

Myth and History in the Creation of Yellowstone National Park. By Paul Schullery and Lee Whittlesey. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003. xi + 125 pages, paper \$22.00.)

Established in 1872 during the peak of Gilded Age excess and exploitation, Yellowstone National Park has become "a global icon of conservation and natural beauty" with its own "creation myth." Not surprisingly, this relatively brief and intriguing study by Paul Schullery, a writer and editor for Yellowstone National Park and an affiliate professor of history at Montana State University, and Lee Whittlesey, park historian for the National Park Service at Yellowstone, reveals that the pioneer conservationists credited with the park's founding were really "not saints, but mortal humans with the full range of ideals and impulses known to the species." The authors successfully demonstrate how the simplistic "campfire story" of tradition has been discredited by historians (most notably in the 1960s by Yellowstone historian Aubrey Haines) in favor of a more complex story that involves both altruism and greed; nevertheless, the myth lives on, as myths often do, and the reasons for its longevity are a main focus of *Myth and History in the Creation of Yellowstone National Park*.

The Cowboy at Work. By Fay E. Ward. (Mineola, N.Y.: Dover Publications, 2003. xiv + 289 pages, paper \$5.95.)

Originally published by Hastings House of New York in 1958, *The Cowboy at Work* makes "available to all those who happen to be interested in the facts pertaining to the history of the cowhand, the type of equipment he used in his everyday work, and how he used it. I have tried," continued Ward in the foreword, "to present a clear and useful outline of the methods an experienced cowhand employed in his work on the open range." This heavily illustrated volume seems to succeed at that level, covering everything from the evolution of the cowboy, the types of range stock, and ranch work to cowboy jewelry, rope knots, quirks, guns, and equipment. It purports to be "a complete cowboy's manual" and certainly should continue to be of much value to historians and folklorists studying the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century range cattle industry that was of such significance in Kansas history.

Lewis and Clark on the Great Plains: A Natural History. By Paul A. Johnsgard. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003. xiii + 143 pages, paper \$14.95.)

Written and illustrated by Paul A. Johnsgard, Foundation professor emeritus of biological sciences at the University of Nebraska, this attractive little book should find a ready audience among Meriwether Lewis and William Clark enthusiasts during their expedition's bicentennial year, 2004, and beyond. "The purpose of this book," which contains forty-five maps and illustrations and begins with a brief "Historical Overview," explains Professor Johnsgard, "is to identify and describe the Great Plains animals and plants that were encountered and described by Lewis and Clark and their Corps of Discovery two centuries ago during their famous exploratory expedition of the Louisiana Purchase territories. It also attempts to place both the organisms

they discovered in an ecological framework and these two explorers in a historical context as biologists." *Lewis and Clark on the Great Plains* joins the much longer study by Wayne Phillips, *Plants of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (Missoula: Mountain Press Publishing Co., 2003), on the growing list of new works inspired by the forthcoming commemoration of that incredibly important expedition and should significantly enhance our understanding of the natural history of the early nineteenth-century American West.

Utah Historians and the Reconstruction of Western History. By Gary Topping. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003. xii + 388 pages, cloth \$34.95.)

Since Kansas—or at least the western portions of our great state—is often considered a part of the American West and many readers of *Kansas History* are western history enthusiasts, Gary Topping's critical examination of the historiographical contributions of five Utah historians (Bernard DeVoto, Dale Morgan, Juanita Brooks, Wallace Stegner, and Fawn McKay Brodie) is worthy of note here. "Each of these writers made enduring contributions not only to our knowledge of the American West but also to our view of the region and its history." Although certainly not flawless, as Topping, an associate professor of history at Salt Lake Community College, explains, their writings in many ways "set the standard for scholarship and interpretation, and their influence is still felt today." *Utah Historians and the Reconstruction of Western History*, writes the author, is "the first instance in which these writers have been subjected to searching scrutiny as a group, the first book to note that their works possess common historiographical traits. . . . On the one hand," argues Topping, they did a fine job gathering sources and establishing "an accurate factual record. . . . On the other hand, they generally did an unsatisfactory job interpreting their material."

Restoring the Burnt Child: A Primer. By William Kloefkorn. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003. xiv + 289 pages, cloth \$22.00.)

For a variety of reasons we historians often neglect and mistrust literary writing, and yet, as Kansas author and Washburn University professor Tom Averill argued so successfully in his summer 2002 review essay, Kansas literature is a valuable part of our cultural past: "our literature has a direct bearing on our understanding of who we are as a people" and represents an aspect of our cultural history that looks at the meaning of life in Kansas in a way that historians often cannot. William Kloefkorn's literary memoirs about growing up in Harper County, which include an earlier volume entitled *This Death by Drowning* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), serve this end. In *Restoring the Burnt Child*, Professor Kloefkorn, Nebraska's state poet and emeritus professor of English at Nebraska Wesleyan University, makes a fascination with fire (it was water in the first prose volume) the underlying theme tying together is memories of life in 1940s Kansas.