

THE SPIRIT OF THE BORDER

Synopsis and Research Summaries

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Zane Grey's West Society

THE SPIRIT OF THE BORDER



By ZANE GREY

INTRODUCTION

This novel is the second of three novels in Zane Grey's Ohio River Trilogy, novels which were inspired by the author's early ancestors who played important roles immediately preceding and during the American Revolutionary War, a period during which settlers were expanding into the Ohio River Valley and beyond. Readers are advised to begin their reading of Grey novels with his 1903 novel **BETTY ZANE** followed by reading his 1906 novel **THE SPIRIT OF THE BORDER** followed by reading his 1909 novel **THE LAST TRAIL**. A fourth Grey novel, **GEORGE WASHINGTON: FRONTIERSMAN**, was published posthumously after being completed by Zane Grey scholar Dr. Carlton Jackson, and readers are advised to read it after having read the previous three Ohio River Trilogy novels.

Before reading any of the Ohio River Trilogy novels the reader is advised to read the brief chronological overview provided by Dr. Carlton Jackson on pages 6 through 12 in the 1989 book **ZANE GREY, Revised Edition** published by Twayne's United States Authors Series edited by Kenneth E. Eble, University of Omaha (ISBN: 0-8057-7543-9).

The Spirit of the Border is a historical fiction novel based upon events that occurred in the Ohio River Valley during the late eighteenth century as settlers were traveling from Virginia westward into the Ohio River Valley. The settlers encountered resistance from Indians as well as from white renegades who played the Indians against the incoming settlers for personal gain. The story compares the seemingly conflicting purposes of two brothers, one a dedicated Indian hater and fighter, the other a Moravian Church missionary who was attempting to Christianize the Indians. The novel's primary character is fashioned after the real life Indian fighter Lewis Wetzel whose zealous pursuit of Indians was the result of his having witnessed the massacre of his family by Indians.

LIST OF MAJOR CHARACTERS

(XX) Indicates the page where each character first appears in the Walter J. Black edition of **THE SPIRIT OF THE BORDER**.

- **Nell Wells (5)**...a young girl who has left Virginia in a wagon train traveling through the Ohio River Valley enroute to Fort Pitt then on to Fort Henry.
- **Joe Downs (5)**...a fellow traveler with Nell Wells, a man who is devoted to hunting deer and bear and fighting Indians, a man who falls in love with Nell.
- **Jim Downs (7)**...a Moravian preacher hoping to Christianize Indians, brother of Joe Downs.
- **Kate Wells (7)**...older sister of Nell Wells.
- **Mrs. Wentz (9)**...a fur trader's wife who befriends Nell.
- **Lize Davis (9)**...a young girl who sees Joe Downs kiss Nell Wells.
- **Jake Wentz (9)**...fur trader husband of Mrs. Wentz.
- **Eb and Zachary Zane and Lewis Wetzel (10)**...men of Fort Henry, friends of Jake Wentz.

- **Jeff Lynn (20)**...a riverman who assists the settlers in their trip down the Ohio River.
- **Simon, Jim and George Girty (23)**...renegade brothers who use their friendship with the Indians to attack and ambush settlers for their own personal gains.
- **McKee and Elliott (23)**...deserters from the fort who assist the Girty's in their attacks.
- **Colonel Zane and his brother Jack (aka Jonathan) (24)**...men who assist Wetzel in defending the settlers.
- **Loorey (26)**...a young man who is not "well-balanced" in his mind, and who is the butt of jokes among the settlers.
- **Silvertip (26)**...an easily angered Indian who becomes the butt of one of Joe Downs' jokes.
- **Bill (29)**...second raftsmen in Jeff's raft party, killed when their raft is caught on a snag.
- **Various Chiefs: Pipe, Half King, Shingiss, Kotoxen, Misseppa, Winstonah (55)**
- **Aola (58)**...daughter of Delaware Chief Wingenund.
- **Wingenund (61)**...Delaware chief who had previously captured and tortured Wetzel.
- **Tomepomahala (64)**...one of Colonel Zane's guides.
- **Members of Colonel Zane's family: wife Bess, Silas Zane, Major McColloch and Mrs. Alfred Clark (once Betty Zane the heroine of Fort Henry) (67)**
- **Martin and John Wetzel (73)**...Lew Wetzel's brothers.
- **Dick and Will Metzger (76)**...neighbors of Colonel Zane.
- **Major Sam McColloch (78)**...fabled for jumping his horse to escape from Indians.
- **Myeerah (78)**...daughter of Indian Chief who married Isaac Zane.
- **Isaac Zane (79)**...Colonel Zane's brother who married Myeerah, daughter of a Wyandot chief.
- **Benny (85)**...a young Indian boy who convinces Nell Indians can be tamed and civilized.
- **Mr. Zeisberger (86)**...missionary at the Village of Peace who gives his room to the ladies.
- **Mr. Dave Edwards and Mr. George Young and Heckewelder (90-91)**...missionaries.
- **Chief Glickhican (95)**...becomes friends with Jim and familiarizes him with Indian culture.
- **Captain Williamson (197)**...leader of a group of soldiers who warns of an Indian attack.

SYNOPSIS

Chapter 1. Nell Wells and Joe Downs arrive on a wagon-train to the land between the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers where the two rivers join to form the Ohio River. Joe tells Nell about his brother Jim, a Moravian missionary who plans to Christianize Indians. Joe mistakes Nell's kind companionship on the trail for what he believes may be a romantic interest. He falls in love with her, and when he grasps her hand she wrenches free and heads down a path toward other arriving wagons. He follows her and again attempts to hold her hand, which she again refuses for fear of what nearby observers might think. Nell meets Mrs. Wentz in the store, and she rebuffs the older lady's belief that she and Joe are lovers. When Nell later sees Jim, whom she believes to be Joe, she slaps him in the face. Joe comes forth to explain the mistaken identity to Jim.

Chapter 2. Joe tells Jim that he is really fond of Nell. He contrasts his desire to kill Indians with Jim's desire to Christianize them, and says he thinks the frontier is no place for a preacher. Jim explains his intent to help Mr. Wells with his missionary work. Jim has brought Joe's dog Mose and Joe's horse Lance with him. Jim meets Mr. Wells and states that he believes Indians are noble, but they have been driven to be violent. Joe introduces Jim to Kate Wells, the older sister of Nell. A drunk teamster, Leffler, makes a pass at Nell. Joe flings him across the cabin. Nell realizes this is the third time Joe has come to her aid. Joe tells Nell he is in love with her.

Chapter 3. Joe plays a trick on Loorey, who is sleeping off a drinking spree, by removing a gaudy shirt from a similarly recovering Indian named Silvertip. Joe placed the shirt on Loorey, a joke that Silvertip fiercely resents, making Joe his enemy. Joe meets Jeff Lynn, a riverman responsible for escorting settlers down the Ohio River by raft. Jeff takes a liking to Joe thinking he will be able to defend himself on the frontier. Joe tells Lynn he came west because was tired of tame life and wants to hunt and fish and see Indians. Jeff tells Joe about the exploits on behalf of settlers by men such as Colonel Zane, his brother Jack (also known as Jonathan), and Lew Wetzel as well as the renegade brothers Simon, Jim and George Girty, and Girty's helpers named McKee and Elliott.

Chapter 4. Jeff Lynn begins to take Joe and Jim and others on a raft journey down the Ohio River. Jeff tells the party several stories, many of them centering on Indian attacks and attacks by the Girty renegades including the killing of a settler woman by Indians. Joe overhears Nell talking in her sleep where she says she is in love with him but wishes he were more like his brother Jim. The second raft carrying Joe and Jim becomes impaled on an underwater snag, which they soon realize was planted by Silvertip and his men. Bill, the second raftsman is killed. Jeff Lynn and the first raft with the ladies continue on down the Ohio unharmed. Silvertip and his men attack the impaled raft, as Silvertip screams, "Paleface steals shirt. Fool paleface play – Silvertip no forget."

Chapter 5. Jim and Joe are captured by Silvertip's band and taken through the forest to an Indian village where they are met by other Shawnee Indians led by Jim Girty. Harsh words are exchanged, and Joe grasps Girty's nose causing it to bleed. Silvertip makes a French comment that translates to "The Wind of Death". The next day Joe hears a low moaning sound following which the Indian sentry runs off without awakening his companions.

Chapter 6. Chapter 6 is a flashback to several days prior to the capture of Joe and Jim. The frontiersman Indian killer Wetzel had been captured by Delaware Indians and taken to their chief Wingenund, who tortured him five years earlier. Wetzel had been taken before a number of chiefs among them Pipe, the Half King, Shingiss, Kotoxen (the Lynx), Misseppa (the Source), and Winstonah (the War-cloud). Also present were the renegades Simon Girty (the White Indian), Elliott (the Tory), and Jim Girty. Wetzel escaped with the help of Aola, the daughter of Chief Wingenund who secretly brought him a knife to cut his bindings and to kill Indian sentries.

Chapter 7. Wetzel rescues Joe and Jim. As they step over dead Indians Wetzel has killed, Wetzel tells them, "They're good Injuns now." They swim across the Ohio River to Fort Henry,

where they are reunited with the others who were on the first raft. They meet Tomepomehala, Colonel Zane's Shawnee guide. Joe tells Jim he believes Jim is a better man for Nell, to which Jim disagrees. Nell runs up and hugs and kisses Jim, once again thinking he is Joe. Joe and Jim meet Bess Zane, the wife of Colonel Zane, and other members of the Zane family. Colonel Zane asks the missionary Wells to not leave Fort Henry until his brother Jonathan and Wetzel can escort them. They meet Tomepomehala, one of Colonel Zane's guides and Jonathan Zane. As the Indians had taken Wetzel's rifle, Jim gives him his brother's rifle, and Wetzel shoots a turtle off a log to demonstrate his skill.

Chapter 8. Colonel Zane tells Joe about Wetzel. He is forty years old from Virginia, and he became dedicated to killing Indians when he observed the massacre of his family by Delawares when he was nearly eighteen years old. He has two brothers, Martin and John. He is called "*Atelang*" by the Indians, meaning "Deathwind". Colonel Zane introduces Joe and Jim to Dick and Will Metzar. Colonel Zane tells Joe and Jim that his brother Isaac married Myeerah, a Wyandot's chief's daughter.

Chapter 9. "Raising a cabin" brings together everyone in the Village of Peace. Colonel Zane tells Jim that the Jesuit missionaries have been unsuccessful among western tribes. The Hurons, Delawares, and Shawnees and other tribes have been demoralized by the French traders giving them rum and by renegades such as Simon Girty who made the tribes vicious. Jim kisses Nell apologizes to her, and he tries to convince her that Joe can be changed from wildness and recklessness if she will help him. She agrees to try to do so.

Chapter 10. The rescued voyagers resume their westward journey guided by Wetzel and Jonathan Zane. They reach the Village of Peace, and a young Indian boy named Benny approaches Nell, convincing her it is possible to convert Indians to Christianity. Jim learns his brother Joe has gone off with Wetzel. They meet Mr. Zeisberger, the head missionary at the village. He gives his room to the ladies, and gives them an update on the progress of the Moravian missionaries, including the believed conversion of Chief Glickhican of the Delawares. Other missionaries, Mr. Edwards and Mr. Young, are attempting to establish new missionary locations away from the Village of Peace. Jim and Nell and Kate take a tour of the Village of Peace visiting the large log amphitheater used for preaching to congregations, an outdoor shady maple grove where assemblies are held, and a workshop that includes a large forge. Nell tells Jim she hopes Joe still loves her. The missionary bell summons Indians to services.

Chapter 11. Jim makes friends with Chief Glickhican who instructs him about Indian culture. Chief Wingenund of the Delawares, the greatest of all western tribes, maintains a neutral attitude toward the Village of Peace. Jim gives his first address to the Indians. Heckewelder organizes a large religious festival, inviting tribes from all over the region.

Chapter 12. Hundreds of canoes carry Indians to the festival. Indian chiefs who support the Village of Peace are given prominent positions at the front of the gathering. Wingenund and his daughter stay at the extreme left of the gathering. Silvertip, the Shawnee chief attends, riding Lance, Joe's old horse. Jim discusses examples of many Indian converts attempting to persuade

others. In the end, Wingenund states he will not “bury the hatchet” until Wetzel, (“Deathwind”) ceases to attack Indians.

Chapter 13. Fifty Indians had been converted since the start of the preaching. The missionaries, George Young and Dave Edwards, vie for the attention of Kate. Heckewelder instructs them to decide which of them would have Kate. As the two of them are true blue friends, they discuss their feelings and what they feel Kate would want. Dave talks with Kate, and she refuses him telling him she feels like a sister to him. Kate tells George she does love him, and that she had chosen him from the start. Heckewelder tells Jim that Silvertip and Girty have been loitering around the village. Heckewelder marries George and Kate, and he says he has picked out a nice little Indian squaw for Dave. Nell tells Heckewelder that she has seen Girty peeking into her window at night and that she still loves Joe and hopes for his return. Girty hides until Indians tie Dave to a tree, and he tells Nell he has been “layin’” for her, and that he feels he had been cheated out of Betty Zane. He says he will feed her Injun preacher to the buzzards.

Chapter 14. Joe spends time in the wild with Wetzel where he learns the ways of survival. He gains Wetzel’s confidence to the degree that Wetzel takes him to his hiding place and teaches him to shoot buffalo.

Chapter 15. One day Wetzel sees Indian sign, and cautions Joe to remain alert. He wants to take Joe back to the village, but Joe refuses. Soon an Indian takes a shot at Joe, barely missing him. Joe hides until the Indian shows himself, then Joe shoots at him but misses. The Indian comes at Joe with his tomahawk, and Wetzel shoots the Indian. Joe later sees cloudy water in a stream indicating Indians passing upstream. He and Wetzel hide and observe Jim Girty and Silvertip leading a group of captives, including two white women, through the woods. Joe finds Nell’s shoe buckle in the mud indicating that she is one of the women captives.

Chapter 16. Joe and Wetzel track the group hoping to find their camp and free the captives. Wetzel assigns Joe to watch as he attacks the Indians in the slay-and-save mission. Wetzel quietly kills several sentries, then a number of Indians return fire. All at once Joe sees flashing stars, feels a terrible pain, then sinks slowly down and sees all darkness. Wetzel escapes.

Chapter 17. When Joe regains consciousness he sees several dead Indians lying on the ground. He sees Silvertip and another Indian bathing a wound on Jim Girty’s head. Kate is lying near Girty, unconscious. Jim is tied to a tree. He tells Joe Nell is gone. He says he heard a loud moaning roar before the attack just before Silvertip disappeared. Wetzel had cut Jim free, but because Jim had been cut he didn’t fight. Jim says Wetzel nearly killed Girty, and that he will likely return to rescue them. Girty realizes Nell has escaped. Joe taunts Girty despite Jim’s warning him not to. Silvertip prevents Girty from attacking Joe with his tomahawk. Girty takes the brothers to Chief Wingenund. Simon Girty and a white man dressed like an Indian are with the chief. Wingenund instructs a brave to take the white father back to the Village of Peace. When the brave grabs Joe, thinking he is the preacher, Joe speaks up saying he is Deathwind’s friend and that he had killed an Indian. Wingenund’s daughter is called to clear up the identity,

and she identifies Jim as the preacher. Wingenund instructs the brave to let Jim go free, and declares Joe should be painted black, a sign he would be killed. The chief's daughter requests Joe be given to her as her husband. Her father agrees. Joe becomes a willing captive, but he keeps thinking Kate was still a captive. He plans to still kill Girty and free Kate. A council is held with several white men, one of whom is Isaac Zane. He tells Joe that Girty and his renegades are jealous of the Christians and are plotting to attack the Village of Peace. Zane encourages Joe to escape and return to the village to warn them. Joe attacks Silvertip and retrieves his horse and dog, then he returns to his lodge, and the chief's daughter agrees to flee with him. As they are leaving, she points to where she believes Simon Girty's cabin may be.

Chapter 18. Joe sneaks up on Simon Girty's cabin where he finds Girty and a bruised Kate tied to a log. He attacks Girty, and is interrupted in the fight by Silvertip, whom he kills. Girty kills Kate then escapes. As Joe is wounded he meets up with his Indian wife who tells him she had returned to her father who expelled her from the tribe for aiding Joe's escape.

Chapter 19. George Young, David Edwards, Mr. Wells, and Heckewelder, at a remote cabin where they had been preaching to the Indians, are unaware of Joe's fight with Girty and Silvertip. They contemplate whether or not they should return to the village as they believe the Indians may attack them. They all agree they will stay to continue their mission. Wetzel and Nell approach them. Wetzel tells them of his attack to free Nell, and that Joe had likely been captured along with Jim. He tells them he believes Kate is in the hands of Girty and that they should return to the village then go on to Fort Henry where they would be safe. They decline to do so. Jim soon arrives explaining that Chief Wingenund had freed him, but he believes the chief intends to kill Joe. He asks to see Nell, and they permit him to do so. They tell her they believe Kate is dead in order to hide Kate's real fate in Girty's hands. George wants to go to try to kill Girty, but the other missionaries stop him.

Chapter 20. A smaller number of Indians than usual arrive at the cabin location, and Jim preaches to them. Four renegade whites including Simon Girty arrive at the remote mission location asking to see Heckewelder, who had not yet returned. Girty informs Edwards that there will likely be trouble and that the missionary work must be stopped.

Chapter 21. Colonel Zane sends a message to Edwards and the others at the remote missionary location advising them to leave the Village of Peace, as he believes Indians under Pipe and Half King may attack the village. Edwards remembers Wetzel also warning them to return to Fort Henry. A force of military men under Captain Williamson arrives, and he also advises them there may be an Indian uprising in the plans. He recommends the missionaries should abandon their missionary location and go to Fort Henry with the troops. He tells the missionaries that he met Wetzel and Jack Zane on the trail, and they were laying for someone. Jim meets a young minister named John Christy who had lost his sweetheart to an Indian attack, and as such he was seeking vengeance against the Indians. French traders and vagabonds and renegades increase their attacks on the Village of Peace, burning crops, killing animals, and execrating Christian converts. Girty and Elliott consult regularly with Pipe and Half King, the two chiefs most opposed to the missionaries. Girty and Elliott invent false rumors saying the American

armies are losing and the soldiers are returning to steal land from the Indians. The Indians await Jim Girty before they attack the village.

Chapter 22. The most obstinate chiefs and Simon Girty decide to kill the Christian Indians.

Chapter 23. Joe recovers from his wounds. He and Whispering Winds, resting in the forest, plan to go to the village then on to Fort Henry. Jim Girty attacks them and kills both of them. With his dying breath Joe warns Girty that his friend Wetzel will avenge Girty's killing. Wetzel arrives and finds the bodies, and he buries them by sinking them in a deep pool.

Chapter 24. Wetzel and Jonathan Zane meet under a cave overhang. The two men pledge to avenge the deaths. They go to the village and watch from afar as they see Pipe and Girty and other rabble rousers moving about the village as the church bells begin to ring calling the converted Indians to services. They see the missionaries Edwards and Young are wounded, and they observe Half King throwing his war club to the ground, the death sentence for converts.

Chapter 25. Against the wishes of the head missionary, Jim and Edwards decide they will preach to the assembled converts. Nell pledges to support Jim. Edwards and Young are again shot. Wetzel shoots Half King from hidden cover. Wetzel barely misses shooting Jim Girty, who shouts the Indian phrase "*Le vent de la Mort*", or "Deathwind", their feared name for Wetzel.

Chapter 26. Outside the village the clamor increases. Captain Williamson refuses to lead his force against the Indians. Believing the Indians and renegades are going to run over the entire village, the converted Indians flee into the church where they sing and pray, and where Zeisberger and Jim continue preaching. Nell hides the little Indian boy Benny beneath her skirts when Girty and his renegades arrived to search the church for any hidden converts. Nell faints and tells Jim she fears Girty will do her harm. Chief Glickhican reverts to his old ways and pulls the bell rope sounding the signal for the Indians to attack. Chief Wingenund leads Jim and Nell and old man Mr. Wells toward the river attempting to save Nell from Girty. Nell keeps asking Jim to look back to see if Girty is following them.

Chapter 27. The fleeing party looks back to see the smoke from the burning village. Mr. Wells marries Jim and Nell. Mr. Wells is worn out, and before he collapses in death he gives Jim and Nell his bible. All at once Girty and Deering and two Indians appear. They tie up Jim. Girty tells Nell he burned the village just so he could get her. Girty tears off Nell's blouse and is about to rape her when two shots are heard. The two Indians fall over dead, as Wetzel and Jonathan Zane spring out of the woods and attack Girty and Deering. Deering is killed, and Wetzel impales Girty against a tree with a long knife through his crotch. Wetzel tells Girty to look up into the trees where he sees buzzards, buzzards which Wetzel knows will eventually eat the badly wounded and badly bleeding Girty.

Chapter 28. Zane frees Jim as Wetzel approaches Wingenund, his life-long enemy. Zane tries to convince Wetzel that Wingenund is a Christian, but when Wetzel questions the chief he replies only that he is true to his race. Wetzel tells the chief that his daughter and son-in-law

were killed by Girty, and that he, Wetzel, had thrown them in the deep well where they sank. Wetzel tells the chief to flee, but warns him that as soon as he is out of sight he will pursue him to eventually kill him. The chief leaves. The buzzards eventually attack and begin to devour Girty.

Chapter 29. Wetzel trails the chief and eventually finds him where he has returned to the spring and retrieved the body of his daughter so he could bury her. That indicates to Wetzel that the chief is indeed a Christian, so he lowers his rifle and flees into the forest leaving the chief standing by his daughter's grave.

Chapter 30. Back at Fort Henry, Colonel Zane says he counted the bodies of forty-nine grown Christian Indians and twenty-seven children, all of which had been burned at the Village of Peace. He says the young Indian boy Benny was the only Christian Indian saved, and that Heckewelder was planning to have him educated. Wetzel walks into the fort and tells everyone that he had Chief Wingenund in his sights and that he shot at him and missed him. Then Wetzel walks away. Jim and Nell remain at the fort where Colonel Zane gives Jim a job. The Indians never return to the beautiful spring where Joe is buried, as they feel it is haunted. Sometimes at night a stalwart hunter slips like a shadow out of the thicket, leans on a long rifle, and stares into the spring. Quiet reigns once more over the dark, murky grave of the boy who gave his love and his life to the wilderness.

HELPFUL RESEARCH AND STUDY SUMMARIES

The brief notes below are taken from a series of references dealing with Zane Grey's 1906 novel ***THE SPIRIT OF THE BORDER (SOTB)***. This novel is the second of three novels in Zane Grey's Ohio River Trilogy, novels inspired by the author's early ancestors who played important roles during the period immediately preceding the American Revolutionary war. Readers are advised to begin their reading of Grey novels with his 1903 novel ***BETTY ZANE*** followed by reading his 1906 novel ***THE SPIRIT OF THE BORDER (SOTB)***, followed by reading his 1909 novel ***THE LAST TRAIL (TLT)***. A fourth Grey novel ***GEORGE WASHINGTON: FRONTIERSMAN*** was published posthumously in 1994 after being completed by Zane Grey scholar Dr. Carlton Jackson, and readers are advised to read it after having read the previous three Ohio River Trilogy novels.

Note: Before reading ***SOTB***, the reader is advised to first read the brief chronological overview provided by Dr. Carlton Jackson on pages 6 through 12 in the 1989 book ***ZANE GREY, Revised Edition*** published by Twayne's United States Authors Series edited by Kenneth E. Eble, University of Omaha, (ISBN: 0-8057-7543-9). Dr. Carlton's overview places in proper sequence the three novels in Grey's Ohio River Trilogy, of which ***SOTB*** is the second novel.

Charles G. Pfeiffer, Zane Grey, A Study in Values – Above and Beyond the West
(Zane Grey's West Society, 2005) (ISBN 0-9768720-0-5)

References (29, 73, 96, 106, 116, 236, 239, 250, 288-289, 335, 385, 425, 436, 483)

(96) Grey is critical of French traders in **SOTB** for giving Indians mere trinkets and whisky, which inflamed the Indians.

(106) Inter-marriage between settlers and Indians occurs in **SOTB** involving Joe Downs.

(116) Consistent with Grey's respect for and admiration of American Indians, Colonel Zane in **SOTB** provides a realistic appraisal of First Americans, "*...the savage has a beautiful side to his character. I know of many noble deeds done by them, and I believe, if they are honestly dealt with, they will return good for good. There are bad ones, of course; but the French traders, and men like the Girty's, have caused most of this long war...*".

(236-239) In **SOTB** religion plays the major role. It is the story of an attempt by Moravian missionaries to convert the Indians to Christianity, to teach them to make a living by farming and related activities, and to live together in villages at peace with all men. The original title of the story, *The Village of Peace*, is far more fitting and descriptive of the book's content than the one now affixed. In the book the experiment is doomed because of the jealousy of both Indians and whites.

The most interesting part of **SOTB** is the sermon which Jim, a young minister around whom much of the action of the story centers, preached to the Indians. He started quite logically, with God as the creator – "The Great Spirit of whom I shall speak created the world..." (Pfeiffer goes on to discuss in depth the content and significance of the sermon – pages 236-239).

Grey's portrayal of Moravian missionaries in **SOTB** is quite different from his portrayal of them in other Grey novels, such as **WILD HORSE MESA, THE RAINBOW TRAIL, CAPTIVES OF THE DESERT** and **THE VANISHING AMERICAN**. The missionaries in **SOTB** are kind, humble, sincere, God-centered persons, not seeking personal aggrandizement.

(385) In **SOTB** while the author draws considerably on his research of actual historical events, he writes in such a way that feeling takes precedence over fact. His descriptions are more concerned with his instincts regarding the likely romantic feelings and behaviors of his characters rather than emphasizing actual historical events.

(425) The long duration of characters Lew Wetzel and Jonathan Zane which continued throughout **BETTY ZANE, SOTB**, and **THE LAST TRAIL** is somewhat unusual for Grey's characters who are usually presented as loners without close friends or "side-kicks".

Dr. Joseph L. Wheeler, *Zane Grey's Impact on American Life and Letters: A Study in the Popular Novel* (George Peabody College for Teachers [Vanderbilt] – 1975)

References MSS (41, 91, 92, 148, 150, 271, 318, 322)

(91) Grey deals with rape in **SOTB**, an act he calls “*worse’n murder*”.

(92) Girty is slain for his sin of rape in **SOTB**.

(148) Even before finishing **BETTY ZANE**, Grey was planning ahead for the second of the Ohio River Trilogy, THE VILLAGE OF PEACE – eventually the title was changed to The Spirit of the Border. A diary kept by Colonel Ebenezer Zane became the historical basis for much of the story.

(271) Grey became a master of sustaining moods of gloom and blood, such as in **SOTB**.

(318) According to **SOTB** the whites’ failure to pay for their land caused the Indians to fight back. Not the least of the Indian’s bitterness had to do with the way he had been treated; herded into reservations like so many cattle.

(322) As far as a general description of what Christianity was all about, Grey never excelled the magnificent Chapter XII of **SOTB** (“*The Groves were God’s First Temples*”).

Carlton Jackson, *Zane Grey, Revised Edition*, Published by Twayne’s United States Authors Series Edited by Kenneth Eble, University of Omaha, 1989 (ISBN 0-8057-7543-9)

References (9-11)

(10) The center of action in **SOTB** is a Moravian mission called the Village of Peace. In their efforts to convert the Indians, the ministers antagonize the chief villain of the story, Jim Girty, brother of Simon. Wetzel urges the head missionary, Mr. Wells, to abandon the mission otherwise he will jeopardize the lives of all the people in it. Wells is grateful to Wetzel’s help, but since he still regards him only as an “Indian-killer”, he will not move. Wetzel gives an explanation of practical Christianity: “*No. I ain’t a Christian, an’ I am a killer of Injuns...I don’t know nothin’ much ‘cept the woods an’ fields, an’ if there’s a God fer me He’s out thar under the trees an’ grass...*” A most violent massacre of the Village of Peace is then conducted by Jim Girty and his Indian allies, who set upon the Christian Indians as they pray and sing hymns in the chapel. The climax of the story occurs when Wetzel confronts the evil Girty at Beautiful Springs, nails him to a tree with his knife, and leaves Girty in agony to spill out his life’s blood and be eaten by buzzards.