

Buckskin Bulletin

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NEWSLETTER OF WESTERNERS INTERNATIONAL
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LIVING LEGEND #53

WI Honors John W. Robinson

By Paul McClure

The **San Dimas Corral** has nominated member **John W. Robinson** to become a "Living Legend."

Hiking guru John Robinson's *Trails of the Angeles* was published in 1971 and *San Bernardino Mountain Trails* in 1972. These authoritative volumes provide trail maps, elevations, access, distances, difficulty levels and seasonal recommendations for 100 hikes in the San Gabriel Mountains and 100 hikes in the San Bernardino Mountains of Southern California.

John began his love of hiking and camping on his family's summer vacations in tent cabins at Camp Curry in Yosemite. His attraction to the San Gabriel Mountains began as a 10-year-old

with his first week of summer camp at the Long Beach YMCA Camp Kole—on the West Fork of San Gabriel Canyon, three miles below Red Box, near the junction of Angeles Crest Highway and Mt. Wilson Road.

He was a hiker before becoming a historian. Spending nearly every weekend on the trails influenced him to earn degrees from the University of Southern California and Cal State-Long Beach in social science with an emphasis in history. He then taught history at the Newport Mesa School District for 32 years before getting really busy in retirement.

John has been an outstanding mentor. Among others, he encouraged **Paul Rippens**
(Continued on Page 3)

LIVING LEGEND #54

Vern Erickson Honored by WI

By Ft. Abraham Lincoln Corral

Vern Erickson was born in Esmond, Benson County, North Dakota. His early schooling took place in Esmond and it was there, through mentoring by **Elwood Jensen**, a World War I veteran and mural artist in France, that Vern's lifelong interest in Western artist **Charles Russell** began. Jensen's uncle was a frame maker in Great Falls, Montana, and had framed some of Russell's paintings. A trip to Great Falls in which Vern met Russell's son and attended an auction of Russell's work cemented this lifelong interest.

After a stint in the military
(Continued on Page 4)



Vern Erickson and his painting "The Birth of Jean Baptiste Charbonneau"

From the WI President

Last month we had an opportunity to go to Lee's Summit, Missouri, for Shirley's 61st high school reunion. While we were there we had time to revisit some of the historical places we haven't seen in years.

The town of Lee's Summit was founded by William B. Howard. He and his wife came to Missouri in 1844 to help secure right-of-way land for the Pacific railroad line. In the 1850 census he was listed as a 29-year-old farmer with 12 slaves. He purchased 220 acres of land in Jackson County. In 1862 he was arrested and imprisoned by the Union Commander in Independence, Mo., but was released on a \$25,000 bond providing he return to Kentucky. After the Civil War he returned to the area and founded the town of Strother (his wife's maiden name) by filing a plat consisting of 11 blocks which currently makes up the downtown section of Lee's Summit.

In 1868 the name was changed to Lee's Summit—either named after Gen. Robert E. Lee or Dr. Pleasant Lea (the difference in spelling is attributed to railroad sign painters) and Summit as it was the highest point on the railroad between Kansas City and St. Louis. The railroad ran through the middle of the town.

On April 12, 1885, a fire destroyed the largest part of the downtown area but was rebuilt. Shirley left Lee's Summit in 1949 and it does her heart good to see Lee's Summit didn't die as many small towns have done. The old downtown buildings are occupied by merchants and have been preserved and the community has thrived.

Cole Younger, Lee's Summit's most notorious resident, is buried in the Lee's Summit Historical Cemetery along with brothers Bob, Jim and his mother. Cole's life outside the law is attributed to the murder of his father. The Younger Brothers' spree ended in a gun fight after an unsuccessful attempt to rob the bank in Northfield, Mo., along with the James Gang. The James Gang made it back to Missouri but the Youngers didn't.

Cole was pardoned from prison and led a quiet life in Lee's Summit until his death.

Of course we had to go to Kearney, Mo., to see the home and grave site of Jesse James. There has been much discussion as to whom is really buried in the grave, but DNA recovered from the remains were consistent with DNA taken from one of Jesse's relatives in the female line.

Then we went to St. Joseph, Mo., to see the house where Jesse was murdered. We also hoped to learn more about the Pony Express while there but the museum was closed.

Then it was on to Liberty, Mo., to tour the bank where the James Gang committed "the first daylight bank robbery" and to see the historical jail where Joseph Smith and his Mormon leaders were once imprisoned.

We hope that if any of you get to this area you will visit these places. I think you will find them all interesting.

*Riding for the Brand
David Carter*

FROM THE EDITOR

There is good news for WI members who have been wanting to get **bola ties** with the head of **Old Joe**.

Thanks to Executive Board and **Indian Territorial Posse** member, **Leon Nelson**, they are available once again.

After much searching Leon located a convenient source for the lanyards and the tips and he spent a morning at the WI office putting 50 ties together. They are still priced at \$15 each.

Also new is the place our *Buckskin Bulletins*

are being printed. We believe we will not only save money (an ongoing concern at the WI office) but will allow us to get the bulletins done in a more timely manner and thus mailed out on a more regular schedule. We also think you will like the reproduction. Remember, if you have ever wondered what the bulletin looks like in color you can go to our web page: www.westerners-international.org

Burntis Argo

John W. Robinson is Living Legend

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to write his book about the history of Mount Baldy.

He is now handing over the task of keeping his trail guides current to airline pilot and veteran hiker Doug Christiansen. Doug will continue to update the maps and data which continually change because of fire, flood, obstructions, development, building of new trails, abandonment of old trails and campgrounds, new Forest Service regulations, and objections from private property owners whose land or roads a trail might cross.

John has been an active member of the **Los Angeles**



John W. Robinson

Corral for over 34 years, the **Huntington Corral** for 30 years and the **San Dimas Cor-**

ral for about 12 years. He is esteemed by his colleagues and friends for his knowledge of and contributions to understanding our great Southern California mountain history.

In addition to the two Trail books mentioned, John has written *Camping and Climbing in Baja*, 1967; *Los Angeles in Civil War Days*, 1977; *The San Gabriels*, 1977, revised 1991; *Los Angeles' First Railroad*, 1978; *The San Bernadinos*, 1989; *The San Jacintos*, 1993, and *Gateways to Southern California*, 2005. He edited *Brand Book #22, Los Angeles West-erners*.

John has won the Sierra Club Hundred Peaks Badge for climbing mountains over 5,000 feet in elevation as well as the Don Plueger Award, 1992 and 1998; the Conference of California Historical Societies Scholastic Authorship Award, 2003; Westerners International "Coke Wood Award" for articles and monographs in 1990 and 1992; Sierra Club Outings Service Award, 1991, and has been named a Fellow of the Historical Society of Southern California, 2005.

A Word from the Chairman

With the discussion your Home Ranch has had with individuals and corrals about dues lately, we often forget our goal is to deal with Western History. We now can look forward to a return to the past at the 50th Annual Western History Association Conference this October 13-16. This year's events occur at the Hyatt Regency Lake Tahoe Resort Spa & Casino, Incline Village, Nevada, with the theme, "Many Wests." That seems appropriate among Westerners to describe the diversity of our own posses and corrals.

The WHA grew from inspiration within The Westerners membership shortly after incorporation in 1958 when The Westerners Foundation became known as Westerners International. There were calls for a more focused academic history organization. WI was the catalyst. It all sounds so bureaucratic to describe WI's history. It is best simply to say WI is the parent of WHA. We are proud to state that WHA has risen to a much larger size and importance than the Westerners of 50 years ago would have predicted. WHA has treated us as their honored guest every year since their formation.

Perhaps it is the little bit of fun mixed into the academics that we Westerners bring to WHA. WHA brings the rigor of standards, accuracy and interpretation to WI that keeps us more appealing to a broader-based membership. The synergy lives on after a half century.

I encourage you to join and support WHA by your active participation and membership, not only at the annual conference, but with your year-round involvement and interest.

Kent McClinnis

Central New Mexico Corral Meets

"The Pancho Villa Raid and the U.S. Military Response, March 9, 1916" was the talk given by John L. Durble Jr. at the March meeting of the Central New Mexico Corral.

This group which draws its membership from Santa Fe to Albuquerque and the surrounding areas of both cities is a fast growing group. Membership was 100 in March.

Trailing

The West

By Shebby Lee

The board of the West River History Conference is pleased to announce this year's keynote speaker, president of the South Dakota Historical Society Board, **Dr. Brad**

Tennant. His speech at the September conference, in keeping with the conference theme of "Relative Riches," is titled, "No Graves or Epitaphs—Remembering the Forgotten of Past Generations."

The conference will be September 23 through 25 in Rapid City at the Surbeck Center on the campus of the South Dakota School of Mines & Technology. Professional and amateur historians and people of all ages are invited to attend and become interested in their heritage.

Dr. Tennant is assistant professor of history at Presentation College in Aberdeen. In addition to his teaching he is an active researcher, writer and presenter on a variety of state and regional topics.

One of the awards given at the conference honors the late **Bob Lee**, who served many years on the WI Board of Directors. One of the supporters of the event is the **Black Hills Corral**.

Conference information may be obtained from conference president Shebby Lee, PO Box 9275, Rapid City, SD 57709, telephone 605-343-4852, or you can e-mail: wrhc@shebbyleetours.com

Erickson Named Legend

(Continued from Page 1)

Vern began working for the State History Society of North Dakota and served as artist/photographer for the North Dakota Game and Fish Department in 1965. He has also served as photographer for the North Dakota Tourism Department.

A freelance artist since 1979, Vern has made a life-long study of prairie wildlife, Plains Indian dress, Upper Missouri Landscapes and early Western artists which combine to render his paintings historically accurate. In 1980 Vern was instrumental in bringing a large group of original Russell paintings to Bismarck for a public art show. He served as cataloguer for that exhibit.

For the Lewis and Clark bicentennial in 2003-2006, Vern created 15 paintings depicting various scenes from the Lewis and Clark expedition journals. They are wonderful, historically accurate and were on display at the North Dakota Heritage Center.

One event of that celebration took place at the brand new Confluence Center where the Yellowstone River enters the Missouri. There were erudite speakers at that event, but none spoke more eloquently than Vern's paintings on display there.

In 2008 the Lewis and Clark Fort Mandan Foundation Interpretive Center dedicated the "Erickson Gallery," a room in which many of Erickson's original paintings are on permanent display, an honor seldom accorded a living artist. Most recently Vern participated in a panel discussion,

chaired by **Clay Jenkinson**, on the process of creating Western art. In September, 2009, Vern and his lovely, supportive wife celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary.

Vern is a charter member of the **Fort Abraham Lincoln Corral**, Bismarck/Mandan, ND. He presented the very first program there in which he showed a film entitled "The West of Charles M. Russell." Vern is also a charter member of the North Dakota Cowboy Hall of Fame.

Vern designed the corral's "**Scout**" newsletter letterhead and was editor when the corral won the first of its "Heads Up" awards from Westerners International. In addition to being a fine graphic artist, Vern is a musician excelling on both guitar and vocals, concentrating especially on early Western and Bluegrass music. He remains active in the Fort Abraham Lincoln Corral having given two additional programs on Western art in the ensuing years, most recently October, 2009.

As the Corral celebrated its 30th anniversary in May of 2010, it is fitting that Vern Erickson should be recognized for his many contributions.

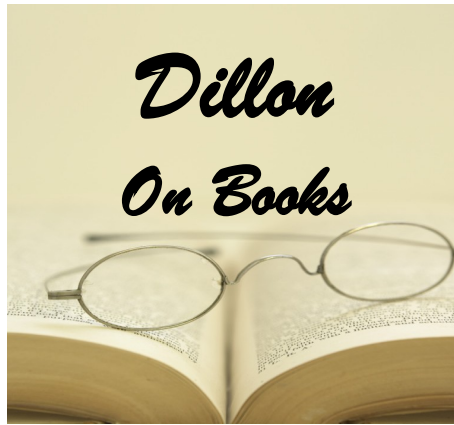
Pine Ridge Unit Meets

June 27 was "Sod House Sunday" at Bowring Ranch State Historical Park in Nebraska. In addition to a picnic lunch the **Pine Ridge Corral** members enjoyed music, cowboy poetry as well as some demonstrations of horsemanship.

By Richard Dillon

There was more than one Royal Road, Camino Real, in the history of the Spanish colonization of America. From the **University of New Mexico Press** comes **Hal Jackson's Following the Royal Road** (\$19.95), a motorist's guide to the historic route from the Santa Fe area (actually, San Juan Pueblo and Taos) down to El Paso and on to Mexico City. The text is a combination of accounts by early travelers, like Josiah Gregg and Zeb Pike, and Jackson's own record of four trips over the route. There are illustrations and 60 useful maps; a foreword by Marc Simmons; and a bibliography of suggested reading. Among the fascinating sites explored by the author are the feared Jornada del Muerto, the Dead Man's Journey between Engle and Fort Selden, New Mexico, and Col. Doniphan's forgotten Mexican War battlefields of Brazito and Sacramento.

A new, reprint (\$26.95) of **Richard G. Hardorf's Washita Memories** is now available from the **University of Oklahoma Press**. Lt. Gov. (Brevet Brigadier General) George A. Custer was probably undeserved of the fame for his Battle of the Washita (River). It was a surprise attack on Chief Black Kettle's peaceful Cheyenne village. After destroying the Indians' lodges and horse herd, Custer hurriedly pulled out, leaving a unit under his second-in-command, Major Joel Elliott, to be butchered by counter-attacking hostiles. Hardorf has collected



eyewitness accounts of the bloody battle.

Downstream: Encounters with the Colorado River, by **Karen Halverson** (\$34.95), is a photo-essay from the **University of California Press**. Seventy-odd pictures by the author document her sojourn on the Southwest's great river, running for 1,500 miles from the Rockies to a dry bed just short of the Gulf of California below the Mexican line.

Ms. Halverson has examined the river by car, on foot and aboard a raft. She is concerned with the spirit of this once-wild river and has captured its beauty with her camera. An earlier reviewer termed her photo technique "visual mapping."

The pictures are large format color images, well-produced. Besides the river, per se, and the Grand Canyon, the author studies such "adjuncts" as Glen Canyon, Dinosaur National Monument, Canyonlands National Park, and lakes Powell and Mead. Also the dams that have tamed the waters. William Deverell contributes a brief history of the use—and abuse—of the river by man.

Robert G. Carter's On the Border with Mackenzie is flawed by the author's exaggerations (and perhaps some fabrications), yet it remains an essential on-the-spot history of the Indian fights in Texas during the 1870's. Originally published in 1935, it is a key source on the remarkable cavalryman, Col. Ranald Mackenzie. It is now re-published (\$39.95) by the **Texas State Historical Association**. (Box 28527, Austin, 78750.)

The Platte: Channels In Time, **University of Nebraska Press** (\$12.95), is by **Paul A. Johnagard**. First published in 1984, this **Bison Books** reprint bears a new preface and afterword. The author is a biologist and ecologist, not a historian, so the emphasis here is on natural history. However, he does not skimp on the human story of the major route westward for explorers, 49ers, Mormons, &c.

Jim Nolen's A Pocketful of History (\$25), from **DeCapo Press**, is a light-weight, anecdotal view of the history of our 50 states as viewed by numismatists collecting the US Mint's State Quarters program.

PICTURES WANTED

Don't forget your camera when your corral or posse has a special event. We like pictures to put in our bulletins or our web page.

Westerners International
1700 NE 63rd Street
Oklahoma City, OK 73111

Harold Tristler is Latest Vice-President of WI

Since taking on the task of International President of Westerners International it has been a goal of **David Carter** to get the vice-president program restarted.

Last month we introduced **Bernice Landers** of the **Jedidiah Smith Corral** as the new VP of District Seven. This month we introduce **Harold Tristler** of the **Fort Smith Corral** as the new VP of District Eight.

"David Carter asked me back in the 1990s to help him put on the summer rendezvous for Westerners International," writes Tristler.

"It sounded like a lot of fun to me and we hosted the event bringing people from all over the country (and from Europe) to Fort Smith, Arkansas, for a real wild west good time," he continued.

"I have been hooked up with the Westerners ever since. If it's western history—sign me up—from history festivals to recreating Judge Parker's trials, right in his court room; to bringing the U.S. Marshal Museum to Fort Smith. I want to help and our little corral is always right there too. What a group!" he said.

Remarked David Carter, the information I requested of Harold Tristler to send is "modest to say the least. Whatever 'Western' has happened in Fort Smith for the past 15 years has had Harold's signature on it and in most cases from a leadership role."

"He has been instrumental

in portraying all phases of Frontier Life from the mountain men and fur trappers right up to the 1900s. He has several large tents, a chuckwagon that he uses as well as authentic clothing and a knack for telling stories that few possess," said Carter.

"His wife **Susan** not only supports his efforts but delivers programs of her own including camp followers, scrub women, period clothing, hat making, soap making, Dutch oven cooking and early western life in general. Both of them are registered nurses at our local regional hospital and a credit to Fort Smith," he said.

Carter is still on the trail of a "few good men and women" interested in being a vice-president.

The job of a Westerner VP is easy: that of a Goodwill Ambassador for the most part. The VP is a member of the full board of WI. The VP makes an effort to check in with the corrals and posses in his or her area by mail or e-mail or telephone. The VP makes an effort to visit corrals in the area if possible.

It is not the job of a VP to tell any group what they should be doing or make any other suggestions, unless they are asked. It is their job to make other Westerners feel that our organization really cares about them and is willing to help if needed.

So if David comes calling do give serious consideration to the vice-presidents group.

WI's Youngest Member?



Possibly those of us looking for new members of our Corrals and Posses are not looking in the right places.

Paul McClure has sent this information about the youngest member of the **San Dimas Corral, Jackson Thomas**.

"Jackson is an energetic 19-month-old cowpoke. His two favorite things are his best friend Froggie and his brown cowboy boots. He likes afternoons at the playground, trips to the pool and a good game of basketball. While his personal library is extensive he prefers such classics as "Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus", "Cowboy Bunnies" and "Good Night Johnny Tractor".

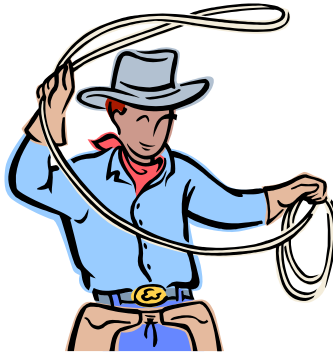
"Several happy trails have led him to Malvern, PA; Richmond, VA, and most recently San Dimas, CA. Today he calls Arlington, VA, home where he lives with his mom, dad and a gun-shy hunting dog named Stella. His Nanny and Pop-Pop are **Peggy** and **Ralph Thomas**."

Jackson, you will notice, has his own corral badge.

CORRAL

San Francisco Westerners had their annual rendezvous May 22 at the Palace Hotel, the history of which goes back to the post days of the Gold Rush and Champagne Days of the city. Built in 1875 the hotel was reported to be the largest, most luxurious and costly hotel in the world, It was devastated by the 1906 earthquake and was completely rebuilt to open its doors again in December of 1909. The group met for a morning tour of the hotel, followed by lunch in the garden court.

Scottsdale Corral met in May to hear **Dori Griffin** present the program "Mapping an Imaginary Arizona: George Avey/Arizona Highways/ Illustrated Cartography. This



group raises a little money by raffling off books members donate. Tickets are \$1 each or six for \$5.

"Life's Railway to Hell: The Miserable Life and Unethical Times of 'Judge' Roy Bean" is the intriguing title of the May program at the **Boulder Corral**. Fortunately we may all someday get a chance to read the findings of presenter **John Milton Hutchins** hopes to someday produce a small book on the subject.

ROUNDUP

Another interesting program title is "The Bandit, The Baron and the Bad Bad Girl". This program was presented at the June meeting of the **Prescott Corral**. Speaker was **Jan Cleere**.

Members of the **John G. Neihardt Corral** heard a program by Rusty Weisman on "Tracing Down the Historic Roads of Southeast Missouri." An archaeologist of the Missouri Department of Transportation. He used Land Office records, travel accounts, postal records and other sources to establish the locations of these roads, including the Cherokee Trail of Tears and Sterling Price's march to the Battle of Fort Davidson in 1864.

Maverick Corral Has New Member

(Editor's Note: Recently the Home Ranch received an e-mail from a gentleman in Wales wondering if there was any way he, who lived so far from the "Wild West", could somehow be a member of Westerners. He has questions. So we signed him up for the Maverick Corral and asked him to tell us a little about himself. His reply follows:)

My name is **Harry Hayfield** and I am resident of Cardigan County, Wales, and have made submissions to my local community theatre that have encompassed the works of Jules Verne and Alexandre Dumas. I decided that in the 150th year of the election of President Abe Lincoln, it might be an idea to submit a story based on that most mis-represented piece of American history—the Wild West.

However, that is where I come a slight cropper (if you will excuse the Limey term). Whilst I have a working knowledge of the history of the West (including the most memorable events such as the Gunfight at the OK Corral, Custer's Last Stand and of course the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill in California) I do not know the fundamental basics of the Wild West. For instance, if someone met someone in a Western town did they say "Ah, good morning my dear sir" or "Mornin' Pardner" or did they draw and fire without so much as a nod of the head. It is these elements that I am seeking assistance in and therefore approached the Home Ranch where I was advised there would be plenty of people who would be able to assist me (and although located in Wales, perhaps one day I can return the favor by being able to walk into a barren town overly laden with Colts and other guns and say in the best Western cliché "Reach for your guns, pardner!")

Harry Hayfield harryhayfield@google.com

BUCKSKIN BULLETIN

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E-mail
WIHomeRanch@gmail.com

Annual Dues
\$5 per member

WI Home Ranch Bunch

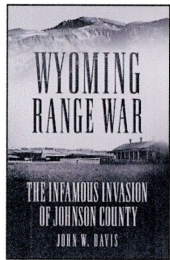
Kent McInnis, David Carter, Don Reeves, John Marshall, Leon Nelson, Bill Deupree, Mary Marvel, Cheryl McInnis, Noel Kruger, Shirley Carter, Fred Marvel, Jim Argo, John & Melvena Heisch, Dennis & Sandra Noble, Jerry Burson, Ed Kelsay, Burnis Argo.

Westerners International

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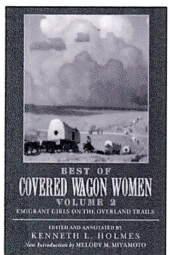
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WYOMING RANGE WAR The Infamous Invasion of Johnson County

By John W. Davis
\$29.95 HARDCOVER · 384 PAGES, 25 B&W ILLUS.

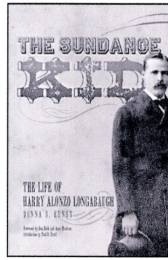
Wyoming attorney John W. Davis retells the story of the West's most notorious range war. Having delved more deeply than previous writers into land and census records, newspapers, and trial transcripts, Davis has produced an all-new interpretation. He looks at the conflict from the perspective of Johnson County residents—those whose home territory was invaded and many of whom the invaders targeted for murder—and finds that, contrary to the received explanation, these people were not thieves and rustlers but legitimate citizens.



BEST OF COVERED WAGON WOMEN Volume 2 Emigrant Girls on the Overland Trails

Edited by Kenneth Holmes
\$19.95 ORIGINAL PAPERBACK · 256 PAGES, 6 B&W ILLUS.

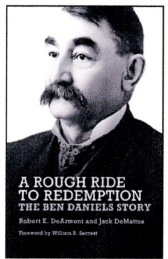
The diaries and letters of women on the overland trails in the mid- to late nineteenth century are treasured documents. These eleven selections, drawn from the multivolume *Covered Wagon Women* series, present the best first-person trail accounts penned by women in their teens who traveled West between 1846 and 1898. Ranging in age from eleven to nineteen, unmarried and without children of their own, these diarists had experiences different from those of older women who carried heavier responsibilities with them on the trail.



THE SUNDANCE KID The Life of Harry Alonzo Longabaugh

By Donna B. Ernst
\$29.95 HARDCOVER · 264 PAGES, 45 B&W ILLUS.
\$19.95 PAPERBACK

He gained renown as the sidekick of Butch Cassidy, but the Sundance Kid—whose real name was Harry Alonzo Longabaugh—led a fuller life than history or Hollywood has allowed. Donna B. Ernst, a relative of Longabaugh through marriage, has spent more than a quarter century researching his life. She now brings to print the most thorough account ever of one of the West's most infamous outlaws, tracing his life from his childhood in Pennsylvania to his involvement with the Wild Bunch and, in 1908, to his reputed death by gunshot in Bolivia.



A ROUGH RIDE TO REDEMPTION The Ben Daniels Story

By Robert K. DeArment and Jack DeMattos
\$29.95 HARDCOVER · 264 PAGES, 22 B&W ILLUS.

"If you want to understand the Code of the West, *A Rough Ride to Redemption* is a good place to start. Historians Robert K. DeArment and Jack DeMattos brilliantly trace gunman Ben Daniels's amazing career from the Wyoming Territorial Penitentiary to Dodge City to charging up Kettle Hill with Teddy Roosevelt in the Spanish-American War. A marvelous book!"
—DOUGLAS BRINKLEY, author of *The Wilderness Warrior: Theodore Roosevelt and the Crusade for America*



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