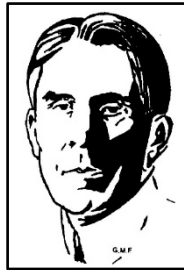


BETTY ZANE

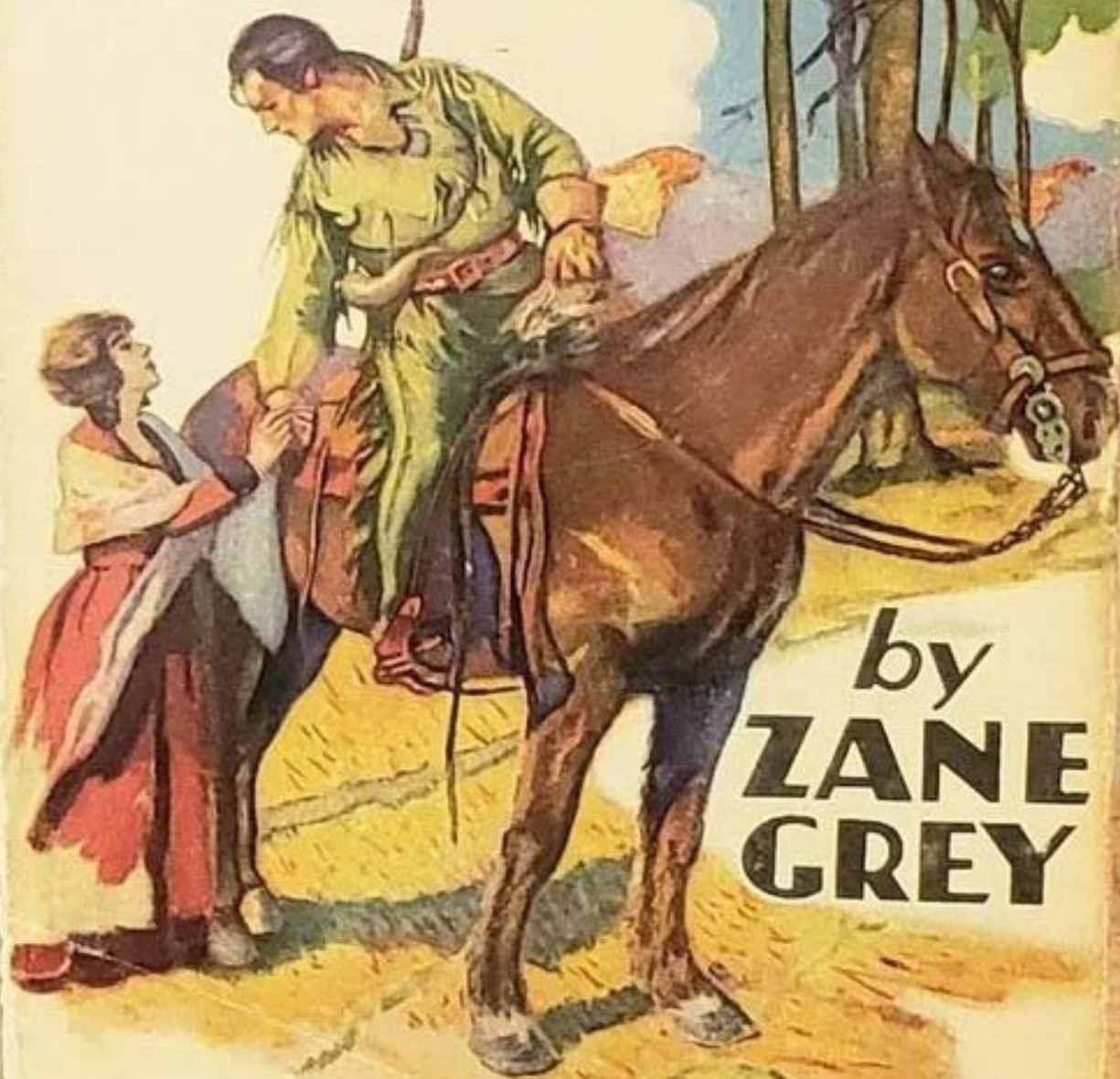
Synopsis and Research Summaries

Prepared by Elmer A. Guerri for his courses about Zane Grey's works
offered through the *Osher Lifelong Learning Institute*,
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Zane Grey's West Society

BETTY ZANE



by
**ZANE
GREY**

INTRODUCTION

BETTY ZANE was Zane Grey's first novel, self-published with financing help from the fiancé of his brother R.C. It was later republished as **THE LAST RANGER**, a common practice in the mid-1900s. The heroine of the novel is the author's great grandaunt who risked her life by running through bullets to bring gunpowder to the besieged Fort Henry in the last battle of the American Revolution in 1872. This book was the first in a series of three known as **THE OHIO RIVER TRILOGY**, which included **THE SPIRIT OF THE BORDER** (1906) and **THE LAST TRAIL** (1909). Grey's patriotism was in large part due to the roles played by his early ancestors in the Ohio River Valley history. A fourth Grey novel **GEORGE WASHINGTON: FRONTIERSMAN** was published posthumously after being completed by Zane Grey scholar Dr. Carlton Jackson. 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).

LIST OF MAJOR CHARACTERS

(XX) Indicates the page where each character first appears in the Walter J. Black Edition of **BETTY ZANE**.

- **Colonel Ebenezer Zane (1)**...Zane Grey's great grandfather, who promised his mother he would take care of his sister Elizabeth (Betty). He founded a settlement near Fort Henry which later became Wheeling, West Virginia.
- **Betty Zane (2)**...sister of Ebenezer Zane, great grandaunt of Zane Grey. She lived with an aunt in Philadelphia where she was educated, and she moved to live with Colonel Zane following her aunt's death.
- **Elizabeth "Bessie" Zane (3)**...Ebenezer's wife (formerly Elizabeth McColloch)
- **Wetzels, McCollochs, Bennets, Metzars (xi)**...families who accompanied Colonel Zane to found Fort Henry in 1774.
- **Lewis Wetzel (4)**...famous Indian killer who swore vengeance against Indians who had killed his parents and some of his kin as he watched when a youngster.
- **Captain Boggs (daughter Lydia) (7)**...stationed at Fort Henry by Colonel George Rogers Clarke.
- **Major Samuel McColloch (7)**...Elizabeth Zane's brother, noted Indian killer.
- **General George Rogers Clarke (8)**...commandant of the Western Military Department, erected what became Fort Henry in 1774.
- **Alfred Clarkee (8, 14)**...a borderman who accompanied Major McColloch to Fort Henry from Fort Pitt and fell in love with Betty Zane; a rival of Ralfe Miller.

- **Tige (12)**...the loyal Zane family dog who appeared to have acute awareness and disdain for Indians who threatened the pioneers. He had followed Isaac home when he escaped from the Indians.
- **Isaac Zane (18)**...brother of Ebenezer Zane (there were five brothers – Ebenezer, Silas, Jonathan, Andrew, and Isaac). Isaac was captured by Indians and taken to Detroit and ransomed.
- **Simon Girty (17)**...an American colonial of Irish descent who served as a liaison between the British and their Indian allies during the Revolution, a man feared as a villain and a leader in attacks against frontier families.
- **John and Harry Bennett (28)**...friends of Colonel Zane.
- **Jonathan Zane (29)**...brother of Colonel Zane and a close friend of Wetzel.
- **Myeerah (31)**...aka “White Crane”, Indian daughter of a French woman and an Indian prince Tarhe, who claimed Isaac Zane as her husband to save his life from Indians.
- **Arrowsmith (31)**...Wyandot brave known as a fast runner.
- **Hamilton (31)**...British Governor known as a hair and scalp buyer who plotted with Indians.
- **Red Fox (32)**...fierce Shawnee chief.
- **Ralfe Miller (83)**...acquaintance of Alfred Clarke at Fort Pitt before arriving at Fort Henry. He became an adversary of Clarke’s, and was alleged to be a big drinker and a friend of Simon Girty and the Indians, causing many to see him as a traitor. He repeatedly pursued Betty Zane asking her to marry him.
- **Crow (96)**...Delaware chief’s son sent to recapture the Indian princess Myeerah.
- **Tarhe (103)**...Wyandot Chief who did not seek war.
- **Chief Logan (109)**...Mingo chief and advocate of peace but who later made fierce war against Virginia pioneers along with Shawnee and Delaware Indians. He spoke out against the use of alcohol by Indians who accepted alcohol from the French in exchange for furs.
- **Colonel Cresop (116)**...massacred Chief Logan’s relatives creating vindication by the Indians.
- **Captain Jack (118)**...young son of Huron war chief Thundercloud. The youngster was befriended by Isaac Zane during Isaac’s captivity.
- **Grandma Watkins (132)**...elder pioneer woman who had serious worries and doubts about the patriotism and loyalty of Ralfe Miller.
- **Elliott and McKee (139)**...Girty’s renegade friends.
- **Cornplanter (175)**...originally a Seneca chief who later became leader of the newly formed “Five Nations”. He had initially captured Isaac Zane and sentenced him to death before his rescue by Myeerah. He was later lauded as one of the most friendly of Indian chiefs towards the United States.
- **Colonel Crawford (177)**...American military leader massacred by the Indians who became, in effect, a martyr and an inspiration for those fighting in the final battle of Fort Henry.

SYNOPSIS

Chapter 1. Colonel Ebenezer Zane and his family had a home at Fort Henry. His sons were well known for their knowledge of Indian warfare and cunning. Three of the boys (Ebenezer, Silas, and Jonathan) had been captured by Indians and taken to Detroit and ransomed. A fourth son, Andrew, had been killed by the Indians as he tried to escape. Isaac had been captured four times and recaptured and had been away from home for several years. It was believed he may have also been killed. Isaac was beloved by an Indian princess, daughter of Tarhe, a Huron chief. Colonel Zane had been hearing reports that Wyandot Indians were preparing for an attack on Fort Henry. The Zanes hear of the arrival of a new young soldier named Alfred Clarke. The family is concerned that Isaac's dog Tige has been uneasy lately. Tige had followed Isaac home the last time he escaped from Indians.

Chapter 2. People at Fort Henry are impressed with Alfred Clarke, the new arrival, and Colonel Zane gives him a position at the fort. As he is patrolling outside the fort he sees Betty Zane riding her horse, and he instructs her to return to the fort. She challenges his right to detain her and give her directions. He informs her of the threat of attack from the Indians and Simon Girty. Alfred is impressed with Betty's beauty. After she leaves Alfred notices a dog barking along the river bank. He then notices what appears to be a man grasping a log, floating down the river. He rescues the man and determines he is Isaac Zane, who has once again escaped from the Indians. Alfred brings Isaac to his father's house. Betty returns to her father's house and complains to her friend Lydia regarding her treatment at the hands of Alfred. She later learns Alfred had rescued Isaac. Isaac tells them he has heard the British Governor Hamilton has offered to pay Indians for scalps of pioneers. He also warns them that the British are assembling Indians to attack the fort, confirming earlier reports they had received. He warns them that the Shawnee chief Red Fox is one of the fiercest warriors. Major McColloch tells them of his escape from the Indians by jumping his horse over a cliff, earning the name "Flying Chief" from the Indians. Betty apologizes to Alfred, but he snubs her. The Indian killer Wetzel returns and tells them the Indians appear to be headed for the Kanawha settlement rather than the fort.

Chapter 3. Betty falls and injures her ankle while picking chestnuts. Alfred sees her in distress, and over her objections, he carries her to Colonel Zane's house. Despite her hurt feelings toward Alfred she wonders why he is often on her mind, the first sign that she actually cares for him. Two of Betty's friends, Lydia Boggs and Alice Reynolds tease her about Alfred. Alfred wins the bottle race at the wedding of one of Betty's friends, and he dances with Betty. Betty tells Alfred she forgives him for their initial confrontation. Alfred asks Betty if he can visit her, and she eventually consents.

Chapter 4. Betty and a youngster Harry hear what they believe to be turkey gobbling sounds, which eventually are shown to be Indians signaling as they lay in hiding hoping to recapture Isaac. Lewis Wetzel questions whether the gobbling is actually made by turkeys or if it is an Indian signal. Wetzel hates Indians, and is known as an Indian killer due to his vengeance for the Indians having violently killed his family when he was a young man. Wetzel stalks and kills a number of the Indians who had been making the turkey calls in the area. Betty asks Alfred to help her feed her pet animals, and they take her canoe and go fishing together. Alfred tells her of his restlessness and melancholy when at Fort Pitt. Alfred is impressed with Betty's riding and shooting skills. They discuss Ralfe Miller, whom Alfred had known at Fort Pitt, and she questions if he may be friends with Simon Girty and soldiers who deserted Fort Pitt. Betty reads a book aloud to Alfred. When Alfred tells Betty he will soon be leaving on an

assignment, she tells him she wishes he would not have to go. When they return to the Colonel's house they learn Isaac has been recaptured. Before Alfred leaves for his trip he kisses Betty, and she slaps his face and runs off. Alfred writes her a letter of apology and slips it under her door.

Chapter 5. Chapter 5 is a flashback to when Isaac is recaptured as he is in the woods hunting deer. He recognizes his captor as Crow, a Wyandot tribe warrior. Isaac learns that a great chief Wingenund has been killed by Wetzel, and he fears the Indians will retaliate by killing him, now that he is again a prisoner. When he reaches the Wyandot camp he meets with Tarhe, the chief of all the Wyandots. Tarhe offers to spare Isaac if he marries his daughter, the princess Myeerah. Isaac refuses, unless Myeerah agrees to return and live with Isaac's family, which she refuses.

Chapter 6. The Hurons side with the French in Pontiac's war, and they agree to aid the British. The American Colonel Cresop massacres an entire Indian village, resulting in increased attacks and violence by the Indians against the pioneers. The increased violence by the Indians is abetted by the trade of alcohol by the French fur traders. Isaac is injured by Red Fox in an Indian ball game. Red Fox is madly in love with Myeerah and he hates Isaac. Isaac convinces Myeerah to see to it that Red Fox is not punished as he fears that would result in more attacks against the pioneers. Myeerah nurses Isaac back to health and continues to protect him. Eventually Isaac realizes he has fallen in love with her. Once more failing to get her to agree to go live with him in his village Isaac escapes during a stormy night.

Chapter 7. Colonel Zane and his wife, Bessie, discuss changes they have seen in Betty since Alfred Clarke arrived, and they believe she cares for him. Alfred leaves for Fort Pitt and later to return to his home. Betty expects to get a letter from him or an apology sent through her brother Jonathan, but she receives neither. She realizes she is in love with Alfred, and pledges to "tear him from her heart". Colonel Zane encourages Betty to attend a dance. Bessie cautions her husband about Ralfe Miller, believing he may be tied to Simon Girty. Betty attends the dance where she meets Grandma Watkins. Grandma Watkins cautions Wetzel that she is afraid for Betty, and she doesn't want her to become a wife in "a rude hunter's cabin". She also expresses her concern about Ralfe Miller. Miller pursues Betty at the dance, but Betty tells him they can never be anything but friends. Miller tells her he will make her love him. Lew Wetzel steps between Miller and Betty when Miller grabs her. Grandma Watkins tries to encourage Betty to take up with Wetzel, but Betty says Wetzel does not care for her in that way. On the way home from the dance Wetzel kills wolves that are following Betty and the others.

Chapter 8. Betty is sad as winter drags by. Wetzel tells Betty stories about killing Indians. Colonel Zane predicts an Indian attack soon. Spring arrives and Colonel Zane's wife warns Betty that Simon Girty had been heard to say he would like to take Betty as his wife. Betty says she would kill him first. One day Betty sees Alfred fishing beneath the old sycamore tree they used to visit. Alfred tells Colonel Zane he had written a letter of apology to Betty before he left. The Colonel says he believes she had not received the letter, and he discovers that Sam, his slave, had hidden the letter because he dislikes Alfred. Colonel Zane admonishes Sam, retrieves the letter, and gives it to Betty. Betty faints when she reads the letter.

Chapter 9. After having been recaptured Isaac is taken to the village of Cornplanter, head of the Five Nations, who had aggressively turned against the pioneers. In the camp Isaac meets Simon Girty who tells him that Colonel Crawford had recently massacred a lot of Indians, which had angered Cornplanter and which made it likely he would want to kill Isaac. Cornplanter sentences Isaac to die. Girty notifies Myeerah of Isaac's plight, and she and some Wyandots and Hurons arrive to claim Isaac, whom they call

“White Eagle”. Myeerah gives Isaac his freedom and promises to go with him to live among the pioneers.

Chapter 10. Colonel Zane realizes Ralfe Miller is a spy, which Wetzel confirms to Betty. Isaac and Myeerah return to Colonel Zane’s. Isaac says he believes Myeerah can bring peace with the Indians. Isaac realizes it was Girty who got word to Myeerah that Isaac was to be killed. Betty pledges to be Myeerah’s friend and to love her since she had saved Isaac’s life.

Chapter 11. At the wedding of Isaac and Myeerah, Wetzel appears to be distracted. Ralfe arrives late to the wedding. Tige’s low growls are silenced by Wetzel. A shooting match is held, the prize being an embroidered buckskin bullet pouch Betty had made. Wetzel wins. Wetzel’s keen eyes spot Indians in hiding on the island from which they could observe the wedding. Unaware of the Indians, Betty decides to ride her horse across the river. Wetzel tries to stop her, realizing the Indians were lying in wait to attempt to capture her. Alfred accuses Miller of cooperating with the Indians. He strikes him, and he challenges him to a duel. Wetzel tells Betty he believes Alfred is in love with her. Later Miller throws rocks at Betty’s window and asks her to leave with him, telling her the Indians are going to attack. Betty realizes Miller is a traitor. Having been refused, Miller sneaks into Alfred’s room and stabs him, then flees. Colonel Zane prepares the fort for an attack, as Wetzel sets off in pursuit of Miller. He kills Miller.

Chapter 12. Alfred recovers from his stabbing wounds. Isaac believes he and Myeerah should return to Tarhe’s Wyandot camp before the Indians attack the fort. As Wetzel is delayed trying to avoid pursuing Indians, he sends Tige back to the fort with a concealed message engraved on a bullet to warn Colonel Zane of an impending Indian attack. Wetzel follows Tige and later returns to the fort.

Chapter 13. Hundreds of Indians and a detachment of 200 British soldiers attack the fort. Girty demands the fort to surrender. The pioneers refuse. With his first shot Wetzel kills Red Fox, the Shawnee chief. The pioneers fight bravely. The Indians attack the fort with fire arrows setting the blockhouse on fire. Alfred saves the blockhouse facing almost certain death, making him a hero.

Chapter 14. The pioneers realize they are about to run out of gunpowder for their guns and cannon. They realize someone has moved the gunpowder, and they realize Miller had likely stolen the gunpowder kegs. The only gunpowder remaining was outside the fort in Colonel Zane’s cabin. Betty Zane volunteers to make a dash to retrieve the gunpowder believing the Indians and British would be less likely to try to shoot a woman. She pleads with her brother, and he agrees to let her try, as it is their only hope. She is successful despite bullets flying about her. The next morning seventy men led by Captain Boggs arrive to help defend the fort, and the Indians and the British withdraw and abandon their attack.

Chapter 15. Isaac and Myeerah arrive with a treaty of peace proving Isaac’s belief that she could deliver peace between the Indians and the pioneers. Colonel Zane agrees to give his

sister Betty to Alfred as his wife, but he plays a joke on Betty by not telling her until later. Alfred takes her to the sycamore tree and tells her about the letter Sam had intercepted. She tells him her brother showed her the letter. Betty resists briefly, then it becomes clear she and Alfred will be wed.

HELPFUL RESEARCH AND STUDY SUMMARIES

(XX) Denotes the pages on which the quotation appears.

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 (147, 151, 310, 316)

(147) Grey's first fictional milieu was the Ohio River Valley. Since his ancestors had opened up the country for white settlers, their history was a natural jumping-off place; his mind had been saturated with these stories ever since he could remember. Some time in late 1901, with Dolly's encouragement and R. C.'s specific suggestion of the plot, he began his first novel. Seemingly, there was never any disagreement about his title: Betty Zane.

(151) After hearing a lecture by the great frontiersman, Buffalo Jones, Grey presented him a copy of Betty Zane. Following that Jones extended an invitation for Grey to join him on an expedition to rope lions on the high plateau overlooking the Grand Canyon. That expedition became the motivation that launched Grey fully into his writing career.

(310) As a result of having been raised on the Puritan Ethic, in his first novel Betty Zane, Grey observes that one should work to live.

(316) Since Grey had a little Indian blood in him, he was usually sympathetic to the Indian's plight. Probably he did more to make the American Indian a real person, rather than a cardboard villain, than any writer since Cooper. Up to that time, America's first citizens were normally treated as subhuman monsters, depraved barbarians. Grey laboriously began to change the stereotype with his very first book, Betty Zane, and stuck at it through the years, finally reaching the climax with The Vanishing American but never giving up the fight.

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 (83, 89, 95, 106, 110-111, 116, 173, 203,
234-236, 334, 415, 425, 452, 483, 561, 601, 608)**

(83) Whatever Grey's personal feelings might have been towards African Americans, and I recall no mention of this in his journal, he did put dialogue on the lips of his characters reflecting general stereotypes that are very offensive today to more than African Americans...In *Betty Zane* there is a negro slave whose loyalty and love for Betty and distrust of the hero, whom he considers to be "no good Southern white trash," causes him to fail to give a letter to her that would have aided the hero to plead his romantic cause – for which he was nearly whipped.

(95) Grey recognized the importance of the French in the history of the Ohio River Valley and also in the Rocky Mountain region. His treatment of them varies. Sometimes he gives them high marks as in the case of Isaac Zane's wife, Myeerah, who was half French and half Indian in *Betty Zane*.

(106) Inter-marriage with First Americans occurs in Grey's romances quite frequently, such as the bride of Isaac Zane in *Betty Zane*.

(110-111) Grey had the greatest sympathy for the Indian, and he constantly lamented the government's mistreatment of them. Grey regarded the broken treaties and the reservation system as shameful – a dark blotch in United States history. Certainly he did not condone the Indian's violence, but in apportioning blame for violence in general, Grey argued that the onus rested on the white man's shoulders. All the way from *Betty Zane*, written in 1903, to *The Last Wagon Train*, published in 1936, Grey defended the rights of the American Indian.

(115-116) In discussing inter-marriage, as in *Betty Zane*, the idea that it produced inferior children is completely absent from the book. Colonel Zane had married a half-Indian and Isaac Zane will follow suit before the book is over. There is nothing to hint at the inferiority of these two women or their children. Further, he is complimentary of the traits of Cornplanter, the offspring of a mixed-race relationship.

(172-173) There are a number of instances of affection between brother and sister (in Grey's writings). There is the attachment that exists between *Betty Zane* and her brothers, especially Isaac, that permeates the Ohio River Trilogy.

(202-203) While heaven and hell as the ultimate destination of human souls after death are not mentioned in Grey's journal, they appear in some form in virtually every one of his romances. When Wetzel is teased by Grandma Watkins about not having a wife he responds, "Dear mother, perhaps there's a wife in Heaven for me. There's none on earth..."

(234-236) From the content of *Betty Zane*, I would judge that Grey's concern with religious subjects was mainly to provide an appropriate and authentic setting. Aside from a few expressions using the name of God, references to God appear only about five times. (On pages 234 to 236 of his book, Pfeiffer discusses a number of specific references to religion on the part of characters in *Betty Zane* in their everyday life.)

(334) Pfeiffer believes the numerous references to God by Grey indicate the existence of God is assumed. In the books where His existence is doubted by some individuals, in the end they have some kind of experience that results in a theistic faith.

(415) In *Betty Zane* the female version of the story is the dominant, if not the only one.

(425) The first thing that impresses one when he begins to look into the subject of close male friendships in Grey's novels is how frequently the hero, like Grey, was a loner. Usually the friendship had not been of long duration, but began in the current book. There are exceptions – the most notable being that of Lew Wetzel and Jonathan Zane, which continued throughout the three novels in the Ohio River Trilogy.

(452) Pfeiffer discusses that in the late nineteenth century religious novels the Westerns obsession with death and its cause was sin and eternal punishment it would bring, not death, that was the big problem; and the normal events of life – “birth, marriage, embarking on a career – become peripheral”. The great emphasis is on “a few extraordinary moments – the hold-up, the jailbreak, the shootout”. Pfeiffer believes Grey parts company with this understanding of the modern Western. It is true that in his journals the brevity of life and the certainty of death were of continuing concern, and that while for some a person's death was nothing, or a great experience, Grey was “too savage, too fierce, too alive for that. I want to go on living and suffering and learning”. Pfeiffer further states this does not mean Grey turned away from Christianity and the idea of some kind of future life, and consequently downplayed the “normal events of life – birth, marriage, and embarking on a career”. Nor does it imply for Grey's heroes' meaning could only be found in the “few extraordinary moments – the hold-up, the jailbreak, the shoot-out”. Grey's fiction recognizes that death is a normal part of life.

(483) Pfeiffer excludes the three novels of the Ohio River Trilogy from the study of the Heritage Syndrome because that syndrome is concerned with people who emigrated to the western part of the United States, and obviously the protagonists of those novels did not.

(561) The breasts, both male and female, but predominantly the latter, are used in nearly every book to either excite passion or to reveal it. The lips, too, are involved, as Grey uses the kiss as one of the primary means of arousing passion. The phenomenon begins on a rather low key in Grey's first romance, *Betty Zane*, when Betty's pride and stubbornness had kept her from revealing her love to Alfred until he had turned from her in sorrow and hopelessness. “The haughty poise had disappeared. Her head was bowed. Her little hands were tightly pressed over a throbbing bosom.”

(601) What of the future of man? It is a problem that haunted Grey throughout his writing career. He suggests that man, as we know him today, may cease to exist. In *Betty Zane* he writes of the Ohio River, "Eons of time before human beings lived, it flowed slowly toward the sea, and ages after men and their works are dust, it will roll on placidly with its eternal scheme of nature."

Dr. Carlton Jackson, *ZANE GREY: Revised Edition*, Published by Twayne's United States Author's Series edited by Kenneth Eble, University of Omaha, 1989
(ISBN 0-8057-7543-9)

Readers are encouraged before reading **BETTY ZANE** to read pages 6 through 9 of Dr. Carlton Jackson's book, which describe in great detail the relationship between the three novels in **THE OHIO RIVER TRILOGY**.