

Summary:

This collection contains works of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and memoir relating to the borderlands of the American Southwest. It is both cerebral (historical works of scholarly inquiry), as well as evocative (reflecting deeply personal experience). The collection has grown organically over a number of years as an attempt to better understand the complex interplay of human and natural history in a tangled web of meaning, contrast, and struggle that defines existence on the marginal fringe--the borderlands of modern America.

Borderlands —A Manifesto of Overlap

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One of the more dramatic recollections from my childhood was lurching over rutted roads with my father to fight a wildfire in Apache Pass near our ranch home in Dos Cabezas, Arizona. In the jovial, neighborly conversation following the “fight,” I recall the old-timers discussing the history of the Butterfield Stage route that ran through the smoking pasture in front of us, and more veiled allusions to Spanish explorers even earlier. Someone had once found a heavily rusted Castilian horseshoe buried in the tall grass. As a nine-year old, I listened spellbound. I didn’t know it then, but quenching that grassfire simultaneously ignited an intellectual passion to deeply understand the history of the land I love intimately—the complicated borderlands I call home. I recall the shock upon learning that *Fronteras*, the name of the Mexican village where we bought tortillas, was not (as I had assumed) an allusion to the U.S./Mexico border, but was so named long before there *was* a border—indeed long before there was a United States. This “border” land is indeed what the Spanish termed it—a mystery.

I began this collection in order to understand its history, in order to makes sense of the apparent inconsistencies and contrasts of human and natural landscapes that are both starkly beautiful and dangerously fraught. My family raises cattle in mountainous rangeland near the Arizona-New Mexico-Mexico border -- three artificial lines in an

emphatically real landscape. It's "border country" in more ways than one; our ranch lies in the interstitial between low desert and subalpine forest—in the margin between vastly different biomes. We are on the Mogollon Rim of the Colorado Plateau, where grass and junipers, wolves and men, struggle for dominance. It is, in the glossy rhetoric of *Arizona Highways*, "America's Last Primitive Area." 'Primitive' is a revealing choice of words: technically a federal designation, it is also (and mainly) an aesthetic distinction, a distinction made by people from densely urban areas about places dramatically unlike their own. There is nothing inherently 'primitive' about the geology, ecology, or anthropology of our home, merely a distinctly "untrammled" feel about the place; modern development and teeming throngs seem very, very far away. Politically, culturally, and ecologically, our region is difficult to categorize. This reality, and the tensions it creates is what this collection attempts to address.

The works annotated here have helped me to understand the unique tides and flows of human history as it has washed, like ancient seas, over the region I call home. Being of a scientific-humanist bent, I began the collection as a child, poring over *Archaeology Southwest* journals and historical tracts about the human element in this landscape. A thousand years ago, what is now our ranch was centered upon a great trade route that flourished between the cultural centers of Mesoamerica far to the south and the Pueblos far to the north. Tropical parrot feathers and chocolate residue have been found nearly to Colorado, and we have found beautifully worked seashells in pastures 500 miles from the nearest ocean. Obsidian, which contains a precise mineralogical signature and can therefore be exactly traced, was mined here and traded to Kayenta-speaking southern enclaves far to our southwest. The Aztecs themselves perhaps passed through here in 1064 on their epic journey south from a drought-stricken *Aztlán* to Mexico. There they

conquered and subjugated native peoples before being conquered and subjugated in turn by Hernán Cortés in 1521. Dominion in the borderlands is merely, and always, provisional. After this dive into the paleo-history of the borderlands, I next began enthusiastically collecting the first documented accounts of this region—accounts from 16th century Spanish *entradas*.

The first Old World inhabitant to set eyes on this borderlands landscape was, remarkably enough, a black man. Esteban the Moor was a member of the almost mythically star-crossed, shipwrecked quartet of Spaniards that first sighted permanent houses south of here in 1536. Esteban and his fellow travelers had survived an epic, eight-year journey from Florida to Mexico, and they began their final leg homeward after approaching the modern Mexico/Arizona border. The account of *Álvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca* has been a centerpiece of the Spanish portion of my collection, and has generated more questions than it has answered, deepening my curiosity and (of course) requiring ever more books in an ever-growing collection...

Fray Marcos de Niza, the “barefoot friar,” who accompanied Esteban and acted as a reconnaissance patrol for the Coronado expedition (which forms a significant portion of my collection), embodies many of the contradictions inherent in the Spanish *conquista*. While it is current to assume a simple and ruthless exploitation of land and souls, the truth is more complicated. The King’s surrogate, Viceroy Mendoza, was concerned about elements of Spanish behavior and therefore ordered his expeditionary monk to:

Tell the Indians that I send you in the name of His Majesty, to see that they are treated well. And say that he grieves because of the wrongs they have suffered. Anyone who does evil to them will be punished. Assure them they will no longer be made slaves or removed from their lands, but will be free, and that they should put aside any fears and recognize God, Our Lord, who is in heaven, and the King, who is placed on earth by God to govern it...ⁱ

This was not merely cynical lip-service: a great many explorers were in fact tried and punished for abuses against natives in the courts of the Spanish empire, starting with Columbus and notably including both Cortés and Coronado. Coronado's armed Spaniards were entering an uncharted wilderness of deserts and mountains; a land more unknown to them than Mars is to us today. They passed just east of what is now our eastern ranch boundary, close enough for any witness to hear and smell the thousands of sheep, cattle, and horses he brought along. These were the first domestic livestock to graze this region, beginning a tradition that remains a cornerstone of the history of the American West. Coronado went on to fight the townsfolk who had slain Esteban at Zuni; flattened lead arquebus balls have been excavated from the base of the stone walls at Cíbola (Hawikku), evidence of overwhelming firepower in an epic and convoluted collision of cultures.

This cultural element represents another stage in my collection's development. In trying to understand the indigenous background to Spanish colonialism, I've added a considerable canon of ethnohistorical literature. I've held the red, white and blue "faceted chevron" trade beads recovered from Coronado's centuries-old campsites, beads intended to be traded to the native inhabitants of this region. I have traveled to the glassworks of the Island of Murano in Venice, Italy where they were originally made and shockingly found that the same bead design is being made to this day. Such is evidence that in this rugged land, the boundary between ancient and modern can be disarmingly thin.

James Ohio Pattie, native of Missouri, came west trapping for beaver pelts in 1826. He was the first Anglo-American to describe (in awed detail) the land we now occupy. Not far from our headquarters, Pattie attacked a bear in its cave in a foolish

display of bravado. The encounter left Pattie shaken, but ten gallons of bear oil soothed his nerves and (later) saved his expedition from starvation. At “Battle Hill,” on our lower irrigated pastures, an armed exchange with the Aravaipa Apache led to almost complete ruin: not only were the party’s horses stolen, but the carefully cached trove of 200 beaver pelts (a year’s effort and perhaps 10 years’ salary) was plundered. Upon their return to Santa Fe after partially rebuilding their trapping collection, the Spanish governor summarily confiscated it for lack of a permit, leaving the party in abject poverty. The Patties had discovered the overweening power of artificial borders.

Kit Carson came through here. Returning from California with Ewing Young in 1829, he encountered the same band of Apaches on our ranch, and recovered 200 stolen horses that had been raided from Mexican settlements to the south. It is an indication of the era’s travel conditions that Carson’s men promptly ate ten of them, kept a choice handful, and turned the rest loose, being unable to manage such a herd on their trek to Santa Fe. This land giveth and it taketh away.

Aldo Leopold once roamed here. Scientist, hunter, forester, farmer and conservationist, famed for his now classic “A Sand County Almanac,” he has entered the pantheon of environmental literature as the poet laureate of ecology, the prophet of Wilderness as state policy. He was not yet twenty-three when he first set foot in this country in 1909; his employer, the United States Forest Service, was itself barely five years old. The mesas and valleys were still fresh with the tracks of Geronimo, the legendary Apache leader who was born in the great broken caldera where the Gila River begins. That region now bears not Geronimo’s name, but Leopold’s. Aldo arrived here the year Geronimo died.

Aldo Leopold's work represents another phase in my ongoing collection about this region. He is a complex character in this story: a determined advocate for conservation, he singlehandedly led the United States Congress to designate in 1924 what is now more than half a million acres of "untrammeled" landscape; America's first "Wilderness." Yet he lived out his last and happiest days, however, on a private farm in Wisconsin. A proponent of wildfire suppression in the West, he died while putting out a wildfire on his neighbor's land—the last pages of his last notebook are charred. Leopold was a complex man who defies modern typecasting: a naturalist who loved to shoot animals and a technocrat who loved poetry. His legacy, and the legacy of the Progressive experiment, is a complicated one, a legacy that heavily influences the land upon which we work.

This nexus between politics and environmental history is where my collection proceeds next. The environmental history of Elinor Melville (*A Plague of Sheep*) help me to understand the impacts of domestic livestock introduction while Daniel Botkin's work (*The Moon in the Nautilus Shell*) helps form a new consciousness about landscape alteration and dynamic ecology.

In short, this collection describes a personal and historiographical trajectory--an attempt to weave new revelations from multiple viewpoints into a comprehensive whole. With any luck, this collection can help make some sense of a kaleidoscope of competing factors that make the borderlands what they are today.

Annotated Bibliography:

Adorno, Rolena and P.C. Pautz. *Álvar Núñez Cabeza De Vaca*. 3 vols.: University of Nebraska Press, 1999.

This lovely three-volume set is an enviable work of historical compilation. It updates, annotates, and re-translates the narrative of Álvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca who famously was shipwrecked in the Narváez expedition off the coast of Florida. Most of the 600 members died through the ungodly events that unfolded, leaving just four men to survive the ordeal and the eight-year trek to Mexico. Cabeza de Vaca had noted with ringing condemnation in his *relación* that his first encounter with “civilized” Spaniards was with a cadre of marauding slavers, who were known to the local Indians as having “no other purpose but to steal everything they found and never give anything to anyone.” De Vaca’s damning account was crucial for authorities in the court who used the testimony to help reign in wayward subjects. For all their vaunted pride and greed, it seems that the career choice of Conquistador was a fairly sure path to humility, chains and poverty.

Altman, Ida. *The War for Mexico's West: Indians and Spaniards in New Galicia, 1524-1550*. University of New Mexico Press, 2010.

Anderson, V.D.J. *Creatures of Empire: How Domestic Animals Transformed Early America*. Oxford University Press, 2006.

Focusing on the first seventy-five years of English colonisation, Anderson examines the ways in which ‘animals not only produced changes in the land but also in the hearts and minds and behavior of the peoples who dealt with them.’ While the geography is clearly well outside my focus area, it nevertheless presents a useful contrasting analog to address how domestic animals were received by indigenous peoples, and presents a model for understanding how domestic animals were adopted by the indigenous Pueblos in the Cíbola, Tiguex, and Quivira regions.

Bolton, Herbert E. *Coronado: Knight of Pueblos and Plains*. University of New Mexico Press, 1949 (2015).

Botkin, Daniel. *The Moon in the Nautilus Shell: Discordant Harmonies Reconsidered*. Oxford University Press, 2012.

Doelle, William and Jeffrey J. Clark. "Preservation Archaeology in the San Pedro Valley." *Archaeology Southwest* 17, no. 3 (2003).

Engineers, United States Army Corps of Topographical, W.H. Emory, J.W. Abert, P.S.G. Cooke, and A.R. Johnston. *Notes of a Military Reconnaissance: From Fort Leavenworth, in Missouri, to San Diego, in California, Including Parts of the Arkansas, Del Norte, and Gila Rivers*. Wendell and Van Benthuysen, printers, 1848.

Flint, Richard and Shirley. *Documents of the Coronado Expedition, 1539-1542*. Edited by Richard and Shirley Flint Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2012.

This work, a beautifully annotated volume of the proceedings of the Coronado *entrada*, is a collection of all known documentary evidence relating to this epochal event. Manuscripts, many of which appear in print for the first time, include native texts, reports on routing and planning, descriptions of the Fray Marcos de Niza reconnaissance expedition, and assessments of ethnohistorical impacts on the Zuni, Moki, Tewa, Querecho, and Quiviran peoples. The Flints established a firm academic foundation with this publication and followed it up with works that addressed the multiple implications of Coronado's *entrada*. The book is a hefty pleasure, the kind of work you can flip to at random and find a tantalizing historical morsel to ponder.

Flint, Richard. *Great Cruelties Have Been Reported: The 1544 Investigation of the Coronado Expedition*. University of New Mexico Press, 2002 (2013).

Simultaneously complicating and confirming the prevailing metanarrative of the "Black Legend" of ruthless Spanish imperialism, this work is a compendium of the testimony provided to the legal inquiry (*pesquia*) convened after the return of Coronado in 1542. Undertaken by *oidor* Tejada, the report is the sworn testimony of fourteen members of the Coronado *entrada*, witnesses to events that triggered complaints of cruelty to the Spanish crown. The accounts, while broadly similar in tenor (generally minimizing reports of cruelty), nevertheless cast a revealing ethnohistorical light on the interactions and responses engendered by the collision and cohabitation of European and Indigenous peoples in the frontier/borderland setting of the mid 16th century.

Hadley, Drum. *Voices of the Borderlands*. Tucson: Rio Nuevo Publishers, 2005.

Hadley evokes the borderlands through poetry. A rancher from a venerable old family, he deftly weaves the voices of three cultures: Indian, Spanish, and Anglo. His perspective is informed by hands-on toil, and the raw aching beauty of the landscape. This sort of hard-nosed aesthetic strikes a particular chord that resonates with all who are familiar with the borderlands. A short example:

The Borderline
If you listen closely,
There are the other whispersoft voices
To be heard along this Borderline.
Not strong, not loud, not imposing,
But they are there.

Hartmann, W.K. *Searching for Golden Empires: Epic Cultural Collisions in Sixteenth-Century America*. University of Arizona Press, 2014.

Von Humboldt, Alexander and J. Black. *Political Essay on the Kingdom of New Spain*. I. Riley, 1811.

Jacoby, Karl. *Shadows at Dawn: An Apache Massacre and the Violence of History*. Penguin Publishing Group, 2009.

McCarthy, Cormac. *The Border Trilogy*. Everyman, 2008.

Cormac McCarthy, who is decidedly *not* from the border region, or at least not this one (he was raised in Tennessee), has nevertheless become my region's poet-laureate. His prose is wanton and powerful, and evokes the complicated cultural strains that define the modern borderlands. Though his *Trilogy* is centered somewhat farther east of the center of my personal orbit, the forces and effects are nevertheless entirely relevant and recognizable.

----. *All The Pretty Horses*. New York: Vintage. 1993.

----. *Cities of the Plain*. New York: Vintage. 1999.

----. *Blood Meridian*. New York: Vintage. 1985.

Schwennesen, Paul. Personal maps collection. *Spain & New World: 1589-Present*.

Sheridan, Thomas E., Stewart B. Koyiyumptewa, Anton Daughters, Dale S. Brenneman, T.J. Ferguson, Leigh Kuwanwisiwma, and LeeWayne Lomayestewa. *Moquis and Kastiilam: Hopis, Spaniards, and the Trauma of History, 1540-1679*. Vol. 1, Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2015.

Moquis and Kastiilam represents perhaps the most directly applicable use of New Conquest/New Philology techniques in the era of the Coronado expedition—albeit with a necessary reliance on oral, rather than documentary records. One of the primary challenges of ethnohistory in the *Tierra Nueva* region is the lack of indigenous sources and documents. Reliance on archaeological data, as well a close reading of Spanish documents has proven relatively fruitful for attempting a circumstantial reconstruction of the period. The addition (in this case) of indigenous oral history suggests a further layering of analysis. For instance, Pedro de Castañeda's somewhat mystifying remark that the “the *Moki* had received word that Cíbola had fallen to the most ferocious people who rode animals that ate people” can be explicated by both a close reading of the Spanish document as well as a comparison to the extant oral tradition of modern-day Hopis.

Melville, Elinor G.K. *A Plague of Sheep: Environmental Consequences of the Conquest of Mexico*. Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Melville addresses what has come to be known as the “biological conquest of the New World.” Analyzing the sixteenth century history of highland central Mexico, it shows how European expansion was aided by the environmental and social changes brought about by the introduction of Old World species. It argues that the impact of Old World grazing animals in New World ecosystems enabled the Spanish takeover of land, and explains how environmental changes shaped colonial societies. This methodology is a useful template as well as a provocative challenge to my understanding of similar forces at play in the livestock introduction of the Coronado era.

Murrieta, Cynthia Radding. *Wandering Peoples: Colonialism, Ethnic Spaces, and Ecological Frontiers in Northwestern Mexico, 1700-1850*. Duke University Press, 1997.

Radding’s study focuses on three indigenous groups of northern Sonora: the Opatas, Eudeves, and Pimas. Though essentially sedentary by European arrival, their forced interactions with outsiders—missionaries, Bourbon and Mexican state authorities, and other ethnic groups in the region—led to their adopting mobility as part of a strategy for coping and surviving. Opatas and Pimas repeatedly acquiesced to being recruited into militias to fight nomadic Indians at the edges of the imperial frontier, but in doing so they also reinforced colonial claims on their labor. Radding’s work is a fruitful model for thinking at the intersection of ethnohistory and environmental history.

Nabhan, Gary P., and P. Mirocha. *Gathering the Desert*. University of Arizona Press, 2016.

Gary Nabhan’s book is a delightful, naturalist romp through the biota of my homeland. Not only the biology of the flora and fauna, but the ethnography is examined as well. The historic interaction between mankind and nature is a theme that is every bit as decisive now as in centuries past.

Nentvig, Juan. *Rudo Ensayo: A Description of Sonora and Arizona in 1764*. Edited by A.F. Pradeau and R.R. Rasmussen: University of Arizona Press, (1764) 2017.

Scott, John C. *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. Yale University Press, 1998.

Weber, David J. *The Spanish Frontier in North America*. Yale University Press, 1992.

David Weber’s *The Spanish Frontier in North America* brings the nuanced insights of the transformation in Latin American History known as the New Conquest History into the northern fringes of Spanish controlled territory. Exemplifying the work being done within the New Synthesis of Coronado scholarship, and with roots in the New Philology

(or “Lockhart School”), it establishes a more sophisticated understanding of the impacts of Spanish colonialism—complicating the “overwhelming force” narrative of complete Spanish dominion. *The Spanish Frontier* documents the establishment, expansion, and fluctuations of the Spanish frontier and explains the larger context of a Hispanic empire that stretched from California to *La Florida*.

Weber, David J. *Bárbaros: Spaniards and Their Savages in the Age of Enlightenment*. Yale University Press, 2005.

Winship, George Parker. *The Journey of Coronado 1540-1542*. 1896 (1904).

Winship’s historical work represents the *fin de siècle* style of scholarship that promoted the credulous, triumphalist narrative. This mode, which seems almost quaint to modern sensibilities, is nevertheless important in its own right. It represents a bygone era of “vigorous” history, which by emphasizing Euro-African agency simultaneously (if unintentionally, perhaps) reduced indigenous agency. Borderland history is in no way complete without an understanding of what made prior histories incomplete themselves.

ⁱ William Hartmann. *Searching for Golden Empires*. Tucson: University of Arizona, 2014. Print. Cited in Richard Flint and Shirley Cushing Flint. *The Latest Word from 1540*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 2011. Print.