"The first liar doesn't stand a chance," was a saying prevalent among my now departed ancestors. Heard through a child's ears, this summing up of an evening's yarn-spinning on the porch was never understood, for children have a way of believing verbatim all their elders say. It was a privilege to be permitted to stay up past one's bedtime to share in the general feeling of camaraderie. The intimacy of long ago summer evenings returned with the reading of many of the personal accounts in *Voices from the Wilderness*.

*Voices from the Wilderness* is a collection of the experiences early American pioneers had, or purported to have had, as they pushed ever westward. The tales are taken from their own writings and from accounts written by people to whom they told their stories. This is not to say the book is a conglomerate of fabrications; rather, a good story should never be sacrificed for the sake of veracity. Any true happening can be enhanced by the way in which it is told.

The first part of the book covers the settling of the Appalachians, and points west, between 1755 and 1825. A few of the men in this section who loom larger than life are Robert Rogers, George Croghan, Daniel Boone, George Rogers Clark, and Davy Crockett. George Croghan's diary account of a trip through the Ohio wilderness gives a very good description of the fauna he observed.

The second part of the book deals with the penetration beyond the Missouri River between 1808 and 1870. A few of the more famous men in this section are Kit Carson, James Bridger, and William F. Cody. The Cody excerpt is a particularly notable example of bold exaggeration about his days with the Pony Express and how he earned and retained the name "Buffalo Bill." The most fascinating and far-fetched tale of all has to be that of Grizzly Adams. The grizzly moniker is due to Adams's friendship with bears of the same name.

Mr. Froncek has collected these vignettes of the making of American folklore and presented each with an individual editorial comment to provide background material. He spent some time traveling over the same ground these men had trod, albeit under different circumstances.

*Richmond, Virginia*  
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