

olds says "never wanted to take sides," was passionately loyal to Sacco and Vanzetti and became violently opposed to the communists in Spain after they had killed his friend José Robles. And Jake Barnes' wound did not leave "his desire for Brett forever unsatisfied." In chapter VII of *The Sun Also Rises* she gives him some sexual satisfaction ("Do you feel better, darling? It's better.").

Reynolds, like Griffin, has been dragging out Hemingway's life—as if he were Leon Edel writing the life of Henry James—in numerous short volumes so that the total cost for the complete biography (with tiny print and unevenly inked pages) will be about \$150. James Mellow's handsome volume, by contrast, covers the years described in Reynolds' book (March 1926 to April 1929) in 65 pages of text and notes, saying infinitely more about this period—in which Hemingway divorced, remarried, had a second son, suffered his father's suicide, published *The Sun Also Rises*, and wrote *A Farewell to Arms*—than Reynolds does in four times as many pages.

Mellow has not conducted any interviews, his subtitle (from "Soldier's Home") is confusing, and he is far too positive about A.E. Hotchner, who was

loathed by everyone I spoke to. Like Kenneth Lynn, Mellow seems to dislike and lose interest in the older Hemingway and rushes through the last half of his adult life in only 80 pages. But these are minor flaws.

This thoroughly researched biography is long, but not too long; it cracks ahead at a lively pace and is consistently interesting. Though there is nothing much new in the book (it is virtually impossible to find new material at this stage of Hemingway studies), Mellow provides a valuable synthesis of all that is known about Hemingway. As Reynolds rightly observes, Hemingway believed that "whatever troubles a male friend might have, they were caused by his wife." Mellow emphasizes, in an original way, Hemingway's male friendships, his reliance on male intimacy in the face of danger, and his fear of the taint of homosexuality.

Mellow's judgments are consistently sound. He notes that the Hemingways, though comfortably well off, were not part of the Oak Park Country Club set. He believes that the temporary blindness of Hemingway's mother was psychosomatic, that Grace Hemingway was devoted to her son, and that the young Hemingway (contrary to Lynn's thesis) suffered no bad effects from cross-dressing. It is significant that Hemingway sometimes called his mother "Mrs. Stein" and described Gertrude Stein exactly as if she were his mother: "I stuck by that old bitch until she threw me out of the house when she lost her judgment with the menopause."

Mellow shows that the Indian girl Prudy Boulton was based more on fantasy than on reality, he illuminates Hemingway's ambivalence about his father, and he rightly suggests that Hemingway's wartime friend Jim Gamble might have been in love with him. Mellow shows that Hemingway's baptism was extremely dubious, though later convenient; that he suffered no permanent injuries from his war wounds, which gave him a sense of immortality; and that his wartime nurse Agnes von Kurowsky actually encouraged his courtship. He mentions the rivers running through Hemingway's works, as well as his use of secondhand sources to provide a realistic basis for his fiction, and rightly remarks that in *The Sun Also Rises*, "Hemingway followed Stein's advice rather than her example." In general, Mellow proves that there is always room

for another intelligent, perceptive, and elegantly written biography.

Jeffrey Meyers, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, has published Hemingway: The Critical Heritage and Hemingway: A Biography. His life of Poe appeared last year, and he is now writing a biography of F. Scott Fitzgerald for HarperCollins.

Frontier Fantasies

by Gregory McNamee

Daniel Boone: The Life and Legend of an American Pioneer

by John Mack Faragher

New York: Henry Holt; 429 pp., \$27.50



Folklore is not history, and myth-makers hate complications. Finally we have a reliable life of Boone through the considerable efforts of John Mack Faragher, a professor of history at Mount Holyoke College whose earlier book *Women and Men on the Overland Trail* (1979) won the American Historical Association's prestigious Frederick Jackson Turner Award. *Daniel Boone* should earn him even greater accolades, for as a work of accessible history it has few contemporary peers.

A straightforward chronological narrative, *Daniel Boone* opens with the birth on October 22, 1734, of the son of a Quaker frontiersman, Squire Boone, who had emigrated to America from England 21 years earlier. As a boy in the upper Schuylkill valley of Pennsylvania, Daniel Boone learned the necessary country skills, so excelling in marksmanship that his neighbors hired him to do their hunting for them. He may have done his job too well, for as a young man Daniel found the hillsides already devoid of game. Coincidentally, Squire Boone was excommunicated from the Society of Friends in 1750 after Daniel's brother Israel married a "worldling," and the family no longer had reason to remain in the Quaker homeland. They relocated to a farmstead on the Yadkin River not far from Winston-Salem, North Carolina, from which Daniel began to operate a profes-

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sional hunting concern that took him into the Appalachians for months at a time.

Faragher details the worldly education that Boone's business required, pointing out how the frontiersman figure emerged as one of America's first heroic types. Most emigrants to the United States had little knowledge of hunting, the domain of the European nobility, and thus the hunter enjoyed a special status; the backwoods hunter had to acquire a knowledge of Indian ways, languages, and law ("the hunting way of life that developed in the backwoods depended on Indian knowledge and skill," Faragher notes), making him an intermediary between Europe and Native America and enhancing his reputation even more. Boone quickly became something of a local celebrity, and when the French and Indian War broke out General Edward Braddock sought the 21-year-old's services for the British cause.

As in Pennsylvania, overhunting depleted the stock of wild game in Blue Ridge country. In 1773 Boone led his family to Kentucky, where he had often hunted, but a Cherokee attack that killed his son James forced him to return to North Carolina for two years. In 1775 he served as scout for the company building the Wilderness Road, during which service he selected the site of Boonesborough (now Boonesboro) on the Kentucky River near present-day Lexington. When the Revolution came Boone was suspected of harboring Tory sentiments, both for having helped the British war against the Shawnee nation and for failing to express sufficient exuberance for the American cause. Still, his neighbors respected him, and at one point after the Revolution he was simultaneously a lieutenant colonel in the Kentucky militia, a representative in the Virginia state assembly, and a county sheriff, having been elected to all three posts.

His fame continued to grow. In 1783 one John Filson, a Pennsylvania schoolteacher, made the still-hazardous journey westward along the Ohio River into the deep woods to find Boone and the next year published a thoroughly romanticized book called *The Discovery, Settlement and Present State of Kentucke* . . . The book failed to sell widely in the United States but was quickly translated into several European languages. Soon intellectuals like Johann

Wolfgang von Goethe were holding Daniel Boone up as the model of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's "natural man," and Lord Byron devoted several stanzas of his epic poem *Don Juan* to the frontiersman, calling Boone "happiest of mortals any where."

But Boone, as Faragher points out, was far from a noble savage. He loved to read, often quoting from the classics or reading books like *Gulliver's Travels* to his companions around the campfire (on a map of Kentucky you will find Lulbegrud Creek as evidence of Boone's love for Swift's book). Later writers would cite Boone's famous inscription "Cilled a bar on tree in the year 1760" as evidence of his marginal literacy, but, as Faragher notes, he was no more lax in his orthography than most of his contemporaries. Often portrayed as a violent country bumpkin—perhaps through association with the Lowland Scots migrants who came to America a decade after the last wave of Quakers—Boone was in fact careful of his grooming and appearance, a man of even disposition in whose household, a visitor reported, "an irritable expression was never heard." Indeed, Boone practiced Quaker tolerance, and as an old man, at the height of his fame, he frequently objected that he had only killed three Indians in his lifetime.

Boone may have been a great hunter and explorer, but in other pursuits he was less than self-sufficient. He often worked as a surveyor for land companies, traveling as far as New Orleans and eastern Texas in their service. (He complained that he could never afford to live anywhere those companies claimed territorial rights.) He wasn't much of a surveyor, Faragher notes; his own son Nathan admitted that Boone could deal with rectangles well enough but little more, and the irregular pattern of land holdings in Kentucky attests to his lack of skill. Nor does Boone seem to have been much of a businessman; at one point he owned some hundred thousand acres of land but lost most of it to swindlers. Boone later remarked to a visiting journalist that "while he could never with safety repose confidence in a Yankee, he had never been deceived by any Indian, and he should certainly prefer a state of nature to a state of civilization."

Still, the stories multiplied. The contradictory man who "contained multitudes"—the admirer of Indians who

participated in their destruction, the slaveholder who cherished liberty, the devoted family man who prized solitude and would disappear into the woods for years at a time—was reduced to a simpleminded stalwart in his own lifetime. "Nothing embitters my old age more," Boone said, "than the circulation of absurd stories. . . . Many heroic actions and chivalrous adventures are related of me which exist only in the regions of fancy. With me the world has taken great liberties, and yet I have been but a common man." The "common man" finally had enough of his own legend, and in 1799 he removed his large extended family to Femme Osage, Missouri, then under Spanish rule. He had another incentive to quit the land he had helped settle: in 1791, Faragher tells us, a hunter killed the last Kentucky buffalo, and by the end of the century big game was scarce everywhere in the territory. Boone's celebrated habit of moving beyond the mountains when the smoke of a neighbor's chimney could be seen was an invention of later biographers, but he did object to being unable to provide for his family.

When death claimed Daniel Boone on September 26, 1820, at the age of 85, he was still very much alive as a figure of American folklore. As publicly disgusted as he had been with Kentucky, some of his bones were dug up 25 years after his death and reinterred under a monument in Frankfort, the state capital; the Kentucky politicians who engineered the move rightly reckoned that many visitors would descend on the site, and to this day the monument remains a popular tourist attraction. Thereafter scarcely a decade went by when some new biography or novel featuring Boone did not appear (Faragher does not say it, but James Fenimore Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales* surely owe a great deal to the Boone legend). In our time many people learned of Boone through the immensely popular TV show of 1964 to 1970, in which, Faragher notes, Fess Parker simply reprised his portrayal of Davy Crockett in an earlier Disney movie, making the comparatively gentle Boone "the rippin'est, roarin'est, fightin'est man the frontier ever knew" and extending the legend even farther from the truth.

The real Boone is far more interesting than the mythical image, and thanks to John Mack Faragher's lively book we finally catch sight of him. *Daniel Boone* is

full of surprises, full of tragedies, and full of life. A model of biographical writing, it will surely be the standard life of the frontiersman for a long while to come.

Gregory McNamee's latest book is *Named in Stone and Sky: An Arizona Anthology* (University of Arizona Press).

Men at War

by H.W. Crocker III

**Quartered Safe Out Here: A
Recollection of the War in Burma**
by George MacDonald Fraser
London: Harvill/HarperCollins;
225 pp., £16.00



Southerners have a special feeling for the pathos of history. They know what it is like to have a lost cause, a history that might be gone with the wind but is still resonant and noble for all that. The Southern Confederacy's almost-allies, the British, also have a sense of the pathos of history. But where the South's has come from defeat in war, Britain's has come from victory—a case of winner take nothing.

In his latest book, just published in England, George MacDonald Fraser writes with the bracing honesty of a former infantryman who wants the truth to be remembered and not swallowed in the memory-hole created by purveyors of political correctness. The book begins, "The first time I smelt Jap was in a dry-river bed. . . ." *Smelt. Jap.* Oh dear. George MacDonald Fraser is someone for whom the truth isn't a political plaything; it is what he saw, heard, experienced, and . . . smelt. He doesn't intend to cater to the prejudices of the young or the ideological, and he's in no mood to apologize for himself or his fellow soldiers. For him the truth is merely true. That makes him a dangerous, but entertaining, fellow.

For those not familiar with his literary corpus, George MacDonald Fraser is the author of the joyous *Flashman* novels chronicling the robust roving of a rogue of an English officer in Queen Victoria's Empire, an accomplished writer of humorous short stories describing life

in a Scottish regiment and its disgraceful Private McAuslan, and the cheeky screenwriter of such movies as *The Three Musketeers*, *The Four Musketeers*, and *Octopussy*.

Quartered Safe Out Here is the true story of Fraser's own service as a 19-year-old infantryman in the 17th Black Cat Division of General Slim's 14th Army; the story of brave, swearing old sweats, grumbling and fighting their way through the heat, the rain, the snakes, the leeches, the mosquitos, and the Japs. It was a good war for Fraser, and he is proud of his service in what he reckons—with its Gurkhas, Africans, and Indians—was the most multinational army since the time of Rome, and one just about as experienced at keeping the imperial peace. When George MacDonald Fraser went to war in Burma, he wore the ring of his great-uncle, buried in Afghanistan, who had gone to war under General Roberts. His grandmother greeted Chamberlain's declaration of war with a simple sigh: "Well, the men will be going away again," as they had gone away and died in the Crimea, in all parts of the tropics, and on the Western front in France.

Near the end of *Quartered Safe Out Here*, Fraser makes a case—like most servicemen who risked their lives on the blood-soaked beachheads of the Pacific and in the malarial swamps of the Far East to defeat Imperial Japan—in favor of America's dropping of the atom bomb on Nippon. But he also imagines what the result would have been if his own section—a rough but steady lot of tough Cumbrian borderers with a natural talent for scrounging their way through life—had been told that the war could end either immediately with the atomic destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki or more slowly through an indefinite continuation of the slogging warfare that had occupied them for the last six years in monsoon-drenched jungles against an enemy that preferred a *banzai* charge to surrender:

They would have cried, "Aw, fook that!" with one voice, and then would have sat about, snarling, and lapsed into silence, and then someone would have said heavily, "Aye, weel," and got to his feet, and been asked, "We'er th' 'ell you gan, then?" and given no reply, and at last the rest would have got up, too, gathering their

gear with moaning and foul language and ill-tempered harking back to the long dirty bloody miles from Imphal boxes to the Sittang Bend and the iniquity of having to do it again, slinging their rifles and bickering about who was to go on point, and "Ah's about 'ed it, me!" and "You, ye bugger, ye're knackered afover you start, you!" and "We'll a' get killed!" and then they would have been moving south [to fight the Japanese in Malaya]. Because that is the kind of men they were. And that is why I have written this book.

They were not the sort of men who, as Fraser points out, would have needed "counselling" on how to 'relate' to members of the opposite sex after a few months in the desert," as American troops required in the Persian Gulf War.

Indeed, Fraser does an excellent job of garroting the modern idiocy of "sensitivity" and "counselling." And he, though an old newspaperman himself, has harsh words for an overly inquisitive media obscenely poking their microphones in the faces of war-weary grunts, straining to find "post-traumatic stress" among every Tom, Dick, and Harry. As Fraser notes, "One wonders how Londoners survived the Blitz without the interference of unqualified, jargon-mumbling 'counsellors' . . . Fortunately for the world, my generation didn't suffer from spiritual hypochondria—but then, we couldn't afford it. By modern standards, I'm surc we, like the whole population who endured the war, were ripe for counselling, but we were lucky; there were no counsellors. I can regret, though, that there were no modern television 'journalists,' transported back in time, to ask Grandarse [a member of his section]: 'How did you *feel* when you saw Corporal Little shot dead?' I would have liked to hear the reply."

And he is just as good at demolishing the presumption of the academics-with-condescending-tones who are wont to explain, to the delight of the historyless youths in their charge, how the primitives of England in the 1940's were fed a steady diet of propaganda that "inflicted" lasting damage on "intelligence, honesty, complexity, ambiguity, and irony." "The British people," Fraser reminds us, "were not stupid; they had been to war before, and knew all about