

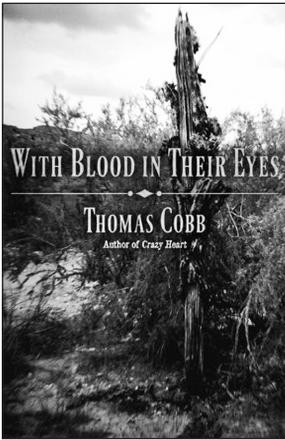
Border Rhetorics investigates its subject from numerous perspectives and undertakes an array of case studies, political action, legislation, and literature to help us understand what shapes American identity and what forces impose an unwanted and unrealistic identity on migrants and immigrants. *Border Rhetorics* is especially relevant for Texas residents and those living in the Southwest borderlands region. Anyone who cares about these issues will find this book not only helpful but essential, perhaps one of the most critical and thorough publications in recent years to examine U.S.-Mexico border issues.

— Monica De Los Santos
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With Blood in Their Eyes by Thomas Cobb
Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2012.
224 pp. \$ 24.95 hardback.

Law enforcement officers went into Rattlesnake Canyon in Arizona to arrest the Power brothers, ostensibly because they had not registered for the WWI draft. Although they had not registered, other factors were in play. Tom Power had been engaged in bootlegging and other activities that had caused anguish and jealousy on the part of some people. Such feelings were exacerbated by other actions of the Power family, usually things done by Tom. For instance, Tom discouraged his sister Ola from pursuing a relationship with Kane Wooton. Thus, it should not be surprising that when officers went to arrest the Power brothers, Kane Wooton, who was along as a member of the group, “jumped the gun” and started the shootout that resulted in the deaths of the entire Graham County Sheriff’s Department as well as Jeff Power, Tom and John Power’s father. The following pursuit lasted 28 days, during which time John and Tom Power and their hired hand, Tom Sisson, avoided capture until they turned themselves in to the Twelfth Calvary, just over the Mexican border. This story of the pursuit and capture is a gripping tale that is exceptionally well written.

Writing historical fiction is challenging in that the details for events have already been substantiated to some degree. If a writer messes too much with the story known to readers, readers become uneasy. However, Cobb skillfully overcomes this potential problem by starting immediately with the initial shootout. Each chapter title is a date. Chapter 1 is 1918, and Chapter 2 goes back to 1889 when Jeff Power was a young man and not yet married to Martha. Cobb then switches back to 1918 and picks up the story line where the last chapter left off. The book proceeds back and forth from flashbacks to the past and back to the 1918 present, until both story



lines converge in 1918, and the story moves toward its conclusion. This back-and-forth process provides readers with background information and an enhanced sense of being in the moment as events occur.

Given news coverage of the time, we might assume the Power family members were outlaws. That is not completely true. They may have had some sharp, behavioral edges, but their actions were not really out of line with those of many others, which does not mean they were guiltless. For instance, they were willing to pay for what they acquired, but what they were dealing with was not always legal. They would pay

for a horse, but if no owner was around and they needed one, they would take it. Jeff, the patriarch, was a hard man, but he loved his wife, and when she was accidentally killed, he did not hesitate to use a shovel to hit the guy whom he felt was responsible for her death.

Cobb brings the dynamics between brothers vibrantly to life. Their early behavior affected the way they interacted with each other for the rest of their lives. For instance, when John was 13 and Tom 11, John was trying to install a set of bearings in a wheelbarrow wheel. Tom told him he was doing it wrong. John said he was doing it right: “You want to do it?” John asked, flipping a pair of pliers at Tom.

Tom batted the pliers down, ‘I don’t want to do it. You do it. Only do it right.’” John then loses his temper and starts beating Tom. Their father finds them fighting and asks them what is happening. Tom says they were just fooling around. His father leaves things alone:

The Old Man turned and strode off. Tom looked at John and just grinned. At that moment, John understood he had lost. He was the older brother, but he was going to spend the rest of his life doing what Tom wanted. Tom would figure stuff out, and John would be left to do it.

Non-fiction does not always get into this kind of human interaction, but Cobb does, and the result is a narrative with the force of humanity behind it. This is a quality piece of historical fiction with the potential to become a motion picture, and I wouldn’t be surprised to see that happen.

— Herb Thompson
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