

# **Centennial Study Guide**

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## Plot Summary

The story begins with Dr. Lewis Vernor, a professor at a "small college in Georgia" being called on to verify facts of a story written by Carol Endermann. The story then shifts to extensive descriptions of the land, mostly along the South Platte River, and the Colorado town of Centennial, including how the mountain ranges and plains came into being. There are then descriptions of the earliest animals of the region.

Next comes the story of Lame Beaver, a member of the tribe known as "Our People" who will later be called Arapaho and Cheyenne. Lame Beaver encounters a pair of traders, Pasquinel and McKeag, and is impressed with Pasquinel. He tells his young daughter that she should consider marriage to the trapper. Lame Beaver, meanwhile, travels to a place called Blue Valley in search of tipi poles and kills an Indian, retrieving his gun and two bullets made of gold. Pasquinel becomes convinced Lame Beaver's daughter knows the location of this source of gold and marries her. More than a hundred years later, one of Lame Beaver's descendants, Paul Garrett, sees Blue Valley as an ugly place, exploited for its gold.

The descendants of Lame Beaver fight to find peace with the whites who constantly invade lands used by the Indians. The first cattle drive goes from Texas to Colorado, and English investors see the opportunity to establish a huge ranch called the Crown Vee, controlling millions of acres by controlling a few key water sources. The cattlemen fight the farmers who also want water and one, eventually known as Potato Brumbaugh, harnesses a great deal of the Platte for irrigation of huge sugar beet crops which prompts the building of a sugar beet factory. With that flourishing industry there's a need for farm workers and Mexicans arrive on the scene, finding the way difficult but less so than in their homeland. Next comes an innovative way to farm dry lands and the prairies are taken by families with the goal of growing wheat. In the 1920s, the farming practices prove fatal to the industry and dust storms carry away the top soil, leaving farming families destitute and cattlemen with no grazing land.

The story wraps up in the 1970s with Paul Garrett, a widower now in control of the Crown Vee. Garrett is concerned about the environment and fears that it may be too late to turn the country around. He finds himself in charge of the state's centennial celebration and is faced with bringing the myriad aspects of history to life.



# Chapters One through Four

## Chapters One through Four Summary

The story begins with Dr. Lewis Vernor, a professor at a "small college in Georgia" being called on to verify facts of a story written by Carol Endermann. Chapter two shifts to extensive descriptions of the land, mostly along the South Platte River, and the Colorado town of Centennial, including how the mountain ranges and plains came into being. Chapter three turns to the inhabitants, discussing the appearance and interaction of the earliest creatures, ranging from dinosaurs to the forerunners of the modern day horse and their migration to Asia. The bison soon migrate to North America where they encounter the large beaver, the forerunner of the modern day animal.

Another important inhabitant was the rattlesnake which remained on the scene, often eating prairie dogs and other rodents as well as crippling or even killing bison, horses and elk, and eventually encountering man who had no anxiety about killing the snakes whenever the two encountered each other. The rattlesnake would eventually play a role in the life of Lame Beaver, a great warrior of the tribe known as Our People and later identified as Arapaho or Cheyenne.

Lame Beaver, introduced in chapter four, is a brilliant statistician who is one of three young men who go out on a mission to steal horses from an opposing tribe. They succeed beyond their wildest hopes and the three, including Red Nose and Cottonwood Knee, return with a small herd of horses. Lame Beaver is granted ownership of one horse, a pinto that is taken because of a promise he made to trade a horse for his intended bride, Blue Leaf. The two have many happy years together and Lame Beaver is credited for getting the first gun for the tribe, useless without the understanding to make it fire but a great coup nonetheless. He later breaks the gun killing a rattlesnake about to strike Blue Leaf.

On one encounter, Lame Beaver is given the task of holding off an adversary called Never-Death, believed to be invincible. As it turns out, he has armor taken from early explorers and Lame Beaver kills him by hitting him repeatedly in the face. Lame Beaver is later on a raiding party in which Cottonwood Knee is shot and killed.

When Lame Beaver and some others encounter a small hunting party, he kills a warrior and takes that gun as well as two bullets that had been molded by that warrior of pure gold. On another occasion, he encounters two white men who trade a gun for Lame Beaver's pelts. Lame Beaver eventually fights to the death, killing a great enemy chief named Rude Water and a secondary chief, both with the gold bullets. The Indians of that tribe recognize the gold for what it is and trade the two bullets, prompting a rush to find Lame Beaver's source. With his death, Blue Leaf is cast out and dies just days later of exposure to the cold - a practical way this tribe eliminates the encumbrance of the old and useless.



## Chapters One through Four Analysis

The early inhabitants of Colorado - the dinosaur, horse, bison and beaver - are described in great detail through stories that give information about the habits and lives of each of the creatures. The bison story features a young calf that fails to properly connect with his mother and allies himself with an older bull instead. The story of the beavers revolves around a female who, at age two, is sent out into the world, finds a place for a dam but fails to find a mate immediately, eventually settling down with an older beaver who had lost his family to some tragedy. This method of storytelling means the facts of each of the animals is presented in an engaging manner that makes the reading more enjoyable than if the facts were merely delivered.

There are extensive discussions of the practices of the Indians, especially those of Lame Beaver's tribe. The author uses the opportunity to discount theories that the first horses came from two horses taken from Spanish explorers with those horses "breeding like crazy" until the plains were populated with the species.

The author also discusses in some detail the earliest human population and discounts the theory that these were unintelligent men with no ability to reason. He cites the discovery of the remains of a bison with a well-crafted spear point in its neck as an indication that this was not the case and weaves around that discovery a story of one of the earliest human inhabitants, a man who crafted spear points and was revered for his ability. The man, at twenty-seven, was able to reason out the best flint for the task and his work was coveted by the hunters of the tribe.



# Chapter Five

## Chapter Five Summary

Pasquinel is a French trader who travels among the Indians, trading for pelts. When he finds himself shot in the back by a Pawnee arrow, he coolly shoots back with his gun, killing two and causing the rest to run away. Unable to get the arrow out, he proceeds with the shaft sticking out of his back until he encounters the Cheyenne who come to his aid but are unable to remove the arrow. They cut off the shaft and Pasquinel continues on his journey as the wound heals with the arrow inside. It will be years before the arrow is cut out, and it continually pains him all during that time.

Pasquinel trades trinkets for pelts and plans to return to Saint Louis with his haul, but has his boat broken up by members of the tribe of Rude Water - the chief who would later be killed by Lame Beaver. Pasquinel, armed only with a knife, goes down river and waits for the braves to appear with his pelts. They soon arrive and they hail a passing boat, planning to take his pelts back. The traders kill the Indians but when Pasquinel insists that the furs are his property, the traders strike him on the head with an oar. He escapes with his life and pursues them on to Saint Louis where he finds that they've already sold their goods. Pasquinel immediately begins planning the next trip, but the company that funded his unsuccessful foray refuses another try. Dr. Guisbert funds that next trip and on this one, Pasquinel encounters a young Scotsman named Alexander McKeag.

Pasquinel and McKeag work together with McKeag serving as interpreter. The two later have a new benefactor, a German silversmith named Brockweiss. Brockweiss has two daughters, each interested in the trappers though McKeag avoids showing any signs of returning the attention. Pasquinel agrees to marry one of the daughters, a young woman named Lise.

While on the plains trading, McKeag is wounded in the shoulder and Blue Leaf - wife of Lame Beaver - cares for him. Pasquinel and McKeag have by now established a strong rapport with many of the Indian tribes, and Lame Beaver is taken with Pasquinel who once could have killed him but didn't. Lame Beaver tells his young daughter, Clay Basket, that she should someday consider marriage to Pasquinel.

Clay Basket helps McKeag with his recovery and becomes very interested in him. Though it's commonly accepted among the Indians that she is interested in him, he doesn't make a move in that direction so she settles for Pasquinel who is happy to take her as a wife, though by this time Pasquinel has already married Lise. Pasquinel fathers a son by Lise and several years later, a daughter. With Clay Basket, he fathers two sons and much later, a daughter who is eventually called Lucinda. The oldest of the sons, Jacques, is an angry young man who is always anxious to get into trouble. Jacques and McKeag argue, ending the argument in a fight in which McKeag holds a knife to



Jacques and notes that he'll later wish he had killed the boy. McKeag and Pasquinel break off their partnership and each goes his own way.

Pasquinel remains intent on finding the gold that he believes Lame Beaver had discovered years earlier. Even after more than twenty years of marriage to Clay Basket, he believes she is holding back information that could help him solve this mystery. The exploits of her father had been drawn by her mother on a robe and Clay Basket remembers it from her childhood. When she details the drawings, Pasquinel comes to believe he knows where the gold is to be found. He leaves his two sons with the Sioux and travels to that place with Clay Basket and his young daughter. There he finds a shiny nugget and bends to pick it up. While in this position, he's shot by Indians, killed and scalped. McKeag, having come to the conclusion that he and Pasquinel should renew their partnership, arrives in time to help Clay Basket bury Pasquinel. Despite misgivings about his desire and ability to care for a family, he takes Clay Basket to live with him and agrees that the daughter will be treated as his own. It's he who determines that she's to be called Lucinda.

## Chapter Five Analysis

There are several points of foreshadowing in this segment of the story. One of those is the fight between McKeag and the young Jacques. When that occurs, McKeag has the opportunity to kill the young man, but doesn't. It's pointed out that there might come a time in which he wishes he had done so. It's also interesting that McKeag continues to be asked about Pasquinel's "other wives," especially by the father of Pasquinel's wife in Saint Louis. That man, Brockweiss, believes Pasquinel to have another wife in New Orleans. What's interesting is that McKeag continues to deny any knowledge of other wives, initially thinking that Pasquinel is merely using those stories as a way to avoid making a commitment to some other woman. Later, it seems that McKeag has no interest in learning anything negative about his partner. It also seems that McKeag holds his former partner's friendship dearer than does Pasquinel.

Another interesting facet of this story that will continue to be important throughout the book is that the stories and people continue to be interwoven. For example, Lame Beaver and Rude Water - two great warriors from opposing tribes who eventually clash and kill each other in the segment about Lame Beaver - each encounter McKeag and Pasquinel. In Lame Beaver's case, he sees the two men on several occasions and slips inside their hut one night when Pasquinel could have killed him. Lame Beaver is impressed that the man doesn't and later tells his young daughter that she should consider marriage to the man. It's while Pasquinel is trying to deal with Rude Water that McKeag comes to his rescue as interpreter. This chance meeting prompts the alliance between McKeag and Pasquinel.



# Chapter Six

## Chapter Six Summary

Levi Zandt is the youngest of five brothers and lives in the home with all of them and his mother, his father having died. The family is Mennonite and is harshly governed by the eldest brother, Mahlon, who at thirty-three has finally decided which girl he wishes to marry. The girl, named Becky Stolfus, has also attracted the attention of Levi and the two share a lunch one day when both families are in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, selling the goods they each market. Later, Becky jumps in the sleigh with Levi when he delivers all the meats left over from the market to a nearby orphanage where a young girl named Elly Zahm is used as little more than a slave. On the ride home, Becky teases Levi and he clumsily tries to kiss her, but when she pulls away he tears her dress. There's an immediate scandal, and Levi is formally shunned by the Mennonite community, forced to apologize to Becky and her father, and subjected to the wrath of his brothers. He comes to the conclusion that there's nothing to do but leave and purchases a Conestoga wagon from a man named Amos Boehman who has recently gotten stuck - a humiliating action - and wants out of the hauling business. Levi has two horses of his own, buys two more along with a good rifle and takes two horses belonging to his brother to complete his team. On the way out of town he stops at the orphanage and Elly needs no encouragement to join him on his trip to the west.

They begin the trip, soon learning that they are naive in many ways but manage to make the best of each situation. When Levi is offered high prices for his six horses, he refuses. This situation is repeated until Levi joins a small party headed to Oregon under the guidance of a mountain man named Sam Purchas. Purchas arranges to sell the horses for five hundred dollars each and to purchase oxen for pulling the big wagon. Levi is angry but submits and Purchas seems to understand his disappointment but stands firm. When the oxen, plodding along, are passed by those pulling wagons with horses, Levi is angry. When they begin to encounter families who are stranded because the horses died, he understands.

One day, the group encounters two Pawnee braves and Purchas pulls out his gun and kills one but is stopped from killing the second by an Army man named Maxwell Mercy. There's no retaliatory attack, but they soon encounter a family that was attacked, the parents dead and two small children left behind. Purchas insists that they leave the children but Levi and Elly take them as their own, and Purchas eventually comes to accept the decision. When they encounter a group of broken down emigrants headed back to the east, Levi gives them fifty dollars, two oxen and the children, receiving their promise that the children will be cared for. Elly is heartbroken at the parting. They eventually join another small wagon train, all trying to find a place to cross the Platte, and join forces, using a large group of oxen or mules along with all the combined manpower available to pull each of the wagons across.





The train soon reaches Fort John where Alexander McKeag and Clay Basket run a general store. Elly and Levi go in to buy some badly needed supplies, including flour. Mercy also goes to visit the store and tells Clay Basket that he is married to Pasquinel's daughter by Lise Brockweiss, a young woman named Lisette, in Saint Louis. There are discussions among the soldiers and the Indians regarding the location of a military fort but no decision is reached.

Levi and Elly move on but encounter wagon troubles and have to saw the wagon in half, leaving behind most of their possessions. Then two of the oxen die and Levi, claiming to have seen "the elephant" turns back. When they reach the fort, Levi and McKeag take up the talk they'd begun earlier about fertile land at Rattlesnake Butte and agree to form a partnership with the money from selling the horses and the money McKeag has saved. When Elly tells Levi she's pregnant, he says he'd already guessed as much and that's the reason he wanted to turn around. One morning, Elly is bitten on the neck by a rattlesnake and dies within minutes.

Levi goes off alone and remains so for months with Clay Basket eventually sending Lucinda to him, recognizing that the girl can reach him. She nurses him back to health and they are soon sleeping together. When they return, Levi has battled his conscience and decided that Lucinda must become a Christian. Toward that end, she and Clay Basket go with McKeag on a buying trip to Saint Louis and the women remain with Lise Pasquinel where Lucinda soon becomes sought after by the many unattached men in the area.

One day, Jake and Mike lead a group of braves to the trading post owned by McKeag and Levi, threatening Levi and killing a young Pawnee Indian there. When Lucinda returns to Levi, Jake tells her that Levi is brave and that he knows this because they tested him. Levi writes out a marriage certificate and Jake and Mike mark in their place as witnesses with an "X."

## Chapter Six Analysis

Levi and Elly enter into a common-law marriage, the preacher they encounter refusing to perform the ceremony because Levi had been shunned, and begin their life as husband and wife. Elly is homely but hard working and pledges to be the wife Levi deserves and to make him happy. Levi's motivations seem unclear, and he openly admits that Elly is not a beautiful young woman. It seems as if Levi's reason for taking her along is merely a whim of the moment but he does come to relish her companionship and the two seem well matched in their goals and courage. When Elly falls from a wagon during a dangerous river crossing, Levi realizes his deep love for her. For her part, Elly reveals that she's loved Levi for some time and that he's the only person who has ever been kind to her.

Levi and Elly encounter a small variety show that promises they'll see an elephant and they attend. There, they find not a live elephant as they had expected, but the skeletal remains of a mastodon. Looking at the huge bones strikes some chord in Levi and for a



long time thereafter, he thinks about the huge creature. It is the same mastodon that roamed the lands he and Elly travel over on their quest to reach Oregon, and later this huge beast will become a symbol for Levi. There are tales of the creature's existence and it's generally believed that huge beasts of this nature still roam the plains at the time Levi and Elly are planning their crossing. At one point, Levi talks of the "brooding elephant that sapped men's courage." It's that elephant that causes some to turn around and travel back eastward, toward civilization.

There's an encounter between Purchas and Jacques Pasquinel - known to most as Jake. The two men clearly hate each other and it's Jake who calls Pasquinel "squaw killer." Though the name is not explained, it makes Pasquinel very angry and he tries to kill Jake as the meeting draws to a close.



# Chapter 7

## Chapter 7 Summary

In 1851, rumor spreads that there's to be a great meeting of Indians and the white man with the ultimate goal of determining land ownership and lasting peace. Thousands of Indians gather, refusing to send only their chiefs on so great a meeting that impacts all. Lost Eagle, grandson of Lame Beaver, is an important factor in the gathering with others, including Broken Thumb with Jake Pasquinel at his side, urging war. The promised gifts are delayed, an ominous sign, but finally arrive and the Indians are given many trinkets as well as blankets and military uniforms, meant to signify the new treaty which grants land rights to the Indians, an annual allowance for restitution, and requirements for all to live in peace. Levi Zandt, serving as an interpreter because the military's first choice for that position - McKeag - has died of cholera, notes that the treaty isn't likely to be ratified by the United States Congress and he's correct in that assumption.

While in Saint Louis, it had been written that Lucinda was among the city's most eligible young women and that she was the sole heir to Lame Beaver, the warrior credited with having found gold. It's not stated that the location of the gold continues to be a mystery but a man known as Spade Larkin carries the clipping and hopes for a successful gold strike. Larkin stops at Levi's store and realizes that Levi's wife is the mysterious Lucinda, daughter of Lame Beaver. He goes to Blue Valley, finds nuggets and starts a gold rush, but others find the vein and milk it quickly for all it will yield. Then the Indians are pushed further and another treaty proposed which greatly limits their land and prompts the starvation of 1863.

A military commander named Leban Asher believes the answer is to provide food and water for the Indians and to teach them to farm, a plan that's immediately attacked by the press. There emerges a man named Frank Skimmerhorn who calls for extermination of the Indians, his wife, parents and daughter having been slain, and is appointed to head up a special military unit. Indians are ordered to put down their weapons and report to a specific area and all who fail to comply are to be "shot on sight." The first to surrender is Chief Lean Bear who is shot through the heart. Others who give in to the command are systematically starved and degraded.

Hostilities continue, escalating with the massacre of many Indians at the hands of Skimmerhorn, who is later chastised for his action, but because he is not under the direction of the United States government, is not arrested. When the Indians fight back, Skimmerhorn eventually captures and hangs Jake Pasquinel and then shoots Mike in the back as he's trying to surrender.



## Chapter 7 Analysis

There are several issues brought to Maxwell Mercy's attention by the Indians as needing to be addressed, and one of those is the cholera which has taken a heavy toll on the Indians. Mercy points out that the disease has also taken a heavy toll on whites and later learns that McKeag and Clay Basket fell to the disease. Mercy says that one has no way of knowing what course the disease will take, but that he hopes it will die out or the entire human race will be in danger.

Mercy is accompanied on the plains by his wife, Lisette, half-sister to Jake, Mike and Lisette. It's interesting that she was raised as a member of a leading family of Saint Louis but readily takes to the rough living required of a military man's wife. She attends the meeting of the Indians and is sometimes called on to lessen the heated rampages of Jake. Jake seems to connect with Lisette and confides in her that his ranting is not idle talk, but that he and Mike both see the inevitable conflict that can't be far in the future.

With the Civil War going on, the U.S. cares nothing for the Indian troubles and an uprising is inevitable. Indians strike at random and the military mows down an entire settlement of forty-seven with a Howitzer. Denver, Colorado, goes on high alert. It's interesting that Asher and Mercy believe so completely in the military way that they can't fathom a person like Skimmerhorn who simply has no respect for orders and refuses to obey them. It's also interesting that Skimmerhorn uses a Biblical reference as the basis for his belief that the Indians are a scourge to be eliminated.

It's interesting that the public applauds the actions of Skimmerhorn, regardless that when the facts of the case are revealed, he is revealed as a monster. When Mike is persuaded to give himself up to the authorities, Skimmerhorn shoots him in the back and even this action gains him accolades from a newspaper editor who saw the entire scene. It will later be revealed that the action of shooting a man in the back eventually comes back to haunt Skimmerhorn who leaves town in disgrace.



# Chapter 8

## Chapter 8 Summary

Levi Zandt receives a visit from Oliver Seccumbe, one of the small party who had traveled with him from the east on the trip originally bound for Oregon. Seccumbe proposes that the two enter into a plan to claim a large tract of land through the Homestead Act and to bring cows to the land. He proposes Texas longhorns and Levi suggests John Skimmerhorn - son of the man who had led the massacre of the Indians — as the man to go get the cattle. Levi and Lucinda had now rebuilt their trading post and agree to the plan. Skimmerton accepts the job and travels immediately to Texas where he begins to despair because most men refuse to consider a drive so far to the north, citing desperados and Indians.

One night, Skimmerhorn smells the enticing odor of onions, meat and peppers and follows it to find a Mexican, named Ignacio Gomez but called Nacho by his friends, cooking over a small fire. With Skimmerhorn adding some food to Nacho's stores, they have a feast. Skimmerman hires him as a cook and they then locate a man to lead the drive, J.R. Poteet. Poteet hires several men to help on the drive, including a black free man named Nate Pearson who is struggling to feed his family and excited for the opportunity to earn the money. Poteet hires several others, mostly trusted men he's worked with before and rounding out the team with a group of youngsters anxious for trail experience and willing to take the worst jobs. With one spot remaining unfilled, a young man named Bufe Coker carrying a Confederate saddle applies. He convinces Poteet to give him the chance and Poteet assigns Pearson to help Coker choose a horse. Pearson realizes quickly that Coker has never ridden a horse and has no idea how to work, but helps him along and Coker, willing to work at any task, soon learns his way around the herd. Then Poteet encounters a young boy of only fourteen, the son of a former military man who died in the Civil War, and at his behest goes to visit the boy's mother. There, Emma Lloyd begs Poteet to buy her cattle and then asks that her youngest son, Jim, be taken along.

Under Poteet's guidance, the herd is driven across eighty miles of desert, a punishing drive during which they lose only a few cows. They encounter a raiding group of Indians who steal three horses, have another encounter in which there's brief gunplay, and then encounter a group of white renegades and have yet another gunfight. They also encounter a small band of Indians who are obviously in danger of starvation. It's the small band under the leadership of Lost Eagle and when he and Skimmerhorn learn each other's identity, there's a moment during which they each size up the other. Skimmerhorn, the son of the man who massacred Lost Eagle's people, gives the Indians three of the herd, including one old bull that had been a problem.

When news reaches the settlement near Levi's trading post now known as Zandt's Farm that the cattle are on the way in, there's a gathering to welcome the drivers and the



cattle. Almost immediately, Jim sees a beautiful young girl and asks her identity. He's told she's Levi's daughter and responds that he's going to marry her.

## Chapter 8 Analysis

Levi and Seccumbe plan to control a large tract of land by claiming for their own several small tracts that contain among the only water supplies of the entire region. The plan is one that's being used by others and in one case, the owner is going so far as to salt watering holes that are not being used by his cattle to discourage others.

Jim Lloyd's mother asks Poteet to take Jim along on the remainder of the drive, saying that it's a way for Jim to have a chance at a life. Jim goes along willingly, initially lying about his age and eventually distinguishing himself along the way, once by calmly standing up to Indians. When they are well on their way, they encounter a group of cattlemen heading back toward Texas to pick up another herd. Poteet tells them of the meeting with Emma Lloyd and says that he paid her a small price for her cows, agreeing to pay the rest when he sells the cows, but that he has decided to buy them outright instead. He sends the money with the other cattlemen and Jim watches as they ride away, saying that he has only at that moment realized that he is never likely to see his mother and two brothers.

Jim notes that the group working together during the drive function well but that separated, there will likely be some problems. He cites one man who has an obvious appetite for women and another that will likely be in trouble with the law.



# Chapter 9

## Chapter 9 Summary

A man named Hans Brumbaugh comes to realize that the men seeking gold are starving because they are so busy seeking gold they haven't time to do anything else. Though there's money to buy food, there's none available for sale. Brumbaugh arranges to buy some acres from Levi and then finds a way to irrigate some additional land, creating a reasonably sized farm. He and his family work at the farming and are soon successful. As time passes, he's joined by a second farmer and the battle for land between the farmers and the cattlemen officially begins. When there's a shootout at the neighboring farm, Brumbaugh digs in and John Skimmerman comes to his aid, effectively fighting off the first advance and remaining.

One of the English investors, a man named Buckford, visits Colorado with his daughter, Charlotte, who decides she wants to remain in Colorado and chooses Seccumbe who eventually gives in to her overt suggestions and agrees to marry her despite the fact that he is several years older than her own father.

Jim Lloyd asks Levi's daughter, Clemma, to marry him but she refuses, saying that she's going to Saint Louis to study as her mother did. Jim vows to wait, but Levi and Lucinda soon receive a letter from Clemma, indicating that she's married a military man and is expecting. Lucinda then receives a letter from her uncle, half-sister to Clay Basket and son of Pasquinel and Lise, a man named Cyprian Pasquinel. He says he believes the man will quickly abandon Clemma and that happens. Levi and Lucinda learn that the baby died and that her husband is no longer living with her but don't learn where Clemma is now. Jim refuses to give up, saying that there will come a time when Clemma needs him and that he's destined to be her husband.

One of those who leads a great buffalo hunt, Amos Calendar, later goes around the country picking up bones to be sold to a fertilizer company. Hearing of this enterprise, Levi goes to watch the enterprise and finds a bone sticking out of the side of a mountain. Realizing it's something more than a buffalo bone and remembering the time he and Elly saw the "giant elephant" skeleton, he calls on a scientist from Harvard who finds a complete dinosaur skeleton and locates several more, soon revealing the fact that there were many animals calling Colorado "home" a million or more years earlier.

Colorado's statehood is announced and it's suggested that the settlement of Zandt's Farm be renamed Centennial. The idea catches on quickly and Levi supports the plan.

## Chapter 9 Analysis

Skimmerhorn comes to believe that the attack on the farmers was initiated by Seccumbe and his concern about Seccumbe's tactics and business practices increases over time. When he's confronted about this by one of the investors, Skimmerhorn



refuses to give in to the temptation to say anything against Seccumbe. Seccumbe admits that he has done some creative bookkeeping in order to show a profit and to pay out dividends to the investors. When Buckford would have questioned the issue deeper, he comes to realize that the magnitude of the land makes it impossible to accurately track the cattle that are supposed to be present. Buckford had imagined that the cattle endeavor could be run like his own silk enterprise. He notes that he would never trust someone to tell him how many bolts of silk there are without counting them. He can't imagine buying cattle that someone says he has without counting each bolt. In this case, the cattle are ranging free on a great expanse of land and there's no effective way of finding them, let alone counting them.

There are several major buffalo hunts around the same time Zandt's Farm is renamed Centennial. One of those is led by the hunter, Amos Calendar - a cowboy among those who drove the cattle to Colorado. Calendar becomes a great hunter after that and when he's approached to lead a mass slaughter of the buffalo, agrees. The purpose of the slaughter is simple - to eliminate the food source for the Indians in an effort to force them onto their reservations.





# Chapter 10

## Chapter 10 Summary

Sheep arrive in Colorado and now the cattle ranchers are fighting farmers like Potato Brumbaugh for water rights and sheep men such as Messmore Garret for the range. Brumbaugh continues to look for ways to divert more water onto his land for use on his crops with the idea that he can channel unused water back to the Platte. He admits that he's using up a great deal before the return to the river. For his part, Garret's arrival in Centennial creates an uproar. Seccumbe tries to convince the sheep ranchers to move out of the country but they refuse. Soon, two outlaws known as the Pettis boys arrive and kill one of the sheep ranchers, Bufe Coker,, who was among the cowboys on that first drive from Texas to Colorado. Coker's live-in girlfriend, a whore known as Fat Laura, is also shot during the incident as is an innocent bystander who sought to warn Coker.

With Coker's death, Jim Lloyd recalls the nights on the range with Coker and his assertion that he would do anything for Jim. It takes little urging for Jim to join Amos Calendar in a plan to kill the Pettis boys. They are joined by Brumbaugh who says that others helped him fight off killers once and he believed the Pettis boys - known as guns for hire - were behind that incident as well. The three men find the Pettis boys in a bar, kill them and disappear before anyone can really see the attackers.

While this battle is being fought, Seccumbe's bookkeeping and management of the ranch is coming under scrutiny by his English purchasers. Seccumbe tells Charlotte that he has diverted a great deal of money and that the English inspector sent to tackle the problem of getting an accurate estimate of the number of cattle on the range is going to discover the discrepancy. That does happen and the man, Finlay Perkin, vows to report Seccumbe's poor practices and his embezzlement to the owners of the ranch. Before he can leave, there's a blizzard and, despite efforts by Jim Lloyd to feed hay to as many as possible, thousands of the cattle die. With this catastrophe, there is no longer any way to prove whether the shortage of cows is a result of Seccumbe's handling or of the storm and the threat is dropped. Seccumbe, now well advanced in years, strolls out onto the plain some distance from the huge house he and Charlotte built and shoots himself.

Charlotte returns to England where she finds that two of the ranch's major investors, including her father, have left their shares to her. When they both die suddenly, Charlotte is grief-stricken but it's Finlay Perkin who sends her on a mission to find a new bull that Jim Lloyd seeks to improve the herd, which by now is largely Hereford. She finds a suitable bull in England and escorts it to Centennial.

Meanwhile, Jim finds Clemma at a Chicago restaurant, discovers that she spent a year in jail and that she's still married. She refuses to return with him and he goes home alone. Jim and Charlotte begin spending more time together and she initiates a



proposal. They set the date and Clemma shows up just days before the wedding is to take place. Jim tells Charlotte that he will marry Clemma instead but Charlotte goes to visit Clemma. Charlotte points out that Clemma should have married Jim years ago but didn't, and that she won't make a commitment to remain with him, even if he marries her. Clemma leaves town and Jim and Charlotte marry as planned.

## Chapter 10 Analysis

When Jim finds Clemma in Chicago, she's carrying the signs of a hard life but still has that lithe body and mischievous way that continues to attract Jim. When he discovers that she spent a year in jail, he aches for her. A former boss of hers tells Jim that a woman who doesn't want to be found simply won't be found. Jim seems to realize that it's time to give up because he can't impose his desire on her. It's interesting to note that some twenty years have passed between the time she left home with the military man and their encounter in Chicago, but Clemma talks to Jim as if they regularly encountered each other. An example of her uncaring attitude is seen when she was originally leaving and gave him hope that she would return to him. Charlotte sees this uncaring trait in Clemma, as does Levi. Levi likens her to the young girl who teased him into a kiss then accused him of attacking her so many years earlier. He agrees that Charlotte's advice for Clemma to leave town is sound.

Levi's family situation remains strained and he is very angry when, after having made a brief trip home, he receives a letter from his oldest brother advising him of a new law that would allow Levi to divorce Lucinda because she is part Indian. Levi is angry and burns the letter before Lucinda can see it, but she later finds a poster advertising the new law. Levi tells her that it's another in a long line of examples that the whites don't understand the Indians. Levi himself is surprised to find out that Lucinda knows a great deal about tribal laws and customs - information she shares with one of Levi's nephews who comes for a visit.



# Chapter 11

## Chapter 11 Summary

Alex Dumire, a forty-eight-year-old lawman, is hired by the citizens of Centennial to calm hostilities between sheep ranchers and cattle ranchers. A traveling circus that comes to town includes a sharpshooter named Cranby, one of those who traveled with the first cattle to Colorado. Cranby is among the casualties of a fire one night. Mervin and Maude Wendell arrive in town with their theater troupe and their ten-year-old son, Phillip. Their possessions are confiscated on orders of sheriff's from other towns to which they owe debts and the Wendells are offered a house, rent free for the first months, and a part time job by Mervin. Soon Dumire is the object of hero worship from young Phillip and he learns that the Wendells set up a scam so that they now own the house they'd been allowed to borrow.

One night, Maude sets up the scam on a man named Soren Sorenson who has fifty-five hundred dollars in cash and is planning to purchase land in the area. When Mervin rushes in and plays the part of the enraged husband, Sorenson knows he's been had and refuses to run or to give up any money, which makes Maude so angry that she kills him by beating him over the head with a fake pistol. Mervin drops the body into a well, but Phillip, who witnesses the entire murder, helps his mother retrieve the body and takes it to the creek where he puts it into an abandoned beaver lodge.

Days pass before Sorenson is reported missing and Dumire initially expects that the man has simply gone out looking for land and will return. When he doesn't turn up, Dumire steps up the search and eventually discovers that Sorenson had been seen briefly with Maude. Dumire questions Phillip and looks for the body, finding the well but never recovering the body. Dumire encounters some fugitives and is shot in a shoot-out. As he is dying, he summons Phillip to his bedside and asks if the body is somewhere along the creek, noting that he can't possibly do anything about it but that it's his job to know. The Wendells remain in Centennial and soon use Sorenson's money to buy the land he had decided to purchase for himself.

It's revealed here that Levi Zendt has died. As the Wendells are working overtime in an effort to show that they are earning sufficient money to live on so that there is no suspicion that they have stolen Sorenson's money, Phillip does yard work and errands. On a particular day, he encounters the sheriff soon after having completed some chores for Lucinda, widow of Levi.

## Chapter 11 Analysis

The scam set up by Mervin and Maude Wendell is simple, and Dumire guesses the majority of the details as soon as he is given an inkling. Maude propositions a married man and when he is just pulling off his pants, Mervin rushes in and demands justice.



Maude suggests that signing the house over to the couple would ease Mervin's temper and he agrees. While the Wendells are engaged in this scam, Phillip watches and comes to realize that he wants to be a man like Dumire rather than a blustering, used up actor like his father.

Phillip seems to admire Dumire and, at least in the beginning, the hero worship is very real. Phillip is a very intelligent and complicated young boy. When Dumire tells Phillip that he is too young to be punished by the courts and can tell where Sorenson's body is without fear of reprisal, Phillip is angry. He is upset Dumire - who he admires greatly - believes that his only motivation is to keep himself out of trouble. Phillip's true reason for helping his mother hide the body and for keeping the secret is simply the preservation of his family.



# Chapter 12

## Chapter 12 Summary

Years pass and Mervin Wendell becomes a realtor, and Phillip is sent away to music school while his mother becomes a leader among the middle-class society of Centennial. Phillip refuses to perform for family or friends on his visits home, and his mother comes to realize that the murder and his role in the cover-up affected him more than she'd thought at the time. Mervin sometimes teases about it, saying that for his birthday he wants only to know where they hid the body. They never tell him and these statements anger Phillip.

Potato Brumbaugh grows huge sugar beets on his farm and continues to ship them to a factory where they are processed into sugar until the time comes when a factory is built locally, prompting others to begin sugar beet farms of their own. Potato, by now seventy years old, faces the problem of finding workers. The farmers import families of several countries for that purpose but all soon want land of their own, leaving Brumbaugh and the others right back in need of workers. While he's in this situation, he travels to Denver in his automobile - one of the few in Centennial - and goes into a Mexican cantina where he finds Tranquilino Marquez.

Tranquilino is a refugee from Mexico, having been a farmer who was forced to participate in a firing squad and told he was going to work in the mines. The work there is grueling and workers toil at their tasks seven days per week. When Tranquilino refuses to shoot a woman, he's threatened and his wife, Serafina, urges him to leave before he's killed. He does so and finds work, sending home all but a meager allowance for himself. Tranquilino is soon Brumbaugh's best worker, and Brumbaugh convinces him to go back to Mexico to bring his family to Colorado. There, Tranquilino and his oldest son are recruited by a renegade and Serafina and their other two children go to Colorado to Brumbaugh's farm to work.

Jim Lloyd has continued to work on the ranch as second-in-command under Skimmerhorn, situation which angers Charlotte. She wants to fire Skimmerhorn but Jim flatly refuses. Then Jim hears from J.R. Poteet who asks if he can hire Skimmerhorn for his own operation. Jim agrees and later discovers that Charlotte, working through the now ninety-year-old Finlay Perkin, put Skimmerhorn's name up for consideration to Poteet's financial backers. Charlotte also gives Skimmerhorn a two thousand dollar bonus that he can use to buy into that ranch and everyone is happy with the situation. Then Jim is told that he should be looking for someone capable of taking over when he's no longer able to run the ranch and, realizing that it takes years of work to gain the knowledge to carry on the work for the ranch, he chooses Beely Garret, son of the country's first sheep herder and now married to Levi Zandt's granddaughter, Pale Star.



## Chapter 12 Analysis

It's noted that Levi and Lucinda had two children - Clemma and Martin. Clemma had run away while Martin remained with his parents but both seemed to have trouble establishing themselves in a life that included both their white and Indian ancestry. That seems to have been a problem for many, though some apparently found ways to deal with the conflicts. That was true even of Levi who listened once to his wife talking about tribal custom and law and was amazed at how much information she could recall, even though the ways of the Indians were quickly changing during her childhood. Clemma isn't heard from again after leaving the area as Jim and Charlotte are getting ready to marry. Martin's life isn't discussed in detail but it is noted that he had gone to visit an Indian reservation in Wyoming and it was there he met the woman he married. From this union is born the girl named Pale Star who marries Beely Garret.

There's a point at which Jim is talking to Beely Garret and that he thinks Garret to be smart and that the evidence is that he had enough sense to leave sheep ranching behind and turn his attention to cattle. It's not clear whether Jim doesn't realize that Garret would be sensitive on this point because his father was a sheep herder or if Jim is deliberately trying to goad a response, but he goes on for some time in this vein until Garret snaps. The animosity against sheep and sheep herders is strong, but it seems that men like Garret will likely begin easing the tension simply because of the willingness to see both sides of the sheep/cattle issue.

It's noteworthy that Tranquilino and his family are caught up in a time of severe strife in Mexico and that his life is in danger on several occasions, but the idea of being forced to work in the mines is the proverbial straw that breaks the camel's back in this case. Tranquilino says he can't imagine being forced to work where he can't see the sun. When he reaches Colorado, he performs menial labor at a back-breaking pace but claims that it's better than what he would have been doing in Mexico. It's interesting that he shows signs of being subservient but actually isn't. He is a diligent worker and does chores without being told, but it's not because he feels subservient to Potato Brumbaugh - it's because he believes himself to be in a better situation and wants to be certain he makes the most of the circumstances. When he returns home, he's soon caught up in the revolution underway and his son is killed by enemy fire.



# Chapter 13

## Chapter 13 Summary

Two men, Earl Grebe and Magnes Volkema, visit the farm of a man who is successfully "dry farming." With these proven techniques of growing crops in land with only a minimal amount of annual rainfall, Grebe and Volkema, accompanied by their families, move to Colorado and homestead sections of land. Volkema's two children - a daughter and a son - each lay claim to their own 320 acres though they lie about their age to do so. Soon after their arrival, Grebe's wife Alice miscarries. Later she gives birth to a son, Ethan, and later a daughter, Victoria.

As the Grebes and Volkemas put their limited information into practice, they have successful crops. The land, having never been plowed, produces well even with the limited rainfall, but there are those who recognize the damage that's being done for the long term. Jim Lloyd tells the newcomers that the initial crop will be good, but it won't last. He realizes that breaking up the sod as the farmers are doing means grass can't possibly return for several years and that the possibility of erosion is high. A man in the land commissioner's office named Walter Bellamy begins studying the farming situation as well and realizes that the farmers' practice of plowing straight lines is creating a situation in which erosion will occur, but farmers refuse to listen when he suggests farming around the contours of the land rather than directly over hills. All such advice is ignored.

Mervin Wendell falls ill, a combination of heart trouble and pneumonia, and spends several days lying ill with dozens dropping in for visits. Phillip, by now married and back in Centennial, is disgusted when he hears his father expostulating on a particular topic and recognizes a scene from a play performed by the Wendells so many years earlier. Mervin dies and the small towns of Line Camp and McKinney argue over which will be renamed Wendell, with McKinney winning out.

Potato Brumbaugh's health begins to fail dramatically and he dies but not before presenting a section of land to a faithful Japanese family who had worked for him and presenting the idea of piping water through the Rockies. Tranquilino returns to find Brumbaugh gone and has to spend his time eking out a living with odd jobs, spending his winter in a makeshift shack in a ghetto called Little Mexico. There he lives with his wife and their two surviving children, Triunfador and Soledad. Triunfador soon comes to realize the potential of a small cantina and establishes one in an abandoned shack. Farmers complain of the gathering place, fearing the Mexicans will begin talking revolution, and Triunfador is often arrested. After being ordered to close, Charlotte Lloyd becomes involved on his behalf, buys the land, and leases it to Triunfador for a dollar a year.

In the early 1920s, the land produces well for the dry-land farmers but then the dust storms begin. Farmers like Earl Grebe are often in danger of losing their land because





they don't have the few dollars for taxes or interest on an outstanding mortgage. When the dust storms continue to rage, the Grebes are literally in danger of starvation and when Earl's wife has a breakdown from the stress of continually listening to the wind, she goes to stay with a neighbor. Charlotte Lloyd, now eighty-three, tells the farmers that their farming practices are wrong, and convinces them to listen to the advice of the man who'd first told them about dry-farming, now realizing his mistake. Charlotte gives that man a ride back to the train station after his visit and is found dead in her car along the side of the road the following morning.

Earl Grebes' son, Ethan, freezes to death during a blizzard. The following year, the family is thrown off the farm for back taxes and a neighbor and friend calls on Jake Calendar to help set the stage for the auction. Calendar threatens those who would bid and the farm sells to a neighbor for five dollars. Timmy Grebe, son of Earl, is given a calf at a rodeo event and later wins a showmanship award with that steer along with a prize of one hundred and forty-five dollars. When he returns home that night, he finds that his mother has killed all three of the younger children and Earl, upon finding the bodies, kills first his wife and then himself. Timmy then goes to live with Mr. Bellamy, formerly the land agent for the area and later the postmaster. Phillip Wendell buys the farm and after a couple of years, plans to sell off all his accumulated land. When he's on the verge of closing the deals, the rains begin and he learns that World War II has begun, that demand for wheat will be up and that he will be rich, so he cancels the sales and buys what he can.

Charlotte and Jim Lloyd had only one daughter, Nancy, who is killed in a plane accident, leaving behind one sickly daughter, Ruth, as sole heir to the Venneford Ranch and all Jim and Charlotte's holdings. Charlotte had instructed Henry, son of Beely Garret and Pale Star, to marry her and he had done so. Now Charlotte and Jim are both dead and Beely and Pale Star move to Florida but with misgivings, saying that the marriage of Henry and Ruth is unstable and that Ruth is a nervous, withdrawn young woman.

## Chapter 13 Analysis

There is extensive discussion of the practices of the Mexican population of Colorado and the fact that the people of that country - so progressive in many aspects of life - are completely backwards and prejudiced when it comes to tolerating others. The people believe there's nothing wrong with hiring Mexican labor for the summer months and leaving them to fend for themselves with no services and no work over the winter months. The majority of these people live in hovels with no access to schools or medical services. In most cases, they are even segregated for purposes of worship, and the mass held each Sunday for the Mexicans are much earlier than those for the whites. Even then, the lowliest of the field hands may not be welcome. When they practice other forms of religion - such as self-crucifixion - they are shunned; meetings are broken up by the law, and the participants often arrested. It seems that these are exactly the same attitudes as were seen a century earlier when the whites were fighting the Indians for land rights.





Another interesting aspect about the Mexican labor force is that they are so easily taken advantage of and that it seems to happen repeatedly. For example, it's noted that one farmer would hire a specific family to work his fields. Just before time to pay the workers, the farmer would contact immigration officials and have the workers picked up. They were summarily deported back to Mexico on the date they were to be paid, meaning their labor was for nothing. But these same people would go merely a few miles from the drop-off point, cross the river and walk the few days back to Colorado, putting themselves in the same position for the following growing season. The farmer would then hire a different family - one not aware of the method - and the cycle would be repeated.



# Chapter 14

## Chapter 14 Summary

Vernor, the historian who was hired to check the facts of Centennial, notes that he spent most of October 1973 searching for a person who was the epitome of the area and that he initially considers Nate Pearson, grandson of the Pearson who had been on that first cattle drive from Texas to Colorado, and then Manolo Marquez, descendant of Tranquilino. Looking for someone with deeper roots, Vernor finally settles on forty-six-year-old Paul Garrett, direct descendant of many of those who had lived and worked in Colorado, including Lame Beaver, Levi Zandt, Pasquinel and McKeag. Garrett has just been notified that he's to be in charge of the state's centennial celebration, which will occur in conjunction with the United States' celebration of two hundred years of independence. For a couple of days, Vernor goes with Paul as he travels to the far reaches of the state, working on plans for the celebration.

On Election Day, Paul worries over his choice for a newly-formed official, Commissioner of Resources and Priorities. One of the candidates is Morgan Wendell, son of Phillip Wendell. Paul's father had been the man who was going to purchase land from Phillip Wendell on the day Phillip realizes World War II was about to begin and from that broken deal had warned Paul to watch out for the Wendells. Paul feels Morgan has never applied himself to anything other than promoting himself. On this day, Morgan tells Paul that he wants Paul's assistance in the position, admitting that Paul is smart and that he knows about ecology. Paul agrees to the appointment.

Paul is called on to testify against Floyd Calendar, a man accused of having taken paying clients to kill more than four hundred bald eagles from the cockpit of an airplane, many bears which Floyd had previously trapped, tagged with a radio device and released, and turkeys being protected on the range of Paul Garrett. Floyd has also killed hundreds of prairie dogs, merely for sport, and has dynamited rattle snake dens, killing all that tried to escape.

Paul has fallen in love with a divorced Chicano girl named Flor Marquez. A widower with two children, he's hesitated for a long time but the couple is eventually married in the restaurant belonging to her father, descendant of the first Mexican to establish a cantina in the area with the help of Paul's great-grandmother, Charlotte.

Paul, in his new role as a public official, is in on basic information such as the fact that the sugar beet industry is in trouble, at least partly because land prices are so high farmers can't afford to hold the land and sell out to those who will subdivide. He also learns that water rationing will likely become a major requirement in coming years with increased demand. Then Harvey Brumbaugh, descendant of Potato Brumbaugh, is asked to move his feed lots farther from the city limits of Centennial because of smell and health concerns, and he announces that he's splitting the operation in two and will



move one half to Indiana and the other to Georgia. Many fear Centennial is now in serious trouble.

Paul confers with Tim Grebe, now fifty-one and a millionaire though he has never forgotten the day he came home to find his family slaughtered. Tim advises Paul to begin a crossbreeding program to eliminate some specific problems of the Herefords, though others warn Paul that any sign on his part that he's dissatisfied with the breed could have a financial impact on the cattle industry locally. Paul agrees to sell off part of his Hereford bulls and Arthur Skimmerhorn asks to buy them, telling Paul that the introduction of the larger breeds has problems as well, including calves so large that the female can't give birth naturally.

Paul continues to bemoan the fate of his beloved land and the town of Centennial, eventually getting sloppy drunk and falling into his memories. Then Cisco Calendar, now a huge hit as a singer, says he has the money to live anywhere, but he continues to live in the house of his ancestry because a person has to have roots, and he believes Centennial could be the "the best remainin' spot on earth." Paul agrees.

## Chapter 14 Analysis

Paul Garrett's lineage is represented on a family tree at the beginning of the chapter. His parents are Ruth Mercy and Henry Garrett, who is the son of Beely Garrett and Pale Star Zendt. Going back three generations to Beely Garrett's parents are Messmore Garrett, the country's first sheep herder and Jane Beeley. Pale Star's father is Martin Zendt, son of Levi Zendt and Lucinda McKeag, who was a direct descendant of Lame Beaver. Pale Star's mother is Prudence Wolf, daughter of Red Wolf and Pale Star. On Paul Garrett's maternal side, his grandfather Paul Mercy is the son of Pasquinel Mercy (who was killed at Little Big Horn with Custer) and Laura Skimmerhorn, daughter of the John Skimmerhorn who participated in the first cattle drive from Texas to Colorado. Pasquinel Mercy is the son of Maxwell Mercy and Lisette Pasquinel, the daughter of the trapper Pasquinel who had interacted so frequently with the Indians, including Lame Beaver. Nancy Lloyd, Paul Garrett's maternal grandmother, is the daughter of Jim Lloyd and Charlotte Buckner. Charlotte's father is Henry Buckner, one of the first to invest in the cattle ranch in Colorado that would become home to the famous Hereford cattle.

Paul is greatly concerned about his state and can see the problems facing those who call Colorado home. He is horrified at the condition of Blue Valley, the place Lame Beaver had found the tall trees for lodge poles and where gold had eventually been discovered. The town is squalid and their proposed ideas for a centennial celebration are equally so. They want to have a carnival and to re-enact specific events, including the hanging of a whore for claim jumping and the murder of the Pettis boys. It disturbs Paul who says he believes the only way to solve the damage done by men to the land there would be to cover it over with dirt and allow nature to take the land back.

There are several points at which it's pointed out that the story has come full circle. For example, Paul has purchased buffalo and is re-establishing a herd. At a particular time



of year, an old cow named Jenny realizes that it's time to migrate north and begins walking that direction. The only way to turn her back is to shoot her with a special rubber bullet, full in the face. Just as the buffalo herds migrated in the time of Lame Beaver, this cow recalls that urge and attempts to do so as well. Paul points out the breeding practices undertaken by Charlotte which has now led to a herd of cattle that are smaller than they should be, cost more to raise to an appropriate weight, and have some health issues. Just as his ancestors had wrestled with the possibility of bringing Herefords onto the ranch to breed with the longhorns, Paul is now introducing another breed into his herd of Herefords.



# Characters

## Lame Beaver

A warrior of the tribe known as Our People, later known as Cheyenne or Arapaho, Lame Beaver is a brave youngster who is granted permission to participate in a raid on a neighboring tribe with the hope of getting horses. Though he doesn't succeed in taking horses on that occasion, he does rescue an old man who would otherwise have been killed. He is chastised for his action because only a chief should have saved the old man from his suicidal mission, and it's then that Lame Beaver comes to believe that he should not be among those who seek a chief's position in the tribe.

Though never a leader, Lame Beaver is accepted as one of the great warriors. When he hatches a plan to steal horses from another tribe, he is accompanied only by two close friends and they succeed beyond their wildest dreams. Lame Beaver later marries a young maiden named Blue Leaf and they have several children, including a daughter who marries a white trapper and has three children of her own who become important in Centennial's history.

Lame Beaver is leading a small group in search of good tipi poles one day when they encounter a war party from another tribe. Lame Beaver kills one of the men and takes his gun, the newest weapon to be coveted among the tribes. With that gun, he gains two bullets and eventually uses them to kill an important chief and a secondary chief before being killed himself. The tribe of the dead chief recognizes the gold for what it is and their trading of the mineral prompts the rumor that Lame Beaver had discovered a source of gold.

## Paul Garrett

A descendant of Lame Beaver, Garrett continues to embrace his Indian ancestry while living the life of an established and successful cattleman. He marries a Chicano, descendant of another important branch of Colorado's history. In the 1970s, Garrett is a man who loves Colorado and is a leader among the citizens of the day. He's appointed to a special commission that will celebrate the one hundredth birthday of Colorado at the same time the United States celebrates two hundred years of independence. He is also appointed deputy of a commission assigned to oversee use of resources in the state. It's in this capacity that he learns that the state's water situation may soon reach a critical stage requiring rationing.

Paul is on hand to learn that the sugar beet industry is in serious trouble and that a feed lot is to be moved to other states. Both are major sources of financial stability in the area and both impact the economy. Paul is a careful man and it pains him to think of diluting his herd of carefully-bred Herefords with bulls of another breed, but he's honest enough to admit that the introduction of this new breed could be of ultimate benefit.



Despite his sentimental attachment to the Hereford, he agrees to make that change and notes that it is the same feeling his ancestors must have experienced when they agreed to introduce the Herefords into their beloved herd of longhorns. The story ends with Paul realizing that things have changed since the times of his ancestors, but that Centennial is still a wonderful place to live.

## **Blue Leaf**

A young maiden of Lame Beaver's tribe who eventually becomes his wife at the price of a pony. She dies in the snow after her husband's death, that being the accepted custom of the tribe as a way to rid itself of older members who have outlived their usefulness.

## **Red Nose**

A member of the tribe of Lame Beaver and one of the two warriors who accompany Lame Beaver on a quest for horses, Red Nose was determined to become one of the chiefs of the tribe and accomplishes this goal.

## **Cottonwood Knee**

A member of the tribe of Lame Beaver and one of those who accompany Lame Beaver on the quest for horses. Cottonwood Knee is killed during a later foray by a group of warriors.

## **Never-Death**

A Comanche warrior, Never-Death is known to have some sort of powerful medicine and it's believed he is invincible. When Lame Beaver eventually encounters Never-Death with instructions that the warrior is to be kept from the heat of the battle at all costs, Lame Beaver discovers that hitting Never-Death in the head and face are effective ways to hurt him. It's later revealed that Never-Death's "medicine" was a suit of armor apparently taken from explorers.

## **Pasquinel**

A French trapper and trader who lives among the Indians and realizes that the key to survival is to never fight the Indians if it can be helped. Pasquinel encounters one of the golden bullets found by Lame Beaver and spends a great deal of his life trying to find the source of that gold. He's a womanizer and has at least two families and likely more. He is married to a woman in Saint Louis and fathers two children by her but is also married to a young Indian named Clay Basket who is the daughter of Lame Beaver, and he fathers three children by her. He dies at the hands of Indians just as he located the gold for which he'd searched so long.



## Alexander McKeag

A Scotsman who is on the run from his homeland, McKeag has a gift for language and is one of the few who picks up the language of Lame Beaver. He encounters Pasquinel and the two partner in the trading and trapping endeavor until McKeag and Pasquinel's oldest Indian son, Jacques, fight. McKeag later realizes that he misses Pasquinel and goes to where he knows his former partner will be spending the winter only to find he's been killed. He takes Clay Basket with him and names Pasquinel's young daughter Lucinda, promising to take her for his own. McKeag and Clay Basket later establish a trading post and when McKeag and Levi Zendt meet up, the two men form a partnership. McKeag dies when a cholera epidemic sweeps the area.

## Clay Basket

Daughter of Lame Beaver and Blue Leaf, she also becomes wife to Pasquinel, the French trapper and trader. Pasquinel had actually met Lame Beaver briefly when Clay Basket was but a child. At that meeting, Pasquinel could have killed Lame Beaver but doesn't, and Lame Beaver later tells Clay Basket that Pasquinel is a good man and that she should consider marriage to him. After Pasquinel's death, Clay Basket lives with McKeag. She dies in the same epidemic that claims McKeag's life.

## Lise Brockweiss

One of the wives of Pasquinel, she lives in Saint Louis and is the daughter of the man who provides the annual stake for Pasquinel's trading expeditions. Lise becomes a leader of the Saint Louis society and later confides in McKeag that she knows people pity her for having married Pasquinel but that she isn't sorry for her life. Lise welcomes Clay Basket into her home when Lucinda seeks the opportunity for education. Lise is the mother of two, a son who becomes a senator in the early years and a daughter who goes to the frontier with her own husband and interacts with the Indians there.

## Elly Zahm

A girl of sixteen who lives in an orphanage and who says that she has always been shunned because of her background. She's worked hard in the orphanage all her life and readily takes Levi Zendt's offer to run away. Elly pledges to be a good wife to Levi and is pregnant with their first child when she is bitten by a rattlesnake and dies near the place they plan to settle in partnership with McKeag and Clay Basket.

## Levi Zendt

A Mennonite who is shunned in his own community after being accused of attacking a young girl who is actually flirting with Levi in an effort to make his brother jealous. Levi,



having enduring being formally shunned for his action, comes to realize that he has no reason to remain in his own country and makes plans to head west toward Oregon. He takes a young orphan named Elly Zahm with him and they endure numerous hardships along the way, eventually turning back from their dream of Oregon and entering into a partnership with McKeag and Clay Basket to build a trading post instead. When Elly is bitten by a rattlesnake and dies, Levi blames himself for her death and goes into deep mourning for several months. He eventually returns to life, largely due to the care of Clay Basket's daughter, Lucinda, and he eventually marries her.

Levi becomes an important man in the area and the place he and Lucinda settle is eventually named Zendt's farm. Levi readily agrees that the name should be changed to Centennial.

## **Jacques Pasquinel**

Son of Clay Basket and the French trader named Pasquinel, he is commonly referred to as Jake. He lives as an Indian, becomes a fierce warrior by the time of his father's death and is known for his cruel ways. He is known for having a scar down the side of his face - an injury at the hands of a white trader at Fort Osage. He is captured as a fugitive and hanged.

## **Lost Eagle**

Grandson of Lame Beaver and the Indian who leads the Arapaho in the final years of their glory and as they go onto the reservation. It's noted Lost Eagle pleads for peace when the various treaties are proposed, always realizing that there's no option for the Indians but to seek peace or be slaughtered. He is photographed with three presidents, the final time with President Filmore as he seeks help for his people who are starving. Lost Eagle dies soon after discussing the situation with Filmore, realizing that the President had no interest in the problem.

## **Lucinda Pasquinel Zendt**

Daughter of Clay Basket and Pasquinel, she is raised by Clay Basket and McKeag and marries Levi Zandt after the death of Levi's wife, Elly. She becomes mother to children, including a daughter, Clemma.

## **Broken Thumb**

An Indian chief who got his name because of a deformed hand, the result of having had a wagon run over it while he was stealing food from the whites. Broken Thumb becomes a renegade and finds himself involved with the Pasquinel brothers.





## Lisette Mercy

Daughter of Pasquinel and Lise Brockweiss, she becomes the wife of a military man named Maxwell Mercy. It's the insistence of Lisette Mercy that prompts hearings that reveal the truth of a massacre led by Skimmerhorn against Indians who had surrendered all their weapons. She is half-sister to the Pasquinel brothers.

## Oliver Seccumbe

An Englishman who travels north with Levi Zendt and his wife, Elly, Seccumbe goes on to Oregon after parting from Levi but later returns to Colorado with a plan to move cattle from Texas to Colorado. Seccumbe marries the daughter of an English investor and soon finds himself in financial trouble, having adjusted books to indicate profits where none exist. He commits suicide.

## John Skimmerhorn

The son of a man who massacred Indians and began the outright wars, John Skimmerhorn is an industrious man who agrees to drive cattle from Texas to Colorado for Levi Zendt and Oliver Seccumbe. John manages the ranch for many years and is very close to Jim Lloyd. He later agrees to leave the area, taking a job as a foreman on another ranch and leaving Jim in charge.

## J.R. Poteet

The man hired by Skimmerhorn to drive cattle to Colorado. His named is often associated with a rumor that he single-handedly started the first herd of cattle in Colorado, but that he did so by arriving too late in the season to make it to Laramie and left the cattle to die in the snow, only to find that they thrived.

## Nate Pearson

A black man who is free following the Civil War but is barely eking out a living for himself, his wife, and their children when Poteet hires him to join the cowboy crew driving cattle to Colorado. His direct descendant is a barber in Centennial in the 1970s.

## Jim Lloyd

The young boy who is the son of Emma Lloyd, and who joins the cattle drive when Poteet and his men come through with the cattle drive. He remains in Centennial, working as a cowboy and falls in love with Clemma Zendt, even when she runs away with a military man and doesn't return home or send news of her whereabouts for twenty years. Jim eventually begins seeing Charlotte Buckford, part owner of the ranch



where he works, and plans to marry her when Clemma returns. Clemma leaves almost immediately and Jim does marry Charlotte.

Jim is a dedicated manager and remains in control of the ranch for many years. He dies on his beloved land.

## **Hans Brumbaugh**

The man who farms land along the Platte and who becomes known for his potato farming, coming to be known as Potato Brumbaugh. Brumbaugh refuses to be chased out of the farming industry by the men of the cattle company. He also comes to realize that all he needs to make his farm lands prosper even more is water and that the answer lies in harnessing the water of the Platte. Brumbaugh has a vision of piping water through the Rockies during the final weeks of his life. He dies after having given a great number of families a helping hand in starting their own farming enterprises.

## **Buford Coker**

Known as Bufe, Coker is among the cowboys who joins the cattle drive from Texas to Colorado under the leadership of Skimmerhorn. Coker later joins a sheep operation and is murdered by the Pettis boys.

## **Axel Dumire**

The forty-eight-year-old sheriff hired by the citizens of Centennial to calm the hostilities between sheep ranchers and cattle ranchers. He tries to prove the murder of a man searching for land to buy but is unable to, though on his death bed, he figures out where the body was hidden when it's too late to do anything about it.

## **Mervin Wendell**

A theater man who arrives in Centennial to do a performance and discovers that their possessions are being confiscated for non-payment of bills in other towns. Mervin and his wife blackmail several men and when one such scheme goes wrong, Mervin's wife kills the man. Mervin himself never knows where the body is hidden though he jokes about it in later years. He becomes a successful - if somewhat dishonest - land owner and agent. He is the father of one son, Phillip.

## **Phillip Wendell**

Phillip is ten and has long curly hair when he arrives in Centennial with his parents, Mervin and Maude, as part of a theater troupe. Phillips watches as his mother, in a failed attempt to extort money from a man in town looking for land to buy, murders the



man. When it's obvious that the body has to be hidden, ten-year-old Phillip helps conceal it in an abandoned beaver lodge. He never speaks of it again and seems unconcerned, but as a young adult is moody and withdrawn, and his mother comes to believe that it probably had more of an effect than she'd believed. Phillip Wendell takes over the land accumulated by his father and continues his shady business practices. He is father of a son, Morgan, who holds a government job in Colorado in the 1970s.

## **Earl Grebe**

A farmer who is among those to help settle Line Camp, the small farming community near Centennial where dry farming techniques are being used. Earl and his wife continue to stick out the situation, and when the dust storms of the 1920s hit, they are hard pressed to feed their families. When Earl comes home one day and discovers that his wife has killed three of their four surviving children, he kills his wife and then himself. Their one surviving son, Tim, discovers the bodies.

## **Tim Grebe**

Son of Earl and Alice Grebe, Tim learns of a "Catch It and Keep It" event set at a rodeo in which youngsters are allowed to keep any steer they can catch and tie. Tim practices extensively so he's not at all afraid to tackle the young steer but his light weight makes it impossible for him to hold onto the animal and it escapes. As a reward for his gallant effort, he's given another steer and names it Rodeo. He later shows Rodeo in a livestock show where it wins a grand prize. When he returns home that night, he discovers his entire family is dead. He lives with a land agent, Mr. Bellamy, who took an interest in helping the young boys of that period and was interested in agricultural endeavors. It's Tim who comes to convince Paul Garrett that he should introduce a new strain to his Hereford herd.

## **Morgan Wendell**

Son of Phillip Wendell, Morgan is elected to a newly-created office called Commissioner of Resources and Priorities. Morgan admits to Paul Garrett that he isn't the smartest man alive and he wants Paul to serve as deputy official of that office. Paul agrees.



## Objects/Places

### Our People

Otherwise known as the Cheyenne and Arapaho, this was the tribe of Lame Beaver and his family.

### Blue Valley

The place where Lame Beaver fights against the Ute while gathering tipi poles and where he gets two gold bullets from a warrior. This is also where Pasquinel is killed.

### Saint Louis

Where Pasquinel and McKeag go to sell beaver pelts and where Pasquinel marries one of his wives.

### Lampeter, Pennsylvania

Named for a wagoner named Lame Peter, this is the town where Levy Zandt purchases a wagon for his trip to the west.

### Lancaster, Pennsylvania

The city where the Zandt brothers and many other Amish and Mennonite farmers offer their wares for sale, and where Levy Zandt meets up with Elly Zahn.

### Franklin

The city on the Missouri River where Elly and Levy join a wagon train headed to Oregon.

### Fort John

The fort located at the joining of the Laramie and the Platte where McKeag has a general store.



## **Denver, Colorado**

A settlement plagued by Indian troubles when a treaty is broken by the United States and a new one proffered.

## **Zendt Farm, Colorado**

The town founded by Levi Zendt by establishing a trading post with his partner, Alexander McKeag.

## **Centennial, Colorado**

The new name assigned to Zendt Farm upon the acceptance of Colorado into the United States, soon after the country's centennial.

## **Chicago**

Where Clemma Zendt is working as a waitress when Jim Lloyd finds her.

## **Crown Vee**

The brand given to the cattle brought to Centennial by J.R. Poteet and Skimmerhorn.

## **Line Camp**

The name given to the town that comes into being for the farmers who plan to farm the "dry land" areas near Centennial.

## **The Platte River**

The river that gives relief to the dry conditions in the area around Centennial. It's noted that it's not much of a river, that it swells easily out of its banks during the rainy periods, and that rights to its water become bitterly contested.



# Themes

## Preservation

Preservation is a recurring theme throughout the story as an array of characters fight to keep what they hold most dear. Early examples of this are the tiny creature who hopes that the largest of the dinosaurs won't step on her eggs. Later, it's the Indians who are seeking to save themselves from several threats. One of those is hunger. As it becomes more difficult for Lame Beaver and his people to feed themselves, he mounts a daring raid to steal horses from an enemy tribe. With these horses, Lame Beaver and his fellow hunters are able to forage farther for game in a brief time and to move their people as the herds of buffalo move.

Men like Potato Brumbaugh take visionary steps, such as his harnessing of the river to make crops grow in a land where little can flourish. When sheep arrive in Colorado, cattlemen are so desperate to eliminate the threat to their own way of life that there is killing. Later, Jim Lloyd and others will see early signs of the coming dust storms that put an end to the dry land farming of the region. Finally, Paul Garrett looks over Colorado in the 1970s and sees that his own way of life is threatened. He vows to tackle the problem of pollution and hopes it's not too late to preserve the land he has come to love.

## Intolerance

The first white men seen by Lame Beaver were the traders, Pasquinel and McKeag. Lame Beaver believes Pasquinel to be honorable because Pasquinel passes up an opportunity to kill Lame Beaver. While Pasquinel's attitude was to never kill an Indian if he could find another way, it wasn't because he was tolerant of the Indians, but merely because he believed it to be the best way of self-preservation. Even this limited tolerance was not often seen, and there were many who wanted to see the Indians driven off the land completely. Toward that end, there was a concerted effort to kill buffalo so the Indians would be starved into leaving. This tactic was somewhat less abrupt but no less brutal than the actions of a man named Skimmerhorn who massacred a village of Indians. Those who spoke against the practice were summarily destroyed themselves. Levi Zendt's trading post was burned to the ground more than once because of his attitudes of tolerance.

This same attitude is seen again when the farmers of the area find themselves in desperate need of a labor force. They find several ethnic groups willing to do the back-breaking labor, but each group soon realizes the desire to own land of their own and quickly leave the labor pool as they work their own farms. It's in this situation that Potato Brumbaugh finds Mexicans willing to perform the work with no aspirations to own their own land, meaning the labor force remains constant. While the farmers and community tolerate the presence of the Mexicans for the purpose of farm labor, they refuse to



welcome them into the society of the community. They are not welcome in the churches, and those who participate in religious rites of their own are often arrested.

## Willingness to Work

The majority of those who prosper over the course of the story are those willing to put their heart and sweat into their efforts. A prime example of this is Potato Brumbaugh. He arrives in the area and immediately sees the possibility of farming. To satisfy himself that it can be done, he and his family faithfully carry water from the Platte to a small patch of land and find that with the addition of water, the land can be successfully farmed. He then figures out a way to divert some of the water from the Platte to his land and expands his farm.

Many of those who come to work for Brumbaugh are equally dedicated to hard work. A Japanese family works Brumbaugh's land and then has aspirations for land ownership. When Brumbaugh sees that this means they won't be available to work his crops, he's upset but the family continues to work Brumbaugh's crops, putting in their own after Brumbaugh's work is done. There are other families who farm with equal tenacity and even those dry farmers who cause the dust bowl conditions are willing to work hard though they are armed with incorrect information.

Another example of this willingness to work is Jim Lloyd. As a teenager, he goes on a cattle drive and pulls his share of the load. While he is working on the Crown Vee Ranch and a blizzard strikes, Jim puts himself on the range, helping the other hands put hay out to save as many cattle as possible.

# Style

## Point of View

The story is written in third person from an omniscient point of view. This is the only option available to the author because the story spans more than a million years. In this area, the author has taken some liberties. For example, the second and third chapters focus on the formation of the land and its earliest inhabitants. When describing the dinosaurs that first called the region home, the author describes the scene from the perspective of a small animal believed to be living in the area at the time. Naturally, there's no way to be certain this small creature saw what is described, but it is reasonable and an engaging way of presenting the information to the reader. It is noteworthy that there are literally dozens of characters and many of them play major roles in the story. While it can reasonably be argued that Lame Beaver as the first character introduced and Paul Garrett, as a direct descendant of Lame Beaver and one of the last characters introduced, are among the more important. However, there are many others who are also vital to the story. Because chapters four through fourteen span more than two hundred years, there are many important characters introduced.

## Setting

The major setting is the imaginary town of Centennial, Colorado, and the time ranges from prehistoric times to the 1970s. The author makes it clear in a note at the beginning of the story that the town and people are imaginary, but the story is set against historic facts, such as the formation of the region during the time of the dinosaur and the mass slaughter of the buffalo as well as tensions over land, water and a way of life. While the town itself is not real, the descriptions are in depth and believable, making the story also believable. There are a number of events that are equally believable because of the dedication to historical accuracy. For example, a traveling circus comes to Centennial and these kinds of shows were common during the 1800s.

A less important setting is Lampeter, Pennsylvania. There exists today a small, unincorporated community called Lampeter which could be the location of the farm where Levi Zendt lived with his brothers. While the descriptions of Lampeter and the surrounding area are not provided in as great a detail as Centennial, there are sufficient descriptions to make the place seem believable. As is the case with Centennial, this believability lends credence to the story overall.

With regard to the time frame, there is a significant span of history, though the majority of the book focuses on the time period beginning in the 1700s when the white men first began entering the region that would become known as Colorado. The details of that time frame, including attitudes of Indians and whites, trading practices and the daily lives of the Indians, are all believable and at least reasonably historically accurate.





## Language and Meaning

The story is written in a very straight-forward style and any reader with an average vocabulary will likely have no trouble reading and comprehending the story. There are some words that are dated, such as "blunderbuss" and "flintlock," but the majority of the language used is everyday English. The general tone of the story is hopeful with a view toward the ultimate goal of survival, but it should be noted that there are periods of despair and homelessness, which is the case of all periods in history. There is also an almost-constant sense of conflict. As the white people are learning to harness the limited water and make the land produce, the Indians are losing a way of life. As the story draws to a close, it's noted that these Indians have fallen victim to hopelessness, and that are numerous incidents of abuse, neglect and alcoholism.

## Structure

The book is divided into fourteen chapters and the story flows in a fairly straightforward, chronological order with only a few notable exceptions. The first is that the book begins with "The Commission." In this chapter, Dr. Lewis Vernor, a history professor, is hired to verify facts of a book written about the region near the South Platte River. Vernor accepts the position with the warning that he would present his findings as well and that he reserved the right to publish those separately. The remainder of the story is the result of his research. That first chapter begins in the 1970s and chapter two flashes back to prehistoric times when the dinosaurs ruled the region that would become known as Colorado.

Chapter four tells the story of Lame Beaver, an Arapaho Indian who encounters two white traders who are later identified as Pasquinel and McKeag. Chapter four goes on to complete the story of Lame Beaver's life and chapter five steps back in time to the arrival of Pasquinel and McKeag in the area and the details of how their partnership began. There are few additional flashbacks and the story is generally presented in chronological order from that point, ending in the 1970s with Dr. Vernor interviewing a direct descendant of Lame Beaver, a man Vernor says epitomizes the west.

Chapters are titled and numbered and the titles offer a preview of what the reader can expect from that chapter. Chapter titles are The Commission, The Land, The Inhabitants, The Many Coups of Lame Beaver, The Yellow Apron, The Wagon and the Elephant, The Massacre, The Cowboys, The Hunters, A Smell of Sheep, The Crime, Central Beet, Drylands, and November Elegy.



## Quotes

"That's the sorriest river in America. You've heard all the jokes about the Platte. 'Too thick to drink, too thin to plow.'" Chapter 1, Page 6

"But if any decision of moment were required, she would again step forth and assert herself, and when she grew too old to assume this task the responsibility would pass to some other strongly opinionated cow, for the leadership of a large group was too important to be left to the males." Chapter 3, Page 82

"There, high above the plains he had loved and the river he had so often followed, Lame Beaver, the man of many coups, found his rest. He died at the end of an epoch, the grandest the western Indians were to know." Chapter 5, Page 182

"The rivers were turbulent: Sweetwater, Green, Snake, Yellowstone, but the hills were rolling and much less severe than the Rockies. It was an amiable land and McKeag felt an easiness creep into his bones as he crossed it." Chapter 5, Page 245

"As with any self-respecting Lancaster farm, the barn was six times the size of the house, for Amish and Mennonite farmers understood priorities." Chapter 6, Page 277

"Levi came to her side and whispered, 'Now we really are alone. Now we can never go back,' and in that moment the Zendts knew what moving west meant - the awful loneliness, the burden of rifles, the strange rivers flowing swift with mud, the unknown Indians lurking, the long, long trails with no homes and no lights at dusk." Chapter 6, Page 341

"That was enough. On this trail, when a man saw the elephant, clear and overwhelming, rising out of the darkness with those beady eyes, he must heed its warning." Chapter 6, Page 375

"It was his own brother-in-law, Jake Pasquinel, now forty-two years old and tense with the disappointment which comes at the age when a man realizes he had made too many wrong choices. Instead of staying with the Arapaho, among whom he might have achieved real leadership, he had drifted from tribe to tribe, learning many languages badly, fit only to serve as interpreter to men who were far less capable than he. Like all half-breeds he stood with one foot in the Indian world, one in the white man's, and at ease in neither. He was trusted by no one and suspicion was so constant that he had grown to doubt himself." Chapter 7, Page 403

"But those same critters, if you could deliver 'em to the army way north at Fort Laramie in Wyoming, would bring you four silver dollars each. All you had to do was gather 'em, head em' out, and collect your fortune at the end of the trail." Chapter 8, Page 486



"Having shot the last of the buffalo, he now seemed determined to remove from earth all visible signs that the great animal had ever existed, as if God had commanded, 'You made this mess. Clean it up.'" Chapter 9, Page 613

"At each grace the tall, acidulous mad would direct God's attention to evildoers, to men who had stolen money from the bank, to girls who were misbehaving, and Levi began to understand why so much violence had been permitted in Colorado. With God kept so busy in Lancaster prying into petty problems, how could He find time to watch over real crimes like those of the Pasquinel brothers and Colonel Skimmerhorn?" Chapter 10, Page 659

"They came into the bright summer sunlight like slugs from beneath a rock, and what they saw reassured them: a lot of cowboys, a lot of local boobs waiting for the games, and especially a group of businessmen on the lookout for something good." Chapter 11, Page 723

"The sugar-beet industry was not really feasible, economically speaking, but it was close enough to the margin to warrant the protection given it, and the one requirement for being a senator from Colorado was to have the muscle to keep the high tariff on cane sugar. Integrity, hard work and statesmanship were desirable, but familiarity with the sugar beet was essential." Chapter 13, Page 832

"For the lack of a few dollars of ready cash, a man stood to lose a farm worth many thousands. It was a crazy system, one devised by idiots and administered by bankers, but it was the way America was run, and the individual farmer could do nothing about it." Chapter 13, Page 897

"'Day and night I'm going to tackle the Denver smog. And I'm going to ban snowmobiles in every state forest.' Even so he feared that such measures might be too late, and he muttered sardonically, 'Pretty soon, if you want to see the unspoiled grandeur of Colorado you'll have to go to Wyoming.'" Paul Garret, Chapter 14, Page 965

"I live in Centennial because it's maybe the best spot in America ... could even be the best remaining spot on earth." Chapter 14, Page 1,038



## Topics for Discussion

Give an overview of the history of the region that would come to be known as Centennial. What are some of the events, people and animals that tie the events together?

List three people who played an important role in the establishment of the town that would become known as Centennial and explain their roles.

What is important about Lame Beaver's trip to Blue Valley? What was his original purpose and how does it happen that he makes this important discovery? How is the find misinterpreted? How does that eventually lead Paul Garrett to view Blue Valley?

Why are the relationships between man, animal and land important? What theme is presented in this book that exemplifies this relationship? How can this be applied to modern-day issues?

Who is Pasquinel? McKeag? How do they come to be partners? What causes the eventual breakup of the partnership? How does McKeag become part of Pasquinel's life again?

Name four descendants of Pasquinel. Describe their roles in the history of Centennial.

Name four of the important Indian characters. Describe their roles in the history of Centennial.

Why is the first cattle drive from Texas to Colorado important? Name four of those involved. What role does each of these men play in the history of Centennial?

What is the relationship between Paul Garrett and Lame Beaver? How are the two men alike? How are they different?