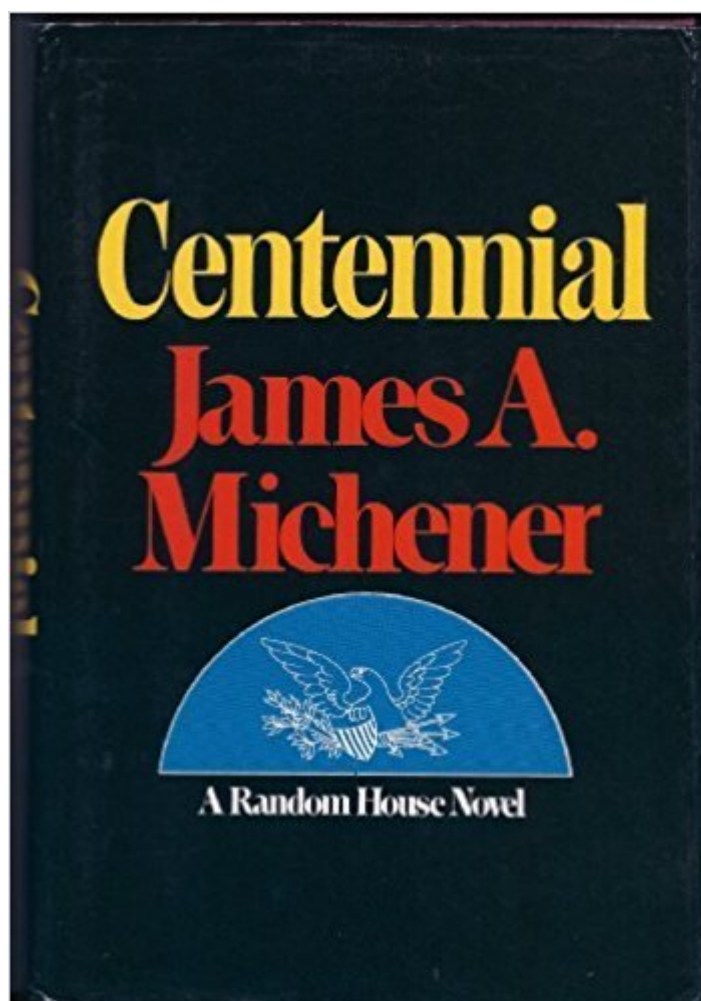


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Centennial 1st Edition By Michener, James A. Published By Random House Hardcover



Synopsis

James Michener's novel traces the history of the plains of northeast Colorado from prehistoric times until the early 1970's. Much of the book is based loosely on actual events in eastern Colorado and southeastern Wyoming which for novelistic reasons are brought together to a single locale, Centennial.

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Customer Reviews

James Michener's novel traces the history of the plains of northeast Colorado from prehistoric times until the early 1970's. Much of the book is based loosely on actual events in eastern Colorado and southeastern Wyoming which for novelistic reasons are brought together to a single locale, Centennial.

I saw this when it was originally aired on NBC, but unfortunately did not see the entire series as NBC did a pathetic job of making it clear when new episodes would air. When I found this on DVD I had to have it just so I could see every episode. Of course in the intervening 25-years, I'd forgotten nearly everything about the series, so it was like watching something completely new. The stories are well adapted from James Michener's fabulous novel of the same name, and the cast is truly stellar, with something like 100 speaking parts. I'd forgotten most of the actors, except Richard Chamberlain and David Janssen, so what a delight in re-discovering so many great actors (of film and TV) of that era. A fabulous ride down memory lane with one helluva great story for company.

Thank you Universal for, yes, FINALLY releasing the NBC 12-episode mini-series Centennial on DVD, which was based on James Michener's *Centennial: A Novel*. For those who did not catch the mini-series, you're in for a great story recounting the history of the people who lived in, pioneered and developed the fictional town of Centennial, Colorado, between the late 18th century and the 1970s. Or, as any native of Colorado will tell you the town is actually Greeley, Colorado, since it is near the South Platte River and Cache la Poudre River -- the locale the novel and series refers to. You should also be aware that some of the characters are a composite of real people who were part of the state's history. Over 20 hours long, this mini-series included many well-known actors of the day: Richard Chamberlain (Scottish trapper Alexander McKeag), Robert Conrad (French trapper Pasquinel), Raymond Burr (German merchant Herman Bockweiss), Barbara Carrera (Clay Basket), Gregory Harrison (Mennonite farmer Levi Zendt), Alex Karras (Volga Deutscher immigrant Hans Brumbaugh), Richard Crenna (Frank Skimmerhorn aka John Chivington, a Colonel at the time of the U.S. Civil War who gained infamy for the Sand Creek Massacre of peaceful Native Americans on the Colorado plains in 1864), Dennis Weaver (cow hand R.J. Poteet), Timothy Dalton, Andy Griffith, Mark Harmon, Brian Keith, Lynn Redgrave, Robert Vaughn, Anthony Zerbe, Stephanie Zimbalist, David Jansen, and numerous other well-known actors (even a young George Clooney in one episode as an extra in the Indian village scene -- it was his TV debut). The episodes as they appeared from October 1978 through February 1979 included: 1. Only the Rocks Live Forever 2. The Yellow Apron 3. The Wagon and the Elephant 4. For as Long as the Water Flows 5. The Massacre 6. The Longhorns 7. The Shepherds 8. The Storm 9. The Crime 10. The Winds of Fortune 11. The Winds of Death 12. The Scream of Eagles. I can't contain my excitement over this release. It's got to be ONE OF THE BEST TV MINI-SERIES to ever air on American television. I enjoyed it then, all those years ago when I live in Colorado. And surprisingly, it played well with audiences in my wife's country of Malaysia too. After all, it's a story that transcends time and culture because it touches on themes common to us all. Highly recommended.

I am Michener fan and I think this distinction is important. I wanted to love this book. I have loved all his other novels. I also live in Colorado (I also lived on the Eastern Shore so loved Chesapeake) so I wanted to love this book. However, this novel's micro-plots were the most disconnected and told through the lens of a magazine writer. I found this to be a slightly lazier point of view than his other novels. The characters were slightly less developed than those in Chesapeake, Alaska, Caribbean etc. With that criticism in mind, this is still a Michener novel; so consider it a must-read. This criticism should be taken as a slight knock on the gold standard.

Historical fiction cinema at its best. Great actors playing believable roles, lavish period accurate sets, attention holding drama. For the unfamiliar, the history of an evolving Colorado locale spanning native American occupation thru westward settlement by "white" Americans including trappers, homesteaders, miners, ranchers, entrepreneurs and the inevitable conflicts between them. Transcending the cowboys & indians "westerns" period portrayal, sympathetic attention is given to the deplorable treatment of the original indigenous inhabitants by land hungry occupiers supported by an expansionist government. Perhaps now considered dated cliché with the passage of 36 years, still an entertaining and educational experience for me.

Hard to say how much I enjoyed this DVD of the mini series presented on TV. It was good to see some truth come out regarding the settlement of the West and the kind of men and women who participated in it all all levels of history. I certainly felt the series was well cast and well acted. It was a joy to see actors that are no longer with us appear in this story. The last DVD of the series (#6) was basically a repeat in cut scenes of the entire set with a heavy environmental and ethnic emphasis to the story. This series, although a very long one, is definitely worth spending the money for and the many hours it takes to watch it. Only a few things bothered me throughout the entire program and they had nothing to do with this amazing story, but were distracting enough to make me laugh out loud sometimes. First, I have seen high school makeup departments do a better job of applying stage makeup, greying of the hair and latex aging effects. Good grief, the makeup and aging of the characters was downright laughable. Also, when a man dies he really should stop obviously breathing!

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