

## Book Reviews

*Tecumseh and the Prophet: The Shawnee Brothers Who Defied a Nation.* By Peter Cozzens. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2020. Pp. xi, 533. \$35.00, 978-1524733254.)

American Indian revivalism did not begin in the Old Northwest with the Shawnee brothers Tecumseh and Tenskwatawa the Prophet. But it is their shared vision, not those of Handsome Lake (Seneca), Hillas Hadjo (Creek), or Neolin (Delaware) that is best known, though their cause—righteous or devious, depending on one’s view—is often miscast. Their plea for unity and a return to the old ways failed like most prophetic Nativist movements, the last led by the Paiute shaman Wovoka whose 1890 Ghost Dance cult sparked Wounded Knee’s bloodbath.

Of the two Shawnees, today only Tecumseh is praised, his heroic portrayals in print, film, and theatrical presentations (like the late author Allan W. Eckert’s outdoor drama *Tecumseh!*) often deifying him at the devaluing of his brother’s legacy. Author Peter Cozzens recasts this imbalance, claiming, rightly, that “without Tenskwatawa, there would have been no Tecumseh.” The older brother’s tribal alliances, “built for political and military purposes,” were spawned by his sibling’s ideology “aimed at the moral cleansing and spiritual rebirth” of Indian unity to form a mutually beneficial relationship. “Tecumseh,” he says, “dominated but never entirely replaced Tenskwatawa as leader of their pan-Indian confederacy.”

Cozzens’ thesis is actually not new, though he freshens details about the two men and their mutual cause; more about that later. His dual biography is reminiscent of classic narrative history writ large with a twenty-first century sensibility.

The Prologue’s opening on Point Pleasant’s battlefield, October 10<sup>th</sup>, 1774, with the killing of Tecumseh and Tenskwatawa’s father cast the crucible of conflict: Long Knife invaders versus Middle Ground Algonquins, the most aggrieved being the Shawnee, driven from Kentucky and Ohio by a British- and Dutch-fueled Iroquoian empire’s lust for fur. Cozzens’ overview of the Beaver Wars and Shawnee culture gives cause to the tribe’s migrations while foreshadowing the portending drama. His maps are superb and bibliography substantial. His text is amply illustrated.

Part one tells the brothers’ backstories. The second marks Tenskwatawa’s rise as a seer in tandem with Tecumseh’s ascendancy as a charismatic but polarizing leader who fails to entice southern Muskogean and western Osages into joining his Algonquin confederacy, opposed by ranking pro-American Shawnees. Part three’s drama of loss and tragedy is set against the War of 1812. It is the usual Indian-Anglo tale of aggression versus accommodation framed in alcohol-fueled cultural dissolution and despondency, material dependency, vanishing game, and broken treaties coupled with clashing lifeways and world views.

Cozzens' portrayal of Tecumseh's visits in Tennessee and southward is revealing. Readers will value his clarity of the region's land and rivers and of Tecumseh's dealings with Chickamauga, Chickasaw, and Creek leaders like George Colbert and Pushmataha, Mushulatubbee and Dragging Canoe, and facts about Nashville outposts Buchanan's and Zeigler's Stations.

North of the Ohio, stalwarts like Simon Kenton, William Wells, William Henry Harrison, Blue Jacket, and Little Turtle appear amid secret dispatches from Canada and ham-fisted policies of Washington D.C. Readers will agonize along Josiah Harmar's and Arthur St. Clair's besotted death marches and then, the reckoning of "Mad" Anthony Wayne's redemptive furies glutting American revenge.

Cozzens is a master of compression. It is helpful if one knows, say, about Lord Dunmore's War or Long Hunter treks over the Blue Ridge, Kentucky's opening, the Revolution's western theater, and the War of 1812's rumblings. Students of the First Far West will recognize characters and events herein, knowing this story's end with Tecumseh's fateful 1813 rendezvous past Detroit at river Thames, Shawnee dispersal west of the Mississippi, and the Prophet's waning days set against his valiant brother's canonization into history's annals.

There are a few gaffes. Boonesborough was not founded in 1774. Shawnees did not dance around "totem poles." Cozzens' sense of the era's material culture and weaponry is spare. His so-called "untold story"—that "Tenskwatawa . . . created a vital doctrine of religious and cultural revitalization that unified the disparate tribes of the Old Northwest"—was earlier told in R. David Edmunds' *The Shawnee Prophet* (1982), then retold in Gregory Evans Dowd's *A Spirited Resistance* (1992), and capstoned in John Sugden's *Tecumseh: A Life* (2002), a pioneering work Cozzens "cheerfully acknowledges" he "owes a great immense debt to."

There is little ground-breaking here to those aware of the era and its players. Still, as in Cozzens' books on the Civil War, he is meticulous with the facts and a superb story-teller, making *Tecumseh and the Prophet*, winner of 2021 Western Writers of America Spur Award for Biography, a solid piece of historical truth driven by a brisk narrative and worthy of any eastern frontier or American Indian Studies bookshelf.

Ted Franklin Belue

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*Finding Daniel Boone: His Last Days in Missouri and the Strange Fate of His Remains.* By Ted Franklin Belue (Charleston: The History Press, 2020. Pp. 224. \$23.99, 978-1467145886).

Ted Franklin Belue's *Finding Daniel Boone, His Last Days in Missouri & the Strange Fate of His Remains* successfully mixes three genres; it's part memoir/travelogue, part mystery, and part

historical, well documented research. The book's central question—are Boone's remains in Frankfort, Kentucky or in the Boone family plot in Missouri—floats and shape-shifts over the narrative, much like the ghost of Boone himself and the misconceptions about him that abound. As a Kentuckian for the last eighteen years, I was inclined to put my faith in the Frankfort reinternment, but my devil's advocate side could imagine, were I a Missourian, that the Kentuckians had exhumed and carted back the wrong bones. Deconstructing a mystery while still leaving its essence intact, as the author does, is no mean accomplishment.

Central to this feat is the memoir/travelogue scaffolding Belue constructs to hang his copious and well documented facts and observations about Boone's life and times during the period he investigates. The reader rides sidekick along with Belue as he interviews Boone experts and forensic scholars. In this sense, the book is picaresque, a road trip—a standard literary trope from *The Odyssey* to *Don Quixote* to modern novels. Belue rightly points out many windmill/giant misconceptions, and he seems most peeved at two—that Daniel Boone wore a coonskin hat and died at the Alamo. He didn't, though this seems to be a common misunderstanding among the cashiers and waitresses who weigh in about Boone, when asked. While it might be fair to comment that such stereotyping doesn't give the waitstaff dignity, it's equally just to highlight that *Finding Daniel Boone* isn't a novel, so the writer can't simply concoct uplifting dialogue, given the constrictors of nonfiction. Several times in the book, Belue and his interviewees find themselves correcting such misconceptions, and gradually, the reader realizes he's using the coonskin hat and Alamo as a refrain or motif that's central to the book: how do you separate history from legend.

Belue, a 2021 winner of the Western Writers of America's Spur Award, is an expert in all things Boone and in the providence of artifacts; one interviewee correctly points out that there are more supposedly authentic Boone long rifles than any one man of the times could have owned. How Boone came to be reburied in Franklin is both darkly funny and shrouded in myth itself; while publicly touted as a memorial for a favorite son, there were very real real estate reasons—it would bump grave plot sales and provide a possible tourist attraction. Belue chronicles this beautifully, culminating in his ironic and hilarious depiction of Frankfort's Bicentennial Boone Burial Sesquicentennial celebration. The description of the houseboat funeral armada and the subsequent snatches of a speech delivered by a Boone relative deliver comic relief. Dismayed at the boat revelers dressed in Spring Break attire, one Boone relative remarked, "It should have been a solemn occasion." This carnival notion runs through the entire book; several historical experts who lived during the reinternment times have dubious provenances over their claims and backstories. There's a huckster nature that's inseparable from the whole saga. Belue incorporates this more to highlight the difficulty of distilling legend from history than to disparage belief systems.

Belue's prose is well wrought, a bit heavy on cliff hanger section endings, and at its best when succinctly describing nature and landscapes. There seems to be no tree or plant he can't

name, and this reader appreciated his botanical knowledge and especially his imaginings of Boone's last days. This exactness—shown well in the miniate of preparing Boone's corpse for burial—offers the reader some historical context and a satisfying look-see into pioneer life.

It's hard to bury a legend, as the myth of the man lasts longer than the corpse, but Belue does an excellent job of sifting through the remains of what's known of Boone's reinternment and final resting place, while doing little damage to the frontiersman myth that swallowed such historical figures as America reinvented who it was. I highly recommend *Finding Daniel Boone, His Last Days in Missouri & the Strange Fate of His Remains* to anyone who likes a well-written and compelling read that's been exhaustively researched by an expert.

Dale Ray Phillips

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*West Tennessee: The Land Between the Rivers.* By Sam McGowan (Lexington, KY: CreateSpace Publishing, 2013. Pp. 3, 532, \$24.95, 978-1490905037.)

Sam McGowan calls his native Carroll County West Tennessee's geographical center bounded by east-west boundaries of the Tennessee and Mississippi Rivers and north-south borders of Kentucky and Mississippi. After 12 years in the Air Force, the veteran was a commercial pilot mainly in the South prior to retiring near Houston, Texas. His writings chiefly focus on military topics, especially air related.

The author penned this account as a self-described non-scholar, hoping to appeal to residents who have departed the state and those who remain inside Volunteer land. He smoothly produces the only one volume work about the West Tennessee region.

He begins with West Tennessee as Indian hunting lands, moves fairly quickly through the frontier stage, gives attention to growing North-South differences, understandably devotes considerable attention to the Civil War, which includes "A Lost Cause" chapter, and its political and economic aftermath, considers the increasing impact of technology on farm life and the Great Depression, develops the major transforming role of Twentieth Century wars, and gives insights into how numerous national trends of the post-1950s often influenced Memphis and Jackson more than agricultural residents. Sadly, the more rural places declined economically due to the loss of garment and shoe factories and plants such as Goodyear in Union City and a mower manufacturer in especially hard-hit Carroll County. However, for whatever reason, McGowan does not acknowledge the existence and even expansion of MTD yard machines. Even though he mentions dairying as doing well, it, too, has declined noticeably in northwest Tennessee. He rightly recognizes in the 1900s the population

migration to other parts of Tennessee and well beyond. Several times he touts the origin of barbeque from the Spanish explorations till a sort of explosion of BBQ places since WWII.

Predictably notable West Tennessee personalities get scrutiny. Of course, the author notes Andrew Jackson as a negotiator of the Jackson or Chickasaw Purchase. Soon thereafter he and his brother-in-law John Christmas McLemore, who was associated with Carroll County's Christmasville and McLemoresville, engaged in land speculation throughout the region. The writer labeled each "a bit of a crook" (p. 21 fn 3). Nor is McGowan completely impressed with David "Davy" Crockett unless he and the President clashed over policies. In fact, according to McGowan, West Tennesseans who served in Union troops did so in large measure "because of family hatred for Andrew Jackson's Democratic Party" (p. 137). General Nathan Bedford Forrest comes off well as arguably "the most famous soldier of the war" (p. 128). Further, about the Ft. Pillow controversy, McGowan raises, "The question that is never asked regarding the claim that Forrest ordered his men to offer no quarter is 'so what?' War is brutal" (p. 203). McGowan speculates that Memphian black political and women's activist Ida Wells' anti-lynching efforts likely generated more black fear and white resentment than good around 1900. Then and beyond in McGowan's view, Democrat Edward "Boss" Crump commanded both West Tennessee and state politics until WWII veterans turned against his brand. McGowan gives ink to the fearless anti-crime Sheriff Buford Pusser of McNairy County who became even larger than life in "Walking Tall." Musicians Elvis Presley, Carl Perkins, and Johnny Cash became significantly greater via Memphis based Sam Phillips' Sun Records.

Now and then something different catches a reader's eye. McGowan chooses to spell Ft. Heiman as Heineman (p. 129), Cape Girardeau as Giraudoux (p. 405), and Pittsburg Landing as Pittsburgh Landing. In reference to the rebuilt Crockett cabin in Rutherford, Gibson County, Tennessee, he misplaces it in nearby Dyer (pp. 67, 490). However, those are minor items.

Marvin Downing

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*T. R. M. Howard: Doctor, Entrepreneur, Civil Rights Pioneer.* By David T. Beito and Linda Royster Beito (Oakland, CA: Independent Institute, 2018), previously published as *Black Maverick: T. R. M. Howard's Fight for Civil Rights and Economic Power* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2009. Pp. 339. \$19.95, 9781598133134).

The civil rights movement is perhaps the second most noble endeavor ever undertaken in this country ~ the first being the Civil War ~ and it is still ongoing. As the recent passage of

voter suppression laws prove, the civil rights of all Americans, and African Americans in particular, remain in peril. The success of a movement is measured not only by its accomplishments but by the courage and integrity of its leaders, and that is especially true for civil rights leaders. In America, only white male leaders can get away with significant character flaws. All people of color, as well as white women, who seek to lead others are held to a different standard.

T. R. M. Howard had significant character flaws. At several junctures in their biography of Dr. Howard, University of Alabama Professor David T. Beito and Stillman College Professor Linda Royster Beito ask the question, why has Howard not received his due as a leader of the civil rights movement? The details of his life answer their question.

Theodore Roosevelt Howard was born in Murray, Kentucky, in 1908 to Mary and Arthur Howard. Like many of the African Americans in Murray at the time, the Howards were tobacco factory workers. Howard's father was an abusive man, and Mary left him when Howard was three years old. She later remarried, and Mary was able to find employment as a cook in the home of Murray's most prominent white physician, Dr. Will Mason. The young Howard impressed Dr. Mason, and Mason became a mentor to Howard. With Mason's assistance, Howard graduated from college and medical school. Howard was so personally indebted to Mason that he changed his name to Theodore Roosevelt Mason Howard. This seems to have been Howard's last display of humility.

In 1935, Howard married Helen Boyd, a young socialite from a prominent African American family in Riverside, California, and began a life and lifestyle that always placed him front and center in his surroundings. Following a residency in St. Louis, Howard abandoned plans to go back to Murray and instead used a stint at Riverside Sanitarium in Nashville as the springboard to a position as chief surgeon of a hospital in Mound Bayou, Mississippi. Mound Bayou was an independent black community founded in 1887 by former slaves in the heart of the Delta, and, in many ways, it was the ideal location for Howard. It gave him the professional stature he seemed to crave and it provided an opportunity for him to demonstrate his leadership ability. Already known for his fiery oratorical skills, Howard soon became one of the town's spokesmen and liaison to the surrounding white communities.

According to the Beitos, Howard's views on civil rights during this period were closely aligned with those of Booker T. Washington. In 1951, he was instrumental in the creation of an organization called the Regional Council of Negro Leadership, which was a conservative group composed primarily of local businessmen committed to the separate but equal treatment of Blacks. As NAACP chapters developed, however, the RCNL seemed increasingly out of step with the nascent civil rights movement. Howard soon began to cross swords with the NAACP.

The Beitos' biography, built on interviews with people who knew and worked with Howard, as well as FBI and NAACP documents and countless secondary sources, details Howard's many accomplishments, particularly as he began to move away from his conservative

views and toward a more militant stance on civil rights. His political shift seems to have begun in 1954, post-*Brown*, with the realization that his community had only a handful of registered voters. The RCNL, led by Howard, and the NAACP began a voter registration drive which, at least in the Beitos' telling, was partially responsible for the spread of the infamous Citizens' Councils in Mississippi. When the Citizens' Councils concocted a credit freeze to stop the registration drive, Howard fought back by the use of boycotts. In the Delta, where shopping and banking options were few, Howard encouraged the African American community to use mail order services and developed a relationship with the Tri-State Bank of Nashville, where Black businessmen could get loans to keep them afloat during the credit freeze.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the volatile and dangerous atmosphere in the Mississippi Delta during the mid-1950s. If there is one single incident which captures that atmosphere it is the death of Emmett Till and the subsequent trial of his murderers. The Beitos write that the Till case "propelled Howard into the national black media and civil rights spotlight as never before," and the acquittals of Till's murderers "added to his determination to confront white racial supremacy." (144, 146) He became a frequent speaker at civil rights rallies, and it was during this period that he butted heads with both Thurgood Marshall and J. Edgar Hoover.

The Beitos clearly want to minimize the consequences of Howard's conflicts with far more famous political figures, but those conflicts crop up throughout the book. They include feuds not only with Marshall and Hoover but Medgar Evers, Jesse Jackson, and Elijah Muhammad as well. Other leading civil rights figures, such as Martin Luther King, Jr., seem never to have acknowledged him. Some of his problems with these leaders relate to his medical practice. After the Till case, Howard and his wife left Mississippi and moved to Chicago, where Howard dabbled in Republican politics even as his practice increasingly focused on the performance of illegal abortions. As a Republican, Howard's politics were again at odds with mainstream civil rights. And, while Howard saw abortion as a necessary evil, especially for poor Black women, the ministers within the civil rights movement did not agree ~ even after abortion was legalized in 1973. At the same time, Howard's lifestyle became increasingly lavish, and he spent much of his income on international big game hunts and a home he called Safari Manor. His medical practice and his extravagance attracted the attention of the media and, more importantly, law enforcement. During the last ten years of his life, he was embroiled in two illegal abortion prosecutions, charges of income tax evasion, and a major insurance fraud scandal involving fake accident victims. Although he was never convicted, the publicity surely damaged a reputation that was already marred by his political divisiveness.

Then his wife of 40 years kicked him out of Safari Manor. To their credit in trying to resurrect T. R. M. Howard's memory, the Beitos do not completely ignore his personal failings, but they also do not emphasize them. The truth of the matter is that Howard had an illegitimate child before he married Helen Boyd, and he had at least seven more after they were

married. The affairs from which these children were born were never a secret, and Howard supported at least some of the children financially apparently with Mrs. Howard's knowledge, who tolerated his affairs until the press picked up on them. Helen Howard never comes fully into focus in this book, which is a shame, because she supported Howard through many trials and tribulations and made their home a haven for his friends and political acquaintances first in Mississippi and later in Chicago. Even after having him evicted from their home in 1973, when Dr. Howard had a heart attack in September 1975, Ms. Howard took him back in and cared for him until his death in 1976. Howard, who had personally guaranteed the loans for a medical clinic he built on the South Side of Chicago, died deeply in debt, and Ms. Howard had to depend upon her brother financially for the remainder of her life.

In concluding their biography, the Beitos make the argument that "Howard's memory was a victim of the overpowering legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr." (249) Others, they say, blame his lack of recognition on his abortion practice. It seems more likely that Howard's memory was a victim of his own hubris. Beyond the impediments to his reputation created by the legacy of King and Howard's own abortion practice, it was a combination of his conflicts with other civil rights leaders, his many legal transgressions, and his unsavory and fairly public flaunting of social conventions which led to his absence from the pages of civil rights histories. He was, without question, a fascinating man who merits serious biographical attention, and aspects of his story are very admirable; but Howard's flaws go beyond the occasional indiscretion or wrong step politically. Unlike others whose reputations may have been slightly tarnished over the years, T. R. M. Howard's integrity and credibility were questionable during his lifetime. His tale is a cautionary and ageless one: pride goeth before the fall.

Melinda Meador

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*A Beautiful Star, The Life of Lois Etoile Brewer.* By Bobbie Smith Bryant (Bobbie Smith Bryant, Louisville, Kentucky, 2019. Pp. 1-84. \$7.99, 978-1-7298-2246-3).

This book is a biography of Lois Etoile Brewer told by her great granddaughter. The author derived the title from the meaning of the names Lois and Etoile. Lois in Greek means "beautiful" and Etoile in French means "star" and thus the title *A Beautiful Star*. Bobbie Smith Bryant shares the life story of her relative but does it with the love of a great granddaughter. While the main body of her book sticks to the facts and memories of her family, the book's appendix brings the story to life when the author uses the facts to create historical fiction filling in the details and dialogue about the way things might have been.



Bobbie Smith Bryant is a native Kentuckian, born in the Black Patch of Calloway County. She is proud of her family's ten-generation tobacco farming heritage and deeply committed to Western Kentucky. She provides marketing and promotional assistance, as well as historic and genealogical research, to Smith Farms. Smith Bryant enjoys Kentucky history and genealogy and because of that passion, she became a freelance writer and speaker. In her professional career, Smith Bryant serves the Kentucky League of Cities as a community development advisor. (<http://bobbiesmithbryant.com/aboutbobbiebryant.html>)

This book is a genealogical study of a woman who lived in the early twentieth century in western Kentucky. Bobbie Smith Bryant shares the genealogical details of Mrs. Brewer. Adding to those facts her families' personal stories bring this woman's story to life. The subject of this book, Lois Etoile Robinson Brewer, was born July 17, 1892 in Calloway County, Kentucky. She was the first child of James Polk Robinson and Bertha Nel (Wilson) Robinson. She grew up on the west side of Murray with her parents and siblings. On October 25, 1914 Lois married Samuel Tilford Brewer, and they had two daughters, Geneva Louise and Reva Ophelia. Geneva married Hal Smith, and their son, William Hal Smith, Jr., was Bobbie Smith Bryant's father, the author of this book.

The Black Patch Wars had a major impact on tobacco growers and the tobacco monopoly held by the American Tobacco Company in the early twentieth century. While the violence committed by the Night Riders was wrong, it is understandable when monopolistic powers kept farm prices low for their own benefit. While these struggles did not directly hit this family, according to the book, years later side stories were shared about how family members were for and against what the farmers did at this time. It is interesting that it was not talked about openly, but in quiet one-on-one conversations indicating just how bad this ordeal had been in local history. Another historical issue that affects modern families in our area like it did Mrs. Brewer is the idea of "boomerang" young adults that start out on their own only to end up back home. The Brewer family lost its farm and had to move to Lois Brewer's in-laws living there for a time. Brewer also lived with her in-laws at the beginning of her marriage. Lois and Sam lived there a year preparing to set out on their own and, it seems, so Lois could be integrated into the Brewer family. Family ties seemed to be much stronger then than they are today.

We are given the intimate details of what life was like in the Jackson Purchase during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Tobacco was an especially important cash crop and plays an important role in the story as it does in the Purchase Area. We also learn what it was like to live, get married, have children, buy a farm then lose it and many other factors of life in far West Kentucky during the time period covered by the book. Tobacco was readily available. The tobacco grown here is smoked in barns and then processed into chewing tobacco and snuff. Mrs. Brewer, the focus of the book, was a woman who "did have at least one vice – she apparently enjoyed chewing tobacco and spitting into a spittoon" (p.14). She also started out

hiding this from her future husband which points to the fact it was not feminine to chew. This is an important point, for male and female relationships, to note in the history of this area.

I only found two minor issues in the book. The author writes about Albert Einstein's "new theory of gravity" (p.18). The theory is "The Theory of Relativity," which includes a gravity component, but was stated incorrectly here. Later she writes of the M. E. Methodist Church. The first M. stands for Methodist and the E. for Episcopal. The way it is written makes it Methodist Episcopal Methodist Church which is incorrect (p.32). Overall the author's work is well done and accurate.

Bryant's research is solid and documented with a bibliography in the back of the book. It is well-written and easy to read. To help genealogical researchers and historians use the book for future research, she includes an index of people, places, and topics in the back of the book.

Bruce Dobyms

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