

*Gila Country Legend: The Life and Times of Quentin Hulse.* By Nancy Coggenshall. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2009. Pp. 296. Map, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. ISBN 9780826348241, \$29.95 cloth.)

Reviewed by: Tanya Finchum

Seven-year-old Quentin Hulse moved in 1933 to the bottom of Canyon Creek, a remote area in the Gila National Forest. He lived and worked there for more than fifty years as a rancher, trail guide, and all around cowboy. Coggenshall, a freelance writer and former high school English teacher, became acquainted with Hulse late in his life and shared many years with him, hearing first hand some of the stories of his life. In this biography, her first book, Coggenshall tells Hulse's story from her vantage point, using other's words to fill in what she herself had no first-hand knowledge of or experience with. Stories are substantiated through research, communication with historians of the American West, and interviews with his friends, shipmates, and U.S. Forest rangers.

Early in the book the author comments that if the listener did not know the characters or the area when listening to an old timer's story, a majority of the story would be missed. The same can be said for this book. To comprehend more of Hulse's story, it is helpful if the reader can recall names of people and places mentioned throughout the book. Stories shared by people who knew Hulse and stories about people Hulse interacted with are interspersed throughout the book, providing the potential for the reader to develop a familiarity with places and people in his life. An added benefit of including these stories is that the reader has time to absorb the scattered pieces of information about Hulse and imagine him in the place and time.

Although this work is chiefly a biography, it spotlights some of the history, culture, and lore of the Gila Country of southwestern New Mexico. It is written for a general audience and will be of interest to people wanting to learn more about the frontier outlier life. It is arranged topically with chapters focused on such [End Page 92] themes as his parents, drinking, work, and animals. The first two chapters provide an introduction to the author and how she came to know Hulse. The book is well researched, includes footnotes adding context and credibility, and has a lengthy bibliography with primary and secondary sources listed. Additionally, there are black-and-white photos and an index. The content shines light on the region, the way of life, the time period, and the person. Coggenshall does a masterful job of weaving the place into the person and the person into the place. This work is highly recommended for the history or social studies classroom, public and academic libraries, and for anyone who enjoys biographies.

Tanya Finchum  
Oklahoma State University  
Copyright © 2010 The Texas State Historical Association  
Southwestern Historical Quarterly  
Texas State Historical Association  
Volume 114, Number 1, July 2010  
pp. 92-93