for sickle-cell anemia, thrived.<sup>4</sup> The constant moisture and humidity of lowland equatorial regions was also an enemy of Europeans, as was the harsh, arid climate of the "Great American Desert," as nineteenth-century observers termed the Great Plains and Southwest.

Environmental change in the tropics and deserts of the New World was decidedly different from that of the more temperate areas. In these marginal places, the removal of native ground cover did not precipitate replacement of indigenous flora by opportunistic European imports; instead a combination of native plants and imports reshaped the landscape. To "Europeanize" the plants and animals of such places required more than the mere presence of Europeans and their descendants.

---

3. Alfred W. Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe 900–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), is the foundation of much of this argument. Crosby's earlier work, *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1972), addresses these issues in the conquest of the Americas.

4. Peter Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1974), 70–91.

The process of transforming these comparatively inhospitable lands into thriving Neo-European colonies was predicated on economic desirability. Such places usually became important to Europeans and their descendants when the land offered the potential to produce commodities in demand in the European world and when the technology to transport those products to market existed. Without these preconditions, places where climate and vegetation differed greatly from Europe did not attract large numbers of Europeans.

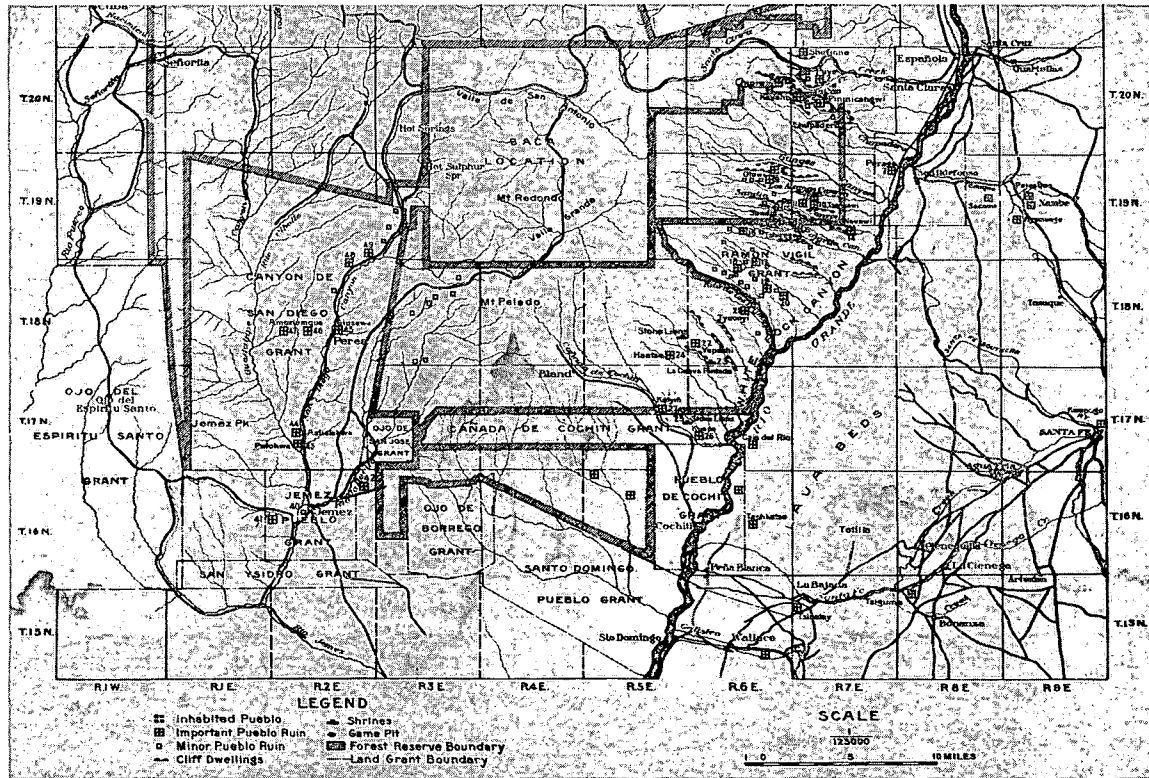
The deserts of New Mexico had relatively little attraction for the Spanish. They did not come in large numbers as they did to the central Mexican plateau. European flora generally fared well when planted in close proximity to water, but away from rivers Spaniards and Pueblos alike had to carefully nurture fruit trees, melons, wheat, and chiles. As a result, New Mexico developed more slowly than places like Peru, where European imports like turnips, mustard, mint, camomile, endive, and spinach grew wildly, defying attempts to keep them out of cultivated fields. In Peru and elsewhere indigenous peoples died from European disease, had their ways of life disrupted by the appearance of rapidly multiplying European livestock, found the native flora decimated and replaced by Old World transplants, and were eventually driven from their homelands, usually within a century of the appearance of the Europeans.

The Pueblo Rebellion highlighted the difference between places like New Mexico and those that better accommodated pastoral and agrarian Europeans. Eighty-two years after Oñate arrived, the Pueblos of New Mexico were sufficiently powerful to drive the Spanish out of New Mexico. In 1680, despite droughts and epidemics, the Pueblos and their cultures remained strong and vibrant, their people healthy, and their disdain for the Spanish evident.<sup>5</sup>

The peripheral location and status of New Mexico and its decidedly un-European climate shielded it from the full brunt of the portmanteau biota of the Spanish and protected its native peoples from the fury of diseases such as smallpox. While European influence in New Mexico was significant, its animals did not reproduce there in the wild fashion that characterized the pampas, Australia, or the eastern United States. Old World plants withered in the dry heat, and European peoples did

---

5. Elizabeth A. H. John, *Storms Brewed in Other Men's Worlds: The Confrontation of Indians, Spanish, and French in the Southwest, 1540-1795* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 1975), 87, 90, 92-99; Marc Simmons, *New Mexico: A History* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1977), 66-75; Joe Sando, "The Pueblo Revolt," in Alfonso Ortiz, ed., *The Handbook of North American Indians* (20 vols., Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1979), 9: 94-97.



A U.S. Forest Service archaeological map of 1906, showing inhabited pueblos, Pueblo ruins, and cliff dwellings, also indicates the maze of interconnecting land grants that overlay the Pajarito Plateau.



not replace indigenous ones. Instead, they intermarried, creating a mestizo population, the *casta* system, and a hybrid culture that retained elements of its primary components.

In New Mexico, European cultural influence also spread more slowly than in more neo-European locales, so that by the nineteenth century it remained an isolated outpost. Even the expanding republic to the northeast did not pose a significant threat until after 1835. Prior to that time, Americans in search of land were more likely to head toward the more hospitable environs of central Texas. The few who arrived in New Mexico found the most fertile and irrigable land already occupied. As late as 1840, foreign residents of New Mexico numbered but a few hundred.<sup>6</sup>

The relative paucity of animals in New Mexico and the general lack of economic advantage meant that peripheral places like the Pajarito Plateau, less than thirty miles from Santa Cruz and Santa Fe, experienced a less comprehensive impact from the European portmanteau biota than did the fertile river valleys elsewhere in New Mexico. Until the late nineteenth century, northern New Mexico offered neo-Europeans little but the potential for subsistence. The primary value of the Pajarito Plateau area was as a buffer between New Mexican settlements and the Utes, Navajos, Apaches, and Comanches who threatened them. Only when the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad built a narrow gauge railway that crossed the Rio Grande Valley in the late nineteenth century did the descendants of Europeans—in this case Americans—begin to assess the economic potential of the region.

In 1880, three distinct areas, defined as much by humanity as by topography, comprised the plateau. The southern third, stretching from the Cañada de Cochití Grant to the north rim of Frijoles Canyon, caught the imagination of early travelers to the region. In 1913, Hewett wrote that the southern third “embraces the most stupendous canyons, the wildest scenery, and affords the grandest panoramas to be seen in New Mexico.”<sup>7</sup> Yet the region was rugged, and its angular trails made travel on horseback difficult. Except in Frijoles Canyon, today the primary focus of visitors to the Bandelier National Monument, the canyon bottoms were too narrow for agriculture, and the sharp rise of canyon walls precluded traditional settlement. The sparsely vegetated, table-like mesas offered little cover. Their sandy soils had limited agricultural potential. Only El Rito de los Frijoles, in Frijoles Canyon, provided

---

6. David J. Weber, *The Mexican Frontier 1821–1846: The American Southwest Under Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982), 180–81.

7. Hewett, Henderson, and Robbins, *Physiography of the Rio Grande Valley*, 17.

perennial water. The ruggedness of the region kept it largely uninhabited.

Man-made boundaries created the middle area; the Ramón Vigil Grant. This eighteenth-century Spanish land grant extended from the north rim of Frijoles Canyon to a surveyor's line just south of the Otowi ruins and the present-day town of Los Alamos. Although nineteenth- and twentieth-century accounts reported seeps and a perennial stream in the westernmost segment of Pajarito Canyon, near the center of the grant, and another perennial stream in the aptly-named Water Canyon, there were few other constant sources of water. But the Vigil Grant encouraged human habitation. It was neither as rugged nor as inaccessible as the southern third of the plateau. The topography of the grant did not impede settlers, its mesas did not tower over surrounding canyon bottoms, and the canyons themselves were much wider than those south of Frijoles Canyon. Prehistoric Native Americans found the middle portion of the plateau more hospitable than the land to the south. Ruins on the Vigil Grant far outnumber those south of Frijoles Canyon.

The northern third of the region, beginning at the northern border of the Vigil Grant and extending to another artificial line that bisected the town of Española, had other advantages. Between Frijoles Canyon and Puye Mesa, the higher, more rugged mesas of the southern area gave way to softer, more rolling contours. The land sloped more gently toward the Rio Grande. The canyons became wider, and although there was no more water north of the Vigil Grant than anywhere else, the wider canyons and their seasonal creeks and the lower elevation of the valley floors created more abundant grass cover.<sup>8</sup>

Before the nineteenth century, humanity had a long history upon the Pajarito Plateau. Pre-Columbian pueblos thrived in the region. A number of factors, however, including a general chill caused by a small, planet-wide Ice Age that peaked during the sixteenth century, caused

---

8. Observers throughout the twentieth century have noted that the largest of the prehistoric pueblos on the Pajarito Plateau were located between Frijoles Canyon and Puye Mesa. The Vigil Grant includes Tshirege, Tsankawi, and many others. See Edgar L. Hewett, *Pajarito Plateau and its Ancient People* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1938). Even archaeological maps of the region follow this track; see the "Archaeological Map of the Proposed Cliff Cities National Park," Proposed National Park file 0-32, Part 2, Records of the National Park Service, Record Group (RG) 79, National Archives, Washington D.C. On Pajarito Plateau archaeology, see Robert P. Powers, "Draft Archeological Research Design for a Sample Inventory Survey of Bandelier National Monument," unpublished paper, November 7, 1986, and Frances Joan Mathien, "The Bandelier Survey Project: Archeological Background," second draft, January 24, 1986, Division of Cultural Research, Southwest Region, National Park Service, Santa Fe.

the people who inhabited the pueblos on the plateau to migrate to lower elevations by 1600.<sup>9</sup> The larger pueblos were abandoned, and despite occasional attempts at resettlement, by 1800, the lowland pueblos of San Ildefonso and Santa Clara to the northeast and Cochiti to the south had become the centers of Native American life in the region.<sup>10</sup>

Few permanent Hispano settlers replaced the Indians, and until the 1880s, the Pajarito Plateau remained largely open land. The lack of perennial streams in the region, and its inhospitable winters confined habitation to the summers. In accordance with Spanish policy throughout New Mexico, Hispanos clustered around the pueblos in the valleys—San Ildefonso, Santa Clara, and Pojoaque—across the Rio Grande and slightly to the north of the abandoned remains of the bustling communities of prehistory. Although it retained vast spiritual importance for Native Americans, the plateau area faded from the central position it held before 1500.

Between 1500 and 1880, Hispano and Indian lifestyles in the Pojoaque and Española valleys that surrounded the Pajarito Plateau changed little. After the Spanish reconquest of New Mexico in 1694, the Hispano communities that grew around the Pueblos practiced a subsistence regime that took advantage of the fertility of the alluvial soils around the Rio Grande and the sparse settlement upon the plateau.

Throughout the nineteenth century, Anglo merchants, mountain men, and settlers filtered into New Mexico. Their trade goods attracted local interest, and the large number of animals they brought began to destroy ground cover around major trading centers like Santa Fe. But only their trade goods made an impact in the Española and Pojoaque valleys: The people there had little to offer merchants. Until 1880, life had a decidedly pre-industrial pace, augmented only by the benefits of items such as window glass. "Defensive and practical needs, rather than aesthetic considerations" governed their lives as well as their architecture.<sup>11</sup>

But by themselves, the valleys surrounding the Pajarito Plateau did not contain the resources to sustain their inhabitants. The plateau provided an essential boost to the subsistence of its neighbors. Its

---

9. Roy A. Gallant, *The Ice Ages* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1985), 39–53.

10. Robert H. and Florence C. Lister, *Those Who Came Before* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press), 1–41. See also Richard Woodbury, "Prehistory: Introduction," in Ortiz, ed., *Handbook of North American Indians*, 9: 22–31. For a fictional account of prehistoric life in Frijoles Canyon on the plateau, see Adolph Bandelier, *The Delightmakers* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich, 1971).

11. Weber, *Mexican Frontier*, 220–24.



Sparse vegetation illustrates the fragility of the environment in this turn-of-the-century scene of early field work on the Pajarito Pueblo Ruins. Photo courtesy of Special Collections, Zimmerman Library, University of New Mexico.

timber and grasses broadened the economic capabilities of the people living at lower elevations. During the summer, when most of the water in the valleys dried up and crops and orchards covered every irrigable acre, residents took their animals up to the higher elevations of the plateau. They sought grass for their small herds, and the frequent afternoon rains in the Jemez Mountains assured a more constant supply of surface water. Many cleared patches of land and raised crops. With seventy-five square miles of open land, there was plenty of grass and timber for anyone who needed it.

Hispano families from around the area regularly utilized the plateau. The Pino family from La Cienega, southwest of Santa Fe, brought sheep to Frijoles Canyon. They planted beans and other crops for their own use, trading only the occasional surplus they produced. They allowed stock to graze freely during the days, and at night, quartered them in prehistoric caves. One man, Pacífico C. De Baca, built a cabin on the eastern fringe of Frijoles Canyon, may have even raised crops, most likely beans, and may have spent some winters in the canyon. Observers also noted that prehistoric irrigation ditches from Frijoles Creek had been used during the nineteenth century, presumably for agricultural purposes.<sup>12</sup>

Elsewhere across the plateau, similar cabins sprang up, and some families settled permanently. North of Frijoles Canyon at the eastern base of the Jemez Mountains, Severo Gonzales had a ranch composed of two homestead sections. On nearby Three Mile Mesa, Pedro Gómez

---

12. Albert J. Abbott to Rodger Abbott, January 12, 1948, Bandelier National Monument Archives, Bandelier National Monument. See also Ida Patton Abbott, "An Account of a Trip to Frijoles Canyon June 20-24, 1907," *Miscellaneous Diaries and Journals*, no. 38, New Mexico State Records and Archives Center, Santa Fe, New Mexico. Albert Abbott visited Frijoles Canyon with two Carlisle Indian School graduates, John and Cyrus Dixon, who apparently worked for the U.S. Forest Service. They gave C. De Baca's name to Albert Abbott, reporting that he had recently left. Mrs. Evelyn C. Frey, the Bandelier concessionaire from 1925 until 1981, also confirmed the presence of Hispano families in Frijoles Canyon during a conversation with Hal Rothman and Bandelier Museum Curator Virginia Robicheau, on October 24, 1985. Mrs. Frey's husband George investigated the remains of the structure during the 1920s, and Mrs. Frey recalled that he told her the house had a basement. Dick Boyd, Sr., intimated that the home belonged to the Pino family in his November 16, 1964, letter to Homer Pickens. He recalled that they came up every summer from La Cienega, near Santa Fe. Richard Boyd, Jr., of Chama, New Mexico, confirmed his father's recollection in an interview with Hal Rothman and Virginia Robicheau on November 14, 1985. He believed that his family purchased their lodge in Frijoles Canyon from the Pinos, although documentary evidence suggests otherwise. The Bandelier National Monument Library has the original tape and transcripts of the conversation. The best guess is that both C. De Baca and the Pinos inhabited the structure at different times, C. De Baca before 1906 and the Pinos between then and about 1919.

y Gonzales and his family settled. In 1894, Benigno Quintana patented a homestead in the vicinity. William Carpenter White settled an adjacent parcel in 1896, and the Quintanas taught Spanish to White's children. Other small homesteads dotted García Canyon, just south of Puye, where people used the cut blocks from nearby ruins for their structures.<sup>13</sup>

The plateau served the needs of a variety of cultures, but geographic constraints often determined patterns of use. San Ildefonso and Santa Clara were closest to the northern third of the plateau, and the Pueblos controlled most of the land bordering the Rio Grande. Native Americans largely utilized the area north and west of Puye Mesa. Hispanos from places like La Cienega, Thornton (Santo Domingo), and the area around Bland came from the south to use the rugged southern portion, while their counterparts from the vicinity of San Ildefonso appear to have gone to the central portion of the plateau with greater regularity, for it contained the Ramón Vigil Grant.

By 1880, the Vigil Grant had a long history of its own. In 1742, in a highly unusual instance, Viceroy don Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza granted the tract to Pedro Sánchez. Sánchez wanted the land because he had difficulty supporting his wife, twelve children, three orphan nephews, and servants. Sánchez may have forged the signature of the viceroy, but during the eighteenth century no one challenged his claim to a marginal tract of land on the periphery of the far northern frontier of New Spain.<sup>14</sup> The land remained in the Sánchez family until 1851, when an heir, Antonio Sánchez, sold the grant to José Ramón Vigil for a yoke of oxen, thirty-six ewes, one ram, and twenty dollars in cash. Vigil claimed his purchase under American law, and his name was attached to the tract. He and his family lived upon the plateau, building a home just east of the point where Los Alamos and Pueblo canyons met.<sup>15</sup>

13. Transcripts of Bences Gonzales interview, April 21, 1948, Los Alamos Historical Society, Los Alamos, New Mexico; "Moses Gomez . . . Los Alamos Pioneer," *Los Alamos Monitor*, September 24, 1970. In its Homestead Collections, the Los Alamos Historical Society has maps that show the location and date of patent for each of the homesteads. García Canyon is now part of the Santa Fe National Forest. Visitors to the canyon can still see homestead structures, including a house built from prehistoric cut blocks.

14. For a chronicle of Vigil Grant politics, see Marjorie Bell Chambers, "Technically Sweet Los Alamos" (doctoral dissertation, University of New Mexico, 1974), 30-43.

15. Chambers, "Los Alamos." For references to the location of Vigil's homestead, see Peggy Pond Church, "Trails Over Pajarito" (unpublished manuscript, Los Alamos Historical Society); Peggy Pond Church, *The House at Otowi Bridge* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1960); and map in Ramon Vigil file, L. Bradford Prince Papers, New Mexico State Archives.

Ironically, Vigil's homestead was outside the boundaries of the property he owned, but during his lifetime it never mattered. As in many cases, the boundaries of the grant were drawn informally.

During the first thirty years of the American era, the Vigil Grant was too remote to inspire the kind of controversy that occurred elsewhere in New Mexico. While the Santa Fe Ring schemed to acquire grazing land throughout New Mexico, the people of the Española and Pojoaque valleys continued to pasture animals on the Ramón Vigil Grant.<sup>16</sup>

Like many other community land grants, the Vigil Grant functioned as common property. People from the nearby valleys traversed the grant and often grazed their animals upon it. As elsewhere in the Rio Arriba region, a visible sense of interdependence dominated interaction between people in the valley and upon the plateau. An informal social compact dictated that unused land belonged to any member of the extended community that needed it, with kinship by blood or marriage strengthening cultural ties. This informal arrangement had important social and economic consequences for the Hispanos who lived around San Ildefonso, ensuring that the narrow world they inhabited provided for all.<sup>17</sup>

Traditional grazing practices offered little respite for the land, but

---

16. Land grant transfers in the old Mexican north have provoked much scholarship, and the work of the Center for Land Grant Studies has contributed greatly to the discussion. See John R. and Christine M. Van Ness, eds., *Spanish & Mexican Land Grants in New Mexico and Colorado* (Manhattan, Kansas: Sunflower University Press, 1980), G. Emlen Hall, *The Four Leagues of Pecos* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984), and G. Emlen Hall, "Juan Estevan Pino, 'Se Los Coma': New Mexico Land Speculation in the 1820s," *New Mexico Historical Review*, 57 (January 1982), 27-42. On the tenor of the times, see Victor Westphall, *The Public Domain In New Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1965), Victor Westphall, *Mercedes Reales: Hispanic Land Grants of the Upper Rio Grande Region* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983), and Victor Westphall, *Thomas Benton Catron and His Era* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1973). Thomas Benton Catron and Stephen B. Dorsey were leaders in the "Santa Fe Ring," the members of which acquired large land grants in northern New Mexico for their cattle operations. Leonard Pitt, *The Decline of the Californios: A Social History of Spanish-Speaking Californians 1846-1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 83-129, 148-191, shows the process by which Spanish-speaking Californians were divested of their lands. In New Mexico, Hispanos were not as outnumbered by Anglos as in California, and they resisted in a number of ways. See David J. Weber, *Foreigners in Their Native Land: Historical Roots of the Mexican American* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1973), 208; see also Robert Rosenbaum, *Mexicano Resistance in the Southwest: The Sacred Right of Self-Preservation* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 99-124.

17. Paul Kutsche, ed., *The Survival of Spanish-American Villages* (Colorado Springs: Colorado College, 1979), 3-55.

on the plateau, the relatively small number of cattle and sheep and the comparatively large land base mitigated the impact of hooves and mouths. Herdsman often took their stock up to the plateau to search for fresh grazing even before grasses at lower elevations began to sprout. As a consequence, in the most heavily grazed areas, short grasses like blue and side-oats grama, false-buffalo, needle-and-thread, and galleta, and forage plants and shrubs rarely had the opportunity to seed and reproduce. By mid-summer, the animals were foraging off stems instead of the flowers of plants. But the pockets of damage this created had little impact upon the plateau as a whole. With an old-growth timber cover, ranging from piñon at lower elevations to ponderosa pine and Douglas fir higher up, and with wildfires that regularly replenished soil nutrients, herders had little trouble finding new and better pasture after they had exhausted a small area.

These grazing practices, however, posed problems for the future. In situations of more intensive use, the grazing lands of *pobladores* and Indians fared less well. Overgrazing in the Rio Puerco basin, from Cuba on the west side of the Jemez Mountains to the Rio Grande, had eroded fragile alluvial soils so badly that between 1880 and 1951 more than ten thousand acres of previously irrigable land near the river were lost to cultivation. With ground cover destroyed, rampaging floods became common. In other similar areas, the tiny sharp hooves of sheep left trails that opened the way for opportunistic plants and decimated large areas of forage land.<sup>18</sup>

Prior to the 1880s, the Pajarito Plateau had escaped this mass destruction. There was no cultural prohibition nor understanding of the land's fragile character to prevent herdsman from overgrazing the Pajarito Plateau, but they lacked the quantity of stock to make more than a short-term impact on a limited area of such a marginal land. But on the Pajarito Plateau, these patterns of use sowed the seeds of an ominous ecological future.

Anglo industry served as the catalyst that ignited the process of change. In 1879, the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad began to build narrow gauge tracks through the Rio Grande Valley, changing perceptions of the value of land west of the river. The Chili Line eventually ran from Santa Fe to Antonito, Colorado, creating new communities in its wake. In 1880, just to the north of Santa Clara Pueblo, where the line originally ended, a railroad town called Española sprang up "in the midst of hoary old Spanish towns and Indian Pueblos." As late as

---

18. William deBuys, *Enchantment and Exploitation: The Life and Hard Times of a New Mexican Mountain Range* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1985), 217.



1885, the town was "a baby city . . . [a] nondescript collection of canvas tents and board shanties on a flat beside the river."<sup>19</sup> The railroad offered a link to the outside world that made the development of previously remote land worthy of consideration.

Anglos perceived the value of land like the Pajarito Plateau in very different terms than did prior inhabitants of the area. They saw what Sawyer and McElroy had seen: commercial grazing and timber potential. The added allure of the proximity of the railroad also figured in the equation, and Anglos offered what seemed exorbitant prices for land along the proposed route. The Rio Grande Valley boomed, and men like Frank Bond, who opened a general store in Española in 1883, envisioned fortunes in the making.

But these new values signaled change in the region, and Hispanos bore its brunt. Unlike their Native American neighbors, they had difficulty proving their claim to lands ceded them by the Spanish and Mexican administrations. While all the Pueblos except Zuñi and Laguna were approved before 1860, Hispanos met with comparatively little success when they sought to have the American government recognize their claims. The question of community ownership, which American law did not recognize, posed significant problems, as did the use of land to which no individual held title. Hispano land received few of the protections extended to Native Americans.<sup>20</sup>

The coming of the railroad also changed the value of land in northern New Mexico. In 1851, when Ramón Vigil acquired his land, it had subsistence value, but by 1880 it had considerable cash value. Vigil, already more than seventy years old, was prepared to sell. When Father Thomas Aquinas Hayes, a priest serving under the Archbishop of Santa Fe, Jean Baptiste Lamy, offered Vigil \$4,000 for the grant, Vigil accepted.

Father Hayes blossomed into quite a successful land speculator. Lamy had sent Hayes to serve at Santa Clara Pueblo, and his position there presumably facilitated the purchase of the grant. Father Hayes knew he owned a valuable commodity. In 1884, he sold the tract to Winfield R. Smith, a wealthy Milwaukee attorney, and Edward P. Sheldon, a Cleveland industrialist, for \$100,000—an astronomical cost of more than \$3 per acre.<sup>21</sup>

---

19. Birge Harrison, "Española and Its Environs," *Harper's Magazine*, 70 (May, 1885), 53-54, reprinted by Las Trampas Press, Española, New Mexico, 1966, pp. 1-2. After passenger trains entered New Mexico in the 1880s, railroad companies sought to promote the Southwest. Harrison's article was part of the process.

20. Victor Westphall, *Mercedes Reales*, 110-21, 193-216.

21. Ramon Vigil file, Prince Papers. See also Church, *Otowi Bridge*, 6-8; and Chambers, *Los Alamos*, 35. File H542C, Ramon Vigil Grant, Los Alamos Historical Society,



Students of the Los Alamos Ranch School, which grew out of Ashley Pond's efforts to establish a vacation club for the wealthy, pause on horseback in May 1919 during an afternoon ride near old Buckman sawmill. Activities such as this had significant impact on the Pajarito environment. Photo courtesy of the Los Alamos Historical Museum.

The sale of the Ramón Vigil Grant was part of a larger pattern. To the east and south of the Sangre de Cristos similar events transpired. At Pecos Pueblo, Hispanos acquired parts of the original Pueblo league from Indians as early as the 1820s. Although the Pecos Valley contained a number of thriving Hispano communities by 1880, at least one title to the entire Pueblo league was bandied about New York City in the hands of Anglo speculators. The group of speculators, none of whom had ever seen Pecos, apparently offered the title as collateral in a number of different situations. At Las Trampas, farther to the north, Anglo speculators alienated the *ejido* (the common area) of a Spanish land grant in 1902, turning the timber and grazing lands of El Valle and Las Trampas into a private pasture for their sheep.<sup>22</sup>

These men saw land not as a place to make a home, but as a commodity, and their values came to dominate territorial New Mexico. They utilized the railroad and a growing national market to make their fortune. Many of them, including some Hispanos, became powerful in territorial politics. Smaller landowners and their communities had difficulty combating the potent acquisitive instincts of men like Thomas B. Catron, who at one point owned more than one million acres in northern New Mexico.

Winfield Smith and George Fletcher, who bought out Sheldon in 1885, shared the dominant values and cultural assumptions of late-nineteenth-century industrial America—growth, progress, development, and profit. They perceived the tract in a different fashion than did other residents of the area. Like the majority of their generation, they believed in commerce as a civilizing factor. Nor could they afford to let the Vigil Grant lie fallow; they had too much money invested in the land. As absentee landlords, they sought tenants who could make enough money off the land to pay both taxes and a stipend to its owners.

In 1885, after much of the West Texas rangeland became desert as a result of abusive land practices and the Texas legislature passed ordinances limiting grazing, W. C. Bishop, the famed Texas cattleman, joined the parade of Texans who sought rangeland in New Mexico and leased the plateau. He headed a large operation handling over three thousand head of cattle. Hispano residents of the region later recalled never having seen so many animals in their lives.<sup>23</sup>

---

contains copies of documents from the Hayes transactions. When Thomas Aquinas Hayes purchased the Vigil Grant, Vigil did not have a patent. It was finally granted in 1898.

22. Hall, *Four Leagues of Pecos*, 171–97; deBuys, *Enchantment and Exploitation*, 171–92.

23. J. A. Stout, "Cattlemen, Conservationists, and the Taylor Grazing Act," *New Mexico Historical Review*, 45 (October 1970), 311–32.

Like many other southwestern locales, the Pajarito Plateau was an ecological trap. Its deep grama grasses, ponderosa pine trees, and the abundance of bear, puma, wild turkeys, and other game at higher elevations promised much to the nineteenth-century eye. The land seemed cornucopian, and to a degree, it was.<sup>24</sup> In reality, however, places like the Pajarito Plateau gave much less than they promised. Its fertility was an illusion created by its high altitude. The region received an average of ten to fourteen inches of rain per year, far short of the minimum that agriculture without irrigation required. Its bunch grass was rooted in a thin layer of topsoil, formed over thousands of years. Once the grasses disappeared, leaving the land defenseless and vulnerable to erosion, they would not soon return. Even sporadic grazing could tax its resources.

The appearance of Bishop and his cattle affected the communal nature of the use of land on the Pajarito Plateau. The land simply could not provide for subsistence and commercial economies simultaneously, and the lessees and their neighbors were at odds. Hispanos and Indians in the region owned too few animals to fill the plateau. The Texans, however, brought so many cows that they monopolized every strand of grass on the Vigil Grant, and in time-honored western tradition pastured animals beyond its vague boundaries. Ironically, Pueblo Indians had previously accused their Hispano neighbors of the same thing. Some Hispanos later reported that the Texans forbade them to graze their animals on the plateau. Others withdrew their stock because they feared violence.<sup>25</sup> Those who had traditionally used the Pajarito Plateau as an ejido were pushed off large tracts of pasture they had always used.

Before the conflict could escalate the deadly winter of 1886–1887 destroyed Bishop's cattle enterprise, and the plateau returned to its historic state. Although Bishop tried to revive his herd in the spring and summer of 1887, he soon packed up the remainder of his enterprise and returned to Texas. After the cattlemen left, herders from the valleys again brought their animals to the Vigil Grant. To the isolated residents of the Pojoaque and Española valleys, the short reign of the Texans seemed but an aberration.

Bishop and his cattle had a complex and deleterious impact upon the Vigil Grant. Modern calculations indicate that the carrying capacity of the 32,000-acre Vigil Grant would have been about three hundred

---

24. Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism*, 279.

25. Transcripts of depositions for *Sanchez v. Fletcher* taken in 1902–1904, Prince Papers.

head of cattle. With ten times that number Bishop initiated a chain reaction. The overstocking reduced the vigor of forage plants, inhibited reproduction, allowed opportunistic plants from lower elevations to move in, and probably eliminated more favored species of forage. As animals traveled progressively farther for water, their hooves created extensive trails, leading to soil movement, erosion, and ultimately, the mortality of plant species, particularly the edible wild plants that congregated around water sources. In turn, the build-up of dead vegetable matter diminished, destroying patterns of soil and plant regeneration.

The presence of the cattle also interfered with the natural regeneration of the range. Trampling of grasses by animal hooves and cropping of immature plants limited the amount of fuel for wildfires. Changes in natural patterns of wildfire prevented shrubs and trees from spreading into grassy areas. This process caused fewer nutrients to be available upon the range, and encouraged competition from plant species of hotter, drier zones. The result was general desiccation of the soil, and ultimately, a diminished economic potential for the land.<sup>26</sup>

In an arid marginal region, the impact of comprehensive overgrazing persists for generations. Ecological climax communities in arid areas like the Pajarito Plateau take hundreds of years to mature. Because its soils were fragile, thin, and highly erodible, the removal of first-growth cover by overstocking precluded the slow process of natural recovery. In short, Bishop and his cattle sprang the trap. Mass grazing permanently decreased the quality of range upon the Vigil Grant, and initiated a process that led to other commercial uses of land not well-suited for the demands of the national market.

The appearance of the Texans also became a precursor of the spread of Anglo material culture to peripheral areas like the Rio Arriba region of New Mexico. The tenets of industrialism and the drive for cash profits entered the world of subsistence economics. Anglo practices of

---

26. The carrying capacity of the Vigil Grant is estimated in Teralene S. Foxx and Gail D. Tierney, "Status of the Flora of the Los Alamos National Environmental Research Park: A Historical Perspective" (Los Alamos: Los Alamos National Laboratory, 1984), 2-4. See also Aldo Leopold, "Grass, Brush, Timber, and Fire in Southern Arizona," *Journal of Forestry*, 22 (October 1924); David R. Harris, "Recent Plant Invasions in the Southwest of the United States," in Thomas R. Detwyler, ed., *Man's Impact on the Environment* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971); R. R. Humphrey, "The Desert Grassland," *Botanical Review*, 24 (April 1958), 198-217; Stephen J. Pyne, *Fire in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982); John York and William Dick-Peddie, "Vegetational Changes in Southern New Mexico During the Past Hundred Years" in William G. McGinnies and Bram J. Goldman, eds., *Arid Lands in Perspective* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1969); and Frederick R. Gehlbach, *Mountain Islands and Desert Seas: A Natural History of the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 1981).

land use signaled the end of traditional life on the plateau and in the surrounding valleys. Even though the Vigil Grant briefly reacquired its traditional, ejido-like status, its value to seasonal users decreased. As its soils became more desiccated and opportunistic desert plants and shrubs like snakeweed replaced native grasses at higher elevations, the plateau ceased to be a dependable source of economic sustenance.

After Bishop left, Smith and Fletcher embarked on new schemes to make their investment pay for itself. In 1898, the partners leased the timber rights of the Vigil Grant to H. S. "Harry" Buckman, a lumberman from Oregon living about fifty miles north of Española in Tres Piedras. The "Chili Line" had reached Santa Fe in 1886, and Buckman built a small town, which he named after himself, about nine miles south of Española, at the spot where the railroad from Santa Fe reached the east bank of the Rio Grande in White Rock Canyon. He began a full-scale timber cutting operation on the plateau. Soon there were lumber camps in Water Canyon, about five miles from the ruins at El Rito de los Frijoles. A new kind of commercial culture began to take root at the base of the Pajarito Plateau.

Buckman made his living by cutting timber on contract from Spanish land grants that fell into Anglo hands. When he leased the Vigil Grant, he had just finished cutting the Petaca Grant, near Tierra Amarilla. As his work on the Petaca Grant showed, Buckman had little regard for the land, its prior inhabitants, or the absentee landlords with whom he made his bargains. An opportunist, he tried to make a fortune from each and every deal, cutting timber indiscriminately, but nearly always scrambled to break even.<sup>27</sup>

Buckman's labor-intensive lumber camps introduced timber cutting for profit to the Pajarito Plateau. His tie-gangs roamed the plateau in search of timber. The saw mills in the canyons processed the wood, which William C. White, the homesteader, and others drove in wagons along the road that Buckman built from his sawmills in Water Canyon to Buckman. There other workers loaded the lumber upon the narrow gauge railroad, which carried it to the world beyond the relative isolation of northern New Mexico.

Buckman's timber enterprise destroyed what remained of the native ecosystem on the Vigil Grant. Bishop's cattle had devastated its native grasses and now Buckman cut much of the old growth timber. The destruction of the grass cover and the spread of low quality forage

---

27. Chambers, "Los Alamos," 30-34; H. S. Buckman to Prince, April 14 and September 3, 1900, *Sanchez v. Fletcher* testimony, Prince Papers. See also John A. Gjevre, *The Chili Line: The Narrow Rail Trail to Santa Fe* (Española: Rio Grande Sun Press, 1969).



Grazing changed the Pajarito environment so substantially between the 1880s and early 1900s that changes were visible to the naked eye. Here, cattle of the Los Alamos Ranch School are corralled at a cow camp high in the Jemez Mountains in summer 1919. Photo courtesy of the Los Alamos Historical Museum.

plants further affected the livelihood of the people of the Española and Pojoaque valleys. They had to take their animals farther to find good pasture, competing among themselves for increasingly poor range.

Even nature seemed to conspire against the long term survival of the people of the region. Meteorological records indicate that the years between 1905 and 1920 were the wettest on record. Although the heavy rains meant years of good crops they also contributed to rangeland damage. With the soil of the plateau already loose and uncovered, the pounding rains and the attendant humidity of the first two decades of the twentieth century carried away much of the remaining topsoil. The decreasing quality of the Vigil Grant and changing patterns of land use in the region ignited a complicated process of economic, social, political, and environmental change.<sup>28</sup>

This change was incremental. Each stage pushed the people of the area closer toward dependency on outside markets. Native American and Hispano populations found themselves with less of the plateau at their disposal. The Vigil Grant, its productivity demolished by Bishop and Buckman, was no longer available. The density of Hispano and Native American stock outside the Vigil Grant increased, and more animals competed for less grazing land. Anglo overgrazing extended the impact of earlier limited overgrazing by Hispanos and Native Americans; cattle and sheep trails were no longer centralized around water sources. Larger herds also drove game higher into the Jemez Mountains, and the black bear, wild turkeys, and pumas that characterized the pre-1800 plateau became more scarce. The advantages of the plateau as a subsistence environment quickly disappeared, and the people that depended on it had to find new sources of sustenance.

Prior to the lumber camps and tie-gangs, few Hispanos or Native Americans worked for anyone else. Instead, they grew foodstuffs, tended animals, and traded for items that they could not produce themselves.<sup>29</sup> Cash money was scarce, and labor was a commodity to be bartered, not sold. Buckman's crews received cash for their labor, and the influx of money made the goods in the stores by the railroad in Española

---

28. On the process of making subsistence cultures dependent, and on how the twentieth-century Navajo experience parallels that of Hispanos in northern New Mexico, see Richard L. White, *Roots of Dependency: Subsistence, Environment, and Social Change among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), 212–314. The same factors came to bear on both groups, and differences in reactions provides insight. On changes in rainfall in northern New Mexico between 1905 and 1920, see deBuys, *Enchantment and Exploitation*, 215–16.

29. deBuys, *Enchantment and Exploitation*, 196; Frank Bond, "Memoirs of Forty Years in New Mexico," *New Mexico Historical Review*, 21 (October 1946), 342–43.



more available to the people of the region. With motives born of desire and necessity, Hispanos and Native Americans began to participate in the cash economy. As their base of existence became less fruitful, many Hispanos entered the market to trade for foodstuffs. Many also sought to acquire the tools and implements of industrial America. These were expensive, and often required credit—the final step in becoming a part of the cash economy. An embryonic imitation of the turn-of-the-century American lifestyle entered the Pajarito Plateau.<sup>30</sup>

The need for credit and its availability dramatically changed both farming and grazing in the Pajarito Plateau area. Cash crop farming became prevalent, and new patterns of land use emerged. No longer did everyone in a Hispano family work on the homestead. The cooperative ethos that characterized life in the region changed as material goods made people rely less upon each other and more on the world at the other end of the railroad tracks. Young Hispanos left home to work for wages to supplement the agricultural and pastoral activities of their families. This led to greater exposure to the Anglo world and additional inroads by its culture.

The change in crop raising practices on the Pajarito Plateau revealed the emergence of cash crop culture. Prior to 1880, Hispano agriculturalists primarily raised crops for their own consumption. If a surplus existed, they traded for necessities. But by the early twentieth century this emphasis had changed. The experience of Victor and Luisa Romero and their six children shows how cash crops assumed a new prominence in their agricultural activities. The Romeros were typical of homesteaders on the Pajarito Plateau. Victor's father, David, had begun to homestead the plateau early in the century, and the younger couple followed his lead. In 1913, they staked a claim to an adjacent parcel. Each spring, they left San Ildefonso for the plateau in their horse-drawn wagon laden with supplies. Of their fifteen acres, thirteen were tillable, and these the Romeros filled with beans and corn. Until the end of the first world war, beans were the primary cash crop commodity. In 1913, the Romeros harvested twelve hundred pounds of beans; in 1914, three hundred pounds of beans and four fanegas (roughly an English bushel) of corn; and in 1915, twenty-one hundred pounds of beans and eighteen hundred pounds of corn.<sup>31</sup>

Cash crop farming did not cause homesteaders to abandon subsistence ways entirely, but these activities became less dominant than

---

30. Unpublished manuscript by George White, the son of William C. White, 1958, in possession of Jim and Linda Goforth, Los Alamos.

31. White, *Roots of Dependency*, xiii-xix, 315-22.

they previously had been. The Romeros planted peach, apricot, and cherry trees, watermelons, and a variety of vegetables, including squashes, for their own use. They also harvested native wild plants like quelites (a wild spinach), verdolaga (pigweed), osha (wild celery), and amole, from which the homesteaders made soap. Ernest and Ernestina Romero, who both grew up on the plateau, fondly recalled wild strawberries as being abundant on the canyon walls.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, the amount of tillable land in marketable crops revealed the importance of the cash economy.

Despite the native abundance, the lot of homesteaders resembled that of sharecroppers in the South. They too took seed and implements on credit, paying interest to merchants in the valleys. As long as their yield and the market prices remained high, their situation was stable. But the land became less productive as a result of constant use and, by 1915, homesteaders began to leave the plateau. Bean and other crop prices plummeted in the aftermath of World War I, and the economic viability of homesteading measurably decreased. The people who lived on the Pajarito Plateau remained poor, but their situation worsened. They had experienced what Anglo material culture had to offer, changing their expectations and accordingly becoming further enmeshed in the Anglo market. They also owed interest and principal for commodities that they took in the better years.

The advent of cash crop farming was ecologically dangerous in a marginal area like the Pajarito Plateau. Modern agricultural science was in its infancy, and few people understood the need for techniques such as crop rotation. As did people everywhere else, the homesteaders on the Pajarito Plateau planted the same crops in the same places year after year. Within a decade, productivity usually declined, damaging the land, further impoverishing its people, and increasing their dependence on the cash economy.

The decline in the quality of forage and the centralization of land in a few hands also changed traditional patterns of sheep and cattle grazing in the region. Individual pobladores still had their small herds of stock, but the plateau ceased to be open land. Bishop had forbidden Hispanos to use the area in the 1880s, and Buckman had appointed James Loomis, a Cherokee Indian who had worked for him on the Petaca Grant, as his field chief in 1902. Loomis followed the lead of the Texas cattlemen, posting signs in Spanish and English that ordered people to keep their animals off the Vigil Grant. In 1905, Theodore

---

32. Gail D. Tierney and Teralene S. Foxx, "The Botanical History of the Romero Site," unpublished partial draft in possession of the author.

Roosevelt extended the boundaries of the Santa Clara reservation westward to include Puye and Santa Clara Canyon.<sup>33</sup> Barriers sprang up in a formerly open world even as the land gave less and less.

The establishment of the U.S. Forest Service in 1905 brought a different kind of institutional influence and its barriers to the plateau. The idea of conservation, using land wisely in scientific fashion, became important to the Anglos who administered the new Jemez Forest Reserve, established October 12, 1905, which included much of the Pajarito Plateau. Typical of the middle-class reformers of the Progressive era, the foresters desired social order. In the efficient management of natural resources they saw both fairness and the preservation of an economic legacy for future generations. They were schooled in the techniques of the burgeoning discipline of modern natural science and on the Pajarito Plateau, foresters reacted to the already depleted range and damaged watershed with a system of permits. Hispanos had to seek out uniformed authorities for permission to use land they had long regarded as their own, and the gulf between Hispanos and the American institutions that influenced New Mexico widened.<sup>34</sup>

Hispanos had to fend for themselves. American institutions ignored their plight, and Hispanos lacked the land base of their Native American neighbors. The Pueblos had the best agricultural land along the Rio Grande, and when their subsistence economy was threatened, they sought more. Theodore Roosevelt's extension of the Santa Clara reservation in 1905 was but one example; the enlargement was enacted despite the opposition of General Land Office Special Agent Stephen J. Holsinger, sent to evaluate that and other questions the year before. Land extensions such as this helped the Pueblos maintain more facets of their traditional lifestyle longer than could Hispanos. After 1913, when the U.S. Supreme Court protected the Pueblos by forbidding further alienation of their land in *United States v. Sandoval*, the position of Native Americans became even stronger. In contrast, Hispanos had no comparable guarantees. American courts acted slowly on their claims, and Anglo adjudication of the ejido issue created significant controversy. As the informal and formal compacts of the past ceased to hold

---

33. U.S. President, Executive Order 80218, July 29, 1905, included Puye in the Santa Clara Reservation. In an uncataloged collection, the Los Alamos Historical Society possesses one of Buckman's signs prohibiting grazing. It bears James Loomis's name.

34. Harold K. Steen, *The U.S. Forest Service: A History* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1976), 3-103. On the U.S. Forest Service's early years in the Southwest, see Edwin A. Tucker and George Fitzpatrick, *Men Who Matched the Mountains: The Forest Service in the Southwest* (Albuquerque: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Southwest Region, 1972), 1-161, 200-207.

and land available to them decreased, they faced dependency. The Pueblos also suffered from the coming of the cash economy, but they became a part of the system much later than did the Hispanos.<sup>35</sup>

The policies of the Forest Service had both environmental and cultural effects. Foresters sought to protect grazing lands, but their policy of fire suppression ended the natural process of regeneration of rangelands. Natural fire had been its primary catalyst. The depleted range remained unproductive, and the foresters placed strict limits on the number of stock that could graze public range. As a result, the need for land forced many Hispanos to run sheep on shares for commercial enterprises.

One man dominated the running of sheep on shares on the Pajarito Plateau. Frank Bond, the Española merchant, had left Canada in 1879 to join his brother, George, who owned a wool processing plant at Trinidad, Colorado. The brothers later sold this plant, and in 1883 followed the Chili Line to Española, where they started a mercantile business and brokered lambs and wool. The mercantile store carried the most up-to-date farm implements and goods, and Bond traded shrewdly with Anglo, Hispano, and Native American alike.<sup>36</sup>

Under Frank Bond's leadership the company prospered. He profited from the long standing disputes over community land grants, purchasing the title to the ejido of a number of Spanish land grants after American courts ruled that heirs could petition for their portion of these common areas. After acquiring this section of the Las Trampas Grant, he referred to the Hispanos whose families had settled the grant in the 1740s as "squatters." Observers of the New Mexico scene did not rate his altruistic sentiments highly.<sup>37</sup> He drove mercantile competitors out of business by undercutting them, and expanded his stores to every important community in New Mexico.

Raising sheep also became part of Bond's empire. Before 1900 he had started financing other people's shepherding under his version of a Spanish system of running sheep on shares called *partido*. Bond

---

35. Marc Simmons, "History of Pueblo-Spanish Relations to 1821," in Ortiz, *Handbook of North American Indians*, 9: 178-93; Sandra A. Edelman, "San Ildefonso Pueblo," in *ibid.*, 312; Stephen J. Holsinger, "Report on the Proposed Pajarito National Park, December 1904," Bandelier National Monument.

36. Interview with Richard Boyd, Jr., November 14, 1985, Bandelier National Monument Library. See also deBuys, *Enchantment and Exploitation*, 175-192; and Frank H. Grubbs, "Frank Bond: Gentleman Shepherder of New Mexico 1883-1915," *New Mexico Historical Review*, 35 (July 1960), 169-99, and *ibid.*, 35 (October 1960), 293-308.

37. Grubbs, "Frank Bond"; deBuys, *Enchantment and Exploitation*, 190; Herbert W. Gleason Report to the Secretary of the Interior and the National Park Service, 1919, Bandelier National Monument.

acquired so much public and private grazing land that small herders, who could not find enough pasture for their stock, had to sign on with him. Bond's system tended to impoverish these small herdsmen. *Partidarios* took his sheep along with their own, and Bond made the herders fully responsible for the animals in their care. Their own stock served as collateral. Bond collected a fee for range use from the *partidarios*, who also had to outfit themselves from his store, where a flat 10 percent interest rate was charged. With expenses mounting, most *partidarios* were lucky to keep their own sheep at the end of a contract period. As Bond's empire grew he became the most influential man in the Española Valley.<sup>38</sup>

Bond's operations bound *partidarios* in a form of peonage. When he leased Forest Service land for *partidarios* to run sheep, he made sure the transaction was recorded in his name. After three years of use, forest grazing rights became permanent, and placing the lease in his name allowed him even greater control over the herdsmen who watched his ever-growing flock. Soon Bond controlled the best range on federal land, and many small stockholders had to become *partidarios* in order to get access to these good grazing lands.

The advent of commercial sheep grazing compounded the earlier effects of cattle grazing and timber-cutting, damaging the fragile landscapes of the Pajarito Plateau. Sheep climbed steep slopes that more clumsy cattle could not negotiate, and their sharp hooves left tiny, zig-zagged trails along the sides of mesas. They sought different plants than did cattle, finding the bunchgrasses of the canyons relatively unpalatable compared to the short grasses of the mountains. Like cattle, however, sheep favored new forage, and "once they get a taste of new grass sprouts," one homesteader with visions of wealth wrote in 1913, "they won't eat anything else, [even the] tons of good hay all around."<sup>39</sup> Commercial sheep-grazing completed the transformation of the ponderosa pine ecosystem into one filled by juniper and piñon woodland plants.

Only the volume of use differentiated Anglos from their predecessors. While traditional pastoralists had a slow and steady impact on land and water, Anglo commercial interests telescoped the impact of hundreds of years into a handful. Early in the twentieth century, few people understood the concept of conservation. Anglo cattlemen and timbermen and Hispano and Native American pastoralists alike

---

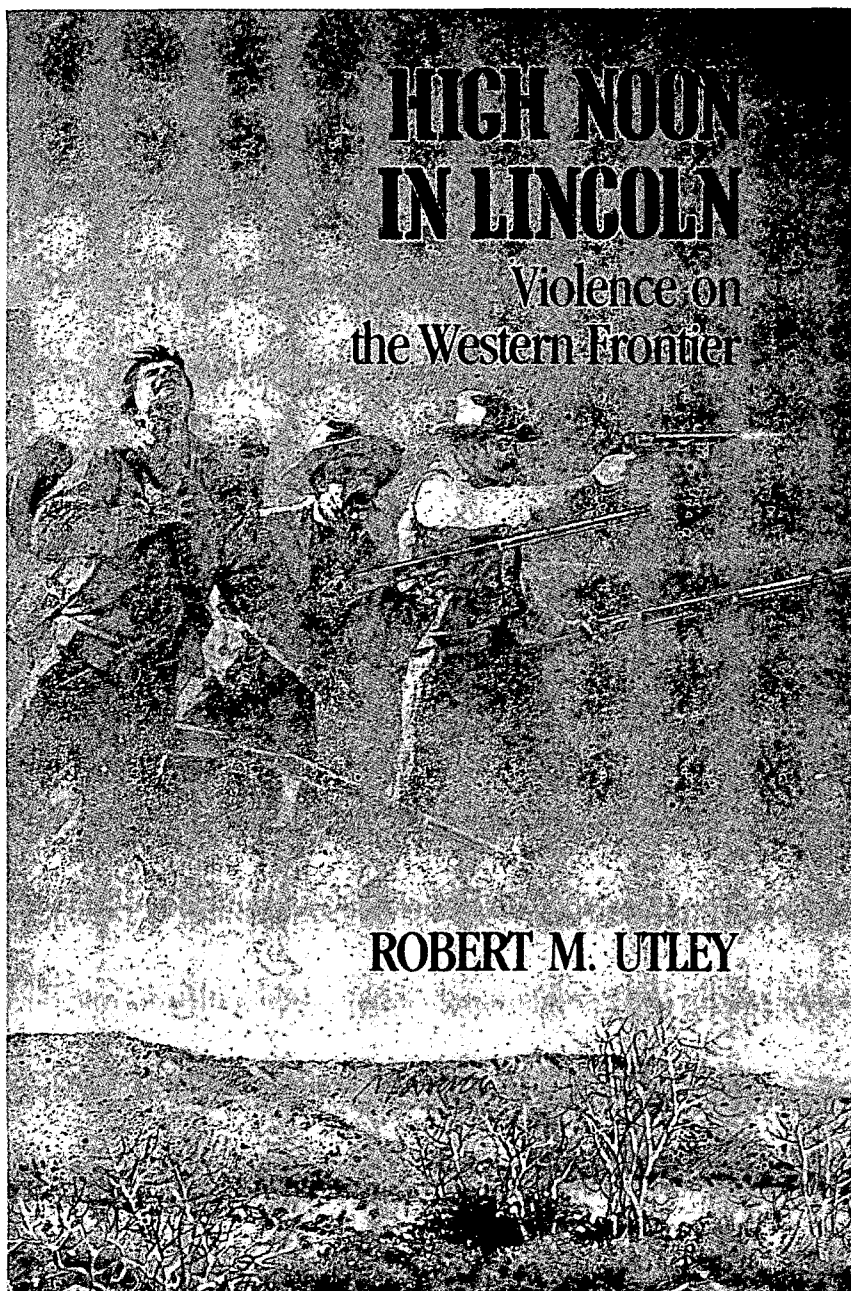
38. deBuys, *Enchantment and Exploitation*, 221.

39. Harold H. Brook letters, file H542L, Los Alamos Historical Society.

in northern New Mexico were not among those who did. In the nineteenth century, as in the vast span of human history, people used land to the best of their ability. Anglo culture had the capability to make a discernible and irrevocable difference, and on the Pajarito Plateau, as elsewhere in New Mexico and the West, it did.

By 1910, environmental change fed by the assumptions of industrial culture played a major role in the interactive process that brought the cash economy to the fore on the Pajarito Plateau. The enterprises of Bishop, Buckman, and Bond encroached upon traditional life in the region, introducing a different set of cultural values and affecting the livelihood of Hispanic residents of the area. The destruction of its grass and timber, the pressure of larger herds, the dependence on the cash economy, and the appearance of American institutions set off a chain reaction that inalterably changed the Pajarito Plateau. Unprotected by the federal government, Hispanos faced radical challenges to their traditional ways of living. Technology and the growing national market had facilitated the commercial development of marginal land, and for those that had subsisted upon that land, survival required cultural adaptation. The dependence of Hispanos may have begun with the American conquest of New Mexico, but the destruction of the subsistence base accelerated the process of forced adaptation. They were caught in a cycle that ended in their dependence upon Anglo institutions.

When Edgar L. Hewett expressed his astonishment at the visible effects of windblown erosion in 1913, he had happened across a readable landscape of cultural and environmental change. The land itself testified to the changes the Pajarito Plateau and its people had undergone. Ironically, a man as sensitive to cultural change as Hewett did not equate the loose soil he saw with the declining condition of the people who surrounded him. He could not interpret the signals given him by the natural world. But in this, Hewett was not alone. At the time, neither could anyone else.



# HIGH NOON IN LINCOLN

Violence on  
the Western Frontier

ROBERT M. UTLEY

*High Noon in Lincoln: Violence on the Western Frontier.* By Robert M. Utley. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987. xiii + 265 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$22.50.)

# Taking It Seriously: Western Frontier Violence. A Review Essay

---

RICHARD MAXWELL BROWN

After more than a century we finally have a book to match the drama and significance of the catastrophic Lincoln County War in southern New Mexico, 1878–1879. Why it took so long for a book like this one—*High Noon in Lincoln: Violence on the Western Frontier* by Robert M. Utley—to appear reveals something significant about the changing historiography of the American West.

Utley has a number of impressive achievements to his credit in *High Noon in Lincoln*. First, he has provided by far the most complete, balanced, and illuminating book on the Lincoln County War—an accomplishment unlikely to be equalled or surpassed by any future historians of the conflict. Second, Utley has judiciously explored the many controversial episodes of the Lincoln County War and offers compelling judgments about them. Third, he has, for the first time among the serious books on the Lincoln County War, presented a conceptual, not merely descriptive, view of that bloody vendetta. Utley's conceptual approach convincingly explains the conflict in its historical and cultural

---

Richard Maxwell Brown, Beekman Professor of Northwest and Pacific History in the University of Oregon, Eugene, served as a consultant to the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence. He is the author of numerous works, including *The South Carolina Regulators* (1963) and *Strain of Violence: Historical Studies of American Violence and Vigilantism* (1975).



context, both regionally and nationally. Fourth, Utley presents a perceptive treatment of Billy the Kid (who rose to fame in the strife)—a *sine qua non* for any successful book on the Lincoln County War. Fifth, all of this is presented in highly readable fashion. Avoiding the pitfall of overwriting into which some historians of the Lincoln County War have fallen, Utley rewards the reader with an appealing, graceful style in which the author's wisdom is evident. Sixth, writing and interpretation are all based on research as definitive as anyone is ever likely to achieve on the Lincoln County War.

Utley, like previous historians, portrays the Lincoln County War as the violent response of the county's powerful economic and political establishment headed by the triumvirate of Lawrence G. Murphy, James J. Dolan, and John H. Riley, against an aggressive insurgency led by two newcomers to New Mexico, English entrepreneur John H. Tunstall and his Scotch-Canadian associate, attorney Alexander McSween. (Also emphasized is the role of McSween's strong-minded wife, Susan.) Utley greatly increases our knowledge of the complicated economic and legal maneuvering on each side of the conflict as Tunstall and McSween sought to overturn the monopolistic control of Lincoln County by "The House," as the mercantile operation of Murphy, Dolan, and Riley was called

The Lincoln County War was "a collision of personalities," writes Utley (p. 171). He is never better than when casting a character, and there are many memorable ones in the book: Tunstall, Dolan, the two McSweens, John S. Chisum, Colonel N. A. M. Dudley, Governor Lew Wallace, and others. Yet, Utley shows that the Lincoln County conflict was a war without heroes. Wallace might well have been the war's lone hero, notes Utley, had he crafted a consistent, effective policy for ending the struggle early in his regime as governor of New Mexico Territory. But, says Utley, Wallace lost interest in the war as he became more and more engrossed, night after night at his desk in Santa Fe, in the composition of what would be his tremendously popular novel, *Ben-Hur* (1880). Thus, Wallace's erratic course in regard to the Lincoln County War was ineffectual. Nevertheless the governor had the good luck to still hold office when the conflict sputtered to an end.

Utley has skillfully used previous work on the Lincoln County War but has also blazed new trails of research, especially in the records of the United States Army. Fort Stanton, located not far from the county's center and seat, the town of Lincoln, was an army post which, along with its commanders and personnel, played a key—and often problematical—role in the Lincoln County War. Hence, army records—



The town of Lincoln, New Mexico, had changed little from the violent days of the Lincoln County War when this photograph was taken in the early 1900s. Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Arizona Library.

largely overlooked before this book—enrich Utley's account of Lincoln County affairs and the war.

Utley's book is superb; but why has it taken so long for a history of the Lincoln County War of this scholarly distinction to appear? The answer is not lack of publication on the subject, for there has been no shortage of books and articles on the Lincoln County War. Historical writing on the struggle has, indeed, gone through three phases: one, romantic history; two, grassroots history; and, three, in Utley's book, conceptual history. The nascent gunfighting career of Billy the Kid and the Lincoln County War were, of course, intertwined. The linkage of the Kid and the war dominate the romantic phase of writing on the Lincoln County War—an approach long on mythology and short on fact. Writings in this genre have tended to be highly sympathetic to the Tunstall-McSween side on which the Kid fought. The archetype of this approach to the Lincoln County War is Walter Noble Burns' *The Saga of Billy the Kid* (1926)—almost useless as a piece of history but a classic of Southwestern historical romance.<sup>1</sup>

---

1. Walter Noble Burns, *The Saga of Billy the Kid* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1926).

In the generation following Burns, the grassroots historians of the Lincoln County War took over. Determined to penetrate the haze of legend surrounding the war to uncover the reality of the conflict, these historians specialized in minute primary-source research at the grassroots: in local newspapers and records as well as by interviewing aged survivors of the violence and knowledgeable old timers. Standing out among the grassroots historians are Maurice Garland Fulton, Philip J. Rasch, and Frederick W. Nolan. Fulton made his mark with a posthumous book, *History of the Lincoln County War* (1968), edited for publication by an aficionado of the war, Robert N. Mullin. Philip J. Rasch published no book but, instead, wrote the equivalent of one in the twenty-eight valuable articles he produced from 1955 to 1972. Of special note in the grassroots school is the British authority, Frederick W. Nolan, who discovered a rich collection of John H. Tunstall's letters from New Mexico to his family in England. Nolan edited and published the Tunstall letters in *The Life and Death of John Henry Tunstall* (1965), a book which immensely increased our knowledge of Tunstall's crucial role in the genesis of the Lincoln County War.<sup>2</sup>

In their grassroots approach, Fulton, Rasch, and Nolan are not intellectual weaklings. They are sophisticated and analytical in their treatment of the war, but they have a major flaw: they lack a conceptual approach to American and western history, which would enable them to present a well rounded, comprehensive explanation and interpretation of the war in a context broader than Lincoln County and New Mexico.

While sharing all the virtues of the grassroots historians, especially their knack for prodigious primary-source research, Utley far surpasses them with his conceptual approach to the subject. From one perspective, Utley sees the Lincoln County War as an example of a pervasive condition of American life in the post-Civil War period while from another viewpoint he sees the war as a distinctively western phenomenon. In regard to the former, Utley notes and emphasizes that, after the Civil War, America was beset by strong political-economic factions known as "rings." These were organizations which often succeeded in

---

2. Maurice Garland Fulton, *History of the Lincoln County War*, ed. by Robert N. Mullin (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1968); Frederick W. Nolan, *The Life and Death of John Henry Tunstall* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1965). For examples of the work of Philip J. Rasch, see Philip J. Rasch, "A Man Named Antrim," *Los Angeles Westerners, Brand Book*, 6 (1956), 48-54; Philip J. Rasch, "Prelude to the Lincoln County War: The Murder of John Henry Tunstall," *ibid.*, 7 (1957), 78-96; Philip J. Rasch, "The Murder of Huston I. Chapman," *ibid.*, 8 (1959), 69-82; and Philip J. Rasch, "The Governor Meets the Kid," *English Westerners, Brand Book*, 8 (April 1966), 5-12.

Robert M. Utley, author of *High Noon in Lincoln*, is the former chief historian of the National Park Service. Last year he received the coveted Western History Association Prize for lifetime achievement in the field, while *High Noon in Lincoln* received the Western Heritage Award for best non-fiction from the National Cowboy Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City, a prize he again received this year for his *Cavalier in Buckskin*. Utley and his wife, Melody Webb, live in Santa Fe.



putting a stranglehold on society in a selfish effort to reap excess profits at the expense of the public. The most famous ring was, of course, that of Boss Tweed in New York City. Yet, the system of rings, as Utley underscores, spread all the way to distant New Mexico in the 1870s where such activity reached its apogee in the somewhat mysterious Santa Fe Ring led, it was widely believed, by Thomas B. Catron. A more local ring was the Lincoln County organization, "The House," headed by Murphy, Dolan, and Riley. Tunstall quickly caught on to the game and wrote home to England that he intended to form his own ring with which to seize control of the economy of Lincoln County from the clutches of Murphy, Dolan, and Riley. By this time, Dolan had emerged as the spearhead of "The House." It was the bitter opposition of Dolan that led to Tunstall paying for his ambition with his life.

Utley's second key concept is to connect the Lincoln County War with the general phenomenon of frontier western violence. In a brilliant concluding chapter, Utley appraises social and ethnic stratification in Lincoln County in relation to the war and compares the Lincoln County conflict to other famous wars in the West. He stresses the inflaming, triggering qualities of liquor and firearms which pervaded Lincoln County and the West. Above all, Utley emphasizes the "code of the West." The code of the West was no myth in Lincoln County. It frequently induced

Lincoln Countians to commit appalling acts of violence: "Avenge insult or wrong, real or imagined, the code decreed. Never retreat before an aggressor. Any degree of violence is permissible, including death. 'I'll die before I'll run,' vowed practitioners of the code" (p. 176).

*High Noon in Lincoln* exemplifies a new attitude of professional historians to western violence. In his landmark 1893 paper on "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," Frederick Jackson Turner viewed western frontier violence as a subject beneath intellectual contempt. Ph.D.-trained academic historians of the West generally followed Turner's lead in ignoring western violence. For the most part, only the professionally untrained grassroots historians, with their orientation to local history, took western violence seriously. These grassroots historians, however, were not widely read either by the public or by professional historians of the West. Moreover, the popular media purveyed so much hyperbole about western violence that respectable historians feared to write about the subject lest they incur intellectual guilt by association. In general, professional historians preferred to treat the more positive, prosaic (and, to them, more genuine) workaday aspects of western history rather than the negative factor of violence which, in any case, they saw as having been falsified and enormously exaggerated in the sensational writings of media popularizers. In their repulsion, the great majority of serious historians all but froze violence out of the western heritage. At best, they consigned it to the backwater rather than the mainstream of western history.

In recent years, however, professional, conceptually-oriented historians of the West have begun to recognize the social significance of the violence which flourished so mordantly on the western frontier. A major development in this trend was the decision by Utley—author of many distinguished publications on Custer, Indians, and the military history of the West—to undertake a major study of the Lincoln County War. A former president of the Western History Association (dominated by conceptual historians), the prolific Utley is the Gibbon of the West.<sup>3</sup>

---

3. Among Robert M. Utley's publications are Robert M. Utley, *Custer and the Great Controversy: Origin and Development of a Legend* (Los Angeles: Westernlore Press, 1962); Robert M. Utley, *The Last Days of the Sioux Nation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963); Robert M. Utley, *Frontiersmen in Blue: The United States Army and the Indian, 1848-1865* (New York: Macmillan, 1967); Robert M. Utley, *Frontier Regulars: The United States Army and the Indian, 1866-1891* (New York: Macmillan, 1973); Robert M. Utley and Wilcomb E. Washburn, *The American Heritage History of the Indian Wars* (New York: American Heritage Publishing Company, 1977); Robert M. Utley, ed., *Life in Custer's Cavalry: Diaries and Letters of Albert and Jennie Barnitz 1867-1868* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); Robert M. Utley, *The Indian Frontier of the American West 1846-1890* (Albuquerque: Uni-

---

Thus, Utley's book on the Lincoln County War both illustrates and leads the new conceptual history of western violence. Nor is Utley's work on western, and New Mexican, violence done. In the last sentence of *High Noon in Lincoln*, he concludes that "the Lincoln County War's most enduring legacy to the world may well be as a launch-pad for the rise of an unknown youth of sunny disposition and deadly trigger finger into one of the mightiest legends of all time" (p. 179)—an omen of Robert M. Utley's forthcoming book on Billy the Kid.

---

versity of New Mexico Press, 1984); and Robert M. Utley, *Cavalier in Buckskin: George Armstrong Custer and the Western Military Frontier* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988). Utley's *Billy the Kid: A Short and Violent Life* will be published by the University of Nebraska Press in the fall of 1989.

# Willa Cather

A Literary Life



James Woodress

*Willa Cather: A Literary Life.* By James Woodress. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987. xx + 583 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$35.00.)

# Willa Cather in New Mexico: A Review Essay

---

ROBERT F. GISH

In *A Certain Climate*, Paul Horgan's recent volume of essays, one of which is devoted to "Willa Cather's Incalculable Distance," Horgan observes that, "In her felicity of word and vision, [Cather] is a great artist of *place*."<sup>1</sup> Horgan, of course, writes as a kindred spirit, another great artist of *place*, and especially of the "spirit of place," the "place-ness," which has long been so enchanting to artists and writers—New Mexico.

Most would contend that Cather's artistry of place is all the greater because it is not limited to New Mexico, any more than is Horgan's. "Regionalism" or localism for the likes of Cather and Horgan is useful, ultimately, only as it inspires and leads to the universal concerns of humanity. As with any consideration of place or setting or locale or "nature" in literature, however, issues in Cather's writing center on the degrees to which human character determines place or is determined by it—that is, seeks to control it or becomes a part of it. The

---

Robert F. Gish is professor of English language and literature in the University of Northern Iowa. He is the author of books on Paul Horgan, Hamlin Garland, and most recently, a literary biography of New Mexico author Harvey Fergusson, titled *Frontier's End: The Life and Literature of Harvey Fergusson* (1988). Another book, *The Short Stories of William Carlos Williams*, is forthcoming. He is also contributing editor to the *Bloomsbury Review*.

1. Paul Horgan, *A Certain Climate: Essays in History, Arts, and Letters* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1988), 80.



"land" in and around Red Cloud, Nebraska, was a tremendous influence on Cather in her early years. The Southwest, as place, worked its ways into her later sensibilities and, along with other mysterious factors that shape the creative imagination, *caused* the creation of some of her best fictions.

Cather as a novelist of place, of lives and landscapes, and of lives *in* landscapes, has continued to gain critical attention and esteem since her death in 1947. Since 1973, the centenary of her birth, Cather scholarship (critical studies and biographies most notably) has helped assure her a spot not just in the literary history of the American Middle West and Southwest, but a *place* as a major writer in the larger "tradition" of American literature. Whether her final legacy will be as a writer, a woman writer, or a "regionalist" is problematic.

Part of Cather's fascination is her multitudinousness, the way her works lend themselves to differing assumptions and approaches. The appearance last year of The Library of America's edition of Cather's *Early Novels and Stories* served as one kind of symbolic recognition of her status as a major American writer and her inauguration into the national "canon," as the current critical buzz word has it.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, James Woodress's long-awaited "definitive" biography *Willa Cather: A Literary Life* (all 583 pages of it), attempts to balance some allegedly extreme, "mistaken," or simply incomplete notions and arguments and, in the process, tries to refocus through comprehensive scholarship recent, more popularized versions of Cather's life such as Phyllis C. Robinson's *Willa: The Life of Willa Cather*.<sup>3</sup>

Woodress sees Cather as much an artist of places—Virginia, Nebraska, Pennsylvania, New York, New Hampshire, Canada, France—as a writer of the American Middle West or Southwest, insofar as it was the interaction and tensions between the places where she lived, or visited, or wrote about, which helped shape and define her life and her art. Certainly, the tensions of geography were not the only forces at work in making Cather the person and the artist she was—or that recent biographers "think" determined her.

Thus, Woodress gives his biography of Cather a more or less conventional structure, the usual fare of traditional literary biography: birth to death; where Cather lived at various phases in her life; how

---

2. Willa Cather, *Willa Cather: Early Novels and Stories*, ed. by Sharon O'Brien (New York: Library Classics of the United States, 1987).

3. James Woodress, *Willa Cather: A Literary Life* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987); Phyllis C. Robinson, *Willa: The Life of Willa Cather* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1983).

moves inaugurated those phases; where she travelled; and what she lived for as an artist. Above all, as Woodress attempts to dramatize, she sought to live a life and search out the place(s) that would, indeed, allow her to write—not an altogether simple task, as the story/history of Cather's complex life proved.

Cather, especially in her later years in which she was at times depressed and outright grumpy, saw little need for actual or planned biographies of herself and did her best to ensure that her life-companion, literary executor, and dear friend, Edith Lewis, destroyed letters and other conspiring materials that would aid a biographer, whether objective or with a hypothesis to test and a thesis to argue. (Lewis's *Willa Cather Living* [1953] provides as significant a source for Woodress as for all Cather biographers who are removed from primary autobiographical sources.) This, in addition to denying film rights to her novels (after what she considered the disastrous adaptations of *A Lost Lady* in 1925 and again in 1934), assured that biographers would be driven back into Cather's novels and short stories where she wrote what amounted to her own imagined and remembered versions of herself. These works represent multiple autobiographies of the author cast as biographies of her characters, narrators, and miscellaneous fictive counterparts. In them, history became story.

In its way, literary biography, regardless of how conscientious or well-intended the biographer is in an allegiance to "facts," inevitably has elements of fiction about it—or "faction," as the New Journalists would have it. Moreover, some individuals would argue that novelists make the best biographers, in ways not unlike those either enlightened or misguided souls (so the controversy runs) who believe that the best historians are narrative historians, more artists than social scientists. Master biographers like Leon Edel wage convincing arguments that the best biographies discover the Jamesian "figure in the carpet," the pattern of the weave seen from underside as well as topside.

All of which reminds us that ever since modern biography began to take shape in the writings of Virginia Woolf, Lytton Strachey, and other questioning, iconoclastic Edwardian types, heroes and heroines—not to mention saints—are hard to come by. One after another contemporary literary biographers asks that the "real" Cather stand, step forward, and be introduced.

No hagiographer, Woodress's account of Cather strives for proportion, tries not to worship her or whitewash her eccentricities, especially her penchant when a child and an adolescent for the name "William," and male clothing. All the while Woodress gives Cather the

respect due an exceptional artist. Woodress seeks to present an objective, factual history of Cather's life and art. (Somewhat innocently, if not obliviously, he assumes that facts do not change in relation to their interpreters and in their arrangement and emphasis—even if the plan is intended as balanced.) He avoids prolonged argumentation about Cather's lesbianism, conjectured by some and confirmed by others. He backs away from psychological or, to be sure, psychoanalytical speculations about Cather's private and personal sexuality, saying simply, reductively, that she preferred the companionship of women but was more asexual than androgynous or lesbian. He acknowledges the Cather profiled by "feminist" critics (of many sub-types to be sure). Most notable for Woodress is Susan J. Rosowski, who approaches Cather not so much from main-line feminist attitudes and assumptions as by arguing for Cather's place in romantic tradition, even seeing her (not disparagingly) as a Gothic writer, a kind of female Bram Stoker, in some later novels such as *Lucy Gayheart*.<sup>4</sup>

Had Susan O'Brien's provocative feminist "partial" biography, *Willa Cather: The Emerging Voice*, devoted to Cather's early years and writings, been totally available to Woodress, he might, in all likelihood, have moved it backstage or muted it.<sup>5</sup> O'Brien sees Cather as a lesbian and as a woman who was also a writer. Thus, O'Brien seeks to answer such questions as how Cather shaped a female self and voice not predetermined by Victorian, masculine assumptions of the artist's identity; and why by the time of her first visit to the Southwest in 1912 she found *O Pioneers!* virtually writing itself. Woodress, for example, dismisses Cather's "love" for Louise Pound, whom she met in college at Lincoln, as much a freshman's "crush" for a senior as a serious affair. And to call it lesbianism, for Woodress, "is to give it undue importance." O'Brien, on the other hand, is convinced by the Cather-Pound love letters "that *lesbian* did in fact capture Cather's self-definition."

Woodress wrote the biography he believed needed writing. Invidious comparisons with the enthusiasm, "cause," and conviction of O'Brien aside, Woodress is generally reliable and comforting in his massing of detail. But he is also monotonous and at times outright boring. He could have said more about relationships of gender and creativity—as did O'Brien. He could have said more about Cather and the West, as John J. Murphy did in his compact but fascinating chapter on Cather

---

4. Susan J. Rosowski, *The Voyage Perilous: Willa Cather's Romanticism* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986).

5. Susan O'Brien, *Willa Cather: The Emerging Voice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

and the Midwest in *A Literary History of the West*.<sup>6</sup> But Woodress works on a larger scale, not involved so much with the gender of the weaver or the figure in the carpet as with the space it covers.

Woodress offers big themes, especially his tracing of Cather's relationships to place, her geographical journeys from Nebraska and beyond, and her professional moves while building a career first as a journalist and drama critic, then as a teacher and magazine editor, and finally as a free-lance novelist. Regrettably, however, such themes are often buried in such standard, plodding biographical fare (and formula) as plot summary, survey of scholarly critical analyses, and cataloging of the reactions of Cather's contemporary reviewers. Woodress follows this structure repeatedly for every text considered.

Notwithstanding his tendency to take the middle of the road on many issues and his proclivity to follow what Reed Whittemore recently referred to as the plague of current biography's "obligation to include," Woodress is thorough in his handling of numerous themes, including: Cather's ties to Nebraska; her years at the University of Nebraska; her move to Pittsburgh and public high school teaching; her mentorship under S. S. McClure at *McClure's Magazine*; her developing friendships of varying degrees of intensity at various times with Louise Pound, Isabelle McClung, Annie Fields, Sarah Orne Jewett, Edith Lewis, Elizabeth Sergeant, Dorothy Canfield Fisher, Zoë Akins, Alfred and Blanch Knopf, and Yehudi Menuhin and his family.<sup>7</sup> Woodress's retelling of how, much later in Cather's life, she took Truman Capote to tea is one of many such enjoyable anecdotes of friendship.

The influence of McClure and Knopf, Woodress makes clear, changed Cather's entire destiny as a writer. McClure's grooming of Cather to take over as managing editor of his magazine allowed her an entrance into the writing world that otherwise would have remained closed, or at least much delayed. Knopf in particular, as a replacement publisher for Ferris Greenslet at Houghton Mifflin, provided the means, with his high regard for Cather's talents and his quality Borzoi editions and generous contracts, to turn Cather into a rich and famous personage in her own lifetime.

Woodress is adequate, too, in his attempts to explain how Cather's discovery of her Nebraska heritage as a subject for her writing brought

---

6. John J. Murphy, "Willa Cather," in J. Golden Taylor and Thomas J. Lyon, eds., *A Literary History of the American West* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1987), 686-715.

7. Reed Whittemore, *Pure Lives: The Early Biographers* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988).

her a new voice and vision at just the right time in her career, first with *Alexander's Bridge* (1912), then *O Pioneers!* (1913), *The Song of the Lark* (1915), and culminating with *My Antonia* (1918).

Woodress also is good in weaving through the twenty-three chapters of his book (through the years of Cather's developing career and her developing relationships with friends, employers, and publishers), her discovery of the West—Wyoming, California, Colorado, but especially New Mexico. He would be somewhat more authoritative by not referring to such influences as Charles F. Lummis on Cather's New Mexico masterwork, *Death Comes for the Archbishop* (1927), as "Charles Loomis" [sic]. But Woodress reports accurately, albeit too tentatively, that New Mexico had a large effect on Cather's art, as it has on so many writers and painters.

In his chapter on *Archbishop*, however, Woodress gives too little attention to Cather's Francophilic and decidedly ethnocentric championing of Jean Baptiste Lamy and Joseph Machebeuf over the native clergy. Woodress seems to side ultimately with Cather, who loved passionately and blindly everything French, and gives little space or sympathy to Mary Austin's cranky but justified insistence on complaining to Cather that Lamy's building of St. Francis Cathedral in Santa Fe, in Romanesque imitation, was a calamity for the local culture. Woodress does the biographer's fundamental duty to report such a flap, but he goes no further in explaining the depths of the continuing antipathy to Lamy in his battles with Padre Martinez.

Questions of whether Cather could have been fairer to both Hispanics and Native Americans in her portrayals go without comment from Woodress. How any discussion of either *Death Comes for the Archbishop* or Lamy and Machebeuf could neglect mention of Fray Angelico Chavez's *But Time and Chance: The Story of Padre Martinez of Taos* (1981), John De Aragon's *Padre Martinez and Bishop Lamy* (1978), or Horgan's prize-winning biography, *Lamy of Santa Fe* (1975), as Woodress does, undermines full claim to truly comprehensive scholarship.

Cather wrote about the Southwest even before she went there first in the spring of 1912. Her story, "The Enchanted Bluff" (1908), set the tone for the expansiveness of spirit, which the "incalculable distances" of her imagination and the Southwest opened for her. Cather's brother lived for a time in Arizona. Visits took her there and to New Mexico and Colorado in 1914 and 1915 (her influential Mesa Verde visit), and in 1916 (she liked the Columbian Hotel at Taos, and daily horseback rides). She returned to New Mexico in the mid-1920s while she was working on *Archbishop*, with the gracious assistance and hospitality of Mary Austin and Mabel Dodge Luhan, among others.

On Cather's last trip to California in 1941 she saw New Mexico for the final time through tears of nostalgia for what *Archbishop* had meant to her as an experience and for the sheer beauty and majesty of the land. New Mexico as place and idea were still much in her, just as she had been in it over the years.

When Cather first found herself in New Mexico it was not because she intended to write about the place. As is so characteristic of New Mexico literary history in the 1920s, D. H. Lawrence was involved. On the referral of a painter friend of Cather's, world-roamer Lawrence stopped off to meet Cather in New York in 1923 when he and Frieda were on their way to Taos to answer Mabel Dodge Luhan's mystical mission to get someone, in this instance Lawrence, to tell the "real" story of New Mexico and its native peoples.

Woodress is uncertain whether Cather had already met Mabel Dodge in New York at one of her entertainments, before her move to Taos in 1916, but traces their friendship to New Mexico. Woodress reports that Cather liked Mabel and Tony Luhan immensely but, he surmises as biographer, that Cather remained innocent of Tony's "carnal nature" and that he gave Mabel syphilis. For whatever reason, Cather did not join the bandwagon of political action then popular with non-Indian artists on behalf of native Americans. Luhan, it should be mentioned, left little record of her impressions of Cather. Those interested in New Mexico literary history will find that Woodress' tracing of the Willa Cather/Mabel Dodge Luhan connection raises more questions than it answers.

In any event, sixteen months after Lawrence's stop-off in New York, Cather took Lawrence up on his invitation to visit him and Frieda in New Mexico. Coincidentally, Cather was reading proofs of *The Professor's House*, with its great interpolated story of the discovery of Mesa Verde, while she visited the Lawrences and Mabel and Tony Luhan. After these visits, and some time spent in Española, Cather and Lewis set up headquarters at the La Fonda in Santa Fe. She was greeted by enthusiastic responses to the Mesa Verde chapter, just published in *Collier's* under its title, "Tom Outland's Story."

The idea to write expressly about New Mexico purportedly came to Cather one day east of Santa Fe as she looked out at the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and realized full force that the great story of the Southwest—greater than a cowboy's coming upon Mesa Verde's ruins in the snow—was the story of the missionaries. This is not to say, one assumes, that she did not comprehend there were countless other New Mexico stories, stories from the reverse angle not of the missionaries but of their would-be converts; all the many stories which New Mexico,

in history and imagination, has meant. She read some of Lummis' works (though Woodress is not specific beyond *A New Mexico David*); and she possibly read Bancroft's *History of New Mexico and Arizona*, among other histories.

Cather focused on Lamy, his history, his biography, after one of her visits—like so many luminaries of the day—to Mabel and Tony Luhan. The bronze statue of Lamy in front of St. Francis Cathedral, plus William Howlett's *The Life of the Right Reverend Joseph P. Machebeuf*, snapped things into place. By the next morning, reputedly, she had the design of *Archbishop* clearly in mind. (When a young man, and much before writing about Lamy, Horgan, ironically or fortuitously as the case may be, accidentally intruded on Cather and her companion Edith Lewis one day in 1926 on the porch of the La Fonda hotel, and he, too, would be compelled by Santa Fe and his own religious/aesthetic impulses to write about the same subject Cather probably was contemplating the day of their chance meeting.)

Woodress sees *Archbishop* as perhaps a more experimental book than it really is, judging that its allusiveness and "technical virtuosity" clearly invites comparison with other "modernist" works. He suggests that it is a better historical novel than it really is, at least as it is read against the "minority" sensibilities of the 1980s, even if her right to poetic license is excused. Certainly Cather's New Mexico novel is a grand evocation of character and place, and a masterpiece of simplicity and symbol.

It can be argued that Cather's impressions of New Mexico, beautiful and deep and sincere as they were, needed more duration, more seasoning. Like Lamy and her fictionalized version, Latour, Cather remained something of a tourist, a visitor. Her idealized portrait of Kit Carson is a case in point.

It is folly to speculate what kind of books would have resulted had Cather moved to New Mexico—lived there, or been born there and felt about it, in her heart, what she felt about Nebraska. Did the Southwest replace Nebraska in Cather's attitudes toward *place*? Was it an extension of that first fondness for lives in landscapes? Or was it something entirely different?

Perhaps, had she decided not just to visit but truly remain in New Mexico, she would have found simultaneously more peace and greater spirit to continue writing than she found in her eastern searches for a home (her depressing New York apartment on Park Avenue, of all places, and her cottages in New Hampshire and on Grand Manan Island in New Brunswick). New Mexico, Los Alamos, Trinity Site, and development of the atomic bomb would not have closed out the war

that weighed so heavily on Cather's spirit in her later years. But the ancient Indian cultures and the Hispanic heritage might have buoyed her. Local history in combination with world history might have given her other "real" stories of New Mexico to write about—beyond that of the missionaries.

Going home to live again in Red Cloud, Nebraska, was never a real consideration for her, nor back to Pittsburgh. Woodress certainly never even hints that Cather's sadness in later years was anything less than malaise because of world wars and the deaths of friends and relatives dear to her. For those who know the lure of New Mexico it is not too farfetched to believe that Cather was perhaps more devoted to that special place and homesick for it than even she really knew or realized.

Horgan sees Cather's life as one destined to probe the incalculable distances of artistic aspiration. In Woodress' *Willa Cather: A Literary Life* one sees just how far and persistently Cather traveled as a result of that aspiration. Her life, like all lives, was a journey from birth to death with determining and shaping stops along the way: Nebraska; Pittsburgh; New Mexico; New York; and all the other places she knew. Although his broad scope does not allow Woodress to dwell on Cather's time in New Mexico or draw truly profound conclusions from his analysis of it, he does present New Mexico as significant in Cather's life.

Whoever Willa Cather was or aspired to be—woman who wrote, writer who happened to be female, romantic, regionalist—her time spent in New Mexico and with its history was part of her biography. New Mexico was also part of her personal history and, through her, became a significant part of the literary history of the nation.<sup>8</sup>

---

8. For additional consideration and reconciliation of Cather's regionalism with issues of gender, and of the American land as the center of women's power in Cather's writings, see Cecelia Tichi, "Women Writers and the New Woman," in Emory Elliot, ed., *Columbia Literary History of the United States* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 589–606.



# Texas State Historical Association

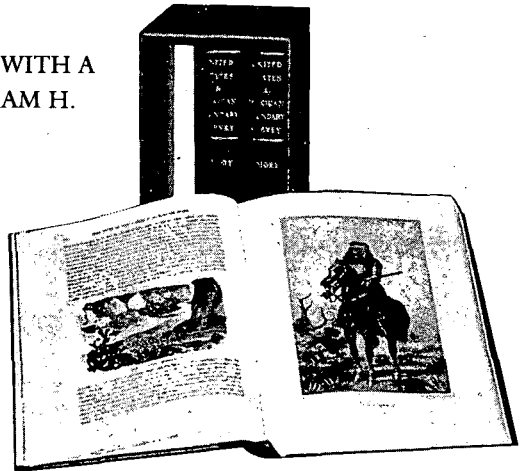
2/306 Richardson Hall • University Station • Austin, Texas 78712

## Report on the United States and Mexican Boundary Survey

BY MAJOR WILLIAM H. EMORY, WITH A  
NEW INTRODUCTION BY WILLIAM H.  
GOETZMANN

One of the most important books on the nineteenth-century West now reprinted, complete with all the reports, maps, charts, illustrations and color plates.

*Volume seven in the Fred H. and Ella Mae Moore Texas History Reprint Series.*



Limited to 750 sets. Three volumes, slipcased, 8 1/2 x 11 in., xxx + 1,022 pages, 37 color plates, more than 350 b&w illustrations, 4 fold-out maps, \$175. per set.

---

## Contours of Discovery

*Printed Maps Delineating the Texas and Southwestern Chapters in the Cartographic History of North America, 1513-1930*

BY ROBERT SIDNEY MARTIN AND  
J. C. MARTIN

Twenty-two historic maps, suitable for display, for the collector, teacher, or student, with an informative 66-page guide. 22 x 17 in., 22 maps, 18 in full color, \$39.95

## The Handbook of Texas

EDITED BY WALTER PRESCOTT  
WEBB, H. BAILEY CARROLL, AND  
ELDON STEPHEN BRANDA

A monumental biographical and historical dictionary. Called by the *Times Literary Supplement* "the best systematic work of reference on any of the fifty United States." 3 vols. 3,075 pages. \$95. per set

*Publications may be ordered from the Texas State Historical Association or from Texas A&M University Press, Drawer C, College Station, Texas 77843-4354*

## Book Reviews

---

*No Separate Refuge: Culture, Class, and Gender on an Anglo-Hispanic Frontier in the American Southwest, 1880–1940.* By Sarah Deutsch. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987. vi + 356 pp. Maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.50.)

Sarah Deutsch describes the evolution of Hispanic society in northern New Mexico and Colorado from 1880 to 1940, the changing roles of Hispanic women, and how the Anglo-dominated economy forced change on Hispanic culture. She has used an impressive array of archival sources, printed material, oral history collections, and her own interviews of men and women who lived through the times she describes.

As late as 1880, Hispanic Americans in northern New Mexico lived in many small villages raising modest gardens and herding sheep to gain a living much as they had since Spanish colonial times. As Hispanic people lost their land and grazing privileges, men began to trek north looking for seasonal work that took them away from their villages for months at a time. Meanwhile, women remained the core of village society. They contributed their labor to the subsistence economy, augmented the men's wages, and were the locus of Hispanic community in the Southwest. Mutualism, Catholic values, folk traditions, and family remained as central stabilizing influences even as the larger society exerted powerful centrifugal forces.

With the village as their social center, Hispanic people were able to maintain a measure of cultural autonomy and economic control over their lives, but the situation did not remain unchallenged for long. Anglo Protestant women missionaries came to the villages to spread their version of Christianity and to "Americanize" New Mexican women—to indoctrinate them with middle-class Anglo values. Anglo proselytizers also brought improved hygiene and

medical care, but they had little effect otherwise as long as villages remained economically viable. Industrial capitalism, however, would force greater changes on Hispanic communities as women and families moved to Colorado to live near the coal mines and beet fields where their menfolk worked and where few women could continue to fill the economic roles that had been viable in village society. As a result, women began to work in the wage economy as field hands and domestic servants.

Increased reliance on wages made Hispanic workers more dependent on the Anglo economy, but wages did not insure an adequate living. Working conditions were poor or worse. Consequently, Hispanic and Anglo laborers alike joined labor unions and led strikes against unfair employers. One strike resulted in the infamous Ludlow massacre in 1914 when the Colorado National Guard opened fire on a strikers' tent city. Hispanic women and children were among the victims. In the beet fields conditions were no better. Field hands did not make enough money to support their families, so child labor remained a staple of the Colorado economy until the 1930s. Not surprisingly, Hispanics also were active in farm labor unions.

There were subtle attacks on Hispanic society as well. Mine owners built company towns that supplanted the traditional *plazas*. Colorado's company towns had the usual features associated with such operations—a company store, goods on credit, high rent. The Colorado Fuel and Iron company had a sociological department that meant to encourage patriotism and inculcate Anglo-American values.

Conditions for Hispanic workers worsened during the Great Depression. Relief measures helped some, but federal administrators seemed more interested in maintaining the economic structure that supported the beet industry than improving the lot of Hispanics. New Deal functionaries, meanwhile, tried to sponsor a revival of Hispanic arts and crafts in the mistaken hope that curio sales would be a substitute for decent wages. All along the line, Anglos tried to recast Hispanic women in an Anglo, middle-class mold. In the end, Deutsch asserts, the once independent Hispanic community became an internal colony at the disposal of Anglo farmers, industrialists, and bureaucrats.

Deutsch has made an important contribution to the history of the West, Chicanos, and the family. Firmly grounded in social science and Chicano history, her book demonstrates just how subtle and complex were the ways in which Anglo Americans conquered the American West—a process that is not done yet.

Albert L. Hurtado  
*Arizona State University*

*On Their Own: Widows and Widowhood in the American Southwest 1848–1939.* Edited by Arlene Scadron. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988. xx + 324 pp. Maps, charts, tables, notes, index. \$29.95.)

While the study of widowhood in the past is in its early stages, that experience in the Southwest is completely unexplored. This collection of interdisciplinary essays thus adds significantly to our knowledge of the subject.

It is strengthened by the varied methodologies employed, the diverse range of sources consulted, and a comparative approach that contrasts the nation with the region, rural areas with urban, and differences among class, age, racial, and cultural groups. Beginning in 1848 with the United States' acquisition of the Southwest, and ending in 1939 with amendment of the Social Security Act to expand coverage of elderly wives, widows, and dependent children, the chapters focus on Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah during a period of significant change, but one in which "the modern welfare state was in its infancy" (p. ix).

The most consistent conclusions in all the essays are not surprising: that economic status is the single most important determinant in the experience of widowhood; that the degree of autonomy prior to widowhood is inversely related to social and economic penalties on the widow; and that widowhood mirrors the functions and meaning of marriage in the social group. This volume makes it clear that although one can describe common variables, there is no such thing as a "typical widow," and that notions of the "grieving or merry widow" are stereotypes, while nostalgic views of some past golden age of widowhood are equally unrealistic. Some authors indeed challenge as romantic the assumption that kin and extended family provide support and security for widows and other dependents because these are "informal support systems . . . highly discretionary, [while] federally mandated assistance has often taken on the status of a right, enforceable by the courts" (p. 306).

The strongest essays in the collection are those which illustrate general patterns with personal/individual examples. Among these are the chapter on Hopi family structure by Alice Schlegel, Martha Loustaunau's examination of Hispanic widows in New Mexico's Mesilla Valley, the detailed analysis of the experience of widows in Denver, 1880-1912 by Joyce Goodfriend, and Deborah Baldwin's case study of the fairly select group of Arizona Pioneer Society widows.

This study is an important beginning but understandably incomplete. The sexual dimensions of widowhood are barely touched upon, and the connections among social symbols and images, and individual responses and identity remain vague. Racial and cultural distinctions are still unclear, and, above all, widows must be compared to other single women in the society.

Jane Slaughter  
University of New Mexico

*Emily: The Diary of a Hard-Worked Woman.* By Emily French. Edited by Janet Lecompte. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987. viii + 166 pp. Notes, index. \$18.95 cloth, \$7.95 paper.)

Among the pleasures of history is the way in which previously neglected or devalued sources assume heightened importance as scholarly research reshapes old questions and weaves new patterns. Such is the case with *Emily: The Diary of a Hard-Worked Woman*, authored by a nineteenth-century western divorcee and edited by Janet Lecompte. Several aspects of this slim volume

serve to make it a more notable publication than its compact appearance might suggest.

First, the contents chronicle the events for one year in the life of a frontier woman. Since in recent years published memoirs and diaries of western women are a rather common addition to frontier historiography, the announcement that another is available might not seem too startling. However, Emily French certainly did not fit into the usual mold of those pioneer women who usually recorded their western experiences. French, divorced after thirty-two years of marriage, rather unexpectedly faced the loss of her home, shattered family relationships, and skimpy economic prospects. In a larger sense, this is the tale of American women, frontier and otherwise, who, late in life, find themselves suddenly cut off from the economic support of their husbands through divorce or widowhood. All too often their lives parallel the struggles of Emily French. French's efforts to secure work, her uneasy hold on unattractive jobs, and an increasing poverty—all intensified by her ill health in a bitter environment—provide new insights into the impact of divorce on nineteenth-century women.

Second, the diary entries cover several subjects of interest to scholars. Religious matters, women's work, parenting, medical care, domestic violence, and, of course, the relentless extremes of the weather are all topics that French addressed. The weak spelling and brief notations aside, this is a diary for careful reading; the yield is a wealth of western information.

Third, the detailed research that surrounds and fleshes out the diary points to the innovative and quality work that characterizes recent trends in women's history in the West. *Emily: The Diary of a Hard-Worked Woman* is an example of what an imaginative, careful researcher can do with a topic that is seemingly too fragmented to be worthy of publication. Lecompte's meticulous and fascinating additions make the volume as complete as appears to have been possible. Under the skillful hand of the editor, this diary has been transformed from a historical relic into a valuable source.

Despite its brevity, Emily French's diary adds to the history of women in the American West in ways its weary, over-worked author would never have expected.

Anne M. Butler  
Gallaudet University

*My Life on the Frontier 1864–1882.* By Miguel Antonio Otero. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987. lxxix + 293 pp. Illustrations, index. \$12.95 paper.)

The years have been kind to the prose and imagination of Miguel Otero. His boyhood memoir, reprinted here, is as fresh and lively as when first published in 1935. The events it recounts, now over a century old, retain a charming immediacy. The volume also remains an important document for the serious student of the American West and Southwest.

Even if Otero had not achieved prominence, becoming governor of New Mexico Territory and later marshal of the Panama Canal, this autobiography

would deserve attention. It can be read as a straightforward account of a boy growing to manhood in various railroad construction and trade centers of western Kansas, eastern Colorado and northeastern New Mexico in the two decades after the Civil War. But in various respects it is unique. Although Otero wrote it late in life, he pictures those frontier days through childhood eyes. Hunting expeditions with a Russian grand duke; meetings with Phil Sheridan, George Custer, and Buffalo Bill; supper with "Uncle Dick" Wooten—all are told with the guileless grace of a child, though admittedly tinged with a touch of an old man's nostalgia and romanticism. Additionally, Otero's father was an influential and powerful Hispanic landowner and businessman, while his mother came from an established South Carolinian family. His definition of his own ethnicity, plus his accounts of the ethnic complexities of that place and time, make a fascinating study for contemporary readers. Beyond this, Otero simply seems to have known everyone there was to know.

Cynthia Secor-Welsh provides a perceptive introductory essay to the autobiography, placing it in the political, economic, and social context of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. She particularly considers Otero's later career, depicting him as a typical businessman and "boss-reformer" of the Gilded Age and progressive era in the West. Extensive notes and bibliographic references will greatly aid those who wish to pursue Otero or his frontier times further. The essay contains a number of photographs of Otero, his family, friends and acquaintances, appropriately emphasizing his early years.

The University of New Mexico Press is to be commended for making this important artifact of New Mexico history readily available once again. It was a fitting present with which to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of the State of New Mexico.

Michael Olsen  
*New Mexico Highlands University*

*Conservation Politics: The Senate Career of Clinton P. Anderson.* By Richard Allan Baker. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1985. xii + 340 pp. Illustrations, map, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 cloth, \$14.95 paper.)

Clinton Anderson was one of New Mexico's most prominent politicians in the twentieth century but as yet has not found the biographer he deserves. Unfortunately, his fate is not singular because many of the state's political leaders during the last one hundred years, from Albert Fall to Clyde Tingley, or Bronson Cutting to Dennis Chavez, have not received full-scale treatment, although historians are now examining aspects of their careers. As a result, New Mexico's history has been seriously distorted. While scholars have lovingly followed virtually every footstep of explorers and padres from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, whether prominent or obscure, they have largely ignored significant activities of the state's political leaders in later years. Of such stuff are historical myths and romances made. One hundred years of New Mexico history lie largely unrecorded. Thus, this volume by Richard Baker

is a welcome addition because it contributes to filling this awful and shameful gap.

Utilizing the Anderson Papers in the Library of Congress, Baker has concentrated on Anderson's important role in shaping national conservation legislation during the Eisenhower era. Regrettably, he has not consulted the relevant but vital papers of Anderson's close colleagues, especially Carl Hayden and Pat McCarran, among others. After a brief survey of Anderson's career in New Mexico politics Baker focuses on his growing stature in the United States Senate over which Lyndon Johnson had such extraordinary influence. Anderson was an effective advocate of river basin development and was responsible for the inclusion of New Mexico projects on the Upper Colorado River. Baker also traces the process whereby Anderson became a national advocate of conservation legislation affecting wilderness areas and shorelines. In an era of burgeoning tourism the New Mexican also framed significant laws affecting outdoor recreation and national parks. He also provided visible leadership for the protection of the West's most precious resource—water. The Navajo-San Juan projects were part of his handiwork as well as national clean water laws.

In a simple and straightforward style Baker competently narrates these aspects of Anderson's career. The book reflects its origins as a doctoral dissertation at the University of Maryland. It has a very narrow research base, tends to be rather uncritical, and is not very sophisticated. Somewhere someone along the line should have prevailed upon the author to provide some appraisal of Anderson's career in conservation, or an evaluation of his accomplishments and failures within the broader context of New Mexico and national politics. But half a loaf is better than none. The book is a worthwhile addition to the still bare shelf on twentieth-century New Mexico politics, and it virtually provides an invitation to some potential biographer to step forward and write a much needed book.

Gerald D. Nash  
*University of New Mexico*

*Papers Concerning Robertson's Colony in Texas: Introductory Volume, Robert Leftwich's Mexico Diary and Letterbook, 1822-1824.* Edited by Malcolm D. McLean. (Arlington: University of Texas at Arlington Press, 1986. 611 pp. Illustrations, notes, appendix, bibliography, index. \$35.00.)

Editors who initiate monumental tasks of compiling a massive amount of documentation with a view toward eventual publication belong to a rare fraternity of scholars. Often requiring years from start to finish, the volumes they produce become heavy tomes of encyclopedic value. Malcolm Dallas McLean is such an editor. For nearly a half-century this meticulous scholar has expended talent and energy toward the goal of sharing with the public a documentary account of the contributions of family ancestors to the Anglo American colonization of Mexican Texas. In the chronology of McLean's publication record, this beautiful volume, *Robert Leftwich's Mexico Diary and Letterbook*, although labelled introductory, is actually the thirteenth in the series and covers

the writer's experiences in search of authorization to settle American immigrants in a foreign land.

Shortly after Mexico gained its independence from Spain, an enterprising Kentuckian, Robert Leftwich, became affiliated with a colonizing project, organized in Nashville, Tennessee, popularly known as the Texas Association. As company agent Leftwich arrived in Mexico City in the spring of 1822 to commence negotiations for a colonizing grant. Owing to vicissitudes of fledgling national politics, the Mexican government delayed enactment of a comprehensive colonization law until 1824 by which it delegated responsibility to state officials. Leftwich, therefore, journeyed northward to Saltillo, capital of the dual-state of Coahuila y Texas, to continue lobbying efforts. Ultimately successful, Leftwich secured permission to settle eight hundred families in the upper watershed of the Brazos and Colorado rivers. Following Leftwich's death late in 1825, the administration of the sizeable land grant underwent a litany of name changes until it became synonymous with that of a successor leader, Sterling Clack Robertson.

With the publication of *Robert Leftwich's Mexico Diary and Letterbook*, editor McLean finally provided a solid foundation for the preceding twelve volumes. The result may be comparable, as McLean conceded, to a carpenter constructing an imposing edifice from the roof downward, meanwhile hoping to find the resources to buy an adequate town lot on which to lay a foundation. Leftwich's *Diary* is replete with descriptive commentaries about persons, places, and politics. Of particular interest are the letters to friends and acquaintances with whom Leftwich shared intimate views on a variety of subjects not the least of which were proper procedures for conducting business with foreigners.

Of ancillary value to the contents of Leftwich's *Diary and Letterbook* is McLean's inclusion of a biographical essay of Edward Disney Farmer (1849–1924), a philanthropist who generously endowed a corpus of international fellowships to promote the growth of friendship and good will between the State of Texas and the Republic of Mexico. In recognition of more than three hundred Farmer Fellowships awarded between 1929 and the publication deadline, signifying an ongoing fulfillment of a humanitarian goal, the editor dedicated the current volume to the benefactor's memory. Of parallel interest to Farmer's cameo is McLean's narrative of his own circuitous route in pursuit of the original Leftwich diary and letterbook, from its rediscovery by a Fort Worth genealogist in the Tennessee State Library and Archives to its final accession and conservation in the Robertson Colony Collection in the library of the University of Texas at Arlington.

McLean and associates have produced an exceptionally attractive and informative edition, bound in red with elegant gold lettering, to complement the earlier blue volumes of *Papers Concerning Robertson's Colony in Texas*. One would hope that *aficionados* of the borderlands will not be discouraged from acquiring the volume because of its steep price tag.

Felix D. Almaraz, Jr.  
*University of Texas at San Antonio*



*A Narrative of the Life of David Crockett.* By David Crockett. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987. lvii + 211 pp. Illustrations, notes. \$6.95 paper.)

*The Tall Tales of Davy Crockett: The Second Nashville Series of Crockett Almanacs, 1839–1841.* Edited by Michael A. Lofaro. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1987. Illustrations, tables, index. \$24.95 cloth, \$12.95 paper.)

Colonel David Crockett's two-hundredth birthday celebration combined with the Texas Sesquicentennial to produce a score of reprints and collections commemorating the legendary Tennessee Congressman and martyr for Texas independence. But in perusing this substantial literature, readers should heed the advice of folklorists to take care to separate the historical *David Crockett* from his folkloric and literary alter-ego *Davy Crockett*. Two excellent new reprints of *A Narrative of the Life of David Crockett* and *The Tall Tales of Davy Crockett* document both of these characters, respectively.

Paul Andrew Hutton's thorough, annotated introduction places *A Narrative of the Life of David Crockett* in its historical and literary context. Originally published in 1834 as Whig Congressman Crockett's official campaign biography, the *Narrative* aimed to counter an earlier fanciful and "fictitious" ghost-written account. The *Narrative* was also ghostwritten, but Crockett evidently played an important role in composing this amusing, readable, and generally accurate autobiography.

Writing in the local vernacular, Crockett tells the fascinating story of his youth in Tennessee, his courtships and two marriages, his disastrous flatboat experience, his hunting adventures (he claims to have killed 105 bears in one year!), and his exploits in the Creek Indian War. But Crockett's political jokes and jabs at his arch-rival Andrew Jackson prove equally entertaining. The *Narrative* was, after all, a campaign autobiography. Defeated by the Jacksonians in 1835, Crockett told his constituents that they could all "go to hell" and he would "go to Texas" (p. xxix). His subsequent 1836 martyr's death at the Alamo combined with the fascinating life related in the *Narrative* to provide fertile ground for the mythmakers who followed.

Although the folkloric and literary "Davy" Crockett was born a few years prior to 1836, he became a veritable media star in the newspaper and journal literature of the post-Alamo years. Michael A. Lofaro's facsimile edition of *The Tall Tales of Davy Crockett: The Second Nashville Series of Crockett Almanacs, 1839–1841*, fills a vital missing link in the story of this mythical "Lion of the West." Yet the hero who emerges in the pages of these heretofore out-of-print *Nashville Almanacs* (they were actually written and published in Boston) is a far different character than the author of the *Narrative*. Interestingly, he is different from even Richard M. Dorson's and Walt Disney's later sanitized heroic versions of the "King of the Wild Frontier."

The Davy Crockett of the *Nashville Almanacs* is no Fess Parker. Modern readers are struck by the crude, sexist, racist, and jingoistic tone of these "terrificashus" yarns (p. 2). While his shooting match with Mike Fink (p. 11) and his bear "wrasslin'" (pp. 9–10) prove amusing, Davy seems also to have acquired several bad habits. In one story he forces a squatter to eat "every atom" of a fresh cow pie (pp. 11–12), while in another he kills an Indian ("red

nigger" in *Almanac* parlance) who has asked Davy to kiss his exposed "posterum" (p. 6)! This mythic Crockett brags that he can "make love like a mad bull, and swallow a nigger whole without choking if you butter his head and pin his ears back" (p. xxix). Obviously, the *Nashville Almanacs* tell us a good deal more about Jacksonian Americans' tastes in "literature" than they do about the historical Colonel David Crockett.

Michael Lofaro has written a solid introduction to these *Nashville Almanacs*, and the woodcut reproductions are stunning. Both of these books are handsome, readable, and welcome additions to Crockettiana. Either would serve as an exciting reading assignment for students in American history courses.

Michael Allen  
Deep Springs College

*The Presidency of James K. Polk.* By Paul H. Bergeron. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1987. xv + 310 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$25.00.)

James K. Polk, perhaps more than any other chief executive, forces historians to question how we should define presidential success. Polk came to Washington in 1845 with a clear agenda, and in four years he accomplished every item on it: the Independent Treasury; a lower tariff; settlement of the Oregon boundary; and acquisition of California and New Mexico. Polk did everything he set out to do. In the course of it, he literally worked himself to the edge of death, outraged a large portion of the citizenry, split the Democratic party, and reopened the explosive sectional controversy over slavery. Polk racked up an impressive series of achievements that took the country a long step down the road to disunion and civil war.

How should we judge such a record? Paul Bergeron's volume in the *Kansas American Presidency* series returns a favorable verdict. Bergeron rates Polk "a highly effective president," emphasizing his diplomatic acumen, his skill in Cabinet management, and his restrained response to criticism of the Mexican War. On the other hand Bergeron acknowledges the suspicious and conspiratorial bent of Polk's mind, his narrowmindedness and occasional deviousness. He especially faults Polk for exerting weak leadership on the question of slavery in the newly conquered territories, and in general for underestimating the sensitivity of the slavery issue.

Despite these reservations, Bergeron presents Polk very much as Polk would have liked to be seen. Bergeron does not ask the hard questions. Praising Polk's fulfillment of "Manifest Destiny," he acknowledges but never comes to terms with the historical literature questioning the existence of a popular mandate for expansion. If Americans "rejoiced in the bold expansionism of the Polk administration," why did they vote Whig in wartime congressional elections? The judgment that sectional disruption was "largely unanticipated" in the 1840s strains credulity. (When Bergeron hails the "new literary productivity fostered by the experiences of the war," one thinks of Thoreau's essay on civil disobedience.) The progress of Polk's armies, the squabbles among his generals, the behavior of envoy Nicholas Trist all appear here through Polk's own narrow and often distorted perspective.

Bergeron fails to transcend Polk's view of his presidency because he leans too heavily on Polk's diary as a source. Whole sections of the book draw straight from the diary; the consequence is not only limited vision but a singular lack of proportion. We learn more of ceremonial Indian visits to the White House than of Polk's Indian policy. The comings and goings of Polk's nephews and nieces receive more space than the conquest of California. Incredibly, there is no word of the famous Stockton-Kearny-Frémont dispute, despite its grave consequences for Polk's administration. It appears that Bergeron simply forgot to finish this part of his narrative.

In a synthetic work like this one, designed for a general audience and hardly claiming to say anything new, style counts for much. Bergeron's prose is competent; his index is excellent; the proofreading and book design are exemplary. Aside from references to a non-existent Department of Justice, the text is generally free of error. But it would have been much more interesting if Bergeron had probed more deeply.

Daniel Feller  
*University of New Mexico*

*Religion and Society in the American West: Historical Essays.* Edited by Carl Guarneri and David Alvarez. (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1987. xvi + 491 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$36.50 cloth, \$23.75 paper.)

This volume consists of twenty essays, most of which were first given as papers at a 1984 conference hosted by Saint Mary's College of California. The title emphasizes the theme of religion and society "in the American West," but "on the American West Coast" would be a bit more accurate. Fourteen articles treat the Pacific Coast states, with California commanding the lion's share of the analysis.

Books of essays are notoriously difficult to review, and this one is no exception. The articles range widely: the California Black churches' thrust for civil rights; the Mormon Female Relief Society; Freemasonry; Judaism as a "Civic Religion"; California Catholic parochial education; Seattle evangelist Mark Matthews; the Aurora Colony in Oregon; etc. All the essays are worth reading, however, and those by Eldon Ernst on American religious history "from a Pacific Coast perspective," Salvatore Mondello on Baptist Railroad Churches, and Lawrence Foster on Mormon polygamy are especially well drawn.

New Mexico readers will welcome the two pieces by Frances Campbell and Mark Banker. Campbell discusses the impact of Gilded Age Catholic parochial schooling on New Mexico Territory. Because the schools were staffed by nuns and priests, they met minimal resistance when they introduced "mainstream" literature, science, and technology into the region. Campbell maintains that Archbishop Lamy's far-reaching parochial school system played a vital role in "assimilating" New Mexican Hispanics and Indians into the larger, Anglo-European culture.

Banker's essay details the career of José Ynes Perea, the first Hispanic to be ordained a Presbyterian minister in the United States. As "missionary to

his own people," Perea often found himself caught between two worlds, neither of which accepted him fully. Banker's thoughtful analysis should be the starting point for further study of the state's small, but significant, Hispanic Protestant community.

The fragmented nature of these essays reflects the fragmented nature of contemporary scholarship on the theme of "religion in the West." There is need for a new synthesis to integrate these disparate currents into a more coherent whole. Until that appears, however, this collection of essays is the best place to begin. It is a welcome addition to the history of culture in the American West.

Ferenc M. Szasz  
*University of New Mexico*

*New Views of Mormon History: A Collection of Essays in Honor of Leonard J. Arrington.* Edited by Davis Bitton and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987. xvii + 480 pp. Tables, chart, notes, bibliography, index. \$19.95.)

This collection of eighteen essays in honor of Leonard J. Arrington indicates how significant he has been to the writing of Mormon history, how the scholarship in the field of Mormon history has matured, and how much diversity exists among Mormon historians. The essays are grouped in four sections: (1) Early Mormonism, Aspects of History and Theology; (2) The Church and People, in Utah and Abroad; (3) Mormon-Gentile Relations; and (4) Mormonism in the Larger Perspective. Most of the studies are narrow in scope, for example, Dean L. May on "Brigham Young and the Bishops: The United Order in the City" and Ronald Walker on "'Going to Meeting' in Salt Lake City's Thirteenth Ward, 1849-1881, A Microanalysis."

Quite different, however, are essays by D. Michael Quinn, "Socio-religious Radicalism of the Mormon Church: A Parallel to the Anabaptists," and Paul M. Edwards', "Time in Mormon History." Quinn's essay displays not only a juxtaposition of ideas but also of experience, especially the repression faced by dissenters in an otherwise homogeneous society. Edwards confronts a hierarchy of ideas relating to the understanding of the concept of time and what it means to Mormon history. Grasping the importance of Edwards' explanation of the Mormon idea of God disclosed why Mormonism was so profoundly unacceptable to Protestant Christians, who saw it unfold as a unique religious experience with an entirely different perception of God and time.

To single out the works of these authors is to do an injustice to the excellent essays by Richard Bushman, Dean C. Jessee, Thomas G. Alexander, David Whittaker, William G. Hartley, Gordon Irving, R. Lanier Britsch, Carol Cornwall Madsen, Jill Mulvay Derr, Richard Jensen, Eugene E. Campbell, Richard D. Poll, James Allen, and Jan Shipp, a non-Mormon whose recent study of Mormonism as a distinctive religious tradition has been so well received both within and without the Mormon community. For anyone unfamiliar with Mormon historical writing, James Allen's analysis of recent Mormon historiography

is a convenient place to begin. David J. Whittaker has also provided a bibliography of Arrington's published work. Davis Bitton's introduction is a brief and gracious sketch of Arrington that leaves the reader with the hope that someone will write a longer biography of the farmer turned economist turned church historian and biographer of Brigham Young. This is an interesting intellectual odyssey.

In reading these essays and thinking about Arrington and other post-World War II Mormon historians, one is struck by the complexity of the problem they faced in making their writing credible to the secular historical community. They could, of course, have chosen to remain safely in isolation. In making the decision to explain Mormon history to the outside world they have had to confront their own past in entirely new ways. They have done enviable work in establishing themselves, and their field of study as well, within the mainstream of the historical profession. Their work warrants careful and critical reading. The time has come to say, as Jan Shippo has proven, that Mormon history is too important to be left to the Mormons.

Martin Ridge  
Huntington Library

*Early Mormonism and the Magic World View.* By D. Michael Quinn. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1987. xxii + 313 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$14.95.)

In recent years Mormon historians and a class of youngish well-educated Latter-day Saints who travel with them have shown an almost fevered interest in the origins and inner person of Joseph Smith, the church's founding prophet. Among other manifestations of this have been outpourings of articles and books about the Mormon prophet and a tendency for the latest point of interpretation or the most recent documentary "find" to occupy center stage at various Mormon history conferences. Often, more prosaic themes went by the board as the prophet cult fed on itself. It may even be said that this phenomenon contributed to the Mark Hoffman forgeries (some of which played directly upon Joseph Smith and magic) and Hoffman's infamous murders as he tried to avoid exposure.

*Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* perpetuates the preoccupation with the prophet's psyche and continues the tendency to strain the borders of legitimate history that has been so apparent in the recent fascination with Smith. But at the same time it seeks to bring the tools of historical analysis to the study of magic and occultism in early Mormon history. While it is ingenious, suggestive, and in certain respects a pathbreaking study, *Magic* is less successful in other ways.

D. Michael Quinn's introduction states his position as a believing Mormon. It also declares his conviction that magic and the occult were of extreme importance in the "world view" and lives of Smith and other common people of his era. Many made little distinction between religion and magic, although they left much clearer documentary evidence of religion's role. Quinn draws from an abundance of secondary material and employs both "friendly" and

"unfriendly" primary sources. He also uses parallel developments as a methodological and interpretive tool.

In two stage-setting chapters, he discusses the religio-magical heritage of early America and the involvement of early Mormons in water witching, stone peeping, and treasure digging. Then follows a discussion of ritual magic, astrology, talismans, magic parchments and occult mentors. Smith is central, but these chapters range from bible times to recent studies in a barrage of information. Chapter five deals with the role of magic in Smith's early visions and the "coming forth" of the *Book of Mormon*. Chapters six and seven concern the magic world view in Mormon scriptures and the decline of magic after 1830.

Quinn reaches a point of particular interest in chapter five's discussion of the *Book of Mormon's* forthcoming. While what some Mormon scholars have called "faithful history" is at stake throughout the book, it is particularly an issue in this chapter as Quinn works "friendly" and "unfriendly" sources into an analysis of events with supernatural implications. The point of importance here is the degree to which Smith's interaction with the other-worldly is carried from the realm of testimony, allegation, or polemic into the realm of history. Not only does this chapter reflect Quinn's integrity, but in it the entire book is seen as a courageous attempt to grapple with elements of the human experience that transcend the natural in terms that can be understood naturally.

The burden of proof strains much of the book. Quinn's effort to transpose impulses, fears, habits, superstitions, rituals, talismans, and dimly perceived world views into an articulated argument often sags. The mass of data is sometimes overwhelming and on other occasions is redundant as Quinn uses related sources to deal with narrowly differentiated points. Even more disturbing is his dependence on parallelism. While it seems fair to argue that the occult was more important in the early 1800s than it is now, many of Quinn's parallels leave one thinking Smith *could* have been influenced but not really convinced that he was. His use of "would have been" or "would be" is almost constant. Occasionally he acknowledges that his case is circumstantial or inferential. While this may have cleared Quinn's conscience, it did not change the inferential to something more substantial.

If *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* moves the history of Mormon beginnings to sounder ground, it will be more because of what chapter five suggests about the application of "faithful history" than for the general persuasiveness of the book's methods and arguments. For all its effort, it does not entirely escape the recent trendiness in Mormon studies.

Charles S. Peterson  
*Utah State University*

*Mormon Polygamy: A History.* By Richard S. Van Wagoner. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1986. vi + 307 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$19.95.)

Several years after rendering his *Reynolds v. United States* opinion, placing Mormon plural marriage beyond the protection of the First Amendment, Chief

Justice Morrison Waite described his decision as a "sermon on the religion of polygamy." The Mormon marriage system naturally evoked homily and emotion. To many nineteenth-century Americans polygamy was a "scarlet whore," one of the "twin relics of barbarism." They read tales and heard lectures of polygamy's supposed excess, made the question a hot political issue, and capped a thirty-year crusade to expunge it with stiff measures that were among the nation's most lamentable invasions of civil liberty.

Given the topic's obvious legal, political, not to mention human and sexual interest, it is a bit surprising that Richard Van Wagoner is the first to attempt a chronological survey of the Mormons' celebrated "peculiar institution." He begins with Joseph Smith's introduction of the system in the 1830s and 1840s, tells of its subsequent "flowering" in the intermountain West, describes the Mormon Church's wrenching abandonment of the "principle" at the end of the century, and concludes with a glimpse of present-day practice, where orthodox Mormons, now turned 180 degrees *volte-face* from their progenitors, embarrassedly ignore or censure the polygamous activity of a scattered bunch of true-believers, the Mormon "Fundamentalists."

Van Wagoner has been industrious. He has mastered a mountain of secondary literature and added some fresh primary research of his own. This he ably presents in a detached, matter-of-fact manner, much as a pathologist might do in performing an autopsy. But when he is done, there is a sense of incompleteness.

Much of the problem has to do with the current state of Mormon historiography, where historians are hard at work, probing, questioning, and testing—sometimes in the manner of exposé. They want hard-nosed, unvarnished, and not necessarily "establishment" truth. However admirable these qualities, they can lead to excess. Van Wagoner's evidence seems repeatedly weighted to the revisionist, with the statements of Mormon dissenters taken at face value and given unqualified sway. Too, his portraits often seem flat and without empathy. The reader will search vainly for a suggestion of Smith's religious dimension. But what is most lacking in the manuscript is a sense of wholeness and meaning. There is no thesis to provide discipline and focus. Promising topics like the relationship of religiosity and sexuality, so often revealed in the rise of new religion, are left unexplored. Equally, while legal and constitutional questions are discussed, treatment seldom exceeds much more than narrative detailing.

Van Wagoner is to be commended for his army of "fact," but illumination comes as data is ordered, balanced, and given interpretation.

Ronald W. Walker  
*Brigham Young University*

*Mormon Polygamous Families, Life in the Principle.* By Jessie L. Embry. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987. 194 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$19.95.)

As long as scholars study Western American and Mormon history, they will continue to confront one of Mormonism's unusual characteristics, polygamy. Since so many laws were passed and so much time was spent defending

the practice, it has always created scholarly interest. Obviously, the splinter factions who still adhere to the principle create tremendous popular excitement.

Jessie Embry has tried a completely different approach than most scholars to that topic. Utilizing the vast collection of oral histories of polygamous children at Brigham Young University, Embry has attempted to view polygamy through the spectacles of the offspring. The Charles Redd Center at Brigham Young University collected the histories between 1976 and 1982, and Embry added these interviews to those of Kimball Young and James Holett, who conducted a series of projects during the 1930s.

From this rich reservoir of primary sources, Embry concludes that Mormon polygamous families were not much different than monogamous families, or even from non-Mormon western frontier families. She argues that stereotypes of oppressed plural wives or even emancipated women are not necessarily true because co-wives did the menial domestic labor. Embry concludes that the polygamy experience was diverse and that individual families responded in different ways.

The diversity causes the author tremendous difficulty that is reflected in her "Table of Contents." There are numerous topics and subtopics that require inquiry, so the volume is divided into a multitude of subheadings that attempt to cover all points. The result is an enticing introduction to polygamy, yet many questions and concerns are unanswered. In reality, each of the well-articulated subtopics deserves a more lengthy treatment.

Perhaps the greatest difficulty Embry faces is the source of her sample. Those who were interviewed had to be elderly at the time of the interview, and they were located, in part, through church sources. Consequently, they had not only lived the principle but experienced it in a twentieth-century post-manifesto mode. The Manifesto of 1890 supposedly outlawed plural marriages, but obviously most people interviewed in the 1970s were post-manifesto babies. This does not negate the significance of Embry's compilation or analysis, but it leaves out a large number of polygamous offspring who viewed the principle with some anger and became disaffected.

The author's demographic analysis makes a considerable contribution when added to other recent studies by Richard Van Wagoner and Michael Quinn. The numerous tables not only document variety, but they raise more difficult questions. It is reality that most polygamous wives were between fifteen and twenty years old regardless of the age of the husband. It cannot be denied that there were numerous plural marriages sanctioned after the Manifesto. Although Embry handles her sources well and the book is a major contribution, she convinces the reader that her conclusions are based on a small sample. Another study may point out both different results and individual impact. This attractive, well-edited volume is an excellent synopsis of how some people say they functioned during polygamy. However, it is certainly not the final scholarly word.

F. Ross Peterson  
*Utah State University*



*Tucson: A Short History.* By Southwest Mission Research Center. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1986. 152 pp. Illustrations, maps. \$12.95 paper.)

*Tucson* opens with the story of a historical hoax, the Lead Cross Caper, and a curious assessment, both cautionary and celebratory, of the archetypal Tucsonan as a "seeker," a drifter "with expectations beyond reality," a chaser of "chimeras" who stumbles onto the essential Tucson "mystique," an identity as a desert city. However much these attributes typify Tucson the city, they characterize *Tucson* the book.

The book consists of seven chapters of interpretive essays on the Tucson experience; an eighth chapter supplements these with a photo essay. The "crafters" of the book, we are assured, are "all Tucsonan." Inevitably, the essays are uneven, and their ensemble is episodic, often repetitive, but all attempt to capture in an evocative style critical aspects of Tucson history. The essential Tucson that emerges is a desert city, a place of multicultural co-existence, a site with a long, tough history; a survivor. Perhaps, too, a chimera.

This is a book for those who already like Tucson, who want to ensure that vital elements of its past continue to inform its future. *Tucson* ignores the twentieth century, except as a source of disruption through anticipated "huge surges of development." The "short history" is a bit too short. It fails to place Tucson within the contemporary geography of the region, a reasonable expectation. But it is a lacuna that may console devotees of an urban center which, when the book's chronology ends, was the leading city of Arizona, but which has not slipped in population and influence to third.

*Tucson* concludes with a panorama of the natural environs of the city as seen through the eyes of Juanita, a Tohono O'odham. The Tucson future, it argues, lies in its past. For a city of transients, the book thus serves as a kind of immigrant's guide to that usable past, and the book's revelations, a species of salvage archaeology for cultural history. The apparent limitations of Tucson are assets. Even the Tucson chimera is a part of its vital past.

For anyone who welcomes an informed, if selective narrative history, *Tucson: A Short History* is fun reading and good looking. Like its archetypal resident, it is a seeker—and like its city, a survivor.

Stephen J. Pyne  
Arizona State University, West Campus

*Invisible Houston: The Black Experience in Boom and Bust.* By Robert D. Bullard. (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1987. xiv + 160 pp. Illustrations, maps, tables, notes, index. \$28.50 cloth, \$11.50 paper.)

Robert Bullard is a black urban sociologist at Texas Southern University who seeks to "awaken the South's largest black community to realize its economic and political potential and to take a more active role in the future growth and development" of Houston (13). In the process, he seeks to alert white readers as well to the fact that the benefits of impressive Sunbelt urbanization have not been equally distributed among all races and classes. There remains, even in booming Houston, an "interrelationship between institutional racism,

poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, residential segregation and crime and their impact on the lives of black community residents" (xiii).

Given his didactic intent it is not surprising that Bullard is highly selective in his choice of subjects and interpretation of evidence. His greatest contribution is in providing extensive statistical data on Houston's blacks, especially for housing, the subject of more than half of the book's very brief and poorly written ten chapters. Even here there are limits to the book's usefulness due to Bullard's concentration on the 1970s and 1980s. Thus the book lacks most what a historian might have provided, that is, a sense of development over time. This is not important to Bullard for his theme is that there has been little change for Houston blacks. Yet much of his own evidence suggests otherwise, making the absence of a sustained discussion of past conditions especially crippling. The comparative dimension is also inadequately handled with regard to conditions elsewhere. Tables indicating that Houston blacks are better off than those in most other southern cities are quickly passed over as in Bullard's own admission that "Houston's black community is the most affluent black community . . . in the South" (81).

Bullard's fascination with the lack of progress and the prevalence of institutional racism is partly due to a distorted definition of the black community as "a highly diversified set of interrelated structures and aggregates of people who are held together by forces of white oppression and racism" (4). White oppression and racism, of course, exist throughout the United States and certainly in Houston, but ethnic communities are held together by more than the hostility of others. Yet we hear little of the positive aspects of Houston's black experience. Bullard mentions but either downplays or misses the significance of declining (though still troubling) residential segregation, increased governmental employment, greater suburban migration, notable educational gains, more political participation and officeholders, the absence of a major riot during the 1960s, and so on. There is obviously far more to be done to improve conditions for blacks and other minorities, and that point needs to be made. But a more balanced account is needed to place Houston's black experience in a more meaningful context—both in terms of the past and of contemporary urban America.

Howard N. Rabinowitz  
*University of New Mexico*

*An Oklahoma Tragedy: The Shooting of the Mexican Students, 1931.* By Abraham Hoffman. (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1987. xi + 75 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, \$10.00 cloth, \$5.00 paper.)

On June 7, 1931, three Mexican students attending colleges in Kansas and Missouri set out by automobile to spend the summer at home in Mexico. That evening, as they were stopped at roadside in Ardmore, Oklahoma, they were approached by a couple of Carter County deputy sheriffs. In a matter of minutes, two of the students lay dead, shot by one of the officers who had just driven up.

The story of this incident and its political consequences is told by Abraham

Hoffman in *An Oklahoma Tragedy: The Shooting of the Mexican Students, 1931*. It turned out that one of the students killed was a nephew of Pascual Ortiz Rubio, who happened to be Mexico's president at the time, and the other was from a wealthy Mexican family. The circumstances of their deaths generated tension between the United States and Mexico. As widespread protest over the killings arose in Mexico, the United States faced demands for gestures of remorse and appeasement to a foreign government.

In lean but clear prose, the affair is presented chronologically beginning with the morning the students departed from St. Benedict's College in Kansas. The central figures, including Oklahoma's controversial governor, Bill Murray, are introduced as they originally came into the case. The chapters take us through the scene of killings, the first publicized fears from afar that the officer's actions were racially motivated, the pre-trial hearing, the first trial and acquittal, the subsequent storms of publicity and protest, the second acquittal, and the indemnity the United States finally paid to each of the families of the youths a year and a half after the slayings. The final chapter speculates on some questions in the case that the author says will probably never be satisfactorily settled.

By interfering in the prosecution and immediately suggesting murder, Governor Murray played a key role whipping up bias against the deputies. But Hoffman finds no evidence to support the charge. The tragedy, based on his investigation, is that the shooting resulted from a case of mutual mistaken identity. Fearing a roadway highjacking, which apparently happened quite frequently in those days, the students had pistols handy on the trip. The deputies, meanwhile, already sensitive as a result of recent killings of Oklahoma patrolmen, were on the lookout for a band that had just committed a robbery. The students were apparently compelled to draw guns as they were accosted because in conformity with Carter County regulations at the time, the officers were not required to wear identifying uniforms. Spotting the guns in the hands of the students, the deputy opened up at close range.

Hoffman laments that while the not-guilty verdicts would appear to have been justified, the truth of unfortunate circumstance in the killings had no bearing on the level of national and international relations, with Governor Murray, other American leaders, much of the American press, and all of Mexico charging without evidence that the prosecution was controlled by the Ku Klux Klan. In the jockeying that takes place between states, Hoffman concludes, what really happens in the course of the lives of ordinary people appears to count for little.

The historical contribution of *An Oklahoma Tragedy* is basic and important. Hoffman's examination of the shooting is careful and convincing. One apparent area of neglect, however, concerns Oklahoma's context of race relations. It may have been true that Murray's accusation of Ku Klux Klan involvement in the trials was completely false and self-serving. Still, as the author points out based on his own prior research, the Mexican view of society in the United States, and in this case, was affected by the United States's capricious repatriation program that rounded up Mexicans and Mexican Americans randomly in public places to deport them. By the same token, was there not a particular

circumstance of race and politics in Oklahoma that served as a real backdrop for the governor's charge, outrageous as it may have been in this particular?

Phillip B. Gonzales  
*University of New Mexico*

*The Devil's Butcher Shop: The New Mexico Prison Uprising.* By Roger Morris. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983. 268 pp. Illustration, notes, index. \$10.95 paper.)

*Penology for Profit: A History of the Texas Prison System 1867-1912.* By Donald R. Walker. (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1988. xiii + 216 pp. Illustrations, notes, tables, bibliography, index. \$24.50.)

Rarely does the average citizen have a chance to catch a glimpse of life behind prison bars. With the publication of *The Devil's Butcher Shop*, which examines the 1980 riot in the New Mexico Penitentiary, and *Penology for Profit*, which analyzes the Texas system, however, readers will have an opportunity not only to view this sordid element of society but also witness humanity at its worst. While both these monographs address conditions in prisons and the political apparatus that controls all aspects of incarceration, two very diverse stories emerge. In the end, though, both authors fault state government for abuses of power and failure to ensure minimal and safe custodial care.

Although these books concentrate on different systems and time periods, results and conclusions are the same. Poor management, inadequate training for the staff, no real desire to improve the situation, and inappropriate direction from the state all led to repressive conditions within both institutions. Yet the question remains why one exploded in a violent riot while the other reformed an inherently corrupt and destructive system.

In response to this issue, Roger Morris argues that the state of New Mexico deserves more blame for the riot than the inmates themselves. Indeed, Morris does not hesitate to charge the state government where he says nepotism, malfeasance, and decay in the penitentiary stretched from the judicial system through the executive branch with stopovers in the legislature.

While not denying the existence of these forces, it is difficult to accept Morris' argument completely. Are we to believe the participants in the riot are innocents? Did circumstances beyond their control force convicted murderers, rapists, burglars, drug dealers, and other deviants to engage in a rampage that cost thirty-three lives and millions of dollars damage? The strongest counter to Morris' position of state responsibility emerges in his vivid description of the riot with gory details of lethal, subhuman acts committed solely by the inmates while the state, represented by the governor, police, and prison officials attempted to halt the destruction.

Yet when Morris concentrates on the riot and blames politics as the cause, he chooses to ignore the larger issues. Herein lies the final failure of *Devil's Butcher Shop*: the author ignores comparisons of the New Mexico system with others across the United States. Had Morris broached this topic, he would have found many similarities in penological practices and conditions. In his

conclusion, Morris emphasizes that nothing has changed since the riot because the process of incarceration remains extreme for both guards and inmates. Yet can all this be attributed to the tragic absence of political enlightenment or intelligent leadership? As Morris correctly notes, there is no public policy. But is New Mexico unique?

The answer is no if you read Donald R. Walker closely. Here we find problems that confronted Texas in the 1880s reappearing one hundred years later in New Mexico. Although the fact is overlooked in both books, such problems exist in most state systems. While *Penology for Profit* also faults management as a cause for discord in the institution, the author contends that public concern and national interest in reform eventually prompted changes.

As a focus, Walker concentrates on the leasing of convicts by the state for public and private ventures. In a strikingly cogent argument, Walker reveals that few Texans questioned the idea of employed inmates, few viewed work as a rehabilitative tool, and finally, few concerned themselves with the cruel treatment inmates received. Instead, the conflict centered on whether convict labor would be under the control of the state or private enterprises. Eventually, though, reform did occur in Texas and the hiring out of prisoners ceased. To that end, Walker reveals a debate that existed on two levels: no one wanted prison to be a place of comfort, but many people also realized that because conditions were so horrendous, leasing of convicts had to stop.

Yet for all the negative publicity Texas received in newspaper reports exposing the system, economic realities rather than conscience brought change in the state penal system. As Walker emphasizes, the discovery and extraction of oil in 1901 earned Texas disposable funds for public institutions. In the end, this income allowed Texas to engage in more reforms.

Yet money, whether more or less, does not seem to be the solution to problems in either case. For one point common to both narratives is the lack of public interest in prisons except when riots occur or when newspapers expose horrid conditions. Thus, if the purpose of these books is to inform they have achieved success. Still, one is more inclined to accept the documented approach with *Penology for Profit* for a more complete view of the problems that have confronted prisons historically instead of the sensationalism, innuendos, and accusations of the *Devil's Butcher Shop*.

Judith R. Johnson  
Wichita State University

*Distant Justice: Policing the Alaska Frontier.* By William R. Hunt. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987. xii + 375 pp. Illustrations, map, notes, bibliography, index. \$24.95.)

William R. Hunt chronicles the judicial history of Alaska from the perspective of the personnel that manned this far outpost of the American frontier and those who challenged law and order. Formally organized as a territory in 1884, Alaska's law enforcement and adjudication system endured the hardships of communication and transportation as well as the anti-social behavior of its

sometimes violent population. By statehood in 1959, the transportation revolution of commercial air service and the entrepreneurial bush pilot had eliminated most of the frontier hardships of time and space. Looking back at the judiciary's record in the territorial period, Hunt evaluates its performance positively. Despite examples of corrupt or ineffective men on the bench, Alaska's judiciary was "superior in strength, honesty, and efficiency." So, too, were the U.S. marshals who enforced the law in this frozen and beautiful land and adapted "to the peculiar problems of the frontier."

In his encyclopedic narrative, Hunt artfully introduces us to the notable villains and notorious criminals of Alaska history—Soapy Smith, Ed Krause, Alexander McKenzie, Ed "Frozen Foot" Johnson, Judge Arthur H. Noyse, Fred Hardy, William Demsey, and William T. "Slim" Birch. Charles "The Blue Parka Bandit" Henderson darts across the pages escaping from one jail and another. Alaska also had its colorful characters like Nellie "Black Bear" Bates who beat the law with her wiles and Vuko Perovich who beat the hangman, made a convoluted journey through the legal system, and passed on seventy-two years later as the proprietor of the Golden Rule Barber Shop.

Alaska also had its heroes of the law like Judge James Wickersham who cleared crowded court dockets with Herculean ability and Luke May, "America's Sherlock Holmes," who used science to ferret out the guilty. Other ladies of the night like Black Bear are joined in this book by the less fortunate like Margaret "French Marguerite" LAVOR, who had her head bashed in one dark Anchorage night. Alaska also had mysterious characters like Tom "Blueberry Kid" Johnson, Robert Franklin "The Bird Man of Alcatraz" Stroud, the Klutak, the "notorious Indian outlaw" whom Hunt puts in the perspective of times. The characters that graced Alaska's historical stage made the cast extraordinarily rich.

For the reader who enjoys the particular in frontier history, this book will certainly be required reading.

Gordon Morris Bakken  
*California State University, Fullerton*

*The Lovelace Medical Center: Pioneer in American Health Care.* By Jake W. Spidle, Jr. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987. xii + 217 pp. Illustrations, tables, notes, bibliography, index. \$27.50.)

In a fitting effort to celebrate the sixty-fifth anniversary of the founding of Lovelace Clinic, Jake W. Spidle, Jr., has written a fine history of that institution. Recognized as a leading medical foundation and clinic in the Southwest and the nation, this facility literally grew up with the city of Albuquerque and expanded its scope and services to match the development of the city and its institutions. Thus, in many ways, the story of Lovelace Clinic mirrors the recent history of its host city.

Doctors William Randolph Lovelace and Edgar T. Lassetter founded the clinic in 1922. Both young doctors had come to New Mexico as a last resort to cure tuberculosis. They found the high desert climate suitable for their health and decided to stay. Eventually they met in Albuquerque, pooled their medical

expertise, and established their medical offices based on the group-practice model of the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota. The early practice was devoted to treating the common ills of the local community, although the group practice method was a new concept in the Southwest.

In all likelihood, the Lovelace Clinic would have remained as a very good group practice clinic, but it came into national prominence when Dr. William Randolph Lovelace II, the founder's nephew, joined the staff in 1946. The younger Dr. Lovelace brought a charismatic vigor to the staff that transformed the institution. Fresh from his work at the Mayo Clinic and his military experience in aviation medicine, Dr. Randy Lovelace brought new ideas and interests to the clinic. He capitalized on the post-World War II growth of nearby Sandia Laboratory and Kirtland Air Force Base and concentrated the clinic's efforts on research and development in aviation, space, and bioenvironmental medicine.

Randy Lovelace met an untimely death in 1965, which, for a time, removed the cutting edge from the expansion of the clinic and foundation. Since this brief lull, however, Lovelace Clinic has continued to expand and even anticipate such modern trends in medicine as health maintenance organizations (HMOs). Yet, the recent so-called crisis in the nation's health care system also affected the institution and forced it to merge with the Hospital Corporation of America in 1985.

Spidle's book chronicles the history of Lovelace Clinic from the arrival of its founders in New Mexico through its merger with its new corporate partner in 1985. Readers looking for a critical medical history will be disappointed, for the focus records rather than analyzes the clinic's events and accomplishments. For example, the reader is told that Dr. Ulrich C. Luft joined the foundation staff after building a brilliant record as a young physician-scientist in Germany (pp. 109-10). Dr. Luft specialized in high-altitude respiratory physiology and brought his skill to the clinic in 1953. Since this renowned scientist worked at the foundation for nearly thirty years, one would like to know more about what he accomplished and how his work compared with other leaders in the field. The author does not provide this kind of interpretation. Nor does he offer a comparative analysis of Lovelace Clinic with other similar practices, such as the Mayo Clinic.

On the other hand, those who wish simply to learn about this fine organization will find the volume informative and enjoyable. The author skillfully weaves the development of the institution with the lives of its founders. As a result, the reader senses the energy that Randy Lovelace brought to the clinic when he joined the staff, as well as the tragedy that befell the organization with his death. In short, readers looking for a fascinating historical account of Lovelace Clinic will find this volume useful.

Robert K. Sutton  
*Arizona State University*

*Cherokee Renaissance in the New Republic.* By William G. McLoughlin. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986. xxii + 472 pp. Illustrations, maps, tables, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.50.)

When it began publishing a newspaper in 1828, the Cherokee Nation chose *Phoenix* as the paper's name and used a picture of the mythical bird as its masthead. In this new treatment of Cherokee history during the years between 1789 and 1833, William G. McLoughlin clearly delineates the political, economic, and religious revitalization that made the phoenix a particularly appropriate symbol. In the process, McLoughlin presents an authoritative story of two cultures that were slightly, but tragically, out of step.

This study is a chronological narrative detailing the attempts of the Cherokee people to rise out of the disorder that followed the American Revolution. Abandoned by their defeated British allies, the Cherokees were left divided and dispirited to face the victorious Americans who, through the Treaty of Hopewell, made the Cherokees a dependent nation. Seriously factionalized and unable either to defend themselves from invasive non-Indians or depend upon the fledgling United States government for protection, the Cherokees experienced a period of cultural disorientation that left them with four choices: psychological escape through chronic intoxication; geographical retreat to the western frontier; removal to remote regions of the Great Smoky Mountains; or, finally, syncretization of native with white culture in an attempt to survive with minimal sacrifice and maximum dignity. While some Cherokees adopted each of these courses, McLoughlin concentrates on the fourth alternative and the mixed-blood political elite that engineered a phoenix-like cultural rebirth, from its faltering beginnings through its successful period of unification to its final defeat at the hands of Andrew Jackson.

Useful, significant, and poignant though this narrative is, it is merely a vehicle to illustrate a much larger point concerning the nature of Cherokee and white—or, indeed, of Indian and white—relations during this period. In sketching the history of Cherokee revitalization, the author makes it clear that the mixed-blood leadership was intent upon recasting native culture in a form that would incorporate Enlightenment notions so as to synchronize their society with that of the Jeffersonian America that had created their precarious situation. In this, leaders like James Vann, Elias Boudinot, and John Ridge were very successful, making themselves—and leading their people to be—literate (in either English, Sequoyan, or both), cultured, virtuous, and reasonable. What the Cherokees failed to notice, however, was that the culture they chose to emulate had gone increasingly out of style among white Americans. While Jefferson's followers maintained an Enlightenment tradition in the presidency, the American people were undergoing a revitalization of a sort themselves, abandoning rationalism for the romantic nationalism that would emerge full-blown in the political ascendancy of Jackson. Prepared for the Jeffersonian promise of equal participation in a rational American experiment, reformed Cherokee society and its leaders collided headlong with passionate Jacksonian racialism and Manifest Destiny, leading to the tragedy of removal and the breakdown of the new cultural synthesis. This is, thus, "a study of the rise of



romantic nationalism in America, told in terms of the struggle of the Cherokee people to accept the promise of equal citizenship in the new nation" (xv) and in so being, is an insightful and significant contribution to the fields of both Cherokee history and Indian/white studies.

Christopher L. Miller  
*Pan American University*

*The Blackfoot Confederacy 1880-1920: A Comparative Study of Canadian and U.S. Indian Policy.* By Hana Samek. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987. xi + 230 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$27.50.)

In the mid-nineteenth century the four tribes of the Blackfoot Confederacy occupied a huge area about twice the size of New England east of the Rocky Mountains in present-day Montana and Alberta. Sharing a common language and customs, they comprised the most powerful and aggressive Indian alliance on the northwestern plains. In 1855 they negotiated their first treaty with the United States. But twenty-two years later the three smaller tribes, who lived primarily north of the international line, signed Treaty No. 7 with Canada in which they acknowledged their allegiance to the British crown. Two years later the buffalo, which had been their staff of life, was exterminated in their Canadian homeland. During the early 1880s the buffalo were killed off in Montana as well, leaving the Blackfoot tribes on both sides of the border destitute—dependent upon government rations for their survival.

This study seeks to assess the relative success of the Canadian and U.S. governments in their efforts to restore their Blackfoot Indian charges to a condition of economic independence over a period of roughly four decades after the buffalo disappeared from their homeland (1880-1920). Since this has been an ongoing endeavor of both governments for more than a century we may quibble over whether the year 1920 is particularly meaningful in such a comparative study. But surely during the early part of that forty-year period officials on both sides of the line believed that this change could be brought about in even less time. George Bird Grinnell, who knew these Indians rather well, told the Montana Blackfoot (or Blackfeet as they came to be known) in council in 1895, "If you are helped for ten years . . . you will not then want any more help. You will learn to walk alone like the white man; the only difference will be the color of the skin."

In the course of her study Hana Samek has not only read the books and articles touching on Blackfoot relations with both nations, but she has consulted manuscript records dealing with Indian policy in both the U.S. and Canada. She has learned a great deal about Blackfoot-white relations from the white administrators' point of view. I think she might have gained some additional, and possibly unexpected, insights into the Indians reactions to government policies had she devoted some time to talking to elderly Blackfoot Indians about the subject. After all, the 1920s were well within the memories of a number of Blackfoot Indians.

The author considers the general history of Indian policy development in both countries, as well as how those policies were applied to the Blackfoot

tribes in particular. She identifies some of the factors that caused a number of authorities on both sides of the line to express the opinion that Canada did a better job of Indian administration than did the United States. As early as 1876 Canada adopted an Indian Act which spelled out that nation's policy, and then held to it. Meanwhile, U.S. policy was subject to the action of Congress and changed frequently as a result of conflicting pressures upon that body, including those of organized groups of easterners who professed to be friends of the Indians and who were eager to see the formerly nomadic tribes of the West converted to Christianized farmers living much like rural whites. On the other hand Canadian citizens seemed to be content to let the Department of Indian Affairs handle such matters in an inexpensive way.

Samek carefully compares the different ways the two countries handled matters of land policy, evangelization, education, law and order, and welfare on their respective Blackfoot reservations. Even though she found that in some respects one country's policies appeared to be somewhat more effective than the other's, she concluded that in the final analysis both countries failed in their aim of making their Blackfoot charges economically self-sufficient. Like other recent students of the comparative effectiveness of Canadian and U.S. Indian policies she attributes much of their failure to the paternalism that flourished on both sides of the border, and to the fact that the Indians were consulted very little if at all in determining and administering these policies. I would certainly agree.

However, she also believes that better results could have been obtained had more money been spent. Surely. But we should know that even the most dedicated Indian administrators had difficulties obtaining money from a Congress beset by many urgent requests for appropriations. I recall that during World War II Congress told Commissioner John Collier that he must reduce the expenditures of his Indian Bureau. The commissioner then asked each reservation to submit a plan for the systematic reduction of expenses over a ten-year period. Coordinating the *Ten Year Program for the Blackfeet Reservation* became one of my unexpected responsibilities as Curator of the Museum of the Plains Indian on the Blackfeet Reservation. The reservation Social Worker and I first surveyed the population trend on that reservation—which showed that the tribal population was growing at a rate more than twice that of the nation as a whole. We concluded that there was *no way* expenditures in the future could be reduced without seriously curtailing such essential services as health and education, which comprised the lion's share of the reservation's budget.

John C. Ewers  
Smithsonian Institution

*Western Apache Material Culture: The Goodwin and Guenther Collections.* Edited by Alan Ferg. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1987. x + 205 pp. Illustrations, maps, tables, appendixes, bibliography. \$19.95 paper.)

*Western Apache Material Culture* resulted from the relationship between the Western Apache people and three outsiders: pioneering scholar of the Apaches,

Grenville Goodwin (1907–1940); the Lutheran missionary Pastor Edwin E. Guenther (1885–1961); and Guenther's wife Minnie Guenther (1890–1982). Beginning their work in 1910, the Guenthers remained with the Apaches for the rest of their lives. Indeed, Pastor Guenther was formally adopted into the White Mountain Apache tribe, the only Anglo ever so honored.

Goodwin devoted a decade between 1929 and 1939 to the study of the Western Apaches. In fact, it was Goodwin who coined the term "Western Apache" to include the Southern Tonto, Northern Tonto, White Mountain, Cibecue, and San Carlos Apaches. Goodwin determined that these five groups have much more in common culturally and linguistically with each other than they did with other Southern Athapaskan groups.

Goodwin and the Guenthers were active collectors of Apache objects and artifacts. They focused, however, on different aspects of Western Apache material culture, giving their collections a remarkable depth and breadth. The Guenthers gathered contemporary material, often acquiring items "that were newly made at the time they were acquired" (p. 5). Eventually their collection covered a seventy-five year time span:

Some of the artifacts the Guenthers collected during decades of this century, however, were of types no longer made, used, or in some cases even remembered by the Apache by the time of Minnie Guenther's death in 1982. Thus, the decline of a number of older crafts as well as the evolution of new ones during much of the twentieth century is reflected in the collection.

Goodwin concentrated on objects no longer in use at the time of his fieldwork in the 1930s. Much traditional Western Apache culture remained intact until the end of the nineteenth century, and Goodwin was able to find elderly Apaches who still possessed or knew how to make objects related to the pre-reservation era. Goodwin systematically documented "artifacts no longer in use at the time of his fieldwork and those that were rapidly becoming obsolete" (p. 2). His careful documentation of his collection is a significant part of Goodwin's legacy.

*Western Apache Material Culture* provides a fine overview of these two collections that represent "Western Apache material culture in a diachronic and complete manner" (p. 8). Essays by Morris Opler, William B. Kessel, Alan Ferg, and Jan Bell further place the accomplishments of Goodwin and the Guenthers in context, and Ferg and Kessel annotate specific pieces in the two collections. This will become the standard volume on the material culture of the Western Apache. The color photographs of the objects are stunning, and I wished there had been more of them. The publisher should have considered issuing a durable hardbound edition because the book will see constant use by scholars of the Apaches.

Joseph C. Porter  
*Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha*

*Apache Women Warriors*. By Kimberly Moore Buchanan. (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1986. 56 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$10.00 cloth, \$5.00 paper.)

*Apache Women Warriors* is a monograph uninitiated readers will find interesting. Those knowledgeable about events and people in Apacheria, however, will find it frustrating. The author collected the most readily available materials on Apaches and selected out pertinent information relating to the activities of women in some of the conflicts of the late nineteenth century.

Of the monograph's fifty-two pages, about a fifth is introductory material tracing the outline of Apache culture and history with emphasis on the Chiricahuas. A final short chapter deals with Indian women as warriors in other tribes. References are made to Kutenai, Blackfoot, Ojibwa, Cheyenne, and Cherokee examples. Notes and a three-page bibliography take up another eight pages.

Only half of the monograph, some twenty-six pages, deals with the activities of women as warriors in Apache society. Therein lies the frustration. Drawing on a variety of sources, including Eve Ball's valuable works and experiences, the author attempts to explain the role of women in relationship to war, raid, spiritual power, and family among Apache people.

Kimberly Moore Buchanan also gives the reader very brief biographies of significant nineteenth-century women warriors and shamans such as Ishton, wife and fighting comrade of Juh, the Nednai chief, and Lozen, the war shaman sister of Victorio, the Mimbres war leader. Others mentioned include Gouyen, Dahteste, and the female relatives of James Kaywaykla and Jason Betzinez, gleaned from the men's published accounts of the Apache wars.

The monograph is flawed by its brevity. The subject deserves more thorough research and a longer treatment. As it is, the work will be useful to those only slightly informed on the topic. Others will go directly to the materials from which *Apache Women Warriors* is distilled.

D. C. Cole  
Colgate University

*Lipan Apaches in Texas*. By Thomas F. Schilz. (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1987. 70 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes. \$5.00 paper.)

The author, who has previously published articles and a book dealing with the Texas frontier, again demonstrates his interest in the region with this short monograph. In it he endeavors to trace the history of the Lipan Apaches from the first mention of them in the literature to their military defeat and dispersion in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Early in his study Thomas Schilz presents what is meant to be a summary of Lipan culture. He refers to a class of deities he calls Thunder Beings who, he declares, were the gods of immediate importance to the Lipan. Actually, thunder was only one of many natural forces to which the Lipan looked for spiritual help. Schilz also describes a female deity named White Painted Woman who, he claims, assisted the Lipan in various ways. The Mescalero and Chiricahua worship White Painted Woman, but the name of the comparable female

deity of the Lipan is Changing Woman. Schilz's assertion that Spanish names were adopted by the Lipan because their list of Apache names became exhausted is strange and amusing. A Lipan Apache was named after some physical trait or peculiarity of speech or action, and so there were endless variations from which to choose. Schilz explains similarities between major Lipan and Mescalero religious practices as a result of Lipan borrowings from the Mescalero. In fact, the beliefs in question are a common Southern Athapaskan heritage of both tribes. Schilz does not footnote the portion of his monograph that deals with Lipan culture, so it is impossible to tell the sources of his singular ideas on that subject.

When he moves from attempts to characterize Lipan culture to an account of the successive wars of the Lipan with the Spaniards, Mexicans, and Americans, Schilz is on more solid ground. After the rush of Americans to acquire Texas land began following annexation, the Lipan were doomed. Caught between Mexican and American forces and harassed by the Commanche, they were steadily reduced in numbers and scattered. The tribal history that Schilz traces has a dismal ending, one all too common in American Indian annals.

Morris Opler  
Cornell University

*I Tell You Now: Autobiographical Essays by Native American Writers.* Edited by Brian Swann and Arnold Krupat. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987. xv + 283 pp. Bibliography. \$19.95.)

The title of this volume comes from the last line of the lead essay by Mary Tallmountain, "I tell you now. You can go home again" (p. 13). Eighteen Indians discuss their individual struggles as writers and as Indians. Some of the essays are full of anger and others exude the quiet and determined strength of survivors. Most of the writers grew up entangled by personal circumstances in the machinations of the termination policies of the 1950s. Some were veterans of World War II, Korea, or Vietnam, others endured relocation, and a few have memories of the Indian New Deal and the resulting backlash upon Indian cultural and political sovereignty.

In a literary sense the articulators in this volume describe personal odysseys of self-determination, defining for themselves a way of being at home with their identity as Indian people. Though many have interspersed pieces of their writings to demonstrate how interconnected their work and their lives are, it is the personal journey of each that is most engaging. Most in their expressions find peace with their mixed ancestries, often polluted traditions that must be purified or reinterpreted, or removals from their relatives, ancestors, and sense of place.

The contrasts in voice and rhetoric are refracted into a textured discourse. The editors are sensitive to let the writers speak for themselves. The brief introduction points out how much this volume is part of the historic continuity of American Indian autobiography as a genre. A selected reading list and addresses of serials that publish the authors are included in the volume and help make such literature even more accessible. The work can take its rightful

place in American Indian literature courses as more readers discover the descriptive power of these life stories.

David Reed Miller  
Smithsonian Institution

*Survival This Way: Interviews with American Indian Poets.* By Joseph Bruchac. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1987. xiii + 363 pp. Bibliography. \$28.95.)

Anyone interested in contemporary poetry or in contemporary American Indian culture will find *Survival This Way* to be an important volume. Edited by Joseph Bruchac, this book complements his 1983 anthology of Native American poetry. Unlike the earlier work, *Survival This Way* only presents one poem from each author. Through edited interviews conducted by Bruchac, the poets explain their motivation for writing, the sources of their inspiration, and the extent to which their Indian heritage is reflected in their creative output.

A few of the poets such as N. Scott Momaday and Simon Ortiz have already found their national audiences, while younger poets like Diane Burns and Karoniaktitie have only begun to mature. Space is given to both seasoned poets and younger writers. Every author speaks of his or her need for written expression as a function of establishing self-identity as an Indian within the dominant white culture. Native American poetry frequently expresses Indian spiritualism and a deep, profound sense of place. Linda Hogan explains that she began writing poetry because "the split between the two cultures in my life became a growing abyss and they [the poems] were what I did to heal it; to weave it back together." Many of the authors' poems represent points of convergence with their ancestors or grandparents and with myths and traditions sacred to their people and their clans.

Lance Henson explains that some Cheyenne poems deriving from chants are never meant to be published, and Joy Harjo condemns the phenomenon of "The White Shaman" or the white poet replicating versions of American Indian poems based on traditional Indian themes. Maurice Kenny also criticizes poets who are "not really using their own roots." In these interviews the Indian poets proclaim their creative identity, not solely on the basis of their Indian roots, but because they see the present and project the past through a cultural perspective in which time and space are reflected in language—not dominated by it. Though these are separate voices, they often speak as one, and reading a single poem and then reading about the author's personal perspective offers rare insight into the poet's heart.

At times Bruchac leads too forcefully with his interview style. Publishing interviews with twenty-one poets may not be as effective as editing in-depth interviews with a select few poets, but this is undoubtedly a significant book that helps establish a new canon within American letters.

Andrew Gulliford  
Western New Mexico University

*The New Native American Novel: Works in Progress*. Edited by Mary Dougherty Bartlett. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986. viii + 132 pp. Illustrations. \$22.50 cloth, \$9.95 paper.)

Tales spun by nine authors, master weavers at fiction's loom, are included in *The New Native American Novel: Works in Progress*. The writers, Native Americans all, are Paula Gunn Allen, Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, Michael Dorris, Louise Erdich, Linda Hogan, Glen Martin, N. Scott Momaday, Louis Owens, and Gerald Vizenor.

This anthology has been expertly compiled with a clear love for the poetry of language by editor Mary Dougherty Bartlett. Newcomers to the world of Native American writing would have been better served, however, had Bartlett fleshed out her two-page preface, which comes across as perhaps too much of an insider's piece.

Singling out one or two pieces in *The New Native American Novel* for special attention in the space allotted here would create an unfair impression about unexamined works. Be assured that each creation displays such an impressive clarity of style, depth of exposition, and inspiring originality that publication of the larger works of which these excerpts are but tantalizing samples is eagerly awaited.

All writers are well-advised to work with material about which they happen to know something. So it is not surprising these selections are bound up in some way with experience in Indian America. Still, one cannot be blamed for wondering when the litmus test of ethnicity will no longer be administered. Have we not arrived at an odd place indeed when authors are described as "Laguna/Sioux/Lebanese-American" or "Choctaw, Cherokee, Irish-American"? What difference does it make and who, really, cares?

If being pointed out as a Native American, American Indian, whatever, focuses attention on the work of a writer deserving recognition, fine. But once that task is accomplished the time comes to remove the crutches of ethnicity. What makes the point important here is the fact that each of the writers featured in this volume richly deserves recognition and praise, utterly without qualification.

In the meantime, *The New Native American Novel* presents offerings by nine gifted writers blessed with a remarkable clarity of vision, sureness of purpose, and creative agility. These are people whose works, even in-progress, are well worth reading. As editor Bartlett points out, this book was compiled "to suggest what the future may hold." Judging by its contents, the future for those of us who enjoy reading enduring works of fiction should be bright as summer's sun.

Ronald McCoy

*Paul Dyck Foundation, Research Institution of  
American Indian Culture, Rimrock, Arizona*

*The Life and Times of James Willard Schultz (Apikuni)*. By Warren L. Hanna. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986. xviii + 382 pp. Illustrations, maps, appendix, notes, bibliography, index, \$24.95.)

Biography can provide one of the most important perspectives of history. Placing the accomplishments of an individual into a mainstream of events

establishes the role of that person in the historical process. In this book, Warren L. Hanna offers a historical perspective of the career of James Willard Schultz, a late nineteenth and early twentieth-century western writer.

Born in 1859 into a middle-class family in Boonville, New York, Schultz grew to maturity as an avid outdoorsman. At the age of sixteen he traveled to Fort Benton, Montana Territory, to satisfy a driving curiosity to see the West. The native New Yorker stayed in Montana for the next twenty-six years. He worked as an Indian trader and a hunting guide, but most importantly he developed a consuming interest in the Pikuni band of Blackfoot Indians. He learned their language, accompanied their hunting parties, and married a Pikuni woman.

Schultz's intimate association with these people made possible his career as a writer. *Forest and Stream* published his first article in 1880, and his most successful work, *My Life as an Indian*, appeared in 1907. By cultivating his capacity as a storyteller, Schultz developed a primary readership among young people. He reached his peak of popularity and financial success in the 1920s. Before his death in 1947, he published thirty-seven books and a plethora of short stories, most dealing with topics about native Americans.

Hanna, a retired attorney, attempts to recognize Schultz's accomplishments as an author and to reveal the real person. This approach is certainly appropriate, but the book never quite fulfills its promise. Although the author refers frequently to Schultz as a primary figure in the creation of Glacier National Park and as a champion of Indian rights, he does not adequately establish how influential Schultz's efforts were in these causes. Hanna does not hide personal problems—alcoholism, a contentious second marriage, and financial irresponsibility—but fails to relate clearly the impact of these difficulties upon Schultz's career. The book also suffers from organizational problems because it is arranged both chronologically and topically. However, *The Life and Times of James Willard Schultz* does succeed as a tribute to an important author of a unique genre of the literature of the American West.

William P. Corbett

*Northeastern State University, Tahlequah, Oklahoma*

*Willa Cather in Person: Interviews, Speeches, and Letters.* Edited by L. Brent Bohlke. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986. xxx + 202 pp. Illustrations, index. \$17.95.)

The late Brent Bohlke has provided a valuable service for readers of Willa Cather by collecting virtually all of the interviews and speeches and some of the letters of this major American writer. Most of the items included have appeared in print before, but they were widely scattered in time and place; now they are conveniently contained in a single three-part volume. As one might expect, the book also provides, as Bohlke himself says, "a more intimate and impromptu glimpse of the artist." It is not, however, Cather's unguarded, private voice that one hears but rather her less polished public one. Another benefit of this book is that it helps clear away a prevailing misconception: that Cather became a somewhat embittered recluse who tried to avoid publicity



altogether. "[I]n reality," Bohlke says, "Cather remained a public figure, but a more discriminating one in her middle and late years."

As editor, Bohlke has intruded very little upon the material he presents. Besides standardizing orthography and syntax in all cases but one (an interview so inept that it deserves reprinting verbatim), Bohlke's major contribution is to provide a concise historical/biographical headnote to each piece in the book. At least one of these headnotes contains a bit of misinformation, however: contrary to what Bohlke says, Mesa Verde was discovered long before 1882 and not by Richard and Al Wetherill.

Perhaps because it is by far the longest, the first section, "Interviews," is the richest. Although some of the details are erroneous (the errors occasionally perpetrated by Cather herself, by the way), one still finds here a good deal of pertinent information. Readers of this journal will be especially interested in how Cather defends her authority to write about the Southwest. It is interesting, too, to see how consistently Cather was perceived by her interviewers as a serious, gifted, unpretentious writer in control both of herself and her material.

The book does have limitations, but for the most part they stem from problems either inherent in the material itself or created by Cather herself. For instance, most of the so-called interviews are really little more than reports based upon interviews, just as most of the speeches are only second-hand accounts of what Willa Cather said, as she seldom spoke from a complete text that could be reprinted. Like the speeches, the number of letters here is meager but for different reasons: Cather destroyed as many of them as she could, and she inserted a clause in her will that prohibits the publication of and even quotation from any letters not already in print. Evidently, Bohlke did not find all of the previously published letters (see Marilyn Arnold's *Willa Cather: A Reference Guide*, 1986, for a few others), but it is unlikely that anyone could: the sources are often so obscure and unexpected.

As Bohlke says, "Willa Cather was a splendid letter writer," but these few samples merely "whet the appetite" for more. Until the hundreds of others are made available—if they ever are—Bohlke's book will be the closest anyone will come to a collection of the documents of Willa Cather, the person.

David Harrell  
*University of New Mexico*

*In the Footsteps of John Wesley Powell: An Album of Comparative Photographs of the Green and Colorado Rivers, 1871-72 and 1968.* By Hal G. Stephens and Eugene M. Shoemaker. (Boulder, Colorado: Johnson Books/The Powell Society, 1987. x + 286 pp. Illustrations, maps, tables, bibliography, index. \$34.95.)

*From Grassland to Glacier: The Natural History of Colorado.* By Cornelia Fleischer Mutel and John C. Emerick. (Boulder, Colorado: Johnson Books, 1984. x + 238 pp. Illustrations, maps, charts, bibliography, index. \$9.95 paper.)

*Grand Canyon National Park: Window on the River of Time.* By Tim McNulty. (San Rafael, California: Woodlands Press/Grand Canyon Natural History Association, 1986. 72 pp. Illustrations. \$16.95.)

The Colorado River simply exudes romance, tragedy, and history from its turbid and turbulent waters. It is the most talked about and written about river

in the American West. All of this attention underscores its importance. With its origins in the alpine regions of Wyoming and Colorado, it wends its way over two thousand miles, with seven states and two nations siphoning off its invaluable resource. Whatever salt-laden water remains enters the Gulf of California.

As the river curls its way in a generally southwestern direction, it has carved magnificent canyons, canyons that have inspired artists, writers, poets, and photographers. Certainly the photographer Pat O'Hara found inspiration and presents the stunning results in *Grand Canyon National Park: Window on the River of Time*, a photographic journey above and through one of the natural wonders of the world. The book is divided into four parts: an introduction (Footsteps in the Sand); the south rim (The High Desert's Edge); the river (Within Canyon Walls); and the north rim (Mountain Above the Gulf). Turning the pages one senses the immensity of the canyon, and yet, appreciates the diminutive aspects of nature through a close-up photo of an ice design, an Indian Paintbrush, or a Seco Lily.

The narrative to *Grand Canyon National Park* is written by Tim McNulty, described as a writer, poet, and conservationist. Should we expect that such a book will contain much history? No, the human past receives only a momentary glance, one page to be precise. The lack of concern with human activity underscores the fact that this book is impressionistic rather than specific. It is a nature book, and McNulty is comfortable in writing of natural history, describing the changing seasons and the changing moods of the Grand Canyon. Of course, the primary attraction is the photography, and McNulty's narrative is simply frosting for those who wish to partake. The lens tells the story, and it is what catches our eyes, our thoughts, and our emotions. The book is one of the "coffee table" productions that fill the book shelves of the national park visitor centers. It ought to sell well, but it surely will not be as enduring as that which it portrays.

Like *Grand Canyon National Park, In the Footsteps of John Wesley Powell* features photography. To be more precise, however, it is rephotography, comparing the new with the old. Hal G. Stephens and Eugene M. Shoemaker are two geologists captivated by John Wesley Powell's epic Colorado River adventure. In 1967 they proposed to the United States Geological Survey a rephotography project as part of the hundred-year commemoration of Powell's 1869 expedition. On that first watery gamble, of course, Powell and his men did not have the skill, equipment, or time to photograph. The great river canyons of the Green, the Yampa, and the Colorado rivers and the sculpted side canyons would be explored, recorded, and photographed in Powell's 1871-1872 expedition, a less romantic but more scientific undertaking. E. O. Beaman and John K. Hillers dramatized the journey with their photography. Considering the difficulties under which they worked, they produced an exceptional visual record. Stephens and Shoemaker identified 150 of Beaman's and Hillers' camera sites, and have reproduced 110 comparative sets in the book.

The result of their effort is mesmerizing. Comparative photography with a one-hundred-year lapse can not help but capture the viewer's interest. As you turn each page you are caught up in ecological detective work that ferrets out the change. Sometimes it is noticeable, sometimes subtle, and often almost

non-existent. Obviously, Flaming Gorge Reservoir and Glen Canyon Dam have wrought extreme change, making comparative photography impossible. Tamarisk, an exotic bush from eastern Europe, has invaded the river banks. However, as Arizona's ex-governor Bruce Babbitt states in the introduction, "the reassuring testimony of the century of time captured in this book is that the canyons of the Colorado are virtually eternal." The visible change, of course, is mostly man induced. Babbitt has it right when he warns that "the task for us . . . is to keep the works of man out of the process, leaving time and the river to their geological destiny" (p. viii).

Fascinating though *Footsteps* is, it could be more. The shortcoming of the book is its rather myopic view of the meaning of the Powell surveys. The authors use a wide-angle lens to capture the photographic past, but they feel no need for a broad approach to history. For them, the meaning of Powell's magnificent adventure is technical and scientific, not cultural. Both authors are geologists, and with the help of some twenty-five other geologists and scientists they document the geology of the photographs in an understandable and competent fashion. One cannot help but wonder, however, if a humanist or two might not have added perspective. Is it self-serving to suggest that this work would be much richer with the insight of a historian? Would the contribution of Wallace Stegner, William Goetzmann, or Roderick Nash have added breadth and meaning to the scientists' efforts? I think so. *In the Footsteps of John Wesley Powell* as produced is a fascinating exercise. A wider vision on the part of the authors could have produced a work of more lasting value.

It would be convenient to tie in *From Grassland to Glacier: The Natural History of Colorado* with the previously reviewed books, but it strains the imagination to do so. Cornelia F. Mutel's and John C. Emerick's manual has little in common, save the word Colorado and a common appreciation of nature. *From Grassland to Glacier* is intended as a guide to the natural history of the state of Colorado. In efficient fashion, the work examines the location, physical appearance, dominant plants and animals, ecological processes, and use by humans of each ecological zone or unit. In their decision to include human activity, Mutel and Emerick are free to comment on the effect of artificial channelization of streams, overgrazing by cattle, the spread of housing developments, logging, and off-road vehicles. Although they occasionally sound alarms, the authors' criticism of human activities is not severe, rather like a feather than a sledgehammer.

While *Grand Canyon National Park* is a picture book, and *In the Footsteps of John Wesley Powell* is a fascinating rephotography work, *From Grasslands to Glacier* is a layman's guide to Colorado natural history, meant to be slipped into the day pack to enhance a Sunday outing. Each book has its purpose, each will appeal to a different segment of the reading public, and each has made a contribution in its respective genre.

Robert W. Righter  
University of Texas, El Paso

*Bacon, Beans, and Galantines: Food and Foodways on the Western Mining Frontier.* By Joseph R. Conlin. (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1986. xii + 246 pp. Illustrations, tables, notes, bibliography, index. \$27.50.)

The study of Western American history has changed markedly in the last decade. "Real historians," as author Joseph Conlin characterizes them, have begun to explore areas formerly avoided as the domain of anthropologists, antiquarians, and sociologists. Material culture, food and drink, and social customs are slowly and deservedly being recognized as respectable areas of historical endeavor.

*Bacon, Beans, and Galantines* is a well-researched and interestingly written investigation of the diet of miners during the California Gold Rush. Beginning with the eastern American diet at mid-century, author Conlin argues that Americans were the best-fed people on earth. The average caloric intake was on the order of four thousand calories, much of it corn, potatoes, dairy products, and pork. Farmworkers and laborers burned up far more calories than the sedentary worker of today, who barely maintains his or her waistline on two thousand calories.

Having established the dietary norm for the period, Conlin reviews the suggestions on provisioning made by various emigrant guides. If one followed the advice in these guidebooks to the letter, Conlin found that the average forty-niner subsisted well off an ample three thousand to ten thousand calories per day of biscuits, bacon, beans, dried fruit, coffee, and tea. While some ill-prepared groups ran into trouble because they set off poorly provisioned, quite a few would-be miners ate better on the trail than in California.

Those taking the long sea route to California were less fortunate. Commercial passenger ships often skimmed on meals, making a bigger profit at the expense of their passengers' health and stomachs. The best-fed passengers were those who chartered their own ships and provisioned them independently.

Once in California it could be feast or famine, exorbitant or reasonable prices. Initially, prices were outrageous due to scarcity of food and the high rates charged by freighters taking cargo to the mining districts. Soon after a camp was established, however, competition grew, freight rates fell, and the quantity and variety of food increased. Well-to-do miners who were once happy with bacon and beans could now dine on oysters, salads, champagne, roasts, fish, and liqueurs. Larger camps featured lunchrooms, saloons with free lunches, and full-service restaurants—all detailed in this work.

An important contribution is Conlin's examination of various dietary diseases, notably scurvy, which is caused by a lack of vitamin C. Some historians have painted a picture of a frontier continually plagued by the disease. Researching the medical progression of the disease, Conlin discovered it to be slow acting and present only when there was a complete absence of vitamin C in the diet. Scurvy was not endemic on the trail because of the periodic availability of vegetables and fruit. In California, now a major citrus-growing region, the disease was more common because vegetables and fruit supplies were rare in remote areas and because of ignorance about what caused the disease.

*Bacon, Beans, and Galantines* is a pioneering work in American dietary history and deserves to be read by a wide audience in fields as diverse as history, anthropology, and dietetics.

Byron A. Johnson  
*Albuquerque Museum*

*Grand Illusions: History Painting in America.* By William H. Gerdtz and Mark Thistlethwaite. (Fort Worth: Amon Carter Museum, 1988. 182 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$21.95.)

What a splendid title for a much needed work on the neglected subject of history painting in America. This book, unfortunately does not live up to its billing. Jan Keene Muhler's foreword tells us why: "The genesis of these essays lies in a proposal, dating back to 1979, for an exhibition at the Amon Carter Museum on the subject of American history painting. After much preliminary work, the project was reluctantly abandoned because of the unavailability of many of the primary examples that would be crucial for its success."

So, what we have here are three essays relating to a phantom exhibition; a show that never was. Its centerpiece was clearly to have been major works by Emanuel Leutze, establishing, in the authors' view, his pre-eminence in the field of American history painting in the mid-1800s. Paintings by his forerunners and peers, and presumably some of his Teutonic colleagues, would have filled out the rest. The final essay of the book, "The Düsseldorf Connection," would have little relevance, otherwise.

During the period under discussion, history painting was considered the pinnacle of the visual arts. Its subject matter included scenes from literature, mythology and the Bible, as well as the more familiar depictions of historical events and important battles. The themes of these large scale narrative works were meant to be of an uplifting nature, to express national pride, to celebrate the heroic. They also served as vehicles to demonstrate wealth, power and prestige. It is no surprise that in the Old World the patrons for all of this were royalty, government, and church.

In the American colonies, however, for a painter, portraiture was the only game in town. Not until after Yorktown would the execution of such magnificent works become a remote possibility. Even then, these few dreamers were obliged to cross the seas for instruction in London or Paris. They returned with high hopes of patronage and appreciation. They found little of either.

Thus, we follow the progression from Copley and West to Leutze and Homer. The flow is enlivened throughout by quotes from the artists themselves, critics, and contemporary periodicals. The changing perceptions regarding the form are highlighted with engaging (and *uplifting*) tracts from journals such as *Godey's Lady's Book*, *Port Folio*, and *The Crayon*. Things are seldom dull.

Mark Thistlethwaite gives us a nice running account of the frenetic jockeying involved in the commissioning of the eight 12' x 18' history paintings for the Rotunda of the new Capitol. John Trumbull (who served as General

Washington's Aide-de-Camp) got the first four, only to have Virginia Representative John Randolph dismiss his "Declaration of Independence" as a "Shin-piece, . . . for, surely never was there, before, such a collection of legs submitted to the eyes of man." Conversely, Trumbull gives a pithy bit of advice to an aspiring young painter: "You had better learn to make shoes or dig potatoes than become a painter in this country." Considering the many problems in securing eight paintings, it is fitting that while Trumbull's grand display of tibia and fibula was finished in 1818, the last of them, William Powell's "Discovery of the Mississippi by De Soto," was not completed until 1847.

Conversely, the more modest form of genre painting (ordinary folk engaged in everyday tasks) soon outstripped its high falutin' rival in popularity. A feisty young America was looking at itself and liking what it saw. Never overly awed by the posturings of Europe, one suspects that they might have found Peal's "The Roman Daughter" (a buxom signorina breast feeding her pappy) a howler and Vanderlyn's *Marius Amidst the Ruins of Carthage* a bore. The French loved *Marius*, Napoleon wanted to buy it, but the painting did Vanderlyn little good in his subsequent lobbying for a Rotunda panel. It took him over thirty years to nail a commission. Still, the authors assure us, history painters refused to throw in their smocks; they daubed ever onward. Or, at least (according to Thistlethwaite) until 1883, when, presumably history painting died, not with a bang, but with a wimpish competition in Philadelphia. William Gerds pulls the plug at an even earlier date. In the context of the show-that-never-was, this might have sluiced by. In a book sub-titled *History Painting in America?* I don't think so.

This sudden demise of the very art form under discussion does serve a purpose. It allows Thistlethwaite to make the statement, "Whenever history painting is considered, surely the one image that most immediately comes to mind is Emanuel Leutze's . . . 'Washington Crossing the Delaware.'" This may well have been true if this prickly of all painting forms had given up the ghost before Anheuser-Busch's frontal assault on the collective American consciousness: "Custer's Last Fight." Surely the heady combination of patriotism and serious guzzling rose to new heights; the beer barons made advertising history; the Custer myth went into orbit. When it comes to the Ultimate American Icon, I think Mark might just have the wrong George.

It is to the authors' credit that while they cover much of the same ground, they seldom tread on each other's toes. For the most part, their views are mutually enhancing. Their efforts provide us with a vocabulary helpful in sorting out the vagaries of this difficult art form. They are to be commended, too, for giving us a brief glimpse into the passionate struggle of these early painters who dreamed on a grand scale.

Eric von Schmidt  
Westport, Connecticut

Signed, numbered prints & art posters,  
of Eric von Schmidt's masterly  
portrayals of America's Past.

# The Storming of the ALAMO

This epic painting of the fateful moment  
in Texas history, displayed at San Antonio's  
Witte Museum, is now available in a signed  
& numbered edition. Art posters of details,  
signed & otherwise, can also be ordered.

# HERE FELL CUSTER

The definitive version of the Battle of the  
Little Big Horn is also offered for the first  
time. Both paintings originally graced the  
pages of Smithsonian Magazine.



Minglewood Press proudly presents a series  
of art posters celebrating renowned artist-  
illustrator Harold von Schmidt's splendid &  
enduring images of the Old West.



For further information, send for free color  
brochure to Minglewood Press, PO Box 368  
Westport, CT, 06880. Or call (203) 454-3758

## Book Notes

---

*Carrizozo Story*. By Johnson S. Stearns. (Carrizozo, New Mexico: Johnson S. Stearns, 1987. 131 pp. Illustrations. \$10.00 paper.) Copies may be obtained from the author at Post Office Drawer 159, Carrizozo, New Mexico 88301.

*Eldorado or Adventures in the Path of Empire*. By Bayard Taylor. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988. xxvii + 375 pp. Illustrations, notes, appendix. \$9.95 paper.) Reprint of the 1949 Knopf edition, with an introduction by Robert Class Cleland.

*Colorado River Country*. By David Lavender. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988. xii + 238 pp. Illustrations, map, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. \$11.95 paper.) Reprint of the 1982 edition.

*High Sierra Country*. By Oscar Lewis. (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1988. ix + 291 pp. Index. \$8.95 paper.) Reprint of the 1955 edition.

*Nevadans*. By Rollan Melton. (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1988. xviii + 275 pp. Illustrations, appendix, index. \$8.95.) Foreword by Robert Laxalt and portraits by Christine Stetter.

*Views of Texas 1852–1856: Watercolors by Sarah Ann Lille Hardinge*. By Ron Tyler. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988. 76 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$19.95 paper.)



*Ethnicity & Assimilation: Blacks, Chinese, Filipinos, Japanese, Koreans, Mexicans, Vietnamese, and Whites.* By Robert M. Jiobu. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988. xiv + 269 pp. Charts, tables, notes, bibliography, index. \$48.50 cloth, \$16.95 paper.)

*Dreamers & Defenders: American Conservationists.* By Douglas H. Strong. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988. x + 295 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$26.95 cloth, \$9.95 paper.) Reprint of the 1971 edition.

*Clarence King: A Biography.* By Thurman Wilkins. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989. xiii + 524 pp. Illustrations, map, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 cloth, \$16.95 paper.) Revised and enlarged edition of the 1958 Macmillan publication.

*The Trampling Herd: The Story of the Cattle Range in America.* By Paul I. Wellman. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988. 433 pp. Illustrations, map, index. \$10.95 paper.) Reprint of the 1939 edition.

*Pony Trails in Wyoming: Hoofprints of a Cowboy and U.S. Ranger.* By John K. Rollinson. Edited by E. A. Brininstool. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988. 425 pp. Illustrations, map, index. \$29.95 cloth, \$11.95 paper.) Reprint of the 1941 edition.

*A Tenderfoot Bride: Tales from an Old Ranch.* By Clarice E. Richards. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988. 226 pp. Illustrations. \$18.95 cloth, \$6.95 paper.) Reprint of the 1920 edition with an introduction by Maxine Benson.

*The Bullwhacker: Adventures of a Frontier Freighter.* By William Francis Hooker. Edited by Howard R. Driggs. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988. xxi + 167 pp. Illustrations. \$5.95 paper.) Reprint of the 1924 edition, with a new introduction by David Dary.

*Indians, Infants and Infantry: Andrew and Elizabeth Burt on the Frontier.* By Merrill J. Mattes. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988. v + 304 pp. Illustrations, map, notes, index. \$8.95 paper.) Reprint of the 1960 edition.

*Gunner Jingo's Jubilee.* By Thomas Bland Strange. (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1988. xix + 546 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes. \$14.95 paper.) Military memoir of the Canadian North West Rebellion, originally published in 1893.

*Family Farming: A New Economic Vision.* By Marty Strange. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988. xi + 311 pp. Charts, tables, bibliography, index. \$18.95.)

*The Last Chance Canal Company.* By Max R. McCarthy. (Provo, Utah: Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, Brigham Young University, 1987. ix + 131 pp. Illustrations, maps, table, notes, bibliography. \$6.95 paper.)

*Instant Cities: Urbanization and the Rise of San Francisco and Denver.* By Gunther Barth. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988. xxix + 310 pp. Maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$12.95 paper.) Reprint of the 1975 edition, with a new preface by the author.

*Extending the Rafters: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Iroquoian Studies.* Edited by Michael K. Foster, Jack Campisi, and Marianne Mithun. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984. xvi + 422 pp. Illustrations, maps, charts, tables, notes, bibliography, index. \$56.50 cloth, \$19.95 paper.)

*Wild Rice and the Ojibway People.* By Thomas Vennum, Jr. (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1988. ix + 357 pp. Illustrations, map, chart, tables, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 cloth, \$14.95 paper.)

*Hasinai: A Traditional History of the Caddo Confederacy.* By Vynola Beaver Newkumet and Howard L. Meredith. (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1988. xvi + 144 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$16.95.)

*To Honor the Crow People: Crow Indian Art From the Goelet and Edith Gallatin Collection of American Indian Art.* Edited by Peter J. Powell. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988. 48 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography. \$18.95 paper.)

*Yellow Sun, Bright Sky: The Indian Country Stories of Oliver La Farge.* Edited by David L. Caffey. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988. 212 pp. Notes. \$22.50 cloth, \$12.95 paper.)

*Wind from an Enemy Sky.* By D'Arcy McNickle. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988. 265 pp. Notes. \$9.95 paper.) Reprint of the 1978 edition, with an afterword by Louis Owens.

*Mezcal.* By Charles Bowden. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1988. xi + 152 pp. Illustrations, \$19.95.)

**WESTERN AMERICANA**

CUSTER  
OUTLAWS  
CATTLE  
INDIANS

**T.A. SWINFORD**

BOOKSELLER

P.O. BOX 93, PARIS, ILLINOIS 61944  
PHONE (217) 465-5182



*Fifteen-year  
index now  
available for  
volumes 56-60,  
1971-1985*

**NEW MEXICO HISTORICAL REVIEW**

Index—four volumes—\$25.00 a set  
\$7.00 for individual indexes

I 1926-1940	III 1956-1970
II 1941-1956	IV 1970-1985

Add 20 percent to all orders for shipping. Please do not send cash. Make check or money order payable to:

Printed Quarterly

Individual \$15.00 per year (Overseas \$19.00)
Institutions \$18.00 per year (Overseas \$23.00)

*New Mexico Historical Review*  
1013 Mesa Vista Hall  
University of New Mexico  
Albuquerque, NM 87131  
(505) 277-5839

## News Notes

---

John P. Wilson, professional consultant in historical and archaeological research, has received the Gilberto Espinosa Prize for the best article appearing in volume 63 of the *New Mexico Historical Review*. Wilson's article, "How the Settlers Farmed: Hispanic Villages and Irrigation Systems in Early Sierra County, 1850-1900," appeared in the October 1988 issue.

Wilson, who lives in Las Cruces, holds a doctorate in anthropology from Harvard University and is author of two books, including his most recent work, *Merchants, Guns, and Money: The Saga of Lincoln County and Its Wars*, which won the Gaspar Perez de Villagra Award from the Historical Society of New Mexico.

Gilberto Espinosa, researcher, writer, well-known New Mexico lawyer, and strong supporter of New Mexico history, served as a consultant to this magazine for many years. Following his death in 1983, Mr. Espinosa's family and friends established the award in his honor. This is the sixth year for the award, which includes a \$100 prize. Previous winners are John O. Baxter, Michael C. Meyer, Robert M. Utle, Jake Spidle, and Robert A. Trennert.

Also receiving awards in connection with New Mexico history were Ira G. Clark, author of *Water in New Mexico*, and Lee Priestley, author of *Shalam: Utopia on the Rio Grande*. Clark and Priestley received

the Pasajero Del Camino Real Awards from the Doña Ana County Historical Society at the society's annual banquet in January.

New Mexico was well represented at the March 18 Western Heritage Awards ceremony at the National Cowboy Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City. Singer Michael Martin Murphey of Taos performed flawlessly as master of ceremonies at the lavish, black-tie affair. A special award for artistic achievement went to famed Santa Clara Pueblo potter Margaret Tafoya. Her pottery, as well as pieces by Nampeyo, Maria Martinez, Nathan Youngblood, and other Pueblo potters, was featured in the "Vessels of Grace" exhibit that opened in the museum gallery preceding the awards banquet. Robert M. Utley of Santa Fe received the Wrangler Award for best nonfiction book for his *Cavalier in Buckskin: George Armstrong Custer and the Western Military Frontier*, the premier volume in the ambitious "Western Biographies" series published by the University of Oklahoma Press and edited by University of New Mexico history professor Richard W. Etulain. The winner in the theatrical motion picture category was *Young Guns*, the cinematic saga of Billy the Kid and the Lincoln County War filmed in and around Cerillos. Paul Andrew Hutton, editor of this journal, served as a judge in the nonfiction category and as a presenter during the ceremonies.

Other winners included Lois and Jerry Jacka for best art book for their *Beyond Tradition: Contemporary Indian Art and Its Evolution*; Glendon Swarthout for best fiction for his novel *The Homesman*; E. N. Coons for best magazine article for "Blizzard," in *American Heritage*; Kim Shelton for best factual television for *Cowboy Poets*; and Frances G. Turnbo for best juvenile book for *Stay Put, Robbie McAmis*. Conrad Kohrs Warren of Montana and Badger Clark of South Dakota were inducted into the Hall of Great Westerners while Randolph Scott was inducted into the Hall of Western Performers. For information on the museum, its publications and programs, write Marcia Preston, Director of Public Relations, National Cowboy Hall of Fame, 1700 Northeast 63rd Street, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73111, or call (405) 478-2250.

A special exhibit on Miguel Antonio Otero, New Mexico's only Hispanic territorial governor, has opened at the University of New Mexico's Maxwell Museum of Anthropology. The exhibit, which examines Otero's life, career, and times, opened in February and will continue through February 1990. Many of the artifacts used in the exhibit, drawn from Otero's private collection, were donated to the university in 1941. Cindy Secor-Welsh, historian, is curator for the exhibit, and Marian Rodee of the Maxwell Museum is associate curator.

The New Mexico Endowment for the Humanities elected four new

---

members to its board of directors last fall. They are: Adrian Bustamante, division head for arts and sciences and instructor in anthropology and ethnohistory at Santa Fe Community College; Thomas E. Chavez, director of the Palace of the Governors in Santa Fe; Nasario Garcia, dean of the school of liberal and fine arts in New Mexico Highlands University at Las Vegas; and David Montejano, associate professor of sociology in the University of New Mexico. Bustamante and Chavez also serve on the editorial board of this magazine.

Two people connected with the University of New Mexico have received gift subscriptions to the *New Mexico Historical Review*. Dorothy Parker, visiting professor in history, received a gift subscription through the local chapter of Phi Alpha Theta, the history honor society. David Rudeen, senior research scientist at the university's engineering research institute, also won a subscription through his participation in the university's 1988 United Way campaign.

Michael F. Weber, former director of the Arizona Historical Society Museum in Tucson, has been named executive director of the Arizona Historical Society. Weber, who holds a doctorate in history from the University of New Mexico, was associate director and chief of the History Bureau at the Museum of New Mexico for many years and served as director of the Palace of the Governors in Santa Fe before moving to Tucson. He replaces James E. Moss, who resigned in April 1988.

A number of symposiums and conferences relating to history have been scheduled this year including a special Santa Fe Trail Symposium sponsored by the Santa Fe Trail Association, to be held September 28 to October 1, in Santa Fe and Las Vegas. The symposium program includes speakers, panels, special exhibits, receptions, and trail tours. Former Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall will be the keynote speaker. For information, contact Adrian Bustamante, care of the Santa Fe Trail Association, P.O. Box 4187, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501.

The Buffalo Bill Historical Center in Cody, Wyoming, will hold its tenth annual Summer Institute in Western American Studies June 12 to July 7. Theme for the institute this year is "Bringing the West into the Twentieth Century." Pulitzer Prize-winning historian William H. Goetzmann will offer a course on western art and western myth. Other courses include David Leavengood on western architecture, Karal Ann Marling on the cowboy in modern times, and Donald L. Parman on western Indians in the twentieth century. Tuition is \$150 per course and participants may earn college credit. Write Lillian Turner, program

coordinator, Buffalo Bill Historical Center, P.O. Box 1000, Cody, Wyoming 83414.

A grand dedication of the reconstructed Fort Union Trading Post near Williston, North Dakota, will be held August 12–13. The \$4 million reconstruction of Fort Union, the key fur trade center on the Upper Missouri River, has long been a dream for fur trade historians, buffs, and the local community. The impressive Bourgeois House already has been finished, and the fort's walls, gates, bastions, and trade house are to be completed by the summer dedication. For information on the dedication and on how to join the "Friends of Fort Union," write Paul Hedren, Superintendent, Fort Union Trading Post, Buford Route, Williston, North Dakota 58801.

Not enough of the nation's historic landmarks commemorate women's experiences and contributions to United States history, and several historical organizations want to do something about it. The National Park Service, the Organization of American Historians, and the National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History have initiated a \$60,000 project to help nominate nationally significant sites associated with women's history. The project will include preparation of theme study essays that integrate the tangible resources of women's past with recent scholarship on women's history.

The University of New Mexico will benefit from preservation/conservation awards made by the Albuquerque Community Foundation for 1988. A \$500 award went to the American Institute of Architects to acquire Historic American Buildings Survey drawings for the John Gaw Meem Archive at Zimmerman Library, while the Planning Research Institute in the university's School of Architecture and Planning received \$1,300 to present a symposium on Pueblo Style architecture. The Albuquerque Community Foundation also awarded the Historic Mora Valley Foundation \$2,000 toward the Cleveland Roller Mill Interpretive Exhibition, and Nob Hill Main Street, Inc., received \$500 for design review of proposed facade rehabilitations in the Nob Hill district.

The City of Albuquerque, meanwhile, is considering how to use the Santa Barbara School building, purchased from Albuquerque Public Schools recently. The Mission Revival Style school, one of the two oldest remaining school buildings in Bernalillo County, was purchased with Community Development Block Grant money.

After having to dismantle the San Lorenzo Church to correct structural problems, the Picuris Pueblo has begun to reassemble the church

building. Using carefully preserved measurements and drawings to keep the work faithful to the original structure, the Picuris are rebuilding the church to better withstand drainage problems.

An appeal is being made on behalf of the Santa Barbara Cemetery in Albuquerque to help preserve the historic site from deterioration and vandalism. The Archdiocese of Santa Fe, the Albuquerque Historical Society, and the New Mexico Genealogical Society hope to enlist interest in saving the cemetery, founded in 1869. For information, contact Friends of Santa Barbara Cemetery, P.O. Box 80581, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87198, or call 266-6490 or 296-3184.

Members of the Ramah Navajo community in western New Mexico have begun interviewing local elders for an oral history project they hope will lead to establishing a community archive. The Ramah Navajo Community Advisory Committee is seeking \$40,000 for an eighteen-month planning grant in connection with the project. Goals include preserving the culture and history of the Ramah Navajo community, creation of a historical archive, and strengthening community concern for land and water rights. For information, write Yin-May Lee at Pine Hill School, CPO Drawer F, Pine Hill, New Mexico 87321, or call (505) 775-3253.

The university museum at Western New Mexico in Silver City will become a gateway station and environmental education center for the Gila National Forest and Gila Wilderness. A \$10,000 grant from the U.S. Forest Service made the museum addition possible.

The Southwest Hispanic Research Institute has established an office in Taos to help support field research in the Taos area. The institute, an interdisciplinary program affiliated with the University of New Mexico, is headed by Jose Rivera. Sylvia Rodrigues will head the Taos office.

Please note that Charles D. Biebel's book, *Making the Most of It: Public Works in Albuquerque during the Great Depression, 1929-1942*, which was reviewed in the January issue, is available in paperback only at \$7.95, from the Albuquerque Museum, P.O. Box 1293, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87103.