

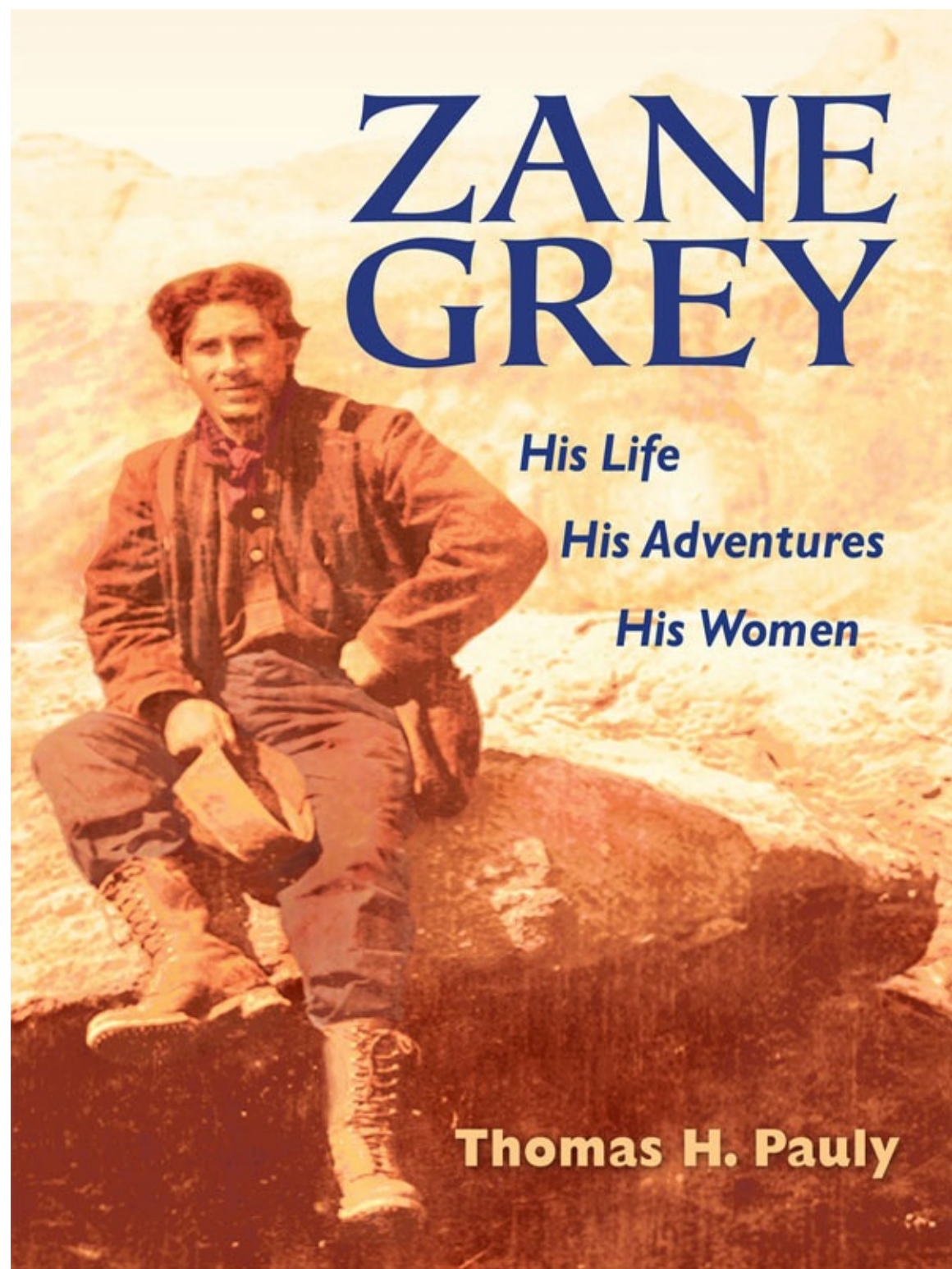
ZANE GREY

His Life

His Adventures

His Women

Thomas H. Pauly



ZANE GREY



ZANE GREY

His Life, His Adventures, His Women

THOMAS H. PAULY

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For Suzie (my wife),

and Anne (my sister),

and our adventures together.

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Acknowledgments

One of the best parts of this project was all the kind, interesting people who aided my search for information. Early on, while I was deliberating whether to write this biography, I decided that I needed to meet with Loren Grey, Zane's son and the current head of Zane Grey, Inc., and find out what he thought about this possibility. During our first luncheon together, which lasted over three hours, he was remarkably open about his father's secret life and very interested in what I had learned so far. He reassured me that he and the rest of the family no longer wished to suppress the truth about Zane. So long as he could read the finished result and did not object to my treatment, he would allow me to quote from the unpublished writings of his father and mother. Several years later, after more lunches and memorable conversations, he granted me this permission.

Although Loren did not allow me immediate access to his holdings of photographs, letters, and journals, he informed me that his materials and those owned by his sister, Betty, had already been photocopied by professors Candace Kant and Joe Wheeler, and he encouraged me to contact them. Both responded warmly to my letters and agreed to share what they had. Candace did an enormous amount of photocopying and mailed me several huge boxes that included many helpful books and articles. Joe invited me to visit him, and provided me a room in which to examine his carefully catalogued materials. Not only was his library impressive, but he freely shared with me all that he had found and learned as well.

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Introduction

“Most people are as they are. You can’t change them. I change always. But then I am not normal, not ordinary in any sense.”

—Zane Grey, Letter to Claire Wilhelm Carlin, September 3, 1932

On November 26, 1939, Zane Grey’s wife of thirty-four years, Dolly Grey, responded to a note of condolence from Dan Beard, a distant friend, who had written when he learned about Zane’s death:

My thanks to you and Mrs. Beard for your letter of sympathy. Zane’s passing was so sudden and unexpected that I can’t realize it. Somehow, it seems to me that he is just away on one of those adventurous trips he loved so much—and perhaps he is.

It was splendid of you to say that you considered Zane a man of great genius. I know that he was, but also know that it takes a man of great genius to recognize one of his ilk.¹

Given the remarkable success of her husband’s career, the defensiveness in Dolly’s comment about her husband’s “genius” is surprising. Grey was *the* best-selling author in America during the 1920s and a major contributor to the Western genre’s rise in popularity. In nine of the ten years from 1915 through 1924, Grey had a new novel among the top ten best-selling novels for the entire year.² Moreover, Westerns of his from before and after these dates achieved the monthly list.³ At the time of his death, Harpers, his publisher since *The Heritage of the Desert* (1910), estimated that sales of his novels exceeded 17,000,000 copies.⁴ “The greatest selling author of all time,” its press release of this information claimed. “In sales Zane Grey is exceeded only by the Bible and the Boy Scout Handbook.”

The extraordinary commercial demand for Grey’s books did not bring commensurate critical respect. Reviewers regularly condemned his novels, and their hostility was intensified by his success. By the time of his death, this animus was so virulent that it infected his obituaries, and made Dolly grateful for Beard’s kind praise for her husband. Grey’s obituary in the *New York Times* included this negative appraisal from fifteen years before: “His art is archaic, with all the traits of archaic art. His style ... has the stiffness that comes from an imperfect mastery of the medium. It lacks fluency or facility; behind it always we feel a pressure toward expression, a striving for a freer and easier utterance.”⁵ The overlap of Grey’s death with that of Opie Read, another Western author, moved Burton Rascoe to write a reflection for the prestigious *Saturday Review* in which he praised Read and bludgeoned Grey: “It is difficult to imagine any writer having less merit in either style or substance than Grey and still maintaining an audience at all.”⁶

The mean spirit of these last respects gave the *New York Times* second thoughts, and elicited a special editorial in defense of Grey—one, however, that did not relinquish its low opinion of his novels: “Grey’s novels were immensely popular. It is easy to sniff at his work; nonetheless it was honest work. He thought and wrote clearly. Whatever of the conventional melodramatic lay in his subject or his method, his books are of the clean and bracing outdoors. Therefore they are as odious as tracts to those who want their literary diet copiously peppered. Wouldn’t a little tolerance in these matters be useful?”⁷ Although it had ignored his work for years, the *New Yorker* was likewise bothered by this i

will in Grey's death notices, and countered with praise that was less qualified and more appropriate: "We do not like the haughty tone the *Herald Tribune* has seen fit to adopt in speaking of the late Zane Grey. The critics, it remarks loftily, will eventually reduce him to the position of one 'who also wrote.' Come, gentlemen. This was a great writer, rich in invention, prodigal with his action, juicily romantic."⁸

Contrary to the negative assessments of these critics, Grey was, in fact, a skillful writer who combined easy readability with artful embellishment. He was justifiably wounded by negative appraisals of his work. In the West, he found an outlet for his considerable talent and strong beliefs in the spiritual value of the outdoors. Grey did not invent the Western, but he did profoundly influence both the popularity of the genre for most of the twentieth century and the more durable appeal of the West as alternative culture. Other writers like Bret Harte and Frank Norris wrote about the West before him, but Grey's romantic stories ranged beyond the actual locales and authentic history and made the region fabled and legendary. His fantasies became those of the nation.

Public libraries keep Grey's Westerns on their shelves today because their patrons regularly check them out, but few of them realize that when he started to write, the Western was not the genre we take for granted, and the Southwest was still a vast wasteland devoid of water, people, and cultural value for those who lived elsewhere. He was neither the first nor the only writer to see the rich potential in these limitations, but he was without equal in transforming the area's hot, dusty landscape into grand colorful settings for exciting, eventful dramas. One of the reasons his stories were more believable and compelling when they first appeared than today is because their locus then was so far away from and so unlike the developed, humdrum, workday world of the East.

His poetic descriptions of desert conditions and the myriad changes wrought by the sun's movement and quick shifts in weather rendered them variably wondrous and menacing. His chases and stampedes, in conjunction with his gunslingers and outlaws, transformed this atmospheric stage set into a gymnasium where men were tested and cured of ailments acquired from too much civilization. His books showed that one of the greatest benefits of this locale was its prospect for romance: the recurring likelihood that his rehabilitated hero would find there a woman who was his equal, whose interests and capabilities had been similarly enlarged, and whose responsiveness and loyalty inspired confidence that their love would be fulfilling and would endure.

Although Grey's Westerns were seminal in getting people all over the world to believe that the arid American Southwest was especially panoramic and conducive to vigorous activity and romance, he could never have accomplished this Herculean feat by himself. He can only be understood and appreciated in terms of his connection to an emerging popular culture that was bigger and more influential than any individual writer. A large measure of his achievement came from being ahead of a mammoth wave of popular interest in his material. Behind his work and looming over it was a formidable entertainment industry just discovering the value of best sellers and the appeal of movies. This carnival of entertainment showered Grey with wealth, but shackled him to its demands. He was repeatedly frustrated by a publishing industry that disliked his attempts at innovation as much as his critics. Early on, he recognized the cinematic potential of his work, but he never understood the filmmaking industry. He deeply regretted his outright sale of film rights to his early Westerns, and failed to grasp how much his novels benefited from the multiple remakes that his "mistake" made possible. The filmmaker whom he initially entrusted with his stories was a hustler whom Jesse Lasky and Adolph Zukor, the wily founders of Paramount, had already outmaneuvered and doomed to

failure. When Zane Grey Pictures lurched toward bankruptcy, Paramount took over the foundering company and shrewdly marketed Grey's work like chilled soft drinks for a thirsty audience.

Despite the many hours he spent writing his books in longhand, Grey's life was as "juicily romantic" as any of his novels, and far more unusual. Had he not been a talented baseball player, he never would have attended college—an education that trained him to be a dentist. In 1903, at the age of thirty, he quit dentistry to become a writer. His first five years of feverish work yielded meager pay, and five more brought only a living wage. His black depressions over his slow progress were alleviated by a passionate love of the outdoors and adventure. In 1906, Grey and his wife took a honeymoon trip to the Grand Canyon, and saw it during the early stages of its development into a tourist attraction. In 1907 and 1908, at a critical juncture in his early career and prior to Arizona's achievement of statehood, he returned to the Grand Canyon for two hunting trips for mountain lions and was among the first to travel its new backcountry trails. These trips started him writing Westerns and inspired many more return visits. He was one of the first white men to reach the Rainbow Bridge, and more than twenty years before John Ford discovered the magnificence of Monument Valley, Grey actively campaigned to have his Westerns filmed there.

Grey also avidly pursued saltwater fishing in Tampico, Mexico; Long Key, Florida; and Catalina, California. During the 1920s, his lust for "virgin seas" and his determination to catch the biggest fish carried him to Nova Scotia, the Galapagos Islands, New Zealand, Tahiti, and Australia. These trips garnered him a dozen world records; he was the first person to land a 1,000-pound fish on sporting tackle. His nine books about these adventures, all entitled "Tales of ...," contain some of his best writing; they remain in print and deservedly so.



Grey in Arizona, 1920. (Courtesy of Loren Grey.)



Left to right: Mildred Ferguson, Lillian Wilhelm, Claire Wilhelm, and Zane Grey at Long Key, 1916 (Courtesy of Pat Friese.)

For a person of such range and accomplishment, it is remarkable that his life remains so little-known and misunderstood. Currently, the chief source of information is a biography that is outdated and long out of print—Frank Gruber’s *Zane Grey: A Biography* (1970).⁹ Gruber started his project as an ailing author of popular Westerns and actually died before the biography was published. Gruber made little effort to distinguish the specious and anecdotal from the true; important information was sloppily handled and intentionally ignored. Gruber was also recruited to write this biography by the Grey family, which pressured him to uphold the wholesome image of the author promoted by his publisher and to gloss over or suppress the problematic aspects of his life.

Grey had a troubled youth, and he was deeply scarred by his father’s slide into poverty and his family’s decline from its distinguished heritage. As a young man, he was sensitive, reserved, and antisocial, and later he became outspoken and reactionary. He disliked cities, vehemently opposed drinking and smoking, and repeatedly criticized modern development.

Grey was profligate with his money and often used overspending as an incentive to work. In 1913,

after renting a spacious apartment in New York City for the upcoming winter, he wrote to Dolly, "I've got to touch Rome [Zane's brother] or somebody for some coin, and then work like hell and I'm grimly settled in mind on the latter."¹⁰ By 1920, when his annual income surpassed \$100,000, he was so pleased with his two-year experiment with California living that he purchased a grand residence in Altadena. That same year, he acquired another house in Catalina, a ranch in Arizona, and an expensive new boat. Five years later, when Zane purchased a grand schooner and initiated costly renovations, Dolly indignantly wrote to him:

Now about the ship. Never knew you were even looking at more than one so your telegram was somewhat puzzling. However, the part about depositing the \$10,000 for you by Sept. 1st was clear enough. I'll do it, tho it will pretty well clean me out. Not a cent came in since you left and the only money you have given me in months is that \$9,000 just before you left ... According to the N.Y. Times you are having your boat refitted in N.Y. Why? When labor was so infinitely cheaper in Nova Scotia? Did anyone ever tell you that it would cost you a fortune to bring that boat through the canal? It cost the *Manchuria* \$11,000 for a single trip. Well, Pa's rich and Ma don't care! That is, if the children don't starve.¹¹

Her irony and ire could not constrain his determination to have what he wanted.



Zane Grey in front of the house in which he grew up, during his 1921 visit to Zanesville. (Courtesy of Loren Grey.)

By the Depression, Grey's profligate spending was so ingrained and so excessive that it almost ruined him. Despite widespread signs of a national financial crisis, an unmistakable drop in demand for his work, and objections from his wife, he purchased another yacht for \$50,000 in 1930 and then spent \$300,000 on renovations. This would be approximately three and a half million in today's dollars, but an even better measure of this sum might be the \$80,000 that Babe Ruth earned in 1931, a salary that provoked controversy because he was paid \$5,000 more than the president of the United States.¹² Added to the debt that Grey was already carrying, this yacht decimated his finances and necessitated that he cut short his most ambitious fishing trip, intended to circle the world. For the next four years, he hovered precariously close to breakdown and bankruptcy.

Over the course of his life, Grey also offended many people. He so antagonized members of the prestigious Tuna Club in southern California that they conspired to drive him away. After the citizens of New Zealand staged an extravagant welcome for him on the occasion of his visit, he publicly denounced their primitive methods of fishing. When Arizona refused him a special exemption from its hunting regulations, he angrily proclaimed that he would never again return to the state in which so many of his novels had been set. Inevitably, and inexorably, his dark moods, competitiveness, and self-absorption drove away almost everyone he ever befriended. Laurie Mitchell served him longer than any of his other boat captains, but his seven years of loyalty did not prevent Grey from summarily firing him. Grey was so grateful to Alvah James for his example and advice when he started out as a writer that he allowed him to occupy his Lackawaxen residence for years, but his abrasive letters to James suggest that their friendship only endured because they were never around each other. Grey's deep attachment to his younger brother extended from childhood outings through many trips together as adults, but even R. C. eventually had to distance himself.

Dolly was the one person who remained steadfastly loyal to Grey, and her observation to Beard that it took "great genius to recognize one of [Zane's] ilk" was at once self-congratulatory and characteristically self-effacing. She understood better than anyone else the full measure of her husband's uniqueness and its staggering demands. During their courtship, she initially won his love by supporting his ambition to write and allaying his crippling doubts. In one of his earliest letters, Grey wrote to her:

On the stone I shall engrave:

Here lies a man, to fame unknown;

Who on the wings of love was blown,

To suffer for the sins he'd sown.

What an epitaph for the greatest might-have-been in American letters.¹³

Dolly approved of Zane's wrenching decision to quit dentistry and ably assisted his ferocious struggle to get his work published. Her modest inheritance financed the two Arizona trips that transformed him into an author of Westerns.

Dolly accommodated herself to "those adventurous trips he loved so much." From the East in the spring of 1922, Zane wrote to her: "We are not going to see a great deal of each other this year, I'm sorry to say. And this letter is to ask you to help me make the best of what we have. A little time in April—in August—in November."¹⁴ His ensuing voyages to New Zealand, Tahiti, and Australia kept him away six to nine months each year thereafter, and much of his time back in the United States was also spent away from home.

Most extraordinarily, Dolly accepted "the girls." With this, more than with all the other things that she did for Zane, she demonstrated that she possessed the "great genius to recognize one of his ilk" and that her genius was as peculiar as her husband's. Grey was extremely handsome and charming to women. He had many sexual adventures while growing up and during his years as a baseball player. At sixteen, he was arrested in a brothel, and several years later he was charged with a paternity suit. He had affairs with other women throughout his five-year courtship of Dolly and after their marriage. In

1913, he took two female cousins of Dolly on his first trip to the Rainbow Bridge, perhaps the most memorable trip of his life. With an outfitter he trusted and an Indian who pioneered the route, he and his companions traversed a labyrinth of canyons and treacherous terrain in northern Arizona to a remote natural arch first seen by whites only four years before. He perceived the awesome Rainbow Bridge as validation for the adventure in his novels, for the spiritual transcendence he associated with the West, and for his yearning for romance.

Thereafter, women regularly accompanied him on his trips, sometimes as many as four. The few scholars aware of these relationships have assumed that they were paternal and platonic,¹⁵ but they were, in fact, romantic and sexual. There exists an enormous, totally unknown cache of photographs taken by Grey of nude women and himself performing various sexual activities, including intercourse. Of the women discussed in this book, only Nola Luxford and Lola Gornall are not in this collection. These photographs are accompanied by ten small journals, written in Grey's secret code, that contain graphic descriptions of his sexual adventures.¹⁶

Dolly knew about these relationships and accepted an "open marriage" long before the term existed. She and Zane never divorced and each professed love for the other up to their deaths. Their marriage was not only unusual, but also crucial to his fragile health and his success as a writer. Dolly supervised the business side of Zane's career for years, and her decisions averted bankruptcy during the 1930s. She accepted his suspect claims that his trips and women alleviated his depressions and inspired him to write. Although these affairs provoked considerable anguish and sharp-tongued complaints, Dolly consistently accepted them, sometimes in ways that were remarkable. She remained close friends with some of his companions, and even allowed several to stay in her home. She intervened on Zane's behalf when the romances foundered, and maintained friendships with some of these women for many years after his death. She was faithful Penelope, steadfastly loyal to her restless, driven Odysseus.

Obviously, Dolly was an unusual woman, and most of the "other women" were too. Contrary to the easy assumption that they were foolish, weak, or exploited, Grey's paramours were usually vivacious, outgoing, broad-minded, and unconventional. In an era when marriage was the rule and alternatives were limited and unappealing, these women chose to be different. They had a relish for adventure that Dolly lacked, but admired. Their openness to sex came with an enthusiasm for primitive conditions and outdoor sports that only men were supposed to like. Grey's published accounts of his adventures seldom mention these women, in part to mask his involvement with them, but also to uphold the prevalent belief that outdoor sports were a male preserve.

If the unusualness of these women was greatest in their capitulation to Zane's needs and wants, none was as accepting as Dolly. Some balked at his uncompromising need for others. Some needed other partners too. Some objected to the time he spent away from them; others were offended by his return home. Some could not endure the inconsistency of his attention to them; others left because of the stifling heat, seasickness, and poor food. Dolly outlasted them all because she best understood Zane and effectively used her knowledge to help and hold him. She realized that human nature, common sense, and the world conspired against his grandiose dreams. As she once confessed to a mutual friend: "I must admit that I am looking at the book [a new Zane novel] through the bias of Zane's humor. Don't laugh! The man has always lived in a land of make-believe, and has clothed all his own affairs in the shining garments of romance, and it is as if these were rent and torn and smirched."¹⁷

Zane's depressions were such that, had he yielded to them, they could have prevented him from completing a single novel. That he endured so much anguish and completed so many books is remarkable. Set against his enormous investment in trips and women, his output is amazing. Grey's unquenchable need for escape, inspiration, and romance kept him searching for more Rainbow Bridges. Dolly accepted his women and travel as necessary and therapeutic, but she also realized that they could aggravate his depressions, and did so many times. Thus when her Ulysses returned with his garments "rent and torn and smirched," loyal Penelope put aside her misgivings and repaired the damage so that he could resume his unending quest.

Wayward Youth: 1872–90



“We all have in our hearts the kingdom of adventure. Somewhere in the depths of every soul is the inheritance of the primitive. I speak to that.”

—*My Own Life*

Pearl Zane Gray’s pioneer heritage was imprinted on his consciousness with the name his parents gave him at his birth on January 31, 1872. Anecdotal histories report his given name of Pearl as derived from the mourning attire of Queen Victoria that newspapers regularly described as “pearl gray.” Although Pearl may also have been named after a distant relative, his unusual, female name caused much taunting and embarrassment. Eventually he dropped it, though not until his twenties, and long after the spelling of his last name had been changed from Gray to Grey. His middle name of Zane, by which he would be known as a writer, did come from his family background. His mother was a Zane—and proud of her family lineage that extended back to Ebenezer Zane, a patriot colonel during the Revolutionary War, and his heroic sister Betty.

Although Grey believed that his ancestry was Danish, Robert Zane, a Quaker, carried the family name to the New World in 1673 from England, and he resided at various locations in New Jersey. His grandson William Zane chose to marry outside the religion and he was so ostracized that he relocated to Hardy County, West Virginia, not far from that state’s current border with Virginia. Ebenezer, William’s second son, was born on October 7, 1747, and three more sons followed—Silas, Jonathan, and Isaac. The Zane brothers became explorers and quickly adapted to the fluctuating alliances of local Indian tribes—mainly the Wyandots and Delawares. Around 1757–58, Jonathan and Isaac were kidnapped by Indians and lived with them for several years. Following a successful escape, Isaac returned and married Myeerah, the daughter of a Wyandot chief.¹

In 1768, Ebenezer married Elizabeth McColloch. She and her four brothers, who were also adept woodsmen, were reputed to be half-Indian and instilled in the young Zane a lifelong belief that he carried Indian blood.² A year later, following the birth of the first of the couple’s twelve children and

ratification of a treaty that opened southeastern Ohio to settlement, Ebenezer, Silas, and Jonathan explored and claimed two miles of property on each side of the Ohio River near Wheeling, West Virginia.³ In 1770, Ebenezer brought his family to Wheeling, and he participated in the construction of Fort Fincastle there in 1774. During the Revolutionary War, he led a successful defense of the fort renamed Fort Henry, against several British and Indian attacks. A final assault on September 12, 1781, exhausted the defenders' stock of gunpowder, and Betty Zane saved the day by running a gauntlet of gunfire and returning with a new supply.⁴ Grey's first three novels would memorialize the heroism of these distant relatives.⁵

Following the Revolutionary War, Ebenezer hunted and did little to develop his property. A New England merchant who visited him in 1789 observed that he made "money very fast but live[d] poor." Twenty years after his original claims, his holdings were still characterized as "frontier," and he had acquired a bad reputation for his foul temper.⁶ When his seventeen-year-old daughter Sarah received a marriage proposal from John McIntire, who was eighteen years older, Ebenezer forbade the marriage and huffed off for an extended hunting trip. During his absence, the two married anyway.

Despite these faults, Ebenezer stayed vigilant for commercial opportunity. He shrewdly perceived the 1795 Treaty of Greenville as a golden opportunity for "a good Wagon road." He petitioned Congress to establish a major throughway from Wheeling, West Virginia, to Maysville, Kentucky, and to compensate him for his military service with parcels of land suitable for ferry crossings on the Muskingum, Hocking, and Scioto rivers. Approval of these requests in 1796 produced two memorials to his name—Zane's Trace and the town of Zanesville on the Muskingum River. Ensuing modifications of the original route, along with extensive improvement over the next twenty years, created the National Road, the country's first highway. The National Road established Zanesville as a commercial center for outlying farms, and it remained so when Zane's parents moved there around the time of the Civil War.⁷

Alice Josephine Zane, Zane's mother, was born on September 5, 1835, to Ebenezer's son, Samuel Zane, who inherited property from his father in Ohio across the river from Wheeling.⁸ Little is known about Samuel's life beyond entries in local records that eleven of his twelve children were born there and that he served for several years on the local school board. Alice met her future husband, Lewis Gray, when she was visiting a sister who had married and relocated to Westmoreland County, where Grays had worked as farmers for several generations.

Liggett Gray, Zane's paternal grandfather, grew up in Westmoreland County, and resettled to a farm near Zanesville shortly before his marriage to Nancy Guttridge on April 3, 1816.⁹ In June of the following year, they had the first of their thirteen children. Lewis, their eighth child, was born July 1, 1831.¹⁰ He and his three older brothers worked Liggett's farm with the expectation that they too would be farmers. The two children who preceded Lewis and the one who followed were daughters, and a brief family history written years later by Ida Grey, Zane's sister, claimed that Lewis was "petted and spoiled" by his sisters.¹¹

Lewis undoubtedly met Alice Josephine through relatives in Westmoreland County. They married on February 5, 1856, and did not have their first child until five years later.¹² Their life together was a far cry from the eventfulness and glory of Ebenezer's. Ida's family history claims that her father owned "fine farm" at the time of his marriage, but sometime around the birth of their first son Ellsworth in

1861, Lewis made a momentous, life-altering decision that foreshadowed a similar one by Zane: Lewis hated farming so much that he quit to become a dentist instead. Prior to the Civil War, dentistry was more a trade than a profession, and so Lewis moved to Zanesville to apprentice himself to John Hobbs, who had been a gunsmith prior to taking up dentistry.¹³ When he completed his training, Lewis opened an office on Main Street. Though he changed his Main Street address several times, he remained in Zanesville for the next thirty years, and his next four children were born there. Ella (1867), who came a year after Ida (1866), was beautiful and a favorite of her parents, but she died suddenly on February 7, 1871. An entry in the record book of the town cemetery communicates the family's grief with its notation that she was "four years and twenty days old."¹⁴ Pearl Zane Gray was born a year later on January 31, 1872. Romer, nicknamed "R. C." and Zane's closest friend for many years, followed on April 8, 1875.



Earliest photograph of Zane Grey. Taken by a professional photographer in Delphos, Ohio, ca. 1893. (Courtesy of Loren Grey.)

Having been raised in rural Ohio, Lewis, like Ebenezer and his brothers, was a hunter, and he introduced Zane to the woods at an early age. Though he was marginally literate ("I never [k]new a card"), he wanted to write, as a surviving poem about his dead mother and an account of his woodland walks verify.¹⁵ Religion was also important to Lewis. He attempted to be an itinerant preacher prior to taking up dentistry, and he taught regularly at the Mission Sunday School while Zane was growing up. A surviving three-page autobiography attests to his fundamentalist beliefs. In this curious document, which may have been written for a church event, Lewis announces his trust in the Lord, the importance of moral training, and the triumph of his faith and hard work over his lack of education. He states that at the age of seven, he resolved to "be good, do good, and make something of his life," and that at twelve, he vowed never to swear or drink. He maintains that temperance, morality, and religion enabled him "to rise in the world." "I love cultured, talented society," he admits, "but have had a hard struggle to get there. What I am I made myself, a self made man."¹⁶ Despite Lewis's fervent efforts to appear humble, his testimony contains telltale hints of the resolve and sternness that Zane would later resent.

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