

nineteenth century was more about converting Natives to Christianity and farming than phrenology. It is potentially confusing to see this attention to phrenology in the middle of this book (pp. 58–66).

Its difficult for me as a scholar to read this book, noting the factual errors and the lack of Native perspectives. The book can help many readers understand some of the complexity of the Paiute history, but the literary side trips Wilson takes add some unnecessary confusion to the text. Wilson shines when addressing the legality and immorality of taking Native lands and treating the Paiutes like rogues. The motivations of the Army and the Indian service in managing Native peoples is also important and Wilson has done good work bringing depth to their characters. In addition, Malheur is the one Indian reservation which has poor scholarly attention because it was so short-lived, and this book begins to answer questions about its formation and termination.

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*Pioneering Death: The Violence of Boyhood in Turn-of-the-Century Oregon.* By Peter Boag. (Seattle, University of Washington Press, 2022. Xii + 344 pp.)

In 1895, eighteen-year-old Loyd Montgomery, the eldest son of a rural share-cropping family in Brownsville, Oregon, committed a triple homicide that sent shockwaves throughout the region. With seemingly little provocation beyond a slap in the face, Montgomery turned his rifle on his parents and a family friend. In his fascinating study of the murder and its aftermath, Peter Boag insists that typical explanations for parricides provided by psychologists and criminologists are insufficient: “Ascribing the offense to personality types and mental illness ignores a variety of temporal matters” (p. 9). Instead, Boag places the parricide within the context of 1890s agrarian Oregon at a time of economic depression, political disillusionment, and increasing urbanization.

What emerges from the book is, on one hand, a declension narrative. Montgomery grew up in the shadow of dwindling prospects for putatively self-sufficient Anglo-American farm families, ceaselessly romanticized for subduing Indigenous communities and altering the physical landscape of Oregon. In contrast, Montgomery’s family did not own their farm and were at the mercy of global markets and fluctuating crop prices. But for Boag, there’s more to the story. The violence at the root of American expansion and ethnic cleansing, combined with the danger and severity of agrarian

boyhood, forged a culture of killing and death in which Montgomery was deeply immersed.

Boag structures his work in three major sections. The first explores local and national media accounts of idealized rural life in Oregon's Willamette Valley at a time when many young people were relocating to cities. Boag juxtaposes such sentimental depictions with the brutal reality of childhood in agrarian towns like Brownsville. The second section examines the parricide within the economic context of the major depression wrought by the Panic of 1893 with particular attention to the vicissitudes of raising cash crops in a shifting marketplace and the Montgomery family's unyielding poverty. He also examines how anxieties produced by the passing of so-called "pioneer" generation at the end of the century affected the community's perceptions of the murders. In the final section, Boag recounts Montgomery's prosecution, incarceration, and execution. He also offers an analysis of the materials and means the state used to end Montgomery's life, focusing on the extensive reach of global markets and industrial capitalism into rural life by the end of the nineteenth century.

In his study, Boag successfully accomplishes two tasks: he assesses the environmental pressures that may have led Montgomery to slay his parents while offering a rare and intimate portrait of ordinary people in agrarian Oregon during the Gilded Age. Given his nod to Michel Foucault in the introduction, I expected a more in-depth discussion regarding changes in discipline and punishment in the American West, particularly since Montgomery's was the last Oregon execution to occur outside the privacy of penitentiary walls. In addition, some of his digressions—such as tracing the origins of the executioner's noose to the plantations of the Philippines—may strike some as needlessly esoteric. Nevertheless, Boag's engaging prose, provocative ideas, and the inherent luridness of his subject matter make this work that rarest of things: an academic page-turner that should appeal to broad audience of readers.

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