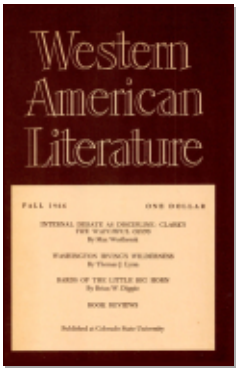
Stephen Harriman Long, 1784–1864, Army Engineer, Explorer, Inventor by Richard G. Wood (review)



Edgeley W. Todd

Western American Literature, Volume 1, Number 3, Fall 1966, pp. 228-229 (Review)

Published by University of Nebraska Press
DOI: *https://doi.org/10.1353/wal.1996.0006*

a wide social concern as well. As the Muries move through the book, beginning with "something new and exciting, a challenging adventure" (the assignment in 1927 to study the life history of the elk herd of Jackson Hole), and leading through many beautifully described wilderness experiences to the closing reflections on the quality of modern life in Jackson Hole, there is always a twofold emphasis. The sights and sounds and smells of wilderness are ever there – I doubt that anyone, for example, has written more truly of the wilderness night than Olaus Murie in "Voices of the Moonlight" – but *people* play an important role in this book also. "I hope it will be a long long time before man can spoil it all," says Mrs. Murie, and in this quiet indictment of man-in-general, seen in his bureaucratic or simply careless manifestations like slickly modern Visitor Centers and high speed roads through inspiring country, there is justice. But the Muries certainly don't forget man in particular. The portraits of Beaver Dick Leigh, who is allowed to speak for himself here through his poignant diary, and of a rancher-poet friend of Olaus', are drawn with care and fairness and sympathy. These are people who loved wild country and who tried, usually haltingly but always genuinely, to express that feeling. They should be valuable to us.

Wapiti Wilderness is a relaxed book, informed by a mellow nostalgia for the early days. Jackson Hole was settled much later than most Western valleys and retained its wilderness character longer; the Muries were there "when," and thus have an unusual perspective from which to judge the developments and overdevelopments of the present. The inspiration of living in and near wild country ("the spiritual impact," Mrs. Murie calls it) runs through the book as a constant motif. In fact, reading *Wapiti Wilderness*, to venture a hackneyed metaphor, is like making a visit to the Muries. The meadow in front of the cabin, then the aspens showing up white before the dark alpine firs – then the almost incredible uplift of the Tetons. In the log house, fellowship, concern for the quality of life, keen examination of ideas, nothing put on. A great life.

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Stephen Harriman Long, 1784-1864, Army Engineer, Explorer, Inventor. By Richard G. Wood. (Glendale: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1966. Frontier Military Series, VI. 292 pages. Bibliography, illus., index, maps. $11.00.)

If one is looking for the facts in the career of Stephen H. Long, for whom Longs Peak in Colorado is named, this book is the one for him to turn to. It is the first full-length biography of the subject, but, as the author remarks, it "is not intended as a 'Life and Times.'" The emphasis is chiefly

upon Long's career, which, as the writer of the Foreword points out, "typifies the rise of the Army's Engineers to meet the early technical challenges growing out of the formation of the United States and the conquest of the American wilderness."

Although Long is probably best remembered as an explorer, even though he was not outstanding in this capacity, he also made useful contributions to the technology of bridge design, the harnessing of steam power for transportation, and the construction of boats and even marine hospitals. Some of his engineering ability was directed toward deepening the channels of rivers and the removal of snags. The author concentrates upon what Long did, and we learn little about the man – his personality, character, or even his family life.

The chief intereest that the life of Stephen Long holds for the reader curious about the West and its history is his exploring expedition to the Rocky Mountains in 1819-20. To this venture the author unaccountably gives only perfunctory treatment, although the account of the expedition which Edwin James prepared after the party returned to the East runs to four volumes in Thwaites' *Early Western Travels.* It is to James' narrative that one must still turn, as did James Fenimore Cooper when he wrote *The Prairie,* which relied upon James as well as upon Long's map of the West.

Mr. Wood's book is thoroughly documented and is unquestionably authoritative. It draws upon a wealth of manuscript documents and published writings and is provided with a full bibliography. Unfortunately, its many weaknesses in construction, style, and mechanics, which might have been eliminated by careful editing, detract from the merits of the book.

EDGELEY W. TODD, *Colorado State University*

The Rummy Kid Goes Home and Other Stories of the Southwest. By Ross Santee. (New York: Hastings House, 1966. 160 pages, $4.95.)

For Santee enthusiasts the publication of this little collection, with drawings as usual by the author, is a sad and significant event, for it is Ross' farewell to friends, readers, and the West he loved. There will be no more books or pictures by this kindly, profane, sentimental, disillusioned, unpretentious, and wholly original spokesman for the cowboy and his country.

It is always a surprise to people just discovering Santee to learn that he was born in Iowa (in 1889), studied at the Chicago Art Institute, failed as an artist, and took up horse wrangling as a way of life only after losing