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Talking Machine West: A History and Catalogue of Tin Pan Alley's Western Recordings, 1902-1918 by Michael A. Amundson (review)

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Perhaps the most enjoyable biographies are those of twenty-five women who were born in Italy, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, England, Ireland, Scotland, and Switzerland, but later immigrated to Utah and converted to the Mormon faith. The firsthand accounts of their travels—by ship to the United States and by hand cart to Utah—and of their religious conversions are fascinating.

There are biographies of women who were community leaders, bishops' wives, Primary presidents, and Relief Society presidents. Their husbands included territorial legislators, county supervisors, school board members, and a president of the Mesa Canal Company. The women participated in events outside their communities, such as working for women's suffrage. One woman was elected Apache County treasurer in 1944.

The book is balanced between biographies of prominent and less-well-known Mormon women. They include: Effie Berry Ellsworth (Congresswoman Isabella Greenway's office manager), Mary Schnebly (sister-in-law of Sedona Schnebly), Eliza Udall (grandmother of Morris Udall), Mary Robinson West (Navajo County suffrage chair), and Cassandra Pomeroy (one of the first students at Tempe Normal School in 1886).

Ellis and Boone have successfully updated and expanded an out-of-print book with limited circulation. *Pioneer Women of Arizona* provides an important analysis of, and information about, Mormon immigration and community settlement throughout Arizona that will benefit current and future researchers of Arizona women's history.

JANOLYN G. LO VECCHIO
Tucson

Talking Machine West: A History and Catalogue of Tin Pan Alley's Western Recordings, 1902–1918. By Michael A. Amundson. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2017. Pp. 208. \$34.95 hardcover)

Most people associate cowboy and western music as originating in the 1930s with Gene Autry, Roy Rogers, and Tex Ritter, but the genre predates the era of the "Singing Cowboy" by several decades. For example the toe-tapping number "Ragtime Cowboy Joe" was penned in Brooklyn in 1912 by Tin Pan Alley writers Maurice Abrahams, Lewis Muir, and Grant Clarke.

Ragtime was a uniquely American music, basically African American, an ingredient of jazz that became popular in the mid-1890s. The music of Scott Joplin was all the rage by 1912, the same year Arizona became a state. The story goes that Abrahams, Muir, and Clarke were

trying to come up with a song that celebrated both Arizona statehood and ragtime music.

The original Ragtime Cowboy Joe was Abraham's four-year-old nephew, Joe. The youngster liked to dress up in cowboy clothes and, whenever he came to visit, his uncle would introduce him as "Little Ragtime-Cowboy Joe." One afternoon, Little Joe came thundering through the room riding a stick horse. One of them commented, "There goes ol' Ragtime Cowboy Joe." And as they say, the rest is history. The song became a number-one hit that year and was the second-best selling song of 1912.

Buffalo Bill Cody is generally regarded as the first to recognize that the Old West was fading from reality into myth and he determined to not let Americans forget it, even if it meant including the myth along with reality. His Wild West Show opened in 1883 and was a huge success, remaining popular until World War I. The Miller Brothers 101 Ranch Wild West Show began touring in 1907 and kept the Wild West alive until the Great Depression. By that time folks could visit their local movie theater. Western movies, beginning with the *Great Train Robbery* in 1903 (filmed in the wilds of New Jersey) and, a year earlier, Owen Wister's *The Virginian*, paved the way for the Talking Machine industry that was centered in New York.

The peak years of Edison Home Phonograph were 1898 to around 1913. Edison actually invented the phonograph in 1877, and he also coined the word. He put the idea on hold for a few years and turned his attention to perfecting the light bulb. Alexander Graham Bell and Emile Berliner took up the slack. In 1886, Bell took a patent on his "graphophone." In 1897, Berliner came out with his hand-cranked "gramophone." In 1901, the Victor Talking Machine was producing disks. Edison's cylinder phonograph, along with the flat disks made by Victor and Columbia, which had superior volume and quality, became even more popular. The age of the "talking machine" began to take off.

From 1889 to 1908, Jack Thorp, a New Yorker, went west to be a cowboy and became the first "song catcher," collecting authentic cowboy songs, most notably "Little Joe the Wrangler." He published his *Songs of the Cowboys* in 1908. This was followed by John Lomax and his *Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads* two years later.

In 1893, a Montana cowboy and poet, D. J. O'Malley wrote "When the Work's All Done This Fall." It wasn't recorded until 1925, when Carl T. Sprague recorded it for RCA Victor. It was the first cowboy poem set to music and sold nine-hundred thousand copies. At the time five thousand copies was considered a hit. Other cowboys, such as Gail Gardner, Curly Fletcher, Badger Clark, Henry Herbert Knibbs, and Romaine Lauderdale, were publishing and recording their poetry.

I need to stress that this book is not just a history of the pioneer days of recording. Amundson also presents an interesting, comprehensive history of the West and how it affected the American psyche during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Anyone interested in the early days of the recording industry, and the stories behind the songs, will find this a musicologist's dream.

Included is a chronological catalogue of western recordings from 1902 to 1918, with the stories and lyrics. One that stands out is the Edgar Davenport's 1905 poem, "Lasca." It is the tragic love story of a beautiful Mexican girl who gives her life to save her cowboy sweetheart. One can still hear this recitation at cowboy poet gatherings today.

Music of the American West has played a very important role in this reviewer's life, and I can attest that the author's flowing narrative will especially be a joy to any like-minded soul. Michael Amundson's *Talking Machine West* belongs on every library shelf, with the other classics of the genre: Jim Bob Tinsley's *He Was Singin' This Song* and *For a Cowboy Has To Sing*, and John I. White's *Git Along Little Dogie*.

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Arizona State Historian

Portrait of a Prospector: Edward Schieffelin's Own Story. Edited by R. Bruce Craig. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2017. Pp. 136. \$19.95 paper)

Indian fighting, secret treasure, lonely prospectors: the life of Edward Schieffelin included nearly every stereotype of life in the Old West. Schieffelin, the man who discovered the Tombstone silver mines, prospected extensively across the western United States in the late 1800s and left journal entries and memoirs that outline his adventures from his teenage years until shortly before his death in 1897 at the age of forty-nine. These scattered writings have been compiled by R. Bruce Craig in *Portrait of a Prospector: Edward Schieffelin's Own Story*. In this compilation, Craig weaves a series of vignettes into a chronological account of Schieffelin's prospecting adventures and thereby brings to life this "once famous, full-bearded pioneer" (p. 4). To aid in this task, Craig uses the transcripts of an interview Schieffelin gave describing his discovery of silver near Tombstone.

The stories include interesting tales of mistrusting prospectors, generous strangers, and Native Americans. Although his discovery of silver deposits near Tombstone, Arizona, made him famous and very wealthy, the most interesting part of Schieffelin's memoirs is his unsus-