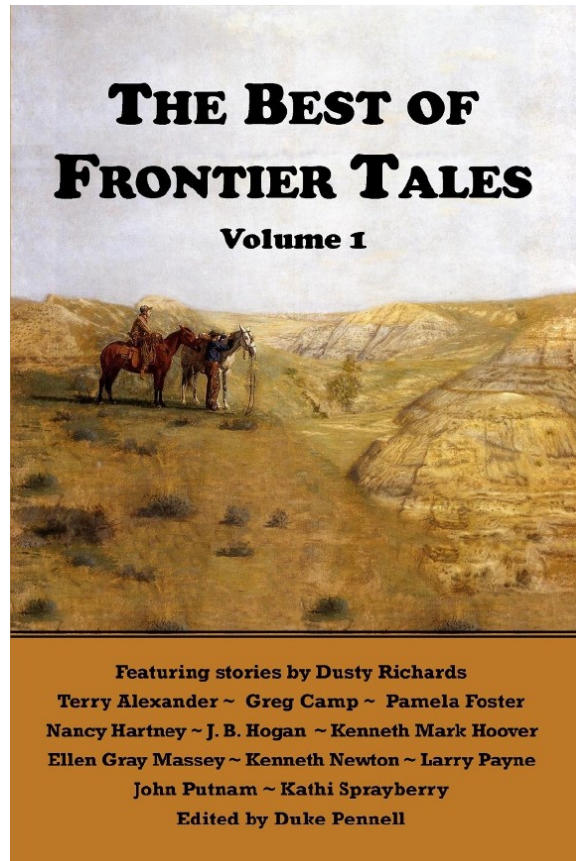


The Best of Frontier Tales Volume 1



Reviewed by Death Valley Rose SASS 28282L

Western tales have a long history, from those told around the campfire to Hollywood scenarios. "Stage to Lordsburg" by Ernest Haycox became the movie "Stagecoach", which almost single-handedly resurrected the Western and made legends out of Ford and John Wayne. "High Noon", based on the short story "The Tin Star" by John W. Cunningham is unarguably one of the most significant films of the 20th century, as is "True Grit", based on a short novel by Charles Portis.

There are those these days who claim the Western short story is dead . . . they are dead wrong.

Among others, SASS members are keeping the genre alive in a newly released book.

Frontier Tales, a web-based forum for writers and readers of "Old West" fiction (www.FrontierTales.com), in their first published volume offer thirteen western based stories voted "best" by readers. It is available at <http://pen-1.com/books.html> and will soon be sold worldwide by Amazon.

The preface, by Duke Pennell, A/K/A Durango Duke SASS 72663 and author's biographies add to the enjoyment of the tales without ever giving away "spoilers".

Each writer has a different slant on the traditional tales ranging from the opening story, "When the Jingle Bob Job Was Over", by the legendary Dusty Richards- depicting how a short man can stand tall in the right circumstances - to a former gunman avenging the killing of his wife. A few verge on comedy, some on the social mores of the era, each is masterfully written and true to the time and the genre.

It would be impossible to mention each in the space allowed for a review, and choosing which to spotlight meant leaving out tales that amused, enlightened and delighted.

That said two, one an amusing double-cross and one a double double-cross deserve special mention.

In "Bottomless Bartlett's Beautiful Bride" John Putman tells of a conman and a madam who each have a vested interest in arranging a marriage between two unlikely characters. In a turn of the tables, they both get their comeuppance when their plans go awry in an amusing fashion.

Ken Newton, Nasty Newt SASS 7365, penned "Apache Gold", a double double cross that will leave you guessing the outcome for the first reading, then rereading it for the vivid descriptions of life during the last days of the Civil War. Authentic, heartbreaking and very probably true to the feelings of men left in the dark about the outcome of that terrible conflict, it is a masterful retelling of an event that could not possibly have happened . . . or did it?

Both men and women are represented in the pages, with the final well deserved "Editor's Choice" going to Nancy Hartney's haunting "White Oak's Tale" wherein justice is served, and a way of life honored.

The book ends – far too soon – with final remarks by the editor, and an invitation to any writer who would like to try their hand at keeping the Western short story alive. Who knows, you may end up writing the next Hollywood blockbuster!

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"Nasty Newt" SASS 7365, is president of the Robber's Roost Vigilantes" SASS club in Ridgecrest, CA. He also has great interest in the Civil War and the Westward Expansion. His post-Civil War novel "Passing Through Kansas" will be available from AuthorHouse later this year. Many of his stories and articles have been published in *Writers West*, *the New Southern Literary Messenger*, *Unknowns* and others.