

# Crusading reporter Nellie Bly one

## NELLIE BLY



BROOKE KROEGER

By Stephen Crocker

Nellie Bly is a name half lost in the mists of time and journalistic legend. This book, admirably researched and packed with drama, is the first full-scale biography of one of the great reporters and crusading spirits in America between Reconstruction and the Roaring '20s.

Under the watchful eye of Joseph Pulitzer, Bly pioneered the New Journalism of the 1880s. It was a style based on compassion and social consciousness, rather than the wit and satire Tom Wolfe and Hunter Thompson would use three generations later. The slender, green-eyed reporter offered her own gonzo reporting.

She was neither objective nor deep. She could not generalize or take the broad view of social or political events. Self-absorbed and self-important, she could, by sheer force of emotion, seize and hold attention like a rock star. Her voice came off the page and into millions of hearts with her stories of fraud, greed, suffering and injustice — written out of her own pain.

Bly grew up in Apollo, Pa., as Pink Cochran. Her adored, wealthy father, a

### NELLIE BLY

Daredevil, Reporter, Feminist

By Brooke Kroeger

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prominent judge, died intestate in 1870, when Pink was 6. Two years later, her mother married a violent drunk whose rages put steel into the future crusader.

Her brief apprenticeship of nine months in 1885 was served on the Pittsburgh Dispatch, where she covered factory conditions for working girls and turned out reams of women's page fare.

In the fall of 1887, after moving to New York, Bly feigned madness, was admitted to the notorious Women's Lunatic Asylum and wrote for Pulitzer's New York World the series of sensational exposes of inmate life that made her famous overnight.

Her temperament and approach to her craft were ideally suited to stunt reporting, which, before it became a craze, served Bly well.

More than just a reporter, she ran her husband's business and began a new one. She held 25 patents in her own name. She

## Anaya's 'Bless Me, Ultima' going strong 22 years later

### 'Chicano' acceptable term to literary 'godfather'

By Glenn Giffin

Denver Post Book Editor

Once upon a time — it was 1972, actually — there occurred a modestly noted event: the publication of Rudolfo Anaya's "Bless Me, Ultima."

It came from the small Quinta Sol Press in Berkeley, Calif.

The book is still selling 22 years later.

Indeed, the title has been newly issued by Warner Books in an illustrated edition.

In the meantime its author has been dubbed "the godfather of Chicano literature." Reached at his home in Albuquerque, Anaya chuckled over that. But is it a designation he's comfortable with?

"Well, a friend of mine explained it to me," he said. "You get to middle age and you have to accept those designations gracefully."

"I guess there's a sense to the reality — we did start the contemporary movement in the early '70s and I think the label sticks because I was one of the three or four writers first published (by Quinta Sol) and I kept writing and publishing."

This doesn't mean a sudden change of publishers, Anaya explained.

"My original publishers will be doing the trade (i.e., paperbound) edition. What Warner will be doing is the mass market and the hard-cover. I think it's one of those situations that will benefit everyone. I'm certainly happy about it, because Warn-

er's going to do a number of other things, including 'Bless Me, Ultima' in Spanish."

This hits a new facet of the PC game. According to some in the PC movement, the term "Chicano" is out and "Latino" is in. Anaya prefers Chicano. "I started writing during the early days of the Chicano movement. We helped form a contemporary Chicano literature, so that designation, as a Chicano writer, is the most comfortable," he said.

What made Anaya's book a classic was his portrayal of a persistent and fervent culture of Spanish-speaking villages in the Southwest. Ultima is a *curandera*, a kind of herbalist/midwife whose knowledge of plants — and of people — makes her a valued member of the community. She's also accused, at times, of being a witch, a *bruja*. His protagonist is 6-year-old Antonio Marez, just beginning school and, like Anaya himself, being forced to learn English as well.

Anaya reflected, "Part of the interesting phenomenon of Chicano literature (is) in the fact that it is often a bilingual approach to writing in order to convey the sense of the community and place. Sometimes that may be difficult to translate, but it can be done."

"But there is a second part to that and I think it is that the United States is finally awakening to the fact that there's a big Spanish-speaking neighbor to the south



Associated Press

**RUDOLFO ANAYA: U.S. is awakening to Spanish-speaking neighbor.**

and that somehow our destinies are tied together. One way to learn about that is not only through commerce and business, but also the arts."

Anaya will be in the Denver area tomorrow visiting Regis High School and, at 7:30 p.m., read and sign books at the Tattered Cover Book Store. On Tuesday he will visit North High School and at 4:30 p.m. sign at Cultural Legacy bookstore before going to Boulder Book Store for a reading at 7:30 p.m.

## Rock impresario was Holocaust refugee

By Carol Mendelsohn

Monday, Jan. 22, 1990, and the Rolling

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