with ancestry in CSKT. A 2003 tribal referendum on the issue proved deeply divisive. Rather than viewing the measure as an assertion of self-determination, many members of the tribe worried that outsiders, including state and federal governments, would see this reform as too broad. Opponents of linear descent feared that the CSKT would lose their distinctive tribal identity, perhaps leading to a renewed congressional attempt at Termination.

Like Termination, the referendum failed, but Puisto notes that these victories had social costs, as they alienated members who felt even further removed from tribal life after defeat of their platforms. Puisto concludes on a high note, however, noting that ultimately these disagreements brought tribal members closer together as they were united in preserving their cultures and their tribes, a commitment formalized with the 1855 treaty and manifested today in myriad ways.

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As Precious as Blood
THE WESTERN SLOPE IN COLORADO’S WATER WARS, 1900–1970
Steven C. Schulte
University Press of Colorado, Boulder, 2016. $41.00 cloth.

Colorado straddles the Rocky Mountains in the center of the American West. Along the western slope of the Continental Divide various streamlets combine to form the mighty Colorado River, which winds its way southwesterly to the Gulf of California. From the eastern slope, water flows toward the Mississippi River or south to the Rio Grande. As the seasons change from winter to spring, accumulated snowpack melts into mountainous catchment basins, rendering Colorado a water-rich state compared to its downriver neighbors in the arid Southwest. As such, it possesses a resource “as precious as blood,” according to the title of this work by Steven C. Schulte, professor of history at Colorado Mesa University and author of Wayne Aspinall and the Shaping of the American West (2002). Schulte’s background and prior research equip him well to tell the story of western Colorado’s fight to secure its water from its neighbors. Hailing mainly from Grand Junction, defenders of the
western slope used the demand for “compensatory reservoirs” to protect their future needs from the diversions and claims from the ever-growing city of Denver on the eastern slope (p. 48).

Two major figures emerge in this story, both congressmen from the western slope and notable for their craftiness: Edward T. Taylor and, later, Wayne N. Aspinall. In historical perspective—and perhaps from the perspective of environmental concern—Taylor’s efforts seem a noble struggle against a much stronger opponent, the imperial water demands of the Denver Water Board, which constantly waved the flag of “beneficial use” to claim water for the city’s growing population. Interestingly enough, Patty Limerick’s recent *A Ditch in Time: The City, the West, and Water* (2013) offers an alternative interpretation, lauding the efforts of the Denver Water Board. After Taylor, in the postwar era, Aspinall shaped western federal water projects to protect the western slope. In Schulte’s treatment, Denver is but another adversary in the drama of Colorado’s internal water wars. He emphasizes that the east-west struggle over water played out against a background of regional demands on the state’s water resources. Kansas was an early claimant in the U.S. Supreme Court case *Kansas v. Colorado* (1907), while California levied incessant claims on the lower Colorado River to supply its agricultural interests and the needs of Los Angeles.

It should come as no surprise that the federal government plays a central role in this story. The Bureau of Reclamation offered opportunity for federal reservoir storage projects that both threatened and benefited the western slope. Congressional representatives from the region became stalwarts in the protection of not only the western slope’s claim to Rocky Mountain water, but also the protection of state water prerogatives over federal claims, which often came in the form of environmental protection beginning in the 1960s. Schulte’s work enriches the
literature both on Colorado water and also on the political figures that made the issue the centerpiece of their careers.

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Mudeater
AN AMERICAN BUFFALO HUNTER
AND THE SURRENDER OF LOUIS RIEL
John D. Pihach
University of Regina Press, Regina, 2017. $27.95 paper.

Irvin Mudeater's life reveals much about the North American West in the second half of the nineteenth century. Born into a prominent Wyandot family in Kansas, Mudeater (1849-1940), who in Canada identified himself as Robert Armstrong, lived an eventful life as buffalo hunter, wagon train driver, scout, and painter along the western margins of the plains from Texas to Saskatchewan. He gained public fame for his role in delivering the Metis leader Louis Riel to Major General Frederick D. Middleton in 1885, but his transnational story is interesting for far more than simply what it reveals about that particular incident.

In the first section of this book, Pihach reconstructs as much as possible of the life and family of Mudeater/Armstrong. Given how much autobiographical information Armstrong concealed in his memoir, this section is essential to our understanding of the man. Mudeater's Wyandot community was caught up in the horrors of Bleeding Kansas and the Civil War shortly before he set off for a life on the frontier, thereafter only rarely returning to Kansas. He lived a peripatetic existence that saw him move generally from south to north, crossing from Montana into Canada in 1882. His mixed heritages and familiarity with nonindigenous ways allowed him to pass and perhaps self-identify as white, which he always did when he was in Canada, and probably often did in the States. We never learn why, unlike his parents and siblings, he left his community, as Pihach puts it, "to live in reckless ways on the fringes of civilization" (p. 19).

The book's second part is Robert Armstrong's memoir, recorded in Calgary in 1920 and probably

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WE'VE MOVED!

In July the University of Nebraska at Omaha welcomed the Western History Association to campus. The new Executive Director, Elaine Nelson, and the UNO History Department pledge to support the mission, growth, and purpose of the WHA.

We hope to see you at future WHA Annual Conferences!
San Diego: November 1-4, 2017
San Antonio: October 17-20, 2018
Las Vegas: October 16-19, 2019

Contact the WHA Staff about membership, the annual conference & other resources on the North American West

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