

Library Ladies, February 2010: Westerns

Prescott Public Library patrons love Westerns, and well they should. Westerns offer adventure, history, drama and humor, and the settings are sometimes just down the road! We have an extensive collection of Western novels, nonfiction portraits of the West, movie Westerns and even classic Western television. The “Best Sellers” tab on PPL’s website catalog has a “New Westerns” list of recently acquired Westerns. The Westerns reviewed here offer something for everyone—adults and children, fiction and nonfiction.

The Misadventures of Maude March, by Audrey Coulombis. Grades 5-8. 2007. Dime store novels and outlaws! Eleven-year-old tomboy Sally March cannot read enough about the Wild West, and never imagined she’d have her own misadventures until a stray bullet kills her Aunt Ruthie. Doomed to either live with both a self-serving reverend and his wife or marry her sister Maude to a wizened old man, Sally and her sister decide to hit the trail. A great read for those who love adventure, the old west, and heroines who aren’t afraid to steal a horse, pull a trigger, or hoard an entire bag of peppermint drops.--Jennifer Kendall

The Last Cowboys, by Harry Horse. Grades 2-4. 2008. Grandfather is off to America with his dog Roo, who wants to search for his own mysterious grandfather in the Wild West. Their adventures are told in a series of letters home to a grandchild in England, and whether they are riding on a bus with thirty greyhounds, wrangling a gang of lawless horses, or visiting the Grand Canyon, they are simply hilarious. The short letters feature charming line drawings by the author, and the whole package is ideal for newly independent chapter book readers. --Amadee Ricketts

Gunsights. 1979, and *Forty Lashes Less One. 1972*, by Elmore Leonard, are two fine yarns liberally salted with Arizona locations, gunfire, and plenty of tough talk. Often packaged together in anthologies, both stories represent the unique Leonard style of curious and interesting characters impossibly drawn together by greed, revenge, insane hatred, or moral conviction... often all at the same time. Even though the horse opera is a familiar venue, Leonard always manages to do something fresh and satisfying. These

two tales, though written in the 1950's, address racism, politics, and treaty disputes while still unfolding a ripping and thoroughly entertaining adventure.--Russell Miller

Vanishing Borderlands: The fragile landscape of the U.S.-Mexico border, by John Annerino. 2008. Annerino chronicles his trek across the United States and Mexico borderlands in stunning photographs and brief, evocative essays of spectacular landscapes, fragile bio-systems and rugged terrain. In these pages, pristine western landscapes and glorious Southwestern vistas contrast with rugged, bloodstained borderlands that once lured conquistadors, missionaries, bandits, smugglers, and colonists. Arizona, California, Nuevo León, Chihuahua, Sonora, and Baja California Norte create the mosaic of border life, which is often almost mythic amongst the almost five hundred years of politics, bajadores, smugglers, and the harsh land itself.--Margaret Espinoza