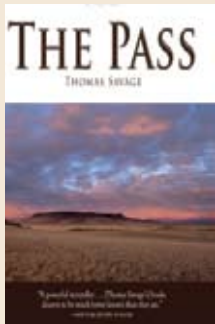


Lanterns on the Prairie:
The Blackfoot Photographs
of Walter McClintock
Edited by Steven L. Grafe, with
William E. Farr, Sherry L. Smith
and Darrell Robes Kipp
University of Oklahoma Press

McClintock, an easterner, wrote and photographed the attire and activities of the Blackfeet as they celebrated the old ways for a few weeks each year at the start of the 20th century. McClintock authored two books about his experiences with the Blackfeet, but this volume includes many of his little-known photographs.



The Pass
By Thomas Savage
Riverbend Publishing and
Drumlummon Institute

This novel, first published in 1944, tells the story of the founding of a family ranch along the Montana-Idaho border near Dillon. *The Pass*, described as being from the golden age of “landscape fiction” by writer Annie Proulx, was the first of many Montana-based novels from Savage, who left Montana in the 1930s.

Butte on the silver screen

Even in a colorful city filled with 150 years of history and scores of true Montana characters, it could be difficult for a documentary film maker to find a clear path to a compelling story. In *Butte, America*, the new film about the Mining City making the rounds in Montana, director Pam Roberts found in her way in the faces and memories of Butte’s residents.

“That’s what fascinated me most—the people of Butte,” says Roberts, who grew up in southeastern Montana and after living and working in California’s Bay Area, resides in Bozeman.

Butte, America tells the story of a Montana community borne of prospectors that came to be home to thousands of hard-working miners, a handful of “copper kings” and a city dominated for decades by one of the nation’s largest corporations. The story includes a long string of remarkable events ranging from the arrival of huge waves of immigrants, tragic fires, labor unrest, to the demolition of entire neighborhoods and the erection of a 90-foot statue depicting Mary, the mother of Jesus, an act of hope and devotion in a city seeking economic salvation.

That’s a lot of historical ground to cover in film that’s slightly more than an hour long. But Roberts and others manage to tell a lively story through a mix of interviews, historical photos, archival film footage and home video shared by folks in Butte. And Roberts’ goal of making a “dramatic documentary film” that tells the story of multiple generations of Butte residents is achieved.

The film debuted in Butte in January and has since had showings in Helena and Bozeman. The reception has “been overwhelming,” Roberts admits, noting more than 1,200 people filled the Mother

Lode Theater in Butte, while another 300 were turned away. Two showings in Helena were sold out, while another 300 folks were turned away from a packed theater in Bozeman. “People are really loving the film,” the director says. “I think that goes to show how much interest there is in Butte.”

Here’s more of what Roberts had to say about *Butte, America*:

MM: How did you decide to make a film about Butte?

ROBERTS: I had been living in the Bay Area and wanted to come home and raise my daughter. I came back looking for a film of national significance but about Montana history. I had always loved Butte and enjoyed visiting there. The people seemed to embrace me when I got there like I was one of their people. We

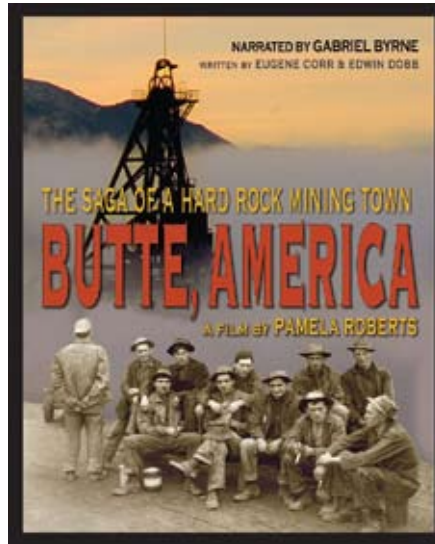
visited the Granite Mountain memorial one evening and the low light was just spectacular. It struck me at that point that I had found the film I wanted to make about Montana.

MM: The film seems to focus on Butte’s labor history. Was that intentional?

ROBERTS: We saw lots of hard-working people when we went there, and I’ve always had an attachment to working-class people. The labor-history focus was intentional. We had lots of history to include but we also tried to create a dramatic documentary film. We sort of had to weave in the significant history into the people story. This is one of the most difficult films I’ve made because there is so much history and so many different characters.

MM: Making the film took more than 10 years. Why so long?

ROBERTS: Finding the right characters was essential. Butte is full of characters but it was critical to find the characters



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Although it's spawned many imitators across the globe, Lee says the Archie Bray Foundation is still one-of-a-kind. At the heart of its mission is still the resident artist program. Under Josh DeWeese's tenure, the organization built a strong resident artist scholarship fund, ensuring that artists are free to work without having to worry about how they'll pay for studio space. Minimal demands are placed upon residents as far as teaching and producing work, and there are no formal critiques.

"I always say that it's kind of intentionally unstructured," says Steven Young Lee, the resident artist director. A result of this approach, the only thing that distinguishes Bray artists is the strength of their work. "There's no Bray style," says Notkin. "And that's a good thing."

Add to that the fact that the humbly-termed "resident director" position that has always been held by a working artist, usually somebody young and promising. Like his predecessors, Lee is continuing the Bray's tradition of innovation and making his own mark on the place at the same time.

Currently, the organization is looking into ways to reduce its carbon footprint, with an eye toward a major kiln overhaul. Just by paying attention to small things, the Bray has already reduced its energy consumption by eight percent, Lee says.

The Bray's magnetic energy continues to attract the kind of artists who go on to become giants in the field, among them David Shaner, Notkin, Weiser, Sarah Jaeger and most recently, DeWeese.

Even for non-artists who, like Board, have become honorary members of the clay community, the Bray casts a powerful spell. Board recalls driving to the Bray one day and wondering to himself just why he loves it so much.

"The first (reason) was, 'It is a life-affirming place to be.' The second was 'It is a creative place.' And the third was, 'The people are just nice,'" he says. **M**

Emily Donahoe has written extensively about the arts in Montana and most recently for *Ceramics Monthly*.

BUTTE, continued from page 12

that are articulate and could contribute to the film. Finding women was a big challenge. Butte's a man's town but women have played a big role. Finding Marie Cassidy was wonderful. She had journalistic aspirations and was very informed about history and collected all sorts of bits and pieces about Butte's past.

MM: Was it hard to track down underground miners? Have many of those who worked underground died?

ROBERTS: It is getting harder. The ARCO retiree group noted in the film has just 20 members left. But there are guys who didn't join that group. It's especially getting tougher with the really old-timers, the ones who experienced more of the history, the strikes and the company's reaction to them and things like that. Some of the younger guys can discuss the craft of mining but don't have as much knowledge and memories as the older guys.

MM: How much did it cost to make *Butte, America*?

ROBERTS: It was about \$800,000 over 10 years. It's a lot of money but not that much when compared to other film projects. We shot some of the recreations in video, for the Granite Mountain fire and other scenes, and that required lots of work. But we shot in film mostly, and film is very expensive. We decided *Butte* deserved film. Some of the light there is so extraordinary. We shot over a five-year period and we absorbed a lot of personal costs. We used a lot of expensive talent from the Bay Area and then we shipped the film there for post-production work. It was totally independent. I raised a lot of the money myself. We would go from grant to grant. In the lulls, we would do more research.

Butte, America will make a tour of Montana cities in the fall of 2009. Copies will eventually be available for purchase. For information about screenings, the film itself or DVD purchases, go to <http://butteamericafilm.org> **M**