



Mud Puddlers

Shaun Bailey

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William Black may be the first racketeer to ever hit Las Vegas. He isn't content "puddling mud," or pouring Hoover Dam's concrete. He's more concerned with running "the Black Bank," an underground lottery complete with runners, middle men—the works. The only thing standing in his way is Simeon Eliason, the boomtown's dictatorial mayor. But does Black fall in line? No, instead he doubles down, and the reason is simple. If Black succeeds, he may never again have to perform hard labor. But if he fails, Eliason will have the proof he needs to send Black to the very back of the bread line, or worse. He could cement Black's legacy as a warning to every gangster intent on creating Sin City.

This is the first book to set the Hoover Dam's biggest myth as fiction, so what are you waiting for? Start your adventure now. Buy your very own copy today.

Mud Puddlers Details

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Author : Shaun Bailey

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From Reader Review Mud Puddlers for online ebook

John says

Working in Boulder City and having been to Hoover Dam 100's of times, and I have to say that I found "Mud Puddlers" to be an fun to read historical fiction. I will say that there were some parts that were a little hard to read but all in all it's one that I will recommend to others. A big thanks for Shaun Bailey on writing "Mud Puddlers", and I look forward to more of Shauns work. I won this Kindle Edition on GoodReads.com.

Robin Morgan says

I received a KINDLE copy of this book from the author through a giveaway he had on LibraryThing, and the following is my honest opinion.

Part of the Progressive Era in the US [1890's – 1920's] consisted of muckrakers, a moniker given to journalists, authors and others, to describe reform-minded who attacked recognized institutions and community leaders as being relatively shady. And in this book, in part, the author, Shaun Bailey, has directed our attention to the conditions the workers involved with the building of the Hoover Dam had to endure.

The term muckraker was used in the Progressive Era to characterize reform-minded American journalists who attacked established institutions and leaders as being shady.

The book deals with its protagonist, William Black, on two levels, the first deals with his activities in trying to unionize his fellow workers, in the early days of unions, to obtain better working conditions, better salary. The author dwells vividly into the daily routine of the hard-working laborers as they work with cement to build, and sometimes perishing, to finish the colossal project being built.

On the other level, we've got to not only remember the dam is being built not too far from Las Vegas, we've got to remember the racketing which existed there in its early days. William Black, while seemingly to be interested in the well-being of his co-workers; he's more interested in numbers game he's running complete with usual individuals involved in this illegal enterprise.

And as is the case with any such enterprise there's always someone standing in the way of allowing to exist unabated, and for Black this individual comes in the guise of Simeon Eliason, the Sin City's autocratic mayor. It's a do or die situation for Black. Winning will make will the "King of the Road," but losing will not put him in the worst possible situation, down to the bottom of the totem pole at work; losing would also prevent Las Vegas from becoming the gambling capital of the US.

For having given his readers, not one but two well-written fictionalized intertwined histories, I'm giving Mr. Bailey 5 STARS for his endeavor here.

Aleksandra Layland says

If you like well-researched novels based on some fascinating, if sometimes brutal, true American history, *Mud Puddlers* by Shaun Bailey is for you. On one level, it's the fictional story of William Black, a Hoover Dam worker who dabbles in union organizing and illegal gambling. One gets him arrested and brutally beaten; the other places him at deadly odds with others. On a broader level, Bailey has written a tribute to the sacrifices of those who completed this historic structure. His inclusion of the 1931 poem, "Us Old Boys on Boulder Dam," by Claude Rader conveys the spirit from that day.

I read *Mud Puddlers* not just as a reviewer, but as someone who lived for many years in Las Vegas and was privileged to tour parts of the dam structure not open to the general public. Bailey has done a magnificent job in providing a historical backdrop to his plot, which describes not just the feat of the dam construction itself, but also the place and the times in which it occurred, including such aspects as the union movement, the treatment of African and Native Americans, and the rise of criminal activities. His narrative is descriptive, flowing, and engaging. The characters are well developed and become real to us.

That said, some readers may struggle with keeping their interest in the story through large amounts of dialog in the vernacular. I did. But hold on! Bailey has some suspenseful and dramatic moments coming at you that you won't want to miss. Caution: there is murder and mayhem afoot. And, as far as the rumors of a body being buried in the dam go, I'll only note what one of the characters said: "Ain't paranoia if it's true." A masterfully written, informative, and entertaining read.

Reader Views says

Reviewed by Skyler Boudreau for Reader Views (1/18)

"*Mud Puddlers*" by Shaun Bailey is a historical fiction novel set in Boulder City during the construction of the Hoover Dam. It follows a cast of "mud puddlers;" men who stamped down the wet concrete of the dam during construction. The primary narrator is William Black, the mastermind of an illegal gambling ring that runs rampant among the workers.

The heavy research that went into writing this novel is made clear in Shaun Bailey's attention to detail. He builds a clear atmosphere in Boulder City and on the Hoover Dam, taking care to utilize all the senses. It's easy for the reader to imagine themselves there, trudging alongside his characters.

There are, however, times when Bailey pours too much of his research into the story. I felt like the reader was required to have prior knowledge on the intricate workings of Boulder City, Hoover Dam, and dam construction in general.

The dialogue between characters feels weighed down by a constant use of slang. While I'm certain these characters read authentically, it distracted me from the main point. I found myself having to pause in my reading to pick apart even short conversations.

I also found the pace of the plot to be inconsistent. After meandering for chapters at a time, it then picks up so quickly I would be missing key events. It's a shame, because when it did shine through, the plot was engaging and immensely enjoyable.

This novel was clearly targeted towards a small and highly specific niche of people. I did learn a lot about the history of the Hoover Dam. I was also inspired to do some research of my own. Anyone with an interest

in construction or a prerequisite in the history of the Hoover Dam is sure to enjoy “Mud Puddlers” by Shaun Bailey. I would recommend others read some of the sources listed in the back of the book before tackling it.

Beyond the history lesson, this novel is truly a study into the people who raised the Hoover Dam. That section of the work is fascinating to read, and definitely my favorite part overall.

Tony Parsons says

1931, The concrete job was huge.

Each of the Mud Puddlers: William “Billy” Black (negro), Erland, Henrik, Eddie, Hank, Ron Purdy, Smitty, Robert Tierney, Jim, & Digger (negro), had their own job to do, but must work as a team at the Boulder Dam (72 stories, Black Canyon) site. Oscar Kopf is 1 of the foremen’s.

The hydraulic jackhammer operators, the pipefitters, & concrete finishers were the same way.

Six Companies Employment Office paid them very well.

The routine seemed to be work, eat, few drinks at the bar & cards in the evening & right back at it the next day.

Green Hut Café. What did Helena “Lena” Purdy (Ron’s wife, waitress), reveal to Redd White (owner, cook) & Clarence (colored cook)?

What happened to Digger?

What did Billy discuss with John Godbey (farmer)?

What happened to Erland?

I did not receive any type of compensation for reading & reviewing this book. While I receive free books from publishers & authors, I am under no obligation to write a positive review, only an honest one. All thoughts & opinions are entirely my own.

A very awesome book cover, great font & writing style. A very well written historical fiction book. It was very easy for me to read/follow from start/finish & never a dull moment. There were no grammar/typo errors, nor any repetitive or out of line sequence sentences. Lots of exciting scenarios, with several twists/turns & a large set of unique characters to keep track of. This could also make another great American dream movie, or better yet a mini TV series. A very easy rating of 5 stars.

Thank you for the free Storycartel; Smashwords; Author; PDF book

Tony Parsons MSW (Washburn)

E says

“Mud Puddlers” is a story of desperate men and women doing all they can to survive the Great Depression. When the Hoover Dam project was announced, labors and their families descended on Las Vegas and the surrounding dessert for a chance of obtaining gainful employment. Those lucky enough were housed in a community especially built called Boulder City, a mere six miles to the work site. William “Billy” Black, the principle character, is a want-to-be union organizer, gambler, hustler, and a general pain in the ass, albeit lovable. The story unfolds around Billy letting the reader see through his eyes what really might have

happened during the construction of the Hoover Dam. Shaun Bailey has done an excellent job of depicting the hardships, challenges and defeats the men and their families experienced while working on the Hoover Dam project. His extensive research adds realism to his story and well has a great history lesson.

I won this e-book from Goodreads.com

Nancie Lafferty says

This book jumps right into a very well-researched tale of the hard-working, hard-driven men who stomped the concrete for the Hoover Dam and the lives they lived while doing it. The book really needs an introduction for readers who are not familiar with the social aspects of the era, the politics of Las Vegas, the desperation for work at that time, etc., and a bit less stress on the dialects and slang in order to make it more readable. I received this as a Giveaway. Thank you.

Jo says

The simplicity of the cover led me to think that this was geared toward children, maybe middle schoolers. The violence and profanity disabused me of that idea pretty fast. This story, about a union sympathizer working on the Hoover Dam, is tough and gritty. Light entertainment it is not. But does illustrate an important part of our history.

Maggies Daisy says

When the Hoover or Boulder Dam was being built in the thirties many individuals were still fighting for the few jobs that were being offered. On weekends many of the workers headed out to Las Vegas and William is no exception but William is constantly hawking his numbers game all to the consternation of his bosses at the Big Six company. Another of Williams downfalls is his big mouth always spouting off about work conditions and how he and his fellow workers should picket for better working conditions by involving a Union. With so many people wanting to see Willaim disappear never to be seen again I was surprised how he kept just one small step from that happening.

N.N. Light says

Mud Puddlers is a gritty historical fiction about the building of the Hoover Dam and the workers who built it. We meet William Black, a low-level racketeer whose passion is running his very own criminal gambling syndicate. He's got big dreams and the only thing standing in his way is the mayor. He's got two choices: he cuts in the mayor and it's a great success or Black'll be six feet under surrounded by the Hoover Dam's cement.

It's clear from the beginning that Bailey has done his research on the construction of the Hoover Dam and the urban myths surrounding it. I give him credit for this because I learned a lot. However, he makes the mistake of assuming his readers are already familiar with said history and dam construction. I got lost several times and had to reread sections.

The grittiness I mentioned earlier is basically men working hard, playing hard and living a tough life as they construct and oversee construction of the Hoover Dam. Strong language and circumstances are peppered throughout the book. Don't be fooled by the cover as this is an adult noir story and not young adult.

If you're looking for an adventurous story dealing with what life was like for the workers who built the Hoover Dam, pick up this book right now!

My Rating: 3.5 stars

This review first appeared at N. N. Light's Book Heaven: <https://www.nnlightsbookheaven.com/si...> Please join us especially if you like all things books!