Book Review: *The Feudist* by CWU History Professor Dan Herman

As is often the case with the most compelling historical novels, readers will find many similarities between the events of the past and the societal problems facing them today. CWU history professor Dan Herman encapsulates this in his new book, *The Feudist: A Novel of the Pleasant Valley War* (Texas Christian University Press: 2020). Set in Arizona in the 1880s, *The Feudist* weaves a narrative around a bloody vigilante war between a multitude of factions—including homesteaders, ranchers and cattlemen, Mormons, Texans, Hispanic New Mexicans, and others—all of whom are hoping that their ideals, laws, and customs will become the law of the land in the vast and unclaimed American West.

Originally from Arizona himself, Herman first heard about the Pleasant Valley War while researching the environmental history of the Salt River and was drawn in by the complex relationships between the many warring parties. After Herman published a scholarly monograph on the war (*Hell on the Range*, 2010), his father envisioned creating a fictional account of these events. "I suggested he make my monograph … into a screenplay. What he wrote was too long for a screenplay but too short for a novel," Herman said about the origins of his book. After his father passed the work along, it was up to him to adapt it into something publishable.

In order to do so, Herman had to retroactively adapt years of archival research on the topic, looking not for historical trends, but to suss out critical details to make the story engaging, such as how people spoke and what their day-to-day lives were like. To Herman, it was particularly challenging to present the major characters as multi-dimensional humans, not cut and dry "white hats" or "black hats," as is so often the case with Westerns.

Most interesting to Herman was the relationship that was revealed between rustling (the act of stealing livestock) and vigilantism. Though they seem opposites on the surface, Herman stated that "they were adjacent points on a scale of manly honor. Historical actors engaged in both behaviors as a way to control and/or contest range and water rights." When asked what’s next for him in terms of writing fiction, Herman said that he would like to write a murder mystery or detective novel set in the 1920s or 30s in the railway corridor between Los Angeles and the Southwest. "This sort of novel would allow me to explore a number of subjects that fascinate me, including the bohemian community in Taos, 1920s-era archaeology, the Grand Canyon, and, of course, 1920s Los Angeles, including Hollywood."

Herman will present a virtual author talk on Thursday, February 18. Details and registration information can be found at the CWU Libraries events calendar, cwu.libcal.com/event/7411637. For more information about the event, contact Maureen Rust (Maureen.Rust@cwu.edu).

Upcoming Events

**February**

09 Racism & Criminal Justice Reading Series
12 Research Smartz: Google and Google Scholar
17 Research Smartz: Hidden Gems of Primary Sources
18 Author Talk: Dan Herman discusses his novel, *The Feudist*
24 Dr. Daudi Abe: Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Principal’s Office?

**March**

03 Collections Chat: Focus on Asian Studies with Professor Chong Eun Ahn
09 Racism & Criminal Justice reading series

**April**

13 Racism & Criminal Justice reading series

For more information visit: cwu.libcal.com/calendar/events
Happy 2021. The CWU Libraries have yet again responded to evolving conditions, setting up virtual services and curbside delivery for the first two weeks of classes.

It was so good to see students again in the fall, even in smaller numbers and keeping six feet away. Students were able to study in the Brooks Library, and we continued to meet students from Ellensburg and beyond online. Our library staff did an extraordinary job making the building safe and welcoming.

We launched a Library Student Ambassador program in the fall. You’ll meet our library graduate assistants in this issue, and you will have a chance to get to know our undergraduates in the near future.

In December, we received the wonderful news the Pendleton and Elisabeth Carey Miller Charitable Foundation granted CWU Libraries $16,800 for some exciting digitized primary resources in Native American studies. That was a great way to end the calendar year.

I’d like to give you a sneak preview for when we can gather in larger numbers. We’ve continued work on creating a reading room atmosphere for the second floor Normal School Collection, and we will celebrate this space when it is safe to do so. There’s a great story behind a certain travelling table that we’ll share when we celebrate! Another space to anticipate is the recreation of the House of Lords replica library, a labor of love of late alumnus Douglas Nickson, who gifted it to us. I can’t wait to show it to you.

Be safe and well.

- Rebecca L. Lubas
Dean of Libraries

The fourth floor of Brooks Library has seen some exciting changes recently. Shortly after she took the reins as dean of libraries in 2019, Rebecca Lubas undertook an ambitious project: revitalizing our well-loved Children’s Literature collection. The Child Lit collection at Brooks occupies a comfortable corner of the top floor and is visited often by CWU Education majors, parents, and anyone interested in the broad range of books for children and teens. The library has to offer. The collection features fiction and nonfiction selections for youth of all ages.

Dean Lubas saw an opportunity for improvement by replacing obsolete materials with new titles. Outdated science nonfiction titles have been replaced with more current offerings. The social science collection has broadened in scope with the addition of new books representing a wide range of cultures and traditions. The fiction collection has also been rejuvenated with diversity and representation in mind. Winners of the Coretta Scott King Award, recognizing outstanding African American children’s authors and illustrators, have taken their place on the shelves alongside the existing collection. Since the summer of 2019, we have added more than 150 new fiction and nonfiction titles to the collection. In addition to these physical materials, we recently acquired the Children’s Literature and Culture database—an electronic resource providing access to over 8,600 historical children’s materials dating from the 1810s to the 1920s.

The Child Lit collection on the fourth floor isn’t the only space in the library catering to children and families. The Family Study Space in the Academic and Research Commons on the 1st floor provides a fun, colorful, and enriching place for children to play and explore while their parents study. Currently closed due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Family Study Space will once again welcome visitors when restrictions are eased, and will feature some of the library’s newest award-winning children’s books and a new collection on global holidays.

New Acquisition in CWU Archives and Special Collections

The CWU Archives and Special Collections has added a new treasure to their collection. A diary authored in 1894 by Ellensburg resident Amos Smith was discovered and purchased from a book dealer in Ontario, Canada this past November. Author Amos Smith records everyday life in Ellensburg from February 1894-December 1894 in the diary that contains about 90 pages. Entries note key holidays such as Fourth of July and Thanksgiving and how they were celebrated, as well as document going to town, farming, hunting for rabbits, enjoying rabbit pie and beer, the amount of money spent on household items, and visiting neighbors.

Amos Smith lived from 1834-1916 and grew up in Massachusetts. He served in the Civil War as part of a Vermont regiment and fought at the Battle of Gettysburg. Following the war, he moved with his family to Washington and was a farmer. Further information was discovered on Smith from researching city directories, census records, and death records. Smith lived on South Main Street in Ellensburg with his wife Aseneth (also spelled Acenith) and daughter Atha, who married fellow Ellensburg resident Emil Becker. Smith was a member of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows of Kittitas County.

The diary purchase was made possible with funding from the endowment of the estate of the late Wilma (Bowers) Stellingwerf who passed away in Wenatchee in 2019. Stellingwerf, an Ellensburg native, grew up on the Bowers farm. She graduated from Ellensburg High School and then graduated from Central Washington College of Education in 1948 with a B.A. degree.

A tablet was used to scan each diary page into individual PDFs and is currently being transcribed. The transcription and scanned pages will be available through the institutional repository ScholarWorks, digitalcommons.cwu.edu. The diary is a valuable primary source and will be shared with faculty and students in upcoming instruction sessions and virtual events. It is a treasure trove for those researching what life was like in central Washington in the 1890s.

Children’s Literature Collection
Library Website Redesign

After months of hard work, our revamped website launched at the end of August 2020. Because providing access to pertinent resources is critical to our mission, we sought to make our new site easier to navigate and more accessible for all users, regardless of where they are located. As CWU shifted to a predominately online learning environment this fall and students and employees are spread out across the country and the globe due to COVID-19 restrictions, the update to our “virtual front door” has proven to be particularly critical.

Our primary goal in undertaking this redesign project was to create a visually appealing user-friendly portal. Some of the redesign highlights include:

• Reorganizing the left-hand main menu for improved discoverability for new and returning users.
• Reducing redundant information and updating page content to accurately reflect our resources and services.
• Adding a static chat pop-out feature so users can reach a library faculty or staff member 24 hours a day, 7 days a week via any of our pages.
• Improving the mobile experience for those accessing our site using a cellphone or tablet.

We value user feedback to continually improve upon our work. If you have any comments or suggestions, be sure to fill out the feedback form linked in the left-hand menu on the homepage or send an email to libraries@cwu.edu.

CWU Libraries Receive Miller Charitable Foundation Grant

The CWU Libraries were recently awarded funding from the Pendleton and Elisabeth Carey Miller Charitable Foundation to purchase online collections of primary sources documenting American history. The Foundation, [millercharitablefoundation.org](http://millercharitablefoundation.org), was established in 1994 to continue the philanthropic legacy of the Millers who supported many charitable activities. The Foundation Board reviews grant applications each fall from civic and cultural institutions in the Pacific Northwest that serve the general public.

The CWU Libraries applied for and received funding for two online collections that are now available through the libraries’ website, [libguides.lib.cwu.edu/az.php](http://libguides.lib.cwu.edu/az.php). The collection Early Encounters in North America: Peoples, Cultures and the Environment, documents the relationships among peoples in North America from 1534-1850. The collection focuses on personal accounts and provides unique perspectives from traders, slaves, missionaries, explorers, soldiers, native peoples, and officials, both men and women. It contains a wide range of published and unpublished accounts, including narratives, diaries, journals, and letters.

The second online collection, North American Indian Thought and Culture, contains more than 100,000 rare, unique, and previously unpublished documents. Materials include autobiographies, biographies, Indian publications, oral histories, personal writings, photographs, drawings, and audio files for the first time. The collection provides a wealth of primary sources on the history of American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Canadian First Peoples. The CWU Libraries are excited to have these collections that will further the research of faculty and students.

CWU Libraries COVID Updates

In March 2020, CWU Libraries were closed to the public in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. CWU Libraries transitioned our services online and identified new ways to provide access to our collections. We expanded our electronic resource licenses; capitalized on services built by the academic library community to address the needs presented by the pandemic, including digital access to a portion of our physical collection and rapid access to articles via interlibrary loan; implemented a chapter and article scanning service and home delivery of our physical resources; offered long-term laptop loans for students requiring technology for online learning; and introduced virtual research consultations with librarians.

Fortunately, we were able to reopen our doors for the Fall 2020 quarter—with a few caveats. The Archives & Special Collections, Music Library, Curriculum Library, and Government Publications collections are by request or appointment only, and the westside center libraries remain closed along with their host campuses. Visitors to Brooks Library will notice some obvious changes, including a large plexiglass shield installed at our main first floor service desk, and all our staff donning mandatory face coverings. We also stored a great deal of furniture and rearranged tables and chairs to allow for physical distancing building-wide. The university identified the fishbowl and second floor commons as classroom spaces to allow larger classes to continue meeting in person, with desks again spaced for physical distancing. This is another visible change, and it is fun to have teaching and learning underway right in our big open areas of the library.

We do ask library users to participate in measures to keep us all safe: wipe down workstations, leave furniture in place, and always wear face coverings when in the building, per campus and state-wide regulations. Library staff participate in periodic walkthroughs of the building to collect space usage statistics, ensure cleaning supplies are stocked, and to remind users about our face covering requirement. While reopening the building for the fall 2020 quarter certainly presented its challenges, it is rewarding to again serve our community with access to our collections and as a space for study, collaboration, and research.
Graduate Assistants in the Library

Among the student workers in the library are our graduate assistants (GAs). This year, we are fortunate to have three wonderful GAs who are a tremendous help on a variety of projects in the library. In addition to some shared duties, their work in the libraries also includes some more specialized contributions and providing a glimpse into the day-in-the-life of a graduate student illustrates how multifaceted that work can be. Meet our GAs:

Jenna Skinner is a second-year graduate student in the Primate Behavior and Ecology program. In addition to her academic work and writing her thesis, she works closely with our user experience librarian and student engagement and outreach librarian on marketing and programming efforts. She also works on the service point and pitches in on many other projects.

Kristen Jones is a second-year graduate student in the School Psychology program. Keeping up with what’s happening in schools could be a part-time job this quarter in addition to her academic work. In the library, she contributes to the service point, the running of the Peer Accountability and Connections (PAC) program, website review, and teaching assistance.

Mara Gans is in her first year of the Cultural and Environmental Resource Management program. She has jumped into the academic work of the program under the new circumstances and balances a full load of courses with her work. Her library work this quarter has included contributions to running the PAC program, creating and updating instruction materials, serving on the service point, and teaching assistance.

While fall quarter has definitely thrown some curve balls, these three GAs have tackled their library work with poise and superior time management skills. We are grateful to have their expertise, perspective, and contributions for the 2020-21 academic year!

Friends of the CWU James E. Brooks Library

Greetings from the Friends of the Brooks Library board. As with all of you, COVID has required us to manage things a bit differently. Our annual book sale, normally held in November, has been indefinitely postponed pending the lifting of COVID restrictions. We will let everyone know as soon as we’re able to reschedule. In the meantime, feel free to bring donations to the library (during library hours) or contact Bob Hickey (Robert.Hickey@cwu.edu) for pick-up.

We’d like to welcome our newest FOBL board member, Rafael Cordova-Gamez. Cordova-Gamez is a fourth-year student at Central studying chemistry with a specialization in biochemistry. He has volunteered in Pierce and Pima County public libraries, as well as libraries in the Tucson Unified School District. Cordova-Gamez jumped right in to help with our fall quarter finals week pizza distribution. This FOBL tradition now continues as a grab ’n’ go in front of the library entrance. Fall quarter finals week we gave away 100 single serving pies to a like number of hungry scholars. We’d like to give a shout-out to Domino’s Pizza for offering us a discount to offset the expense. It takes a village! Look for more free pizza during the winter and spring finals weeks.

For the third year running, the FOBL is funding eight giveaway copies of books authored by the Lion Rock Visiting Writers Series presenters. These books are distributed by English department faculty directly to students. The writers’ series is being held online this quarter and are open to all. You can find links to the virtual presentations on the website.

Be sure to join us on Thursday, February 18 at 4:00 p.m. when Dan Herman, FOBL board member and History department faculty member, speaks about his new novel, The Feudist: A Novel of the Pleasant Valley War. More information about this event can be found in the article on page one of this newsletter. Registration is required: cwu.libcal.com/event/7411637.

We wish you a prosperous year of productivity and peace.

-Bob Hickey, President
Andy Piacsek, Vice President
Ronda Brooks Patrick, Treasurer
BrooksFOL.org

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