

THE BUSTER CLAN: AN AMERICAN SAGA

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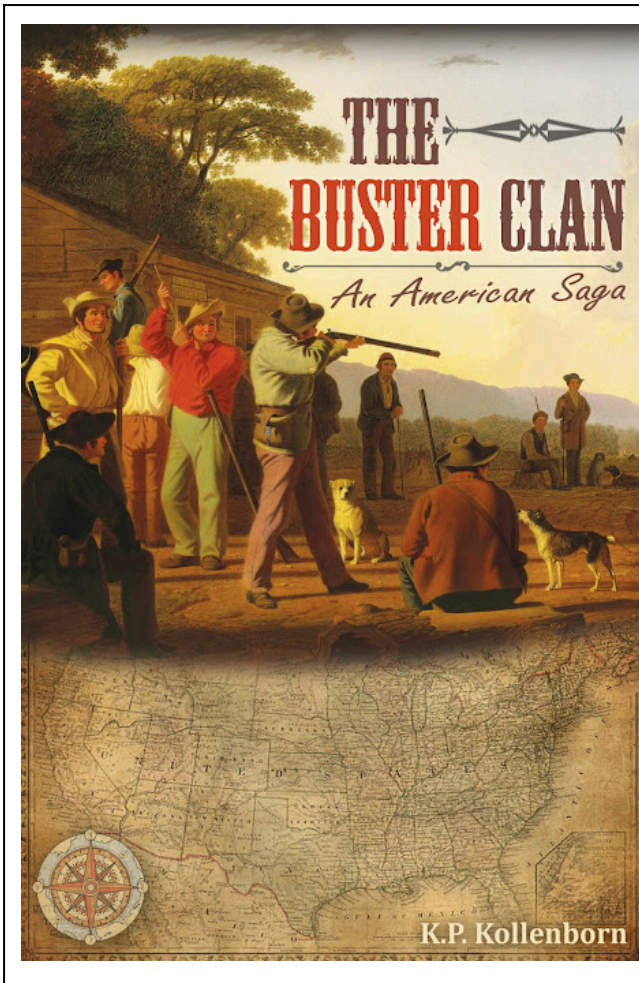
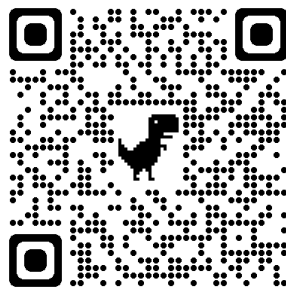


Image *Finding Your Roots, Roots Less Traveled* and *Who Do You Think You Are* are presented in a book format. *The Buster Clan: An American Saga* does exactly that. Within these hefty histories are smaller sagas where lives were personally affected by how history played out.

Unfolding a trajectory of United States' events through a collection of Buster narratives and archives, the Busters added authentic and freshly told stories about the American experience. Instead of focusing on one person in a biography, many people are featured with mini-biographies; like an anthology of biographies. *The Buster Clan* is a quintessential portfolio of histories that embodies the American resolve.

Touching on social and political themes such as identity, westward expansion, slavery, wars, human rights, technology and Hollywood would inspire any lover of history to burrow deeper inside these narratives. This book took me a total of seven years of researching and writing, during which time I had reached out to others to help me facilitate my researching journey and fact checking. It's also a personal homage as I am a Buster descendant.



Synopsis:

Chapter One: “What's in a name? that which we call a rose By any other word would smell as sweet;” William Shakespeare. Delving deeper into the origin of the Buster surname, and how the concept of English Plantation transferred from Ireland to the American colonies with the Busters being a part of that development.

Chapter Two: “The people of America crye oute unto us;” Richard Hakluyt, Discourse on Western Planting, 1584. Introducing the development of indentured servitude, the headright system, laying down the foundation of colonization by the usage of plantations, and how the first Buster may have been born into its institution, and later, greatly benefited from it.

Chapter Three: “Many a mickle makes a muckle.” 18th century Scottish Proverb. Focusing on the Scotch-Irish connection, from Ireland to Virginia, and how the Busters married into the wealthy, highly prestigious Woods family who had Scottish clan influences from conquered Ireland via England and France.

Chapter Four: “The highest glory of the American Revolution was this: it connected in one indissoluble bond the principles of civil government with the principles of Christianity.” John Quincy Adams. Before the American Revolutionary War, there was the War of the Regulation in North Carolina. Although both rebellions may have appeared similar in regards to changing the systems, each had their own calling and had very different results.

Chapter Five: “Our new Constitution is now established, and has an appearance that promises permanency; but in this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes.” Benjamin Franklin. If a modern society is to survive, it needs money. In spite of the economic challenges during this transition, the Buster clan managed to sustain themselves in Wythe, Albemarle, and Augusta Counties. The first Claudius owning an “ordinary,” or simply put, a tavern for weary travelers.

Chapter Six: “The War of 1812 perhaps the least remembered of American wars because it was fought in such a left-handed slapdash manner on both sides.” Charles R. Morris. After Daniel Boone shepherded the westward trails from Virginia into Kentucky, the migration overflowed. This competitive strand prolonged the undeclared wars with the people who already inhabited the land, especially in the Ohio Valley which would carry well into the War of 1812. Joshua Buster would only serve six months, but through his connections, would rise to a general from a private.

Chapter Seven: “We are like chameleons, we take our hue and the color of our moral character, from those who are around us.” John Locke. Focusing on the misuse of labor: binding out, to which five Buster boys were placed before there was a foster care system, and slavery, to which many Busters were slave-owners.

Chapter Eight: “The sun shines bright in the old Kentucky home;” Stephen Collins Foster. Garret Buster was a biracial servant owned by General Joshua Buster. Garret’s story revealed his tenacity and risk-taking ventures as noteworthy and exceptional, therefore, what makes his story, and the story of his family empowering is the fact that his grandson, Greene Berry Buster, wrote a book about him.

Chapter Nine: “Don't worry about biting off more than you can chew. Your mouth is probably a whole lot bigger'n you think.” Texan Proverb. Capt. Claudius Buster, the man who cried “Texas!” In search of adventure, Claudius and his father left Kentucky to carve out a new life in Texas. Just a few years before the Mexican American War, Claudius continued to search for adventure, including surviving the Mier Expedition, escaping Mexican troops, until his luck ran out.

Chapter Ten: “California presented to people a new model for the American dream—one where the emphasis was on the ability to take risks, the willingness to gamble on the future.” Gold Rush on American Experience. The Gold Rush, cattle and embezzlement. The opening of California's Gold Rush brought in all kinds of people from everywhere. When people looking for fortune went bust, they looked for other means of survival.

Chapter Eleven: “In the end, there is no absence of irony: the integrity of what is sacred to Native Americans will be determined by the government that has been responsible for doing everything in its power to destroy Native American cultures.” Winona LaDuke. Descended from “Isabella” Buster Byrd and Chickasaw Chief Minta Ishtanaha, William Byrd became governor of the Chickasaw in present day Oklahoma after the “Trail of Tears” mass removal. He also fought for the Confederacy during the American Civil War, and ironically, alongside another Buster.

Chapter Twelve: “Be careful about reading health books. You may die of a misprint.” Mark Twain. During the 1840’s at its zenith, prestigious men from all over visited Blue Spring Sulphurs in the western part of Virginia. It was the place to be and was famously known for “taking the waters” for either health reasons or for indulgence. George W. Buster would be the major player behind the fashionable spa, affectionately referred to as “the Blue,” but would end in despair and poverty.

Chapter Thirteen: “Never wrestle with a pig. You get dirty and the pig likes it.” Missourian Proverb. Busters from Missouri entered the American Civil War on the Confederacy side, where one fought for preservation of slavery and adapted using the Native Americans for the Southern cause; the other fought against the disorder Missouri found itself in with bandits on both sides, briefly fighting alongside of the James brothers, and becoming a POW for two years.

Chapter Fourteen: “Character is like a tree and reputation like a shadow. The shadow is what we think of it; the tree is the real thing.” Abraham Lincoln. Continuing border states warfare, Garrett’s sons volunteered in both the Black Brigade and other Black American regiments whereas Joshua Buster’s son, Milton, served in the Kentucky-torn senate. Meanwhile, Capt. Claudius Buster’s POW experiences in Mexico didn’t make him think twice about owning a large cotton plantation and joining the Texas Confederacy to preserve his wealth to which he lost all after the war.

Chapter Fifteen: “They called it, ‘swallowing the dog.’” During Reconstruction, many Southerners, including the Busters, struggled with their losses; so much so, several had either engaged in violence against Black Americans or were complacent to it. Regardless of their financial losses, they were all about getting back on their feet.

Chapter Sixteen: “I suppose we need not go mourning the buffaloes. In the nature of things, they had to give place to better cattle, though the change might have been made without barbarous wickedness.” John Muir. The cattle boom, whether it began as the overland trails before the Civil War, or cattle drives thereafter, the Busters were influential in the beef business. The Wild West had impacted some of their lives, including Sterling Buster knowing Wild Bill, and a friend killed by Billy the Kid.

Chapter Seventeen: “No society that feeds its children on tales of successful violence can expect them not to believe that violence in the end is rewarded.” Margaret Mead. The United States was born out of violence; a primal product extracted out from a raw need to survive in a destructive way. This chapter exposes how a group of Busters were put into prison based on the crimes they’ve committed.

Chapter Eighteen: “Pray for the dead and fight like hell for the living.” Mother Jones. In Colorado, mining wars were problematic during the early nineteen hundreds, and Sheriff Sanford Buster was caught in the midst of it all.

Chapter Nineteen: “I have no regrets. Were it to be done again, I would do it exactly as I did it at the time.” Wyatt Earp. Sheriff Sanford Buster, once again, was caught in the midst of a trial that garnered national attention of a prominent family murder-mystery; the

family being descendants of Charles Dickens. Sanford strongly believed the son shot his father for money to the point where some of his investigational methods were questionable under the eyes of the law.

Chapter Twenty: “Charged with the mission of operating beyond the boundaries of civilization with minimal support and no communication from higher authority, they lived and often died by the motto, ‘Order first, then law will follow.’ ” Thomas W. Knowles. Of course there would be a couple of Busters who served in the Texas Rangers, one at the end of the 19th century and the other during WWI.

Chapter Twenty-One: “It is one of the blessings of this world that few people see visions and dream dreams.” Zora Neale Hurston. Focusing on racism in the early part of the 20th century, Virginia Buster married Félix Martínez who became a political voice for the Latinos in New Mexico. Garrett’s grandson, Greene Buster, became an educator and used his talents to inform the public about Black American history during the time of the Jim Crow Laws, even in the state of Kansas before Brown v. Board of Education.

Chapter Twenty-Two: “Now and again there occur alterations of the ‘emotional’ and the ‘apparently normal’ personalities, the return of the former often heralded by severe headache, dizziness or by a hysterical convulsion.” Charles S. Myers, *Shell Shock in France, 1914-1918: Based on a War Diary*. Personal stories of three Busters who suffered from PTSD after WWI, one of whom lost his memory and ended up 1,560 miles away from home.

Chapter Twenty-Three: “True Americanism demands that we judge each man on his conduct, that we so judge him in private life and that we so judge him in public life.” Theodore Roosevelt. Leading public lives, whether a deaf baseball player, a B-rated Hollywood Western actor, a WWII general who supported public health and published an autobiography, maintaining private lives could be tricky.

Chapter Twenty-Four: “Behind every working woman is an enormous pile of unwashed laundry.” Barbara Dale. Focusing on Buster women in the workforce and how they defied social norms prior to the Women’s Liberation Movement, and even afterwards, still overcoming inequality.

Chapter Twenty-Five: “All in all, I would not have missed this century for the world.” Gore Vidal. Nearing the end of the 20th century, how Busters impacted modern technology with computers, transplanting embryos, the arts and filmmaking.

Postlude: “Please accept my resignation. I don't want to belong to any club that will accept me as a member.”Groucho Marx. Concluding with the final chapter by revealing the Buster name in literature, a play and movies, both fiction and nonfiction. What is characteristic of a Buster is characteristically American. And joking aside, if we all would like to join the membership before considering resignation, take into consideration that there is a little bit of Buster in all of us, whether we like it or not.