



The DENVER WESTERNERS
ROUNDUP

November - December 2021



Courtesy Smithsonian Institution

*James Beckwourth, Mountain Man,
Fur Trader and Explorer*

Tall Land Breeds Tall Tales
and
Grasslands Free to All
by Dabney Collins



Courtesy of the Author

Our Author

The author of our issue this month is Dabney Otis Collins. He was born and reared on a cotton plantation near Demopolis, Alabama. In 1916 he graduated with a MS degree in architecture, but ill health forced him to give up his profession and move to a high, dry climate. He chose Colorado and to recover his health he worked as a ranch hand near Julesburg and soon began to get the feel of the big open plains of far-away horizons. After retirement from a career as editor of a *National Fur News*, he began to write stories. Doc Collins, as he was known to his fellow Posse members, joined the Denver Westerners in 1946. He served as *Brand Book* editor and sheriff. He also had articles published in the *Roundup* in 1963 and 1977. Dabney passed away in 1983 at the age of 93.

THE DENVER WESTERNERS ROUNDUP

VOL. LXXVII NO. 6



November- December 2021

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The *Roundup* (ISSN 2078-7970) is published bi-monthly by the Denver Posse of Westerners, Inc., founded Jan. 25, 1945. Subscription is included with payment of the current membership fee of \$35 per year due on January 1. Content is based on oral presentations given at monthly Westerners meetings. Submission of a manuscript is encouraged, but publication cannot be guaranteed. Submissions must be in digital format and must follow guidelines provided by the Westerners. All submissions are subject to revision and/or correction at the editor's discretion. Every effort is made to ensure accuracy of content but such accuracy is the ultimate responsibility of the author.

Periodical postage is paid at Denver, CO. Printed by Unique Litho, Denver, CO.

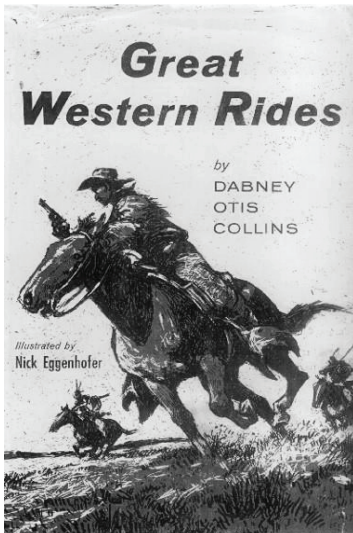
QUESTIONS? Should you have any questions concerning the *Roundup* or the Denver Westerners, please email Roger Dudley at rogdud@comcast.net.

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For this last issue of the year we have chosen to publish some pieces from one of our first members of the Denver Westerners. This is our chance to present a sampling of writing from a prolific writer, Dabney Collins. So much of what the first years of the *Roundup* consisted is found within the breadth of writer that Dabney was. Included in this issue are pieces of historic fiction as well as the historic presentations that have been our focus for most of our existence. The *Roundup* of earlier years included poetry and a touch of historic fiction as it found its purpose as both a publication for members and non-members. The *Roundup* has always been a way for members to have their work published, although Dabney Collins was one that did not need an outlet for his writing.

Dabney completed 225 to 300 short stories and historical articles. Many appeared in Western magazines such as *Adventure*, *American West*, *Colorado Magazine*, *Denver Post Empire*, *Catholic Digest* and *Colorado Outdoors*. Some were historic fiction, some were straight history. One piece from *Argosy* was later published as a forty-eight-page booklet, *The Hanging of Jack Slade*. This booklet also includes a photo of a Charles Russell watercolor of Jack Slade owned by renowned Denver Westerner Fred Rosenstock.

Dabney also wrote two books of essays, *Great Western Rides* in 1961 and *Land of Tall Skies* in 1970. *Great Western Rides* tells the



Courtesy David Emrich
Great Western Rides,
published in 1961

exciting, authentic detail emergency rides for high stakes. The voices cover various phases of Western history—for trappers, cattle, railroads, Indian wars, pony express, vigilantes. Stories range from the great ride of Marcus Whitman from the Northwest to the Southwest and on to Washington; Tome Fitzpatrick; the boy caught in the Johnson County War; Portugee Phillips, John C. Fremont; Ray Morley.

In this issue we have included an excerpt from one of the articles in *Land of Tall Skies*, but following here first is an entertaining, well-researched, yet fabricated account for the most part of the lighter side of the Pike's Peak Gold Rush in 1858. It was written, perhaps in 1946, for publication in the *Roundup*, but for unknown reasons it was never published. So, sixty-five years after it was written, here is *Tall Land Breads Tall Tales*.



Courtesy David Emrich
*This Booklet was Published
in 1963*

Tall Land Breeds Tall Tales

By Dabney Otis Collins

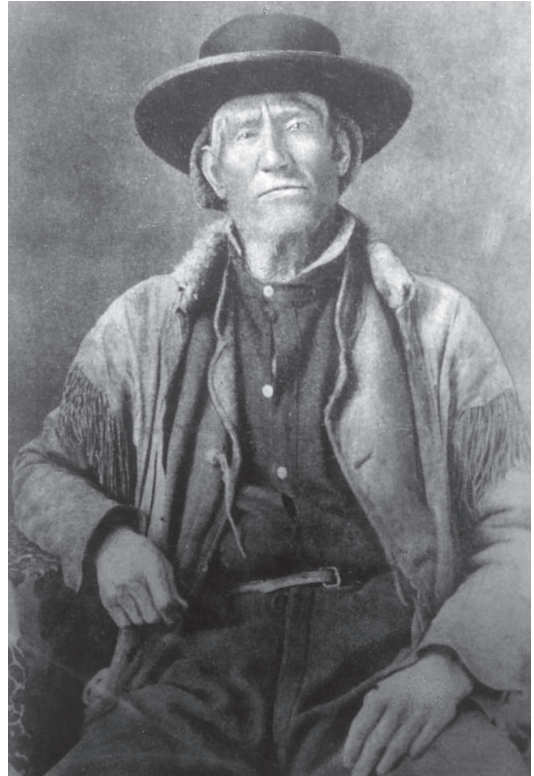
As he entered the frontier west, a man's first impression was a vast sea of grass reaching to far-distant horizons. He had the feeling that, on a clear day, he could see forever. Add to this new-found power of sight, there was the strangeness of a country where a river might be half a mile wide and half a foot deep. It was where you dug for firewood (sagebrush and mesquite roots) and where the windmills climbed for water, and where sight was the most precious of man's six senses.

Seeing a tall, orange-red, chimney-like object standing alone in the level expanse of emptiness, a trapper might take a notion to find out what it was. Maybe, inside it or around it, he could dig up all sorts of Injun doin's: silver belts, turquoise bracelets, a war bonnet, arrows and things left there by the medicine man. It was just a short piece away, a mile or so.

Off he started. Appearing not to have come any nearer, he walked faster. But no matter how fast he walked, he seemed to be standing still. Faster, he strode the buffalo grass carpet. The chimney-shaped rock remained just as far away. Plodding steadily toward it, the trapper flung a glance backward. He caught a glimpse of the wagon train as it disappeared over a ridge. He had come four or five miles, he thought, and the orange-red butte was as far away as ever. He turned back.

In his telling of it, the chimney-shaped rock was about six miles distant when first seen, increasing to ten, fifteen, twenty. Finally, it became another lost gold mine whose treasure is still untouched.

The hunter for a party of beaver trappers might be trailing a herd of antelope. As he approached within shooting range of his Hawken .50, the band of pronghorns suddenly veered to the right at top speed. They had caught the warning signal from the movements of the patch of white on the rump of an antelope topping a hill half a mile away.



Courtesy WikiCommons

Bridger was part of the Second Generation of American Mountain Men and Pathfinders that followed the Lewis and Clark Expedition

Long ago, the Plains Indians had learned that the movements of their hands and arms were visible at far greater distances than their voices could be heard. So, the sign language evolved as a substitute for speech—to each tribe its own.

To the frontiersmen, strangers in strange surroundings, it was as if nature had planned this land of tall peaks and tall skies as a breeding place for tall tales. As it happened, this was welcomed by the mountain men listening to them around their campfires. It eased their loneliness, drew them closer together. Some of them were good storytellers. Though he may have heard Jim Bridger tell about the time he became lost in a petrified forest, somewhere up in the Dakotas, a dozen times or more, it was always good to hear it again. Let's listen to Old Gave, as he was called.

"Them trees was just like any other trees, 'cept they was made of stone. A whole woods full of stone trees, and scattered about on the ground. And every tree, seems like, was chock full of little birds. Thar' I sat on a stump, all day and into the night listening to them petrified birds singing their petrified songs."

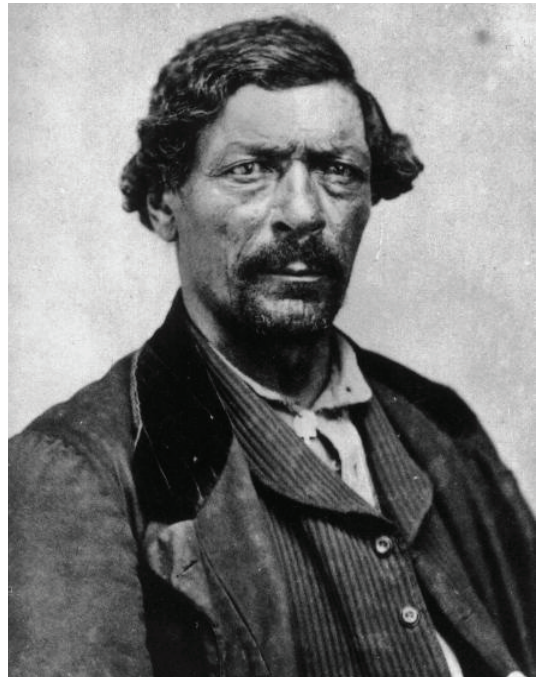
When the laughter subsided, someone asked the runaway mulatto slave, James Beckwourth, if that was the forest in which he caught a bull buffalo in his beaver trap.

"That ain't nothin' to laugh about," Beckwourth rebuked his questioner sternly. "I did ketch that bull in my trap." He turned to Bridger. "Ain't that right, Gave? You was there. You seen it happen."

"I sure did. And this time, you don't need to add nothin' to it."

As Beckwourth told it, he and Bridger were riding their trap lines along the bank of a creek that ran into the Madison River. The sun was just coming up through the jackpines that combed the ridge. Ahead of them, an old bull buffalo moved toward the creek. Taking the easiest way to the water, he went down the beaver slide. Beckwourth had set a trap at the foot of this slide. To scare the thousand-pound beast, he dug in his spurs. Too late.

He was met with a tremendous splashing. The bull had sprung the trap and was fighting desperately to get it off his foot. He climbed the bank, dragging both the trap and the float stick. Somehow, he kicked the trap free, but it landed on one of his horns. To Beckwourth's streams of profanity and Bridger's gales of laughter, off the old bull raced, the beaver trap hanging to one horn, the float stick to the other.



Courtesy WikiCommons

James Beckwourth was born into Slavery in Virginia. Freed by his Father and apprenticed to a Blacksmith, he later moved to the American West

Though no one doubted his courage, his listeners had ample reason to question many of Beckwourth's derring-do exploits. Such, for example, his killing and scalping fifty-five Cheyennes in a single fight.

Adopted into the Crow tribe, with whom he lived for about ten years, his feats as a warrior and horse stealer earned him the honor of becoming the head chief. He was a founder of Pueblo, Colorado, a street and a church in Denver were named for him. Under the spell of his flamboyant spirit, however, fact had a way of melding into a skyrocketry of fiction, fable and myth.

In 1853 a wandering journalist, Thomas D. Banner, came across Jim Beckwourth in California. To him, the aging mountain man related his life story. It was published by Harpers in 1856 as *The Life and Adventures of James P. Beckwourth, Mountaineer, Scout and Pioneer, and Chief of the Crow Nation of Indians*.

A camp of old-time mountain men, floating their sticks in the California gold diggings, heard about the book. Some may have known Beckwourth personally; doubtless all had heard of him. A collection was taken up, an emissary sent to San Francisco for a copy of the book. Unable to find it, he bought a Bible.

It was an appropriate choice. The gold-bearing streams had been all but emptied of their treasure. Following the Black Friday and express company failures in San Francisco, exposure of corruption in high places was being avenged by the Vigilance Committee. In times like these, a man needed something to restore his faith in humans.

That night, when the trappers were all gathered round the campfire, their emissary opened the Book at the chapter on Samson. By the time he had come to the passage telling how Samson tied firebrands to the tails of three hundred foxes and turned them loose in the Philistine cornfields, one among the rapt listeners had had it.

"Thar," he broke in, getting to his feet. "I'd know that for one of Jim Beckwourth's lies anywhar."

Though fictional, this anecdote points up Hiram Martin Chittenden's criticism of the autobiography: "It is idle to treat as reliable history the ingenious collection of heroic achievements," wrote the famed chronicler of the fur trade of the West. "There is probably not a single statement in it that is correct as given."

At the annual prairie carnival called rendezvous, held this year on Ham's Fork of Green River, the talk got around to various experiences of what mountain men had eaten to keep from starving.

Jim Bridger said a man needn't ever get hungry as long as he could knock a rattle-



Courtesy WikiCommons

Joe Meek joined William Sublette and the Rocky Mountain Fur Company at age eighteen and roamed the Rocky Mountains

snake in the head with his whipping stick. [a strip of leather about five feet long and one inch thick but with one end fastened to a stiff handle.] Rattlers, fried or in soup, were good doin's. Joe Meek told of the time he had been lost in the Nevada desert and hadn't eaten for two or three days. He was about gone under when he came upon a big ant hill. He rolled up his sleeves, stuck his hands in the hill, and let the ants swarm up his arms, then licked them off. "They set right well on my stummick," Joe said, "after they quit crawlin' round."

Beckwourth was there that night. Jim had already told about how he ran ninety-five miles in one day, with a pack of Cheyennes right behind him. The big mulatto agreed with Bridger that soup was best for a starving man, but that rattler soup couldn't shine against Mormon cricket soup, especially when it had a sprinkling of baby tarantulas.

Kit Carson spoke up. "I recon' I've eat about everything that flies, crawls or walks, 'cept my own kind," the mountain man said. "But accordin' to the way my stick floats, doin' without water is even worse than starvin' to death." Laying a coal in his pipe, he told about the time he and Ewing Young were coming back from California and ran out of water crossing the Arizona desert.

They killed their pack mules and drank their blood. When that was gone, they borrowed a little more time by doing the same thing to their riding horses. Still no water in sight. Nothing but quivering white sand and cloudless blue sky. Plodding across the blazing sand, Kit and Ewing couldn't even spit cotton.

Resting in a handkerchief-sized patch of shade from a creosote bush one day, they saw about a dozen Apaches hoofing it across the desert. The Indians were leading two mules and a burro. These animals looked like they had big ropes wound round their bodies.

Ewing Young shook his head. "Now what in tarnation can that be?"

"Water," answered Kit.

"Water?" Ewing's cracked lips wouldn't let him laugh. He gave Kit a long, slow look and shook his head. "Loco," he muttered.

"Loco, hell. I said, water. Them be guts wrapped round them mules and that burro. And the guts be full of water, or I don't know Apaches."

Ewing wanted to believe him badly enough, but he couldn't. The heat had gone to Kit's head. But that night they crept up on the Apache camp. Laying low, they saw each Indian take a drink from the gut wound round one of the mules, then bed down.



Courtesy Wikimedia Commons

Kit Carson and his favorite horse, Apache, from The Life and Adventures of Kit Carson, the Nestor of the Rocky Mountains (1858)

The two mountain men waited, their chalk-dry throats seeming to be tied in knots. At last, the Apaches went to sleep. Kit and Ewing cat-footed toward the mules. But they didn't like the way the mules were looking at them, so they went to the burro who had his eyes shut, as if asleep.

Kit untied the leather strap from the end of the gut strapped around the stocky little burro, stuck it in his mouth and took a pull. The first swallow was like a red-hot poker shoved down his throat, the second lifted his hair by the roots and half-popped out his eyes. He stopped for breath and Ewing took over. Then it was Kit's turn. All of a sudden, the home-brewed mescal grabbed hold of them. They let out a whoop like a thousand Comanches on the warpath. The Apaches jumped out of their blankets and were gone.

"The way them varmints lit out," Kit said, "I don't b'lieve they stopped this side of the Mexican Border. So me and Ewing went on to Santy Fee with the two water mules."

"What happened to the mescal burro?" asked Joe Meek.

"Oh, him?" Kit tapped his pipe against his moccasin heel. "Somehow or 'nother that jackass got ahold of that gut and drained her dry. Last time we saw him, he was kickin' over a sand dune big as a house."

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This excerpt was extracted from an essay in his book, *Land of Tall Skies*, copyright by the author in 1977. The second page of the book reads, “To the Denver Posse of the Westerners and to all who have an interest in the history and romance of the Old West.”

Grasslands Free to All

By Dabney Otis Collins

Free land for the millions!

On May 20, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed into law a bill that was to bring home for a new life of freedom and independence, but oftentimes cruel defeat, to the settlers of the West. Under the Homestead Act, some two million American families created farms out of almost three-hundred-million acres of free land. It permitted every American citizen, age twenty-one and over, and any person who had declared intent to become a citizen, to file claim to one quarter-section (160 acres), of unappropriated Government land.

To receive title to the homestead, the settler was given two choices. He could pay \$1.25 an acres after six months residence, or “prove up” by living on the claim five years, in which case he paid nothing. There was a frontier saying that the United States paid nothing. There was a frontier saying that the United State Government was betting the homesteader a 160 acres of land that he could not last out the six months, to say nothing of making a living on it for five long years.

The gamble had as many losers as winners. For every claim proved up, there was a relinquishment. For every family that had wrested a livelihood from the virgin grasslands, there was another forsaking the cramped confines of dugout or tar paper shack, returning home with broken dreams.

These were the raw beginnings. The weak relinquished their claims. The strong remained and worked on the land and bult on it, toward a future that seemed as unlimited as the horizon. But, as in the beginning, the cattle interests were yet to be contested. It was to be a long and bitter fight,

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Poster Promoting the Purchase of Land

the little man against the big man. The homesteader, who filed legally on Government land against the cattle baron, who made his own laws.

As early as 1859, immediately following the discovery of gold in Colorado, herds of Texas longhorns were pointed toward Denver. The Dawson and Goodnight trail began in Indian Territory. From Kansas, it followed the north side of the Arkansas River to Pueblo, thence to the headwaters of Squirrel Creek and northwest to Cherry Creek and Denver City. The ready market for beef brought more Texas trail herds to the booming gold diggings.

The end of the Civil War gave birth to the era of the big cattleman. Texas was filled to overflowing with longhorns, people up north were hungry for beef. The Texas trail drives began, and names like the Chisholm Trail, Abilene, Dodge City, longhorn, chuckwagon and cowboy became a part of our language. If homestead claims in Missouri and Kansas stood in the way of trail herds, there was not much the sodbusters could do about it—until their cattle began to die of a strange fever.

The sickness was caused from infection by ticks carried on longhorn cattle. Spanish tick fever, virulent in summer and fall. In 1867 the legislatures of Missouri and Kansas enacted quarantine laws against Texas herds carrying the disease. The law was enforced by shotguns in the hands of angry settlers. As a consequence, cattle drives were pushed over into Colorado Territory, largely unsettled at this time. The eastern third of the Colorado High Plains became a corridor to northern shipping points and cattle ranges.

The first Texas herd to make trail on the corridor, to Wyoming, was driven by John W. Iliff, “Cattle King of the Plains.” Colorful, but short-lived Trail City, on the Kansas-Colorado boundary line, and Lamar were important cow towns.

Trail City was an offspring of the National Cattle Trail. The site is on US 50, to the south, six miles east of Holly, in the southeastern corner of the state. There were some three-quarters of a million head of longhorn cattle in Texas ready for the northern drives. But all the old trails were closed. Homesteaders, barbed wire, and laws forbidding the entry of tick-infested cattle had forced the main line of the Texas cattle trail westward from the Missouri border. The cattle market had gradually shifted from Westport to Abilene, then to Ellsworth and, lastly, to Dodge City. Then, in 1883, had come the quarantine law against Texas cattle entering the state of Kansas.



Courtesy National Archives 134. (69-N-13606C)

Townsend/Penwell Family on their way to Montana in 1866

Added to these troubles, stockmen north of the Red River were opposed to southern Texas cattle being driven through their range lands. In Colorado, the Bent County Cattle Growers Association adopted resolutions opposing a Texas drive through their domain. The agitation for a national trail increased in volume and intensity through 1884. Something had to be done, and fast.

A delegation of Texas cattlemen called on their representatives in Congress. The Federal Government, they argued, must establish a north-south cattle trail from Texas to the northern markets and range lands in Range 41 [“Range” is a surveying word for a boundary line oriented north to south,] along the eastern boundary line of Colorado, be reserved from sale and settlement for a ten-year period and set apart as a national livestock highway. Sensing victory, the Texas delegation laid plans to establish the National Trail.

The Range 41 Bill, however, was withdrawn. In the emergency, Martin Culver, a prominent cattleman from Corpus Christi, was sent to Washington as a lobbyist for the National Trail. He was successful in obtaining what he thought to be a concession on a strip of land three miles wide along the eastern Colorado state line, On Range 41 West.

The National Trail, as finally established, left the Western Trail near the site of present Woodward, Oklahoma, and ran west through the northern tier of Texas Panhandle counties to Texhoma, then across No Man’s Land to the southwest corner of Kansas. From here it went up the Colorado side of the Colorado-Kansas line for about 160 miles to Ogallala, Nebraska, on its way north to the Dakotas, Wyoming and Montana.

In Martin Culver’s fertile brain a trail town was being born. Here was the Arkansas River crossing point for northbound herds. All were stopped and held here by trail cutters employed by Kansas and Colorado ranchers. These men, expert in reading brands, checked the herds for strays that might have been picked up on ranges passed through.

In 1884, Culver began laying out a town-site on the banks of the Arkansas, where the Santa Fe railroad intersected the proposed National Trail. Nearby, stretched the storied miles of the Santa Fe Trail. And two or three miles east of the Kansas line was the town of Coolidge. Associated with Culver in the venture were Howard P. Myton, registrar of the United States land office in Garden City, Kansas, and the land agent firm of Smith and Bennett. The town company was incorporated with a capital stock of \$20,000 divided into 200 shares at \$100 each.

“Let’s call her Trail City,” said Martin Culver.

His partners nodded their assent. “Trail City she is,” Bennett agreed.

“And old Dodge better watch out,” added Smith.



Courtesy WikiCommons

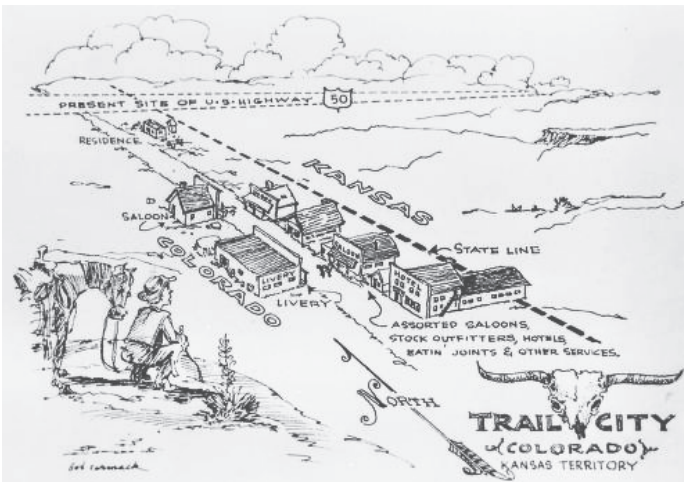
Cattle King of the Plains, John W. Iliff

In a short time nearly a hundred lots were sold at \$100 to \$200 each. The fifteen-acre patch of bluestem grama and sagebrush began to sprout buildings in a hurry. On both sides of the single street buildings were going up a couple of grocery stores, a hardware store, boarding houses, saloons, dancehalls and other fun spots that would make quick work of a cowboy's thirty dollars per month pay.

The infant, and instant, village was comminated by Culver's Canfield Hotel. The walls of the two-story building of sandstone, common to the locality, were cemented inside and out with a rough sand cement, according to Harry E. Chrisman, who has made an extensive study of Trail City. The noted Texas cattleman, I. Prentice (Print) Olive, who owned ranches in Nebraska and the

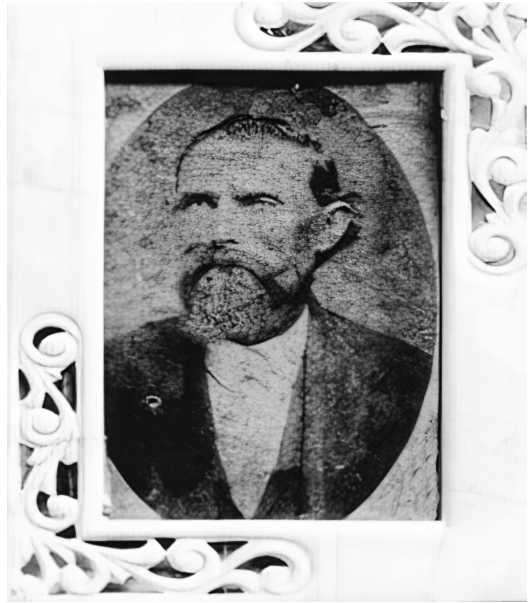
vicinity of Wray, Colorado, built a home and a livery stable in the new town. The Santa Fe Railroad built the stockyards. And the big saloon owners of Dodge City moved in with their faro banks, roulette wheels, poker tables and dancehall girls.

Murph Ward operated a hack service between Trail City and "dry" Coolidge. The hacks carried six passengers on three seats. Fare was fifty cents a trip. When business was slow, a shady lady of the eighties was invited to take a free ride to the Kansas town. Her return trip would likely be made with no empty seats.



Courtesy Denver Posse of the Westerners

As it might have looked in 1886. Drawn by Bob Cormack, Posse Member, for the June 1964 Roundup



*Courtesy Trail City Bed and Breakfast, Coolidge KS
Martin Culver, Founder of Trail City*

The booming trail town, where resident population never exceeded 200 and the transient population was about 300, stood alone in one respect: The back doors of the row of buildings on the east side opened in Kansas; in front they opened into Colorado. When the law was hot on a man's trail and had him cornered, all he had to do was dash out the back door and across the state line. This strip of a few feet justly earned

the name, “No Man’s Land.” One saloon, it is said, had a line painted down the middle of the barroom floor, directly over the Kansas-Colorado boundary line. Customers were invited to drink in the state of their choice—and the laugh was often on Kansas.

A branch of the National Trail turned west and north from Trail City. It crossed the historic Smoky Hill Trail just east of a monument built of cast concrete in the shape of a stepped pyramid. Various cattle brands were drawn into the wet cement on the top and second-from-top tiers. The bronze plaque, missing now, bore the legend:

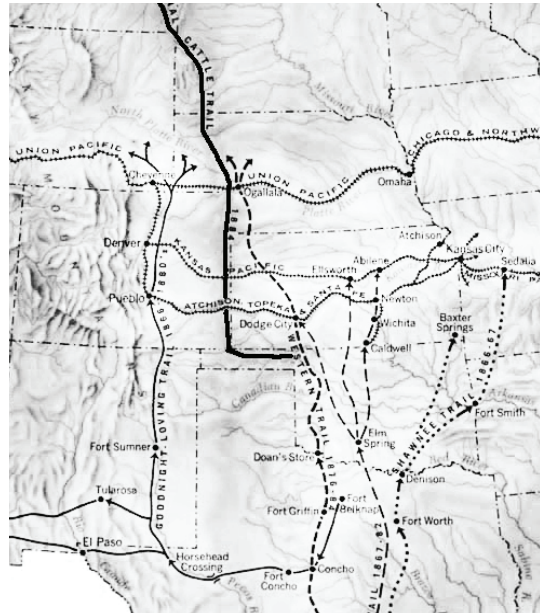
“This monument stands on the Smoky Hill Trail on the Republican-Big Sandy Divide, the route of the Butterfield Stage 1866-1870. Fifty yards east the Texas-Montana Cattle Trail [National Cattle Trail] crossed the Smoky Hill Trail.” Ruts made by Butterfield stagecoaches on their way from Atchison, Kansas to Denver, and tracks of the great trail herds are still faintly visible.

This branch of the National Trail passed east and north of Kit Carson, where stands another impressive monument (plaques stolen). Keeping close to water and grass, it followed the winding course of the Big Sandy to River Bend, Deer Trail, then north to Brush and to the Powder River crossing in Wyoming.

In Trail City, the Texas herds began coming up early in the summer of 1885. By June 11, three herds had crossed the Arkansas. Ten days later, 110 head of Texas longhorns had reached Trail City. On July 3, it was reported that the arrivals had increased to 80,078. By the 29th, the number of cattle passing through had reached 125,000. It was estimated that the total drive for the year would be about 225,000. This meant a lot of cowboys in town, starved for the sight and touch of a pretty girl.

As is told of almost every pioneer western cattle or mining town, it was not unusual for a cowpuncher or a freighter to let off steam by riding his horse into a saloon and enjoying a stirrup cup in the saddle. In the cloud of dust churned up on Trail City’s Main Street by horse races, a painted lady might be seen clinging to the saddle behind a whooping cowboy. An old-timer doubted the truth of this story, the backbone of a horse, he allowed, would be a mite hard on a bare behind.

In addition to the men who drove the herds through in June, July and August, tough characters, among them escaped convicts and army deserters, descended upon the town. Trail City had a marshal, but there is no record of a local court or jail. The nearest law was in Las Animas, seventy-five miles away. But there were occasional deputy sheriffs in town. Going east on a freight train, Deputy Sheriff James Talbott thought he would



Courtesy WikiCommons

The Short-Lived National Trail is the Darker Line

have a little fun while passing through town. He blazed away at it with his six-shooter. One ball went into a saloon, another into a residence, narrowly missing the owner's wife. Hearing the shots, a visiting deputy rushed to the Santa Fe tracks and ran after the freight train, emptying his gun at the lawman riding it. Squabbles between trail men were mostly for the fun of it.

All was not horseplay in the brief life of Trail City. Two old friends, Texas trail drivers, met in a saloon. Years before, one had jumped bond for which the other stood good. The money had never been repaid. Now, after a few drinks, they agreed to let bygones be bygones and be friends again. They began to match silver dollars. The little game ended in a knife fight, one with a cut throat, dead.

The murder of Print Olive burned deeper on Trail City the brand, Hellhole On the Arkansas. Joe Sparrow, who had been a trail driver for Olive, owed him some money. Sparrow did not intend to repay the loan. He was warned to have the money ready by the afternoon of August fifteenth, since Olive was leaving town the next day. On his way to find Sparrow, on the sixteenth, Print stepped into the Haynes Saloon. He was in his shirtsleeves, unarmed. Within the saloon, Sparrow and his friend, John Stansfield, had watched the rancher's approach. Before a word was spoken, Sparrow shot him in the chest.

"My God, Joe!" Print Olive cried. "Don't kill me!"

Joe Sparrow drove a second shot into Print's chest, slamming him backward to the floor. The murderer stepped in closer, leaned over the dying man. He sent a bullet into Print Olive's brain. It all happened in seconds.

The barkeeper leaped the counter, seized the murder weapon. Jumping over the dead man, Sparrow ran into the street. He was quickly captured. Stansfield fled out the back door, never to be heard of again. After three trials, Sparrow was declared innocent.

Trail City's days of glory were soon ended. In 1887, trail driving was on the decline, for two reasons. First, the market for Texas stock was sluggish. While more than 90,000 head were sold at Trail City during the season, at least 70,000 were turned back to Texas and Oklahoma. Second, a block of public land in southeastern Colorado, 145 miles long and 70 miles wide, was opened to settlement. The stampede of homesteaders for 160 acres of free, virgin soil closed the National Cattle Trail. With its closing, Trail City died.

TRAIL CITY!
 THE ROARING TOWN
OF THE WEST!
 BEAUTIFULLY LOCATED
 ON THE ARKANSAS RIVER,
 AT THE INTERSECTION OF
 The -:- Santa -:- Fe -:- Railroad
 WITH THE
Great National Cattle Trail,
 In Bent County, on the Eastern boundary of Colorado, presenting the most Enchanting Scenery, surrounded by verdant hills, in full view of PIKE'S PEAK AND THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS.
 Soon to take the lead among the famous cattle towns of the west.
 FOR
CHOICE RESIDENCE LOTS
 AND
Business -:- Locations,
 ENQUIRE OF
M. S. CULVER,
 Agent Trail City Town Site Company,
 COOLIDGE, KANSAS.

*Courtesy Kansas Historical Society
 Advertisement to promote Trail City*

Over the Corral Rail

*Compiled by Ed Bathke. Please submit your items of news, etc. to Ed.
Deadline is the 10th of the first month in the date of publication.*

Denver Posse saddened by loss of members

With profound regret, Sheriff Mark Barnhouse announced the death of Posse member and Posse Benefactor Gail Lindley at the 15 December 2021 Posse meeting. Gail died the previous day. Gail and her husband Don are the owners of the Denver Bookbinding Co. where our Posse meetings are currently held. The Denver Bookbinding Co., founded in 1929, is the oldest family-owned book binder in the country. The deep sympathy of the Posse is conveyed to all of Gail's family and friends.



Robert "Bob" A. Briggs Jr. passed away on December 2 at the age of 83, just weeks short of his 84th birthday. Bob was a member of the Denver Posse of Westerners and last presented to the Posse on June 27, 2018, when he told the "Colorado Carnation Story." Bob held a BS and MS in horticulture from Colorado State University. He was instrumental in establishing the nationwide prominence of the Colorado Carnation industry. Bob's desire to contribute to the community resulted in his being a state legislator, Adams County Commissioner and Westminster City Council. We extend our sympathy to Bob's family.

Colorado Westerner Activities

At the October Colorado Corral meeting, member and Denver Posse member, Ed Bathke, presented “Ed Tangen, the Boulder Pictureman.” Ed Tangen operated a photo gallery in Boulder from 1906 to 1951. Between 1906 and 1918 he published 1600 stereoviews, which were featured in the program. Today these photos provide an insight to life in the early 1900s, ranging from Boulder, to the surrounding area, including Idaho Springs, Golden, and small towns on the plains. Later Ed Tangen became a pioneer in crime photography.

Meeting in person in November, the Pikes Peak Posse enjoyed a program by past sheriff Don Moon as he presented “The Making of a Stand-Up Historian,” For over thirty-five years Don has concentrated on presenting “Entertaining History,” teaching the totality of history with a little humor. He has created several characters, the most notable being his outstanding representation of Teddy Roosevelt. He explained why actors perform, the benefits of, and importance of keeping history alive, relevant and truthful...while providing humorous experiences.

The December program was timely, as Dr. Brian Laslie presented “The Santa Tracking History of NORAD.” Brian Laslie is the Command Historian of the United States Air Force Academy and was previously the deputy command historian for NORAD where he tracked Santa annually.

In January the Pikes Peak Posse reverted to a Zoom format as Brad Bowers presented “Bound by Steel and Stone: the Colorado-Kansas Railway, a Little-known Shortline.” Mr. Bowers focused on the Colorado-Kansas Railway, operating between Pueblo and Stone City, and its survival during the industrialization of the West following the supposed 1890 closing of the frontier. He holds BA and MA degrees in history, and in his teaching at Pueblo Community College spreads the wonders of Colorado history to his students.





Westerners Bookshelf



Dividing the Reservation – Alice C. Fletcher’s Nez Perce Allotment Diaries and Letters 1889–1892 by Nicole Tonkovich. Pullman, WA: Washington State Press, 2016. 332 pages, photographs, bibliography, index. Softcover, \$29.95

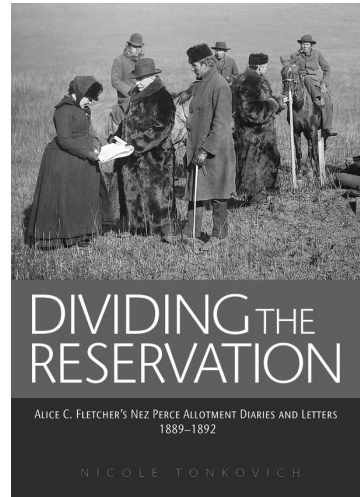
Alice C. Fletcher, a pioneering ethnologist, was the first woman to serve as an Indian agent beginning with allotting lands for the Omaha and Winnebago reservations from 1883 to 1888. She helped write the Dawes General Allotment Act in 1887 so was well prepared to accept the assignment to supervise the allotment of the Nez Perce reservation in Idaho in 1889. But during this undertaking she reached a turning point in her career which drove her from government work to academia. The multiple and detailed letters in this book highlight the events that pushed her to this decision.

This collection of letters includes both formal reports on Fletcher’s work as well as personal letters detailing the difficulties she encountered. The work was originally supposed to be completed in one or two years, but stretched to four. The local Indian agents were not supportive of her efforts in addition to being unscrupulous in their dealings with the Nez Perce. Much of the land that was to be allotted as farmland was not suitable for this activity as the terrain was mountainous with steep hills and deep valleys making travel throughout much of the reservation difficult. This caused delays in the survey work needed to make the allotments.

The heat was oppressive with many days over 100. Imagine trying to make your way around such terrain in the heat while in the traditional female dress of the day, including full-length skirts and long sleeves, as Fletcher is depicted in many of the photographs included in the book. There were also several long-running legal battles over the eligibility of various people for an allotment along with encroachment by settlers which Fletcher had to try to settle.

The picture that Fletcher paints in these letters is one of difficulty that includes both triumphs and failures. It is the failures which cause her pain and much of her struggle. The personal aspects of these letters are the most fascinating part of this collection. At times I thought there was more detail included than might be needed as some of the letters get a little tedious to read, but by the end, it is this detail that fed my appreciation of her efforts. Fletcher persevered in an environment where many people, men or women, would have given up and walked away. She refused to do that and sacrificed greatly in her attempts to do the right thing for the Nez Perce. It is an inspiring and enlightening read as Fletcher makes her journey to a better understanding of the reality of Native life and the shortcomings of federal policy.

– Leslie Karnauskas



A Time for Peace – Fort Lewis, Colorado, 1878-1891, by Duane A. Smith. Boulder, Colorado: University Press of Colorado, 2006. 212 pages, illustrations, maps, photos, preface, prologue, notes, bibliographic essay, index. Hardcover \$25.00

A Time for Peace gives the reader a comprehensive history of Fort Lewis in southwest Colorado (present-day Durango), from its origination in 1878 until its closure in 1891. The post was established for the protection of settlers and miners in the area, but the fort in reality had little to do with protection and everything to do with the local economy. The result was economic stability as well as lucrative contractual work covered by locals. Special events such as organized dances, regimental concerts and other social outings resulted in an important social link between settlers and the post family. Chapter Six–The Army Loved to Dance–highlights the significance of the post’s active social life and the intermingling between locals and post activities.

Chapter One covers earlier military camps at and near Pagosa Springs, until the decision was made to establish a permanent post, which is today’s Fort Lewis College. Chapter Two covers the 1879 Ute War which took place north of the fort. It was the only time that Indians were a focus of the post commander.

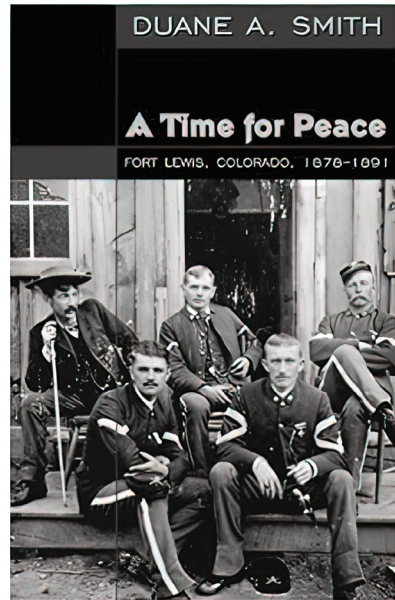
The book has many interesting pictures taken at the post and the people who lived there, found in two parts of the book, pp 61-70 and 137-153. During the existence of the fort there was only one Indian outbreak that resulted in civilian deaths near the post.

A house had been set on fire, killing the owner and wounding the wife; rumors swirled that other attacks had occurred, but they had not. An investigation revealed that this attack had come about because cowboys, after threatening to “shoot the Utes on sight,” had murdered six Utes, including two women and a child in their tepees. And, despite clear evidence of wrongdoing, these cowboys escaped punishment.

The family is unnamed, but their full story can be found in *Wild West*, Vol. 33, #5, February 2021. John and Margaret Genthner were the victims. John was killed as he stepped out of his burning house late at night, and Margaret was critically wounded, eventually losing her arm. Her youngest child did not survive the ordeal. Margaret lived another thirteen years. Her obituary said her Indian wound eventually caused her death.

As more and more settlers came into the area, it proved to be the end of the historic fort. “As such, Fort Lewis’s days were numbered.” Duane Smith has produced an important book, as he has done with all his publications on Western history. *A Time for Peace* is an enjoyable read and will add much to one’s knowledge of the history in and around Fort Lewis during its short existence. It deserves a place on the shelves of all people interested in Western history, especially regarding the role of military forts in the settling of the West.

– Jeff Broome, PhD



Beckoning Frontiers – The Memoir of A Wyoming Entrepreneur, by George W. T. Beck. Lincoln, NE: University Of Nebraska Press, 2020, 410 pages, photos, index. Softcover \$29.95

Lynn J. Houze and Jeremy M. Johnston have done a wonderful job of editing the raw and previously unpublished complete manuscript of George Beck's memoirs (while adding a historical introduction). There had previously existed two heavily edited and differing manuscripts in separate locations. When Beck's granddaughter turned over boxes of his archives to the editors, the full original work was found. What makes Beck of interest to the publishers who have been releasing the *Papers of William F. Cody* series is his involvement with establishing the town of Cody. As it turns out, Beck's life is far more interesting than just that one facet.

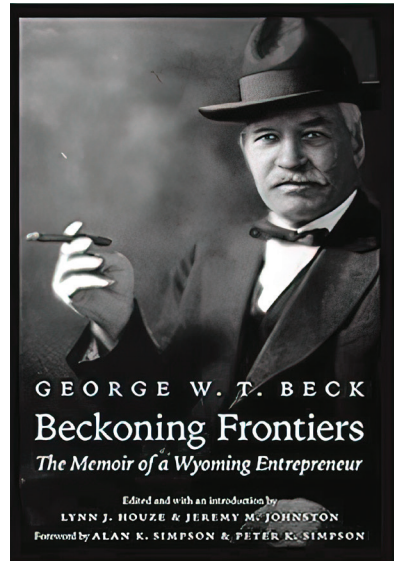
Beck was born in 1856 in Kentucky and died in 1943 in the town he helped found, Cody, Wyoming. His father was a lawyer and politician, while his mother's great-uncle was George Washington. It was an inheritance from that estate that set Beck up to venture into the West. These memoirs are more folksy than historic at times which paints a vivid picture of a world we have only read about in second-hand descriptions. He talks of seeing "huge buffalo herds, one numbering possibly forty thousand..." and how "everything was fresh, unsullied, practically untouched" when speaking of the Big Horn Basin in Wyoming. He could slip easily from rubbing shoulders with William Randolph Hearst's father, Senator George Hearst, to heading to Leadville to prospect for metallic riches.

In his life, Beck was acquainted with a great number of famous folk. As a child he was friends with President Andrew Johnson's niece and nephew and describes him playfully chasing the kids with a stick. Later he describes Calamity Jane as "a strange, ugly, shy woman," while he calls Frederic Remington "a huge man weighing more than two hundred and fifty pounds" as well as "a gargantuan eater." He was also a friend of Iron Tail, the Indian on the Buffalo nickel who had been a star in Buffalo Bill's shows. "Often the white men were more dangerous than the Indians" and that was evident after he found that for a time "our house guests had been Jesse James (and) his brother Frank."

He established the town of Beckton in Wyoming and later Cody, named for one of the co-founding investors. They had a readymade promotional tool for their new town (and irrigation project) when they ran large ads on the programs for Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show.

The afterword by Betty Jane Gerber, George Beck's granddaughter, gives a vivid description of the Beck home in Cody along with his accomplishments. In the appendices are a speech given by Beck in 1938 and reprinted letters from Buffalo Bill to Beck about the construction of the irrigation canal.

– George W. Krieger



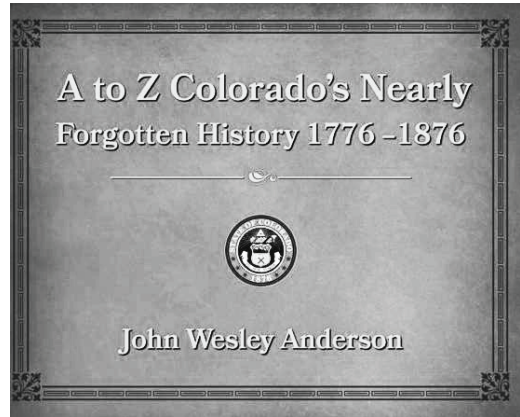
A To Z Colorado’s Nearly Forgotten History 1776 – 1876, by John Wesley Anderson. Colorado Springs, CO: Circle Star Publishing, 2021. 326 pages, appendix, bibliography, index. Hardcover \$69.95

“Each of these people, places and events represents individual threads that when woven together become part of Colorado’s colorful tapestry.” That is the author’s description of what is found in this, his seventh book. Mr. Anderson is a retired law officer who now is a consultant and speaker with an interest in the American Southwest.

The layout of the book is twenty-six chapters loosely tied to a letter of the alphabet as it relates in some either direct or tangential way to Colorado history. This framework allows each chapter to stand alone, though many relate to one another. An example of that is the “G” chapter is about the battle of Glorieta Pass in March 1862. A later chapter “V” is of the battle at Valverde in February 1862. Both topics work together to tell of the Confederate forces who came from Texas to fight a combined force from New Mexico and Colorado during the Civil War. “... a rebel victory in the New Mexico Territory would throw open the gates to Colorado’s mineral-rich Rockies....”

Some of the topics are broad, such as the ones about “Explorers” and “Pioneers” which allow for several unrelated stories to be told that fall under those headings. Others are very specific, such as “N” about a nearly forgotten Ute Chief known as Nevana. Interesting little tidbits are thrown in which make this a potpourri of information history lovers will find worthwhile. “The 1779 Anza vs Cuerno Verde Comanche Campaign was the largest known military engagement in Colorado’s early history until the American Civil War.” While most Westerners will know the broader stories of the Hungate killings or Zebulon Pike’s expedition, they may not know the story of Private William Cathay, who turned out to be a disguised woman fighting with the Buffalo Soldiers till her ruse was discovered. This allows both history neophytes and experts to find something of interest in this book.

—George W. Krieger



Bound by Steel and Stone – The Colorado-Kansas Railway and the Frontier of Enterprise in Colorado, 1890-1960, by J. Bradford Bowers. Louisville, CO: University Press of Colorado, 2021. 305 pages, maps, photos, biography, index. Hardcover \$26.65

Bound by Steel tells the story of the Colorado-Kansas Railway (later the Colorado Railroad) that was destined to fail from the start, but persevered for nearly fifty years.

Author J. Bradford Bowers tells the story of the “schemers and dreamers” that envisioned building an electrified interurban railway to connect Colorado and Kansas. The visionaries imagined bringing coal from Cañon City and Florence to a series of planned power plants along the Arkansas River. These would then provide the electricity needed for the electrified railroad and most importantly to farmers much in need of the water that could be pumped from wells all along the planned route.

Bowers follows the ambitious plans of the Colorado-Kansas Railway that got underway with a ground-breaking west of Pueblo in 1908 to its liquidation in 1957. He provides extensive details about the many bankruptcies suffered by the railroad, the first of which occurred after laying only one-and-a-half miles of track. Included are details of the fight between the railroad and the local entrenched political machine in Pueblo and the many efforts to re-envision the railroad.

Inadequate capital, a limited revenue base (the railroad ran deficits for most of its existence) and extensive competition doomed the enterprise from the start. However, the railway survived with much revised expectations. There would be no power plants; they reverted to traditional steam power provided by a used locomotive and would only build track in the switching yard and to the Stone City quarry twenty-two miles from Pueblo. In its final years the enterprise relied on revenue provided by its switching operation in Pueblo.

The railroad enthusiast will find much to appreciate in the detailed description that Bowers provides about the difficulties that the Colorado-Kansas Railway faced and the herculean efforts by Irma MacDaniel, its final manager, to keep it afloat in its last years.

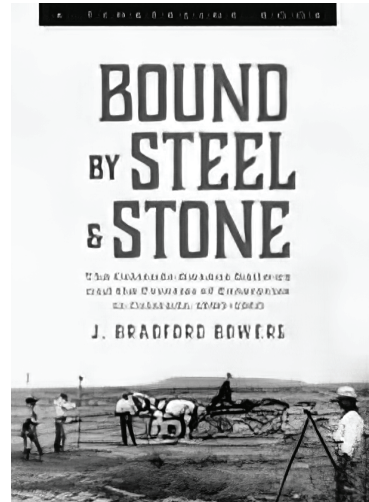
Also included and enhancing the narrative for railroad enthusiasts is a roster of the rolling stock and engineering notes.

– Jim Donohue

Rediscovered Frontiersman – Timothy Goodale, by James W. McGill. Independence, MO: Oregon-California Trails Association, 2009. 317 pages, maps, pictures, footnotes, index. Softcover \$24.95

This is an interesting contribution to Western literature—factual, somewhat dry and much like reading an almanac. This book is in the style of “He climbed to the top of the Empire State Building and carried Fey Wray back down while airplanes shot cannon fire at both of them;” action but no emotion. Or another movie analogy comes to mind, Woody Allen’s “Zelig.” Here, a trapper and frontiersman named Tim Goodale (with all kinds of name misspellings) shows up with famous people and at famous events, but few people record his existence. He doesn’t write much about himself, and a relatively wide sampling of people mention that they met him but say little about what he did other than, “Goodale is a famous frontiersman.”

While reading through this almanac we learn that Tim/Jim/John lived from 1810 until 1869. He left his New York home at age nineteen and went west. He married at least two Indian women and raised at least



Rediscovered Frontiersman
Timothy Goodale

James W. McGill



Oregon-California Trails Association
Independence, Missouri

two families. While doing that he was a fur trapper/trader, explorer, mountain man, game-food hunter, cattle and sheep drover, emigrant guide, military advisor, surveyor, trail builder, fort operator, ferryman, cattleman, rancher, horse and mule trader, Indian-emigrant relations mediator, U.S. Mail carrier and Indian representative to the military. He was the sometime companion to Kit Carson, Jim Beckwith, John C. Freemont, Lucien Maxwell and other notables. I would add that he was a good storyteller and a wagon master. With all this going on, how does a fellow have time to be famous? That is why this book was written.

The Oregon-California Trails Association noticed that Tim Goodale's name kept showing up in other people's stories about moving west. They wanted to answer the question of "who was this Goodale fellow?" Extensive research of trail diaries and newspaper writings led to the compilation of this book. For Colorado readers, Goodale made several appearances at Hardscrabble, Pueblo, Bent's New Fort (he operated the fort for one year) and has a couple of spots on the Santa Fe Trail named for him. He lived for almost a year south of Boulder, CT. Tim Goodale is recorded as a remarkable frontiersman; too bad he didn't have a TV show or movie named after him. Then he would be famous to us too. Because of this introduction, I'll be looking for Tim/Jim/John in my future Western readings.

By the way, Tim Goodale shows up seven times in our Denver Posse website database. He isn't unknown to us.

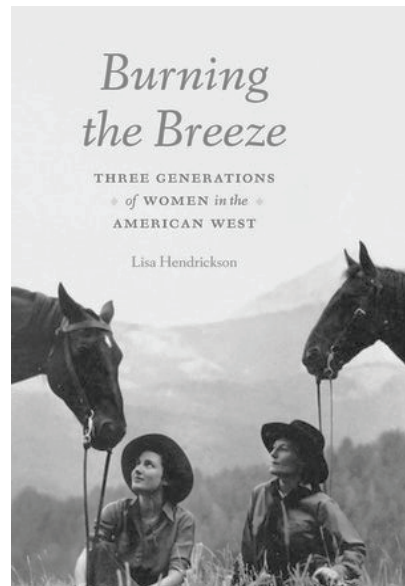
– Dan Shannon

Burning the Breeze – Three Generations of Women in the American West by Lisa Hendrickson. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2021. 353 pages, photographs, endnotes, bibliography, index. Softcover \$21.95

The author uses an unpublished memoir and a partial transcription of a lost diary as the basis for this story of three generations of women from a Montana homestead family. She supplements their story with newspaper articles, descendant family interviews, and other research documents from the era to fill in the context so we can better understand the challenges as well as better appreciate the accomplishments of these women.

The story starts with Lizzie Nave Martin and her seven-year-old daughter Lulu who left their war-torn home in Missouri following the Civil War and the death of her husband. They headed to the Montana Territory hoping to find new opportunities in Virginia City. Owing a large debt left by her husband, Lizzie works hard to settle that debt and to raise her daughter while dealing with all of the difficulties early settlers encountered. Lizzie remarries and the family begins ranching near Radersburg, Montana.

Lulu grew up loving the ranch life. She marries young and as with all three generations of women in this family, does not pick well. The family grows with two daughters and



three sons, one of whom dies shortly after birth. Lulu became well known in the region for her hospitality, always willing to provide a welcoming meal and bed for travelers in their remote area of Montana. The story continues with one of her daughters, Julia.

Julia learns to ride at a young age. She loves ranching, hunting and fishing. Her love of riding at full speed, which the Western wranglers called “burning the breeze,” is the inspiration for the book’s name. Much of the remaining story is about Julia’s efforts to start a dude ranch on the family property and another on rented property in Arizona. The risks she takes are bold as she markets the ranch with no money during trips to New York City, seeking guests while the country is in a Depression. Julia takes her guests on camping and hunting expeditions while offering high-end amenities that build a great reputation for the ranches. She continues to ride, hunt and fish well into her 70s.

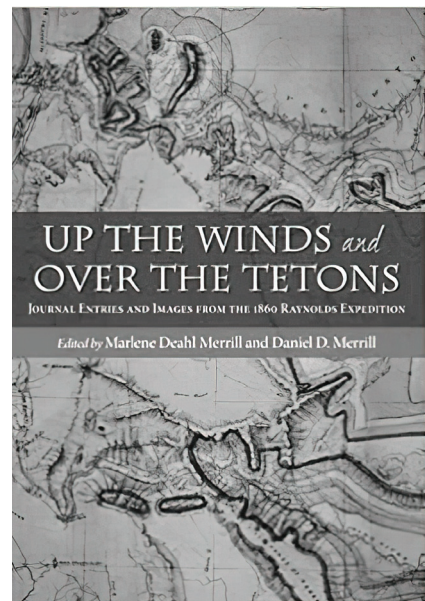
The book includes a family genealogy chart which is very helpful as the author moves between the generations. I found myself referring to it often. As I got to know these women, I developed an appreciation for their fortitude and tenacity. Julia’s granddaughter is quoted at the end of the book, saying about her grandmother, “I never heard her say ‘woe is me’ ... Nothing stopped her. She cruised right through.” That we should all be so strong, resilient and self-reliant.

– Leslie Karnauskas

Up the Winds and Over the Tetons, edited by Marlene Deahl Merrill and Daniel D. Merrill. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2012. 118 pages, maps, graphics, appendices, endnotes, bibliography, index. Originally hardbound, softcover issued December 2021, \$29.95

I am always interested in journals about the experiences of explorers and early settlers of the West. I was also attracted to this book because of my own interest in the Tetons. It is a detailed journal of the 1860 Reynolds Expedition to the Tetons and the Yellowstone region. The introduction, epilogue and notes from the editors are quite helpful. I also enjoyed the illustrations by the artists on the expedition, which the editors were able to find at a variety of institutions. Reynolds’ journal is very descriptive about the rivers, valleys, and mountains. Yet no map showing the route and helping the reader locate these features was included in the book. The editors explain in the Introduction that the expedition had three phases, yet this rather slim volume only provides Reynolds’ journal accounts from one phase, exploration of the Teton-Yellowstone region, which they explain as the most interesting part of the trip. It is indeed interesting, but I would have appreciated seeing Reynolds’ description of the other two phases as well. Nevertheless, *Up the Winds and Over the Tetons* is an interesting and informative exploration account worth having.

– Steve Friesen



Chief Thunderwater – An Unexpected Indian in Unexpected Places, by Gerald F. Reid. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2021. 200 pages, twelve b&w photos, two maps. Hardcover, \$34.95

In the few mentions of Chief Thunderwater that preceded this book, he was portrayed as a con artist, a black man posing as an Indian, “who in 1920 swindled the Caughnawaga Iroquois of some \$50,000...” Reid’s painstaking sleuthing paints a wholly opposite view of Thunderwater, instead showing him to be the victim of a government smear campaign.

From what the author could determine, Thunderwater’s mother was the daughter of Chief Keokuk of the Sac and Fox tribes. Born Oghema Niagara (near Niagara Falls), he performed for a time in Buffalo Bill Cody’s Wild West Show. Later he moved to Cleveland where he was “a businessman, concerned citizen, Indian-rights activist and lifelong resident.” He was strongly anti-alcohol and demanded that his city enforce the law “forbidding the sale of liquor to Indians.” He took his anti-liquor campaign to Buffalo, New York where he was trying to improve “the conditions of the Indians of the Six Nations.”

In 1914 he organized the Council of the Tribes in Cleveland, fighting “hostility and overreach” from whites. He acted as an ambassador to his people, helping Indians visiting his city and at one time took in a wayward teen, straightening out his life. Oghema’s main source of income was herbal medicines such as “Thunderwater’s Mohawk Oil.” He also ran a campground near Huron Township for a time, Camp Niagara.

Where he got in to trouble was when he worked with the Haudenosaunee peoples of Canada spawning the “Thunderwater Movement.” The book examines in detail Indian affairs and activism of the time and how Oghema’s promotion of “Indian Nationalism” got the Canadian Department of Indian Affairs in a lather. Deputy Superintendent Duncan Campbell Scott apparently spearheaded a campaign of dirty tricks to bring down the movement. A questionable claim of child abuse, the fleecing of poor Indians via dues and the claim that Thunderwater was actually black were used to discredit him.

These same charges were used against him later in Kentucky, causing Thunderwater to file a costly libel suit in 1928. The economic question is the one area that this book doesn’t answer well. “While the Indian Department’s estimates of the money raised... may be overblown, the funds were substantial, and his use of them remains unclear.” The author, a Professor at Sacred Heart University in Connecticut, has managed to create a fresh and interesting work exploring a controversial Indigenous man long forgotten.

– George W. Krieger

