

Alexander the Corrector, by Julia Keay (269 pages, June 2005), reexamines the life of Alexander Cruden (1699–1770), the creator of a biblical reference book, *A Complete Concordance to the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments* (1738), which has endured in multiple editions to the present time. Cruden was incarcerated several times in madhouses, earning him a reputation as a lunatic, but Keay attempts to resuscitate his honor by arguing that he was only socially inept, the eccentric victim of mores unsympathetic to the obsessions that fueled both his sexual fantasies and the perfectionism that resulted in an exhaustive single-handed scholarship usually attainable only by committee. Cruden's achievement is even more remarkable in that it was completed in his spare time as a proofreader in London. An enriching elucidation of 18th-century ethics. \$27.95. Overlook. ISBN 1-58567-690-X.

Belle Starr: The Bandit Queen, by Burton Rascoe (340 pages, November 2004), is a reprint of the 1941 biography that attempts to



synthesize what was known at the time about the legendary female outlaw Belle Starr (1848–1889), born Maybelle Shirley in Jasper County, Missouri. Although portrayed in American films as a gun-slinging desperado, Belle Starr was more an indi-

vidualist survivor in a frontier stacked against women who made poor choices in marriage partners. Belle's life is an instructive example

of how Civil War loyalties and frontier injustices combined to inspire a misleading cinematic legend. Little remembered today—her secluded grave near Porum, Oklahoma, can be located only by asking friendly neighbors, as I did in October 2002—Belle Starr is worth rediscovering. As Jennifer Henderson wrote in “Belle Starr: Lies in the Cinematic Skies,” *Big Reel*, April 2003: “Much of her fame arose from whom she associated with rather than what she actually did. Her misdeeds, such as horse theft and social impropriety, were not enough to create the ‘post-Civil War outlaw’ reputation she ultimately earned.” Although Rascoe's work is entertaining, it should be read in conjunction with Glenn Shirley's *Belle Starr and Her Times* (University of Oklahoma, 1982) and Phillip W. Steele's *Starr Tracks: Belle and Pearl Starr* (Pelican, 1998). \$15.00. University of Nebraska. ISBN 0-8032-9003-9.

Cumberland Island: A History, by Mary R. Bullard (415 pages, January 2005), is a superb example of how local histories should be researched and written. A colorful portrayal of Georgia's largest sea island, Bullard's book examines the minutiae of Cumberland's residents and events from the first Indian habitations to recent attempts to save it from development. Bullard, a descendant of the Carnegie family who owned much of the island from 1881 to 1972 when it was designated a National Seashore, is uniquely qualified to assess the island's importance as a historical and environmental treasure. \$39.95. University of Georgia. ISBN 0-8203-2267-9.

The Great Earthquake and Firestorms of 1906, by Philip L. Fradkin (418 pages, April 2005), revisits the chaos engendered by three days of devastating fire following the temblors early in the morning of April 18, 1906. Fradkin focuses on the human decisions that heightened the tragedy, from

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the flames being fed by property owners who torched their own buildings because insurance policies covered fires and not earthquakes, to the de facto martial law that led both military and quasi-military forces to shoot and kill an undetermined number of civilians suspected of looting. The unprecedented photographic documentation of the destruction leads Fradkin to compare the firestorms to those of Dresden and Tokyo during World War II. Essential background reading for next year's centennial. \$27.50. University of California. ISBN 0-520-23060-4.

The Joy of Teaching, by Peter Filene (159 pages, March 2005), provides some guidance for new college instructors who are developing and teaching their first courses. Using examples of syllabi, gaming ideas, and rubrics for evaluation, Filene emphasizes that teaching undergraduates is a three-way interactive relationship between student, teacher, and subject matter. The suggestions offered here will prove useful to teachers in the humanities, natural sciences, social sciences, and perhaps even library science. \$17.95. University of North Carolina. ISBN 0-8078-5603-7.

The Poetry Home Repair Manual, by Ted Kooser (163 pages, February 2005), offers friendly and practical advice not only on how to write poetry, but how to think like a poet. Kooser, the 13th poet laureate consultant in poetry to the Library of Congress, sprinkles dozens of sample verses throughout this guide, which is not so much a catalog of poetic forms as an inspirational handbook to help the beginning poet discover his or her style and

voice. \$19.95. University of Nebraska. ISBN 0-8032-2769-8.

Spying from Space, by David Christopher Arnold (209 pages, January 2005), describes the development of the air force's satellite tracking and control system from the early days of the space race to 1969. Originally set up to monitor the secret Corona spy satellites launched by the Discoverer missions (1959–62) to take photographs of the Soviet Union, the Air Force Satellite Control Facility headquartered in Sunnyvale, California, tracks Department of Defense satellites, receives and processes the signals they send, and relays commands to them. A little-known but vital chapter in American space history. \$48.00. Texas A&M University. ISBN 1-58544-385-9.

Two Women in the Klondike, by Mary E. Hitchcock (197 pages, March 2005), is the first-hand account of how two wealthy socialites from New York City ventured to Dawson City, Yukon, to try their hands at prospecting in the Klondike gold fields. The author, a 49-year-old widow, and her friend Edith May Van Buren, the 38-year-old grandniece of President Martin Van Buren, packed up their belongings (including a giant circus tent, a movie projector, an ice cream freezer, and a flock of pigeons) and traveled across Alaska in 1898 to spend two months in a muddy mining camp. First published in 1899, Hitchcock's memoir brings the sights and personalities of the gold rush to life. \$24.95. University of Alaska. ISBN 1-889963-68-2. ♪

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