Eva Emery Dye: Romance with the West

By Sheri Bartlett Browne


Table of Contents

Writing in the early years of the twentieth century, novelist Eva Emery Dye captured the imagination of American readers with her epic accounts of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, the Oregon Trail, and the conquest of the American West. Brimming with adventure, drama, and romance, her books helped to shape an entire generation’s understanding of American history and Manifest Destiny.

In this first biography of Dye, Sheri Bartlett Browne chronicles the life of one of Oregon’s most successful early writers. Drawing on previously unknown letters and diaries, Browne examines Dye’s determination to write historical fiction, the history of her involvement in the suffrage movement, and her lifelong promotion of education through the Chautauqua movement.

Dye is best remembered for The Conquest, one of the first fictional works to popularize (and romanticize) the Lewis and Clark Expedition, in which she introduced a new American heroine, Sacagawea. Although the book’s portrayal enhanced the young Shoshone’s role, it was Dye’s later efforts to memorialize her with statues and speeches that turned Sacagawea into an American icon.

Dye’s most extensive project was a historical novel recounting the achievements of nineteenth-century American missionaries in Hawaii. Completed in the 1920s but never published, her manuscript promoted a controversial view of American influence in Hawaii. Dye wrote one last book, The Soul of America, which examined the accomplishments and perseverance of pioneer women.

Eva Emery Dye: Romance with the West offers a fascinating look at a figure once prominent in literary and suffrage circles in the Pacific Northwest, and highlights the significance of family and education in women’s lives at the turn of the twentieth century.
“Eva Emery Dye was a woman of remarkable abilities, who played a major role in the construction of the persona of Sacagawea, in the Oregon suffrage movement, and in the development of popular culture in the Pacific Northwest. Sheri Bartlett Browne's biography brings to center stage a major figure in the literary life of the first half of the twentieth century in the Pacific Northwest.”

—Stephen Dow Beckham, Pamplin Professor of History at Lewis & Clark College

About the Author

Sheri Bartlett Browne is Assistant Professor of History at Tennessee State University.
Phototherapy in essence relies on the uptake of sensitizing dyes by cells and the subsequent induction of an intracellular toxic reaction after exposure to light. What makes this technique particularly notable is the documentation of increased uptake of the photosensitizing dye by tumor cells; since “tumor-cell selectivity” is the Holy Grail of oncology, this observation is certainly of more than passing interest. In this book, several authors present summaries of their research... Eva Emery Dye: Romance with the West. Oregon State University Press, 2004. 186 p. NW 813.6 BROWNE 2004; R 813.6 BROWNE 2004. Biography of Dye, who brought us The Conquest, one of the first romanticized versions of the story, and of Sacagawea’s role during the journey. Explores Dye’s work as a historian, author of four regional histories, suffragette, and community activist. Includes two chapters of particular interest: “Envisioning the West: Sacagawea, Lewis and Clark, and The Conquest” and “Sacagawea, the Women’s Club Movement, and Suffrage Activism.” *Burroughs, Raymond Darwin, editor. Carlson, Laurie M. Seduced by the West: Jefferson’s America and the Lure of the Land Beyond the Mississippi. Ivan R. Dee, 2003. 226 p. The Home Life of Eva Emery Dye. Ear and far has radiated the genius of Oregon’s gifted author, Eva Emery Dye—even to lands beyond the seas. Wherever her books are read, the charm of the spirit that enlivens every page is felt: but within her home in Oregon City, overlooking the Willamette, beams the effulgence of mother love and wifely devotion. The world has the author, but the home holds the wife and mother. Out from this realm, hallowed by love and made merry by the prattle and song of children.