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# Story Circle Book Reviews

*reviewing books by, for, and about women*

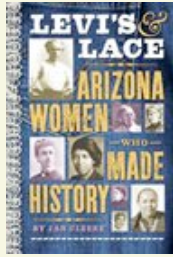


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## Levi's and Lace: Arizona Women who Made History by Jan Cleere



Rio Nuevo Publishers, 2011. ISBN 978-1-933-85553-0.

*Reviewed by Laura Strathman Hulka*  
Posted on 08/01/2011

**Nonfiction: Biography; Nonfiction: History/Current Events**

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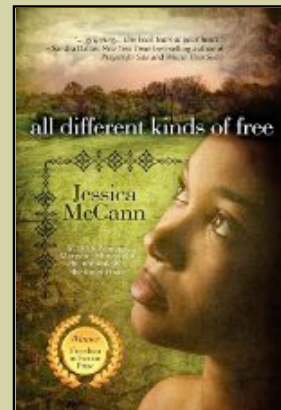
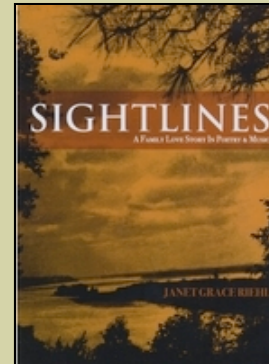
Jan Cleere is an Arizonian. She loves the West and the strength of the women who populated it, and it shows in her writing. The 35-plus women in this book are among the most interesting and intriguing of Arizona's past women; each written about briefly and concisely, and each enriching the life of the reader.

Cleere's book covers several defined categories of "pioneer women." The six sections of the book are: Women of the Land, Women Who Healed and Saved, Women Entrepreneurs, Women Who Educated, Women of the Arts, and Women of the Law.

Cleere is inclusive, for she brings to us vignettes of the lives of Lozen, an Apache Warrior woman; Catherine Hookey Drexel, who spent her life dedicated to the education and health of Blacks and Indians (sainted by the Catholic Church in 1988 as St. Katharine); Angela Hutchinson Hammer, a woman determined to make a difference as a Western publisher and printer; Elizabeth White, nee Polingaysi Qouawayma, a Hopi woman who entered the world of the Whites and yet taught Hopi and Navajo children for over three

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decades; Nampeyo, a remarkable woman whose artistic talent brought forth beautifully original Indian pottery; and Annie Dodge Wauneka, a dedicated arbitrator and advocate for the Navajo people.

Throughout the book are photos of the women, giving the reader a chance to not only read their stories but gaze upon their faces; some weather-worn and tired, some aged and wrinkled, but all of them with the light of learning and love of the West in their eyes. They were dedicated at first to Arizona Territory, then to the state of Arizona, determined to make a life for themselves and their families while bettering the economy and the personal lives of the natives and residents of the wide open desert lands. Cleere even includes women whose jobs may have not been seen as reputable, such as boarding house mavens and camp followers who cooked and comforted the men defending the Western Frontier.

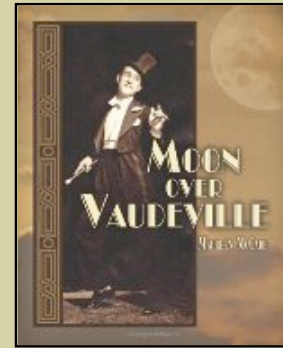
Tucked between the stories are one-page overviews of other women not included in the main sections of the book. These brief "Another Notable Woman" inserts remind the reader that the 35-plus women who are focused upon are not the only contributors to creating lives in Arizona; there are hundreds, nay thousands, of women whose daily lives were often devastatingly hard, but their spirits and hopes were always strong and looking to the future.

Remarkable women are not the exception to the rule, but the backbone of the West, and it was both enjoyable and encouraging to read about so many women, most unknown, that created homes, towns, churches and schools to help Arizona and the West grow.

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Author, historian and lecturer Jan Cleere writes extensively about the desert southwest, particularly the people who first settled the territory. Her freelance work appears in national and regional publications including *Arizona Highways Magazine*, *Persimmon Hill Magazine*, *Phoenix Woman*, *Tucson Guide Quarterly*, *The Desert Leaf*, *Chronicle of the Old West*, and *Arizona Garden*. Jan and her husband live in Oro Valley, Arizona, under the shadow of the Santa Catalina Mountains. Visit [her website](#).

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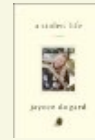
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