

Accounting Historians Notebook

Volume 34
Number 1 April 2011

Article 6

April 2011

Chance to publicize accounting history: Killer Colt: Murder, Disgrace, and the Making of an an American Legend by Harold Schechter: Book Review

Richard G.J. Vangermeersch

Follow this and additional works at: https://egrove.olemiss.edu/aah_notebook



Part of the [Accounting Commons](#), and the [Taxation Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Vangermeersch, Richard G.J. (2011) "Chance to publicize accounting history: Killer Colt: Murder, Disgrace, and the Making of an an American Legend by Harold Schechter: Book Review," *Accounting Historians Notebook*: Vol. 34 : No. 1 , Article 6.

Available at: https://egrove.olemiss.edu/aah_notebook/vol34/iss1/6

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Archival Digital Accounting Collection at eGrove. It has been accepted for inclusion in Accounting Historians Notebook by an authorized editor of eGrove. For more information, please contact egrove@olemiss.edu.

Book Review

A Chance to Publicize Accounting History: Killer Colt: Murder, Disgrace, and the Making of an American Legend by Harold Schechter

Book Review by
Richard Vangermeersch

Killer Colt by Harold Schechter, the dean of true-crime historians and professor of American Literature at Queens College, depicts the life and death of John C. Colt — in my view, the most significant American accounting textbook writer of the nineteenth century. Schechter wisely also compares the life of J.C. Colt with that of his brother, Samuel Colt of Colt-45 Fame.

I have had the thrill of sharing my voluminous files on John C. Colt with Harold and have participated with him in subsequent research. He has taken full use of the Colt Family Papers at the Archives and Special Collections at the University of Rhode Island Library. Harold is a true historian and his book is fully referenced and indexed.

Let me not spoil Harold's book for you by revealing too much about the story, plot, the murder, the trial, the newspaper coverage, the appeal, and, finally, the day of the execution. Need-

less to say, this may have been the most spectacular murder story of 19th century New York City.

My purposes of this brief piece is: (1) to get you to read this thriller; (2) to get you to interest your colleagues and students in it; and (3) to develop further accounting history scholarship about John C. Colt. Harold's book should be a best seller. WHAT AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ACCOUNTING HISTORIANS TO POPULARIZE OUR FIELD.

Please visit:

1844 Double Entry Book-keeping Textbook by John C. Colt:
http://digitalcommons.uri.edu/sc_pubs/19/

Description of John C. Colt papers at URI Special Collections
http://www.uri.edu/library/special_collections/Colt/John_C_Colt.html

Vangermeersch working paper on life and writings of John C. Colt:
http://digitalcommons.uri.edu/sc_pubs/18/

Vangermeersch working paper on four addresses by John C. Colt:
http://digitalcommons.uri.edu/sc_pubs/9/