

## Clean Curve of Hill Against Sky - Review



On guitar - center, Don Koke, Director, Flint Hills Folk Music Guild and Iron Horse Concert Hall, El Dorado

### **RESPONSE TO CLEAN CURVE OF HILL AGAINST SKY**

**By Don Koke** - July 6, 2010

I love the album. A paean to the prairie, a vivid description of what it's like to live and work out in the Kansas Flint Hills in all the beauty of its landscape, flora and fauna. You cut a broad swath, working from the hills themselves in the title song and featuring the tallgrass itself in "Big Bluestem: King of the Prairie," to the catalogs of your favorite birds in "Sail the Summer Sky," and the list of critters in "A Night Out on the Prairie." The latter is about as clever as they come.

Likewise, your accounting of the human side of the prairie is equally as detailed. The work is long and hard (whew!). I really like "Working Flint Hills Cowboy" and "Getting a Count." So much for the romance of the range. "The Kaw Trail" doesn't pull any punches either, a hard fact about the history of the land and its people. Your introduction to the song notes the Kaw's final exile was 1873, the same year as the "Chase County Courthouse Ball." Ironic, but then life in the Flint Hills is hard.

The music is good, both vocally and instrumentally. Your leads and the harmonies behind you are fresh and spirited, the melodies original and appropriate. It's an enjoyable album I want to listen to more than once. You and the boys have really put together a fine piece of work, and that goes for the album jacket and booklet with its generous artwork and commentary. It's all a first rate and worthy tribute to the Flint Hills.

A verse in the title song brought to mind the Hudson River School, those 19th century artists who captured the beauty and life in the American wilderness as they watched civilization encroach upon it.

There's more people & buildings & towers all the time  
Cause there's always a reason to put nature aside  
Just a few places left now to pleasure the eyes with  
That clean curve of hill against sky