

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

---

Dissertations, Theses, & Student Research,  
Department of History

History, Department of

---

January 2006

**Review of *To Save the Wild Bison: Life on the Edge in Yellowstone*  
by Mary Ann Franke**

David Nesheim  
*University of Nebraska - Lincoln*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/historydiss>



Part of the [History Commons](#)

---

Nesheim, David, "Review of *To Save the Wild Bison: Life on the Edge in Yellowstone* by Mary Ann Franke" (2006). *Dissertations, Theses, & Student Research, Department of History*. 11.  
<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/historydiss/11>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the History, Department of at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations, Theses, & Student Research, Department of History by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

However, I wanted more. There are passing glances to the settlement (or lack thereof), but no details. Noble's remarkable ride is barely mentioned. There is not a clear explanation of the Burning Man Festival. Black Rock whets the appetite; it is a beautiful coffee table book. But the book does not satisfy a thirst for really understanding the area.

JESSIE L. EMBRY

*Associate Director, Charles Redd Center  
Brigham Young University, Provo, UT*

**LABOR, CIVIL RIGHTS, AND THE HUGHES TOOL COMPANY**, by Michael R. Botson, Jr., (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2005), 265 pp., \$43.00 hb.

Michael R. Botson, a former industrial worker and union member employs a significant ruling by the National Labor Relations Board in 1964 as the centerpiece of this well-crafted study. The Independent Metal Works Union operated in a traditional Jim Crow environment prior to the landmark NLRB ruling. Botson's work here reminds us that the civil rights movement was not just a battle, but also a series of inter-racial and intra-racial negotiations among conflicting interests. His discussion of coalition-building and of the networks black union leaders employed to move their case forward (at extreme risk) adds important texture to the changes underway in the American workplace. Labor historians have dealt with black unions before (Trotter, Montgomery, Kelley), but the focus has often been on the role of the radical left. Botson finds primarily middle-of-the-road orientation among African American labor activists in Houston. The CIO's role in the labor struggle at the Hughes Tool Company in the highly racialized, anti-labor climate in Texas enriches the study by adding another important layer of competing interests and agendas.

The primary setting is Houston, Texas, where Howard Hughes, Sr. established his operation. Botson wisely avoids turning his book into an urban history, but contextualizes the worker's circumstances enough to document the challenges faced by organized labor in the evolution of Houston's powerful economy. The result is an analysis of African American involvement in the labor movement in urban Texas with social and economic emphasis that is highly recommended to individuals with these interests.

Fifteen well-placed illustrations (one is a drawing) portray industrial settings or union members and six tables (wages, etc) supplement the text. The listing of the stark differences between earnings of white and black employees is a stark reminder of how deeply embedded race-based policies were in the workplace.

ROBERT H. DUKE, *Department of History  
Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI*

**MONTANA 1911: A Professor and His Wife Among the Blackfeet**, by Mary Eggermont-Molenaar, ed., (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 425 pp., \$35.00 pb.

This is an invaluable volume on the Blackfeet in Montana. It includes the translated diary of Wilhelmina Maria Uhlenbeck-Melchior's experiences and her anthropologist husband's research findings. Christianus Cornelius Uhlenbeck was a Dutch anthropologist-linguist of the tribe. His 1911 research trip was his second. In 1910 De Josselin de Jong took numerous photographs of the first research trip and those splendid images grace the pages of this intriguing book.

In addition to the diary materials, Klaas van Berkel and the editor provide biographical material on the Uhlenbecks. Inge Genee evaluates C. C. Uhlenbeck's work as a linguist. Alice

B. Kehoe adds a chapter on the nature of Uhlenbeck and de Jong research design and findings in the broader context of work on American Indians. The editor offers a collage of Blackfoot texts, a translation of 'Patronymics and Proper Names of the Peigans,' and de Jong's work on tribal dances.

For readers interested in this important tribe, this book will be a delight. It brings to ethnographic studies a rich number of texts adding to our knowledge of the tribe and the research design of early twentieth-century scholars.

GORDON MORRIS BAKKEN, *Department of History  
California State University, Fullerton, CA*

**TO SAVE THE WILD BISON: Life on the Edge in Yellowstone**, by Mary Ann Franke, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005), 309 pp., \$29.95 hb.

No single group of bison receives as much attention as those in Yellowstone National Park. Mary Ann Franke investigates the recent controversy regarding the Yellowstone bison and the efforts to control their movements, the longer history of their management in the twentieth century, and a brief natural history of the species. Franke has spent nine summers working in Yellowstone and previously published on the Yellowstone fires. She is certainly familiar with the park; however, that close connection also leads to privileging the importance of Yellowstone and constricting her assessment of other parks. Although the Yellowstone bison were intensely managed from 1901 until the 1960s, they are currently regarded as the last 'wild' bison in the United States.

The various attempts to handle the brucellosis controversy, which involve quite a bit of human management, provide the main focus of the work. Any solution must consider the various interest groups vying for a voice in that management including the National Park Service, the Buffalo Field Campaign, the Montana and Wyoming state wildlife agencies, area ranchers, and the InterTribal Bison Cooperative. Noting that the debate centers on different values; Franke argues that science can only serve as a tool and cannot offer a definitive answer. To Save the Wild Bison illustrates the complexities of maintaining a 'free-roaming' population in the face of a wide range of biological, political, and cultural boundaries. In an age increasingly reliant on technology and science, Franke concludes that humans need to believe in the 'magic' of wilderness.

DAVID NESHEIM, *Department of History  
University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE*

**THE TOOTIN' LOUIE: A History of the Minneapolis & St. Louis Railway**, by Don Hofsommer (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 396 pp., \$74.95 hb.

Don Hofsommer is a distinguished writer in railroad history. Like his other works, this one is immensely detailed and meticulously researched; there are many useful maps and illustrations. As its publisher claims it is the definitive history of the Minneapolis & St. Louis (M&StL) and it should interest western historians and railroad enthusiasts alike. There are twenty-six chapters; nine on origins and construction and seventeen on traffic, equipment, finances, alliances and mergers.

The M&StL began as an effort by Minneapolis millers to tap western supplies of fuel and grain and southern markets, and to protect against Chicago and Milwaukee competition. It is therefore one of many such lines beginning with Baltimore's support for the B&O. But the M&StL started late; it never reached St. Louis and as a small carrier in competition with giants it was marginal at best. In the 1920s the ICC held