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## (Review of) Flannery Burke, *A Land Apart: The Southwest and the Nation in the Twentieth Century*

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*Published in:*  
Journal of Tourism History

2019

*Document Version:*  
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

[Link to publication](#)

*Citation for published version (APA):*

Zander, U. (2019). (Review of) Flannery Burke, *A Land Apart: The Southwest and the Nation in the Twentieth Century*. *Journal of Tourism History*, 11(2), 208-209.

*Total number of authors:*  
1

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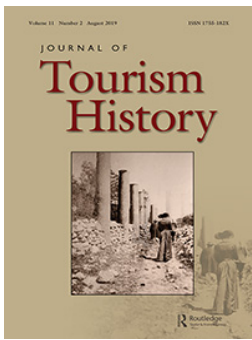
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## A land apart: the Southwest and the nation in the twentieth century

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To cite this article: Ulf Zander (2019) A land apart: the Southwest and the nation in the twentieth century, *Journal of Tourism History*, 11:2, 208-209, DOI: [10.1080/1755182X.2019.1622831](https://doi.org/10.1080/1755182X.2019.1622831)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1755182X.2019.1622831>



Published online: 29 May 2019.



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## BOOK REVIEWS

**A land apart: the Southwest and the nation in the twentieth century**, by Flannery Burke, Tucson, University of Arizona Press, 424 pp., US\$70 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8165-3661-3, US\$30 (paperback), ISBN 978-0-8165-2841-7, US\$30 (e-book), ISBN 978-0-8165-3681-4

Flannery Burke, associate professor of history at Saint Louis University, Missouri, is well acquainted with the American southwest. In *From Greenwich Village to Taos Primitivism and Place at Mabel Dodge Luhan's* (2008), she wrote about a number of New York City artists who moved to New Mexico in the late 1910s, driven by a modernist understanding of primitivism and in search of 'authentic' motives and places to capture in paintings. Taos seldom met their expectations, which led to efforts to change the place according to how it 'ought to be'. Another challenge was meetings and interactions with other artists living in the area who, hardly surprising, had other experiences and expectations, resulting in 'competitive primitivisms'.

Some of the themes from her former book are recognisable in *A Land Apart: The Southwest and the Nation in the Twentieth Century*, but it has another and wider perspective. The book, which is one of the latest contributions to the University of Arizona Press's the Modern American West series, edited by David M. Wrobel and Andrew G. Kirk, partly covers the same region. In *A Land Apart*, Flannery Burke has complemented New Mexico and its modern history with Arizona, the various relationships between the states as well as the region in a long-term perspective, although the focus is on the late nineteenth and the twentieth century.

A personal recollection sets the tone. Burke and her husband are driving and ask themselves, in the middle of the night: 'Where are we?' The question, she continues, is not as innocent as it seems; the geographical labels are not only neutral descriptions. One group's (ethnocentric) centre could be another group's periphery, and this is very much the case for 'the Southwest', which has been an undisputed centre for its original inhabitants while it has been 'north' for the descendants of those with Spanish heritage and 'southwest' for Anglo-Americans. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that ethnicity and race as well as different heritages and the clashes and blending of these are important concepts all through the book.

*A Land Apart* is in many ways an example of cultural history, but Burke never loses sight of the politics that have shaped the region. New Mexico and Arizona became the forty-seventh and forty-eight states to join the United States in 1912. The border question between Mexico and the United States was one important reason why it took so long, but another was that the region seemed to be, to quote her introduction, 'out of place, out of time'. Part of the challenge were differing orientations as the inhabitants in New Mexico preferred traditional perspectives, not least because of the dominance of Spanish as the spoken language, while the people of Arizona gravitated towards the future and a 'mainstream' English-speaking America.


Burke does not rely on chronological storytelling. Instead, her analyses stretches from the place and its people, or rather 'places' and 'peoples' since the original 'Indian country' was in part replaced by other 'countries', populated by new ethnic groups who imprinted their cultures on the region. Burke uses different approaches and materials, from native stories, novels, films, the presence of the military, research facilities (especially in New Mexico), architecture and city planning, to aspects of geography such as the importance of access to

water supplies. Another point of departure is tourism. The latter is not least a result of John Ford's Westerns, several of which were filmed in the Monument Valley, situated in the borderland of Utah and Arizona. The chapter on race and tourism gives many examples of sharp analysis of the different aspects that create the basis for modern tourism. Fittingly enough, she has named it after *The Searchers* (1956), Ford's classic film about race and racism in the West.

*A Land Apart* is very worthwhile reading, and not only for those who have a special interest in tourism and/or the development of New Mexico and Arizona from the early twentieth century to the present. Flannery Burke's study of the region is exciting and innovative, partly for her ability to connect breadth and depth, partly because she never loses sight of the importance of the different heritages which have shaped the region, and partly as a consequence of the sophisticated entanglement of past, present and future that characterise the concluding chapter of the book.

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<https://doi.org/10.1080/1755182X.2019.1622831>



### **Books for idle hours: nineteenth-century publishing and the rise of summer**

**reading**, by Donna Harrington-Lueker, Amherst and Boston, University of Massachusetts Press, 2019, 229 pp., US\$90 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-62534-386-2, US\$29.95 (paperback), ISBN 978-1-62534-383-3

Although it does not say so in its title, this book writes a decidedly North American cultural history, exploring the connection between the developing tourist and publishing industries in the USA in the decades between the end of the Civil War and the turn of the last century. Of course, the rough outline of this history – that is, a growing middle class determining both the economic and cultural developments of the period and in the process fashioning a sense of national identity – is not unfamiliar to historians of 19th century European culture. Indeed, the emergence, around 1800, of a bourgeois female readership intent among other things on self-improvement, and the influence this had on publishing and hence on European culture as whole, has become something of a commonplace in European social history. But it is the specifically American detail underneath such a development that matters to the author, and that makes the reading of this book worthwhile.

Harrington-Lueker traces the interplay between the growing ability and need of a (predominantly white) middle class to engage in leisure activities, the development of a veritable national tourism industry and a restructuring of the literary market. The inclusion of a period of summer leisure in the annual calendars of growing numbers of people, the mushrooming of summer resorts – be that at the seaside or in the mountains – and the accompanying development of accommodation and transport facilities had a lasting impact on reading habits and publishing patterns alike. Conversely, the new developments in the publishing industry promoted the practice of summer leisure in word and image, putting summer leisure and summer resorts in the minds of the many. They even, Harrington-Lueker