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Review of *Roadside History of Montana* By Don Spritzer

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Roadside History of Montana. By Don Spritzer. Missoula, MT: Mountain Press Publishing Company, 1999. Illustrations, maps, bibliography, index. xvii + 432 pp. \$20.00 paper.

Historians tend not to take "roadside histories" very seriously, even while the literate public appreciates them for their ready vantages on the accessible past. This volume, however, merits the attention of historians as well as "buffs" for its multifaceted insights based upon a broad array of state and local histories. It is, in short, a serious work.

Traversing the Highline region of the far north at the start, Don Spritzer moves into the mountain valleys of the west, then the more open valleys and plateaus of the southwestern and central areas, and concludes with a run eastward down the broad Yellowstone Valley. While he naturally devotes most of his attention to local happenings, he opens each regional section with a broader discussion and also draws more general themes into the local encapsulations.

No one familiar with Montana's history will be surprised to find that much of this roadside history's coverage relates to such fixtures of Treasure State lore as stagecoaches, Indian wars, mining rushes, or ranching on the frontier. But a measure of the book's true worth lies in its treatment of more recent and relevant topics such as the Unabomber, the stand-off of the Freeman near Jordan, the Church Universal and Triumphant, and superfund sites around Butte. The treatment is balanced and current.

Don Spritzer of Missoula is the author of two previous books on the history of Montana

and numerous articles and newspaper pieces. He has succeeded here in furnishing a factually solid, interpretive, and readable survey of the state's past from the roadside vantage, from which any reader—serious or escapist—can benefit.

MICHAEL MALONE
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We regret to inform our readers of the untimely passing of Dr. Michael Malone. We are honored to publish his review posthumously.