

Mountains & Mesas: The Northern Rockies and the Colorado Plateau by Pete Bengueyfield.

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***Mountains & Mesas: The Northern Rockies and the Colorado Plateau* by Pete Bengueyfield (review)**

O. Alan Weltzien

Western American Literature

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REVIEW

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In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

404 Western American Literature between the author and his subject would have deepened the life with no loss of pathos. More attention to the very worlds that overwhelmed Lewis could only have underscored the courage that Ambrose so admirably chronicles. THOMAS HALLOCK New York University *Mountains & Mesas: The Northern Rockies and the Colorado Plateau*. By Pete Bengueyfield. (Flagstaff, Arizona: Northland, 1996. 145 pages, \$17.95.) Pete Bengueyfield and his wife, Alice, have been professional photographers of the Intermountain West for many years. In *Mountains & Mesas*, Pete has written text worthy of their stunning pictures, text that combines scientific explanation with familiar lessons in ecology. In the Foreword, Luna Leopold calls Bengueyfield one of the "few consistent defenders of the common," and cites the book's

“unusual blend of science and heartfelt reverence.” Bengeyfield moves easily through geology, silviculture, and wildlife ecology, explaining complex science in a way that neither distorts it nor condescends to the lay reader. And he writes with grace. Bengeyfield’s title reflects the two regions—Northern Rockies and Colorado Plateau—he studies in the book. In both sections, he examines geology, hydrology, vegetation, and wildlife. Throughout, he interleaves exposition with italicized excerpts of personal narrative; the latter exemplify or dramatize the lessons of the former. Bengeyfield begins at Glacier National Park’s Gunsight Pass and ends with a discussion of the differences between desert bighorn sheep and the more familiar Rocky Mountain bighorns. Along the way, one hears echoes of Aldo Leopold, John McPhee, Patricia Nelson Limerick, and Wallace Stegner. Bengeyfield includes, in a three-page “Further Reading,” an impressive annotated list of writers, which suggests many lines of influence upon him. At the end of his Preface he describes *Mountains & Mesas* as a definition of the region’s “capability,” and in his “Word About the Photographs,” echoing the Thoreau of “Walking,” he defines the pictures “as a reminder of the values that are compromised by allowing Reviews 405 development in the present to close out opportunities to experience wildness in the future.” In an eighteen-page closing homily, “History, Economics, and the Future,” he describes “hear[ing] the delicate waterfall of the canyon wren’s song,” and reminds us that “To calculate stream power, you sit at a desk and put numbers in a computer. To appreciate stream power, you stand on the banks of the river in Lamar Canyon in the middle of May.”

In *Mountains & Mesas*, it is easy to appreciate. O. ALAN WELTZIEN *Western Montana College Western American Novelists, Volume 1: Walter Van Tilburg Clark, Dan Cushman, H. L. Davis, Vardis Fisher, A. B. Guthrie, Jr., William Humphrey, and Dorothy M. Johnson.* By Martin Kich. (New York: Garland Publishing, 1995. 876 pages, \$120.00.) This new volume by Martin Kich is not a collection of essays but a comprehensive bibliography of writings by and about each of the seven authors named in the title. In addition to novels, the primary listing includes other genres and publication data for later editions and reprints, but it does not describe individual works. The secondary bibliography is annotated with detailed summaries for monographs, chapters, and major articles. Full-length books receive chapter-by-chapter summaries, so extensively treated that a reader wonders occasionally if the synopsis is meant to substitute for the original critique. For instance, the annotation for Paul Bryant’s Twayne study of H. L. Davis takes ten pages, and Thomas W. Ford’s volume on A. B. Guthrie for the same publisher nearly thirteen. Although these examples are extreme, other book summaries at five or six pages are still more detailed than necessary. The material is well organized. Primary works are arranged chronologically by genre with uncollected titles listed separately. Secondary items are alphabetized categorically by type (Books, Items in Books [including Chapters and Briefer References], Articles [including Interviews], Book Reviews, and so forth). Bold section headings should make entries easy to locate, but the scant Table of Contents (providing only the authors’ names) and the lack ...

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THOMAS HALLOCK

New York University

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Wheeling & Dealing: political conflict management, despite external influences, recognizes

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