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Book Reviews

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BOOK REVIEWS

In reviewing Dorman H. Winfrey's *Julian Sidney Devereux and His Monte Verdi Plantation*, the reviewer questioned a statement by the author that an election was held in 1850 to locate the state capital of Texas. Winfrey was correct for the State Constitution of 1845 called for such an election, and it was held.

Cow People. By J. Frank Dobie. Boston (Little, Brown, and Company). 1964. x+305. Illustrations, photographs, and index. \$6.00.

Cow People is the last book published by the late J. Frank Dobie, and, as with his other works, it is a fine effort. One cannot review it without a feeling of sadness at our loss. It is, perhaps, fitting, even poetic, that Dobie's last work should be a work on the character and spirit of the people of the cattle industry. They were his people, and he knew them well. Dobie treats them sympathetically, but not uncritically. He sees their virtues, of which there are many; but he also sees their vices, of which there are also many.

Across the pages of this book stroll a wide variety of characters—cowboys, cow men, trail bosses, ranch women—great and small. They were chosen, not only for their importance and flavor, but because each is, in part, representative of an age or type. Yet, each is an individual. Dobie attempts to deal with the traits of cow people and, in part, to contrast their traits to the traits ascribed to them by the popular and traditional romantic legends.

Dobie approaches the topics through many stories and anecdotes, some through a single character in a chapter, some through a chapter centered about a subject or characteristic illustrated by many stories and many characters. Dobie talks of horses, of silence, of water, of chuckwagons, and how all of these were a part of life in cattle country and how they were regarded by cow people. Dobie does much to clear waters muddied by thousands of western novels and stories and by hundreds of Hollywood productions. "Cow people," wrote Dobie in his introduction, "true to life and occupation as in *Log of a Cowboy* by Andy Adams, in *Pasó por Aquí* by Eugene Manlove Rhodes, and in autobiographies up to the standard of Agnes Morley Cleveland's *No Life for a Lady* and Ike Blassingame's *Dakota Cowboy* never passes the requirements of film and TV. I am not counting on *Cow People* coming up to those requirements."

The legend would have us believe that the cowboy was independent, silent, peaceful but funloving, and a man of his word. Dobie seems to agree, but there are many exceptions, some of which Dobie points out. There were many stubborn, irascible, loudmouthed, and just plain mean people in cattle country. His point is that cow people are humans whose characters are shaped, in part, by their environment. If he was independent and stubborn it was because he could afford to be. He was often cruel

and ignorant, but was penalized for neither. Yet in this same harsh environment there were also people who loved art, poetry, music and literature.

Men are shaped by their environment, but progress comes only when men shape their environment. This is Dobie's premise; and it is the basis of his chief criticism of cow people and Southwesterners in general. Many Southwesterners are not only unprogressive, but resist progress at every opportunity. They often see all change—cultural, political, social—as an evil, even a conspiracy, which they blindly and irrationally resist. Culture cannot be bought. Progress must come as a product of man's mind. This is part of the message of Dobie's book, in fact, of his life.

Cow People is written with all the skill, humor, understanding, and insight of the master storyteller. Though it has many parts, anecdotes and characters, it emerges as a whole. It is, though the author would not have liked the pseudo-scientific term, a character analysis of cow people, and in a larger sense a character analysis of the people of this part of the country.

Dobie captures the flavor of the cow people and of their time. That was his intention. That was his accomplishment. Reading the work is a delightful and provoking experience. It is a master storyteller at his best.

CARL L. DAVIS

Stephen F. Austin State College

Of Money . . . And Men. An Illustrated Collection of Representative Early Texas Bank Checks from the old files of Garrett & Key, private bankers, 1877-1884, and A History of the First National Bank, Marshall, Texas. By Hobart Key, Jr. and Max S. Lale. Marshall, Texas (The Port Caddo Press), 1965.

This attractive and well-designed volume presents a brief history of private and early corporate banking in the East Texas town of Marshall. Included are examples of checks and drafts illustrating early banking practices and forms. Of the almost one hundred specimens shown, some have a surprisingly modern look and are not markedly different from those in use in recent years. Others are more exotic in appearance, carrying pictures of beautiful women, harvest scenes, noble savages, locomotives, and steamboats. In a special pocket the authors have also included an original check from the 1880's as a collector's item. These materials are from the bank files of Garrett and Key, private bankers, and bring back nostalgic memories of the early and more personal days of banking in America.

The text, written by a grandson of one of the founders of Garrett & Key, deals largely with the highlights in the development of this firm of private bankers and its successor, The First National Bank of Marshall. From the early days of the state, when a section of the original constitution prohibited banks, most citizens looked upon bankers with distrust and suspicion. The success of any banking enterprise depended in large measure upon the honesty and integrity of the individual bankers. Evidently the Key family and its associates had these virtues in ample quantities for the

family progressed from 1877 until 1949 with the firm of Garrett & Key developing into the strong and thriving First National Bank of Marshall. During this period of more than seventy years the Keys' bank never defaulted on its obligations nor was forced to suspend operations.

The account would have been more valuable historically if the authors had written from a broader knowledge of American political and banking history. For example, the National Bank Act was passed in 1863-1864, not 1874. The comment that "prior to the bank holiday, 1933, there had been more than 30,000 banks in the United States" (p. 38) is misleading. In the weeks before the inauguration of Franklin Roosevelt there were probably not more than half that number of banks in operation. The reader of this account would assume that the bank holiday caused the banking crisis, not the reverse. Despite these criticisms, this volume is a welcome and interesting addition to the local history of East Texas. The inclusion of the many types of checks and drafts will make it a useful source to students of early banking practices in Texas for years to come.

ROBERT S. MAXWELL

Stephen F. Austin State College

Faint the Trumpet Sounds: The Life and Trial of Major Reno. By John Upton Terrell and Colonel George Walton. New York (David McKay Company, Inc.), 1966. 310 pp. Bibliography and index. \$6.95.

This work adds yet another title to the long list of books dealing with the Battle of the Little Big Horn, generally considered the West's most famous battle. In particular, it is a defense of Major Marcus A. Reno, the unfortunate officer who became the scapegoat for the entire affair. Authors Terrell and Walton, one a professional writer and the other a professional soldier, clearly state their intention to absolve Reno of any blame for the massacre that took the lives of 264 persons. In doing so they rather tediously reconstruct the life of Major Reno as well as the careers of Colonel Custer and other participants in the fateful battle and ensuing events.

Born in Illinois in 1834, Reno later attended West Point. Excessive demerits kept him from graduating for three successive years, but he finally received his commission with the class of 1857. He served with distinction as a cavalry officer during the Civil War, part of the time in command of a Pennsylvania unit arranged by his wife's political connections. Following the war, Reno held a variety of assignments ranging from ordnance work to service in the Freedmen's Bureau. He joined the 7th Cavalry in August 1869.

Lieutenant Colonel George A. Custer, the "boy general," commanded the 7th Cavalry. This unit had been divided over Custer's actions in the Battle of the Washita in 1868 when nearly two hundred Indians were killed. Some officers held Custer responsible for failing to assist Major Joel H. Elliott and eighteen troopers who were killed within two miles of Custer's forces. Reno thus joined a faction-torn regiment. His wife's death in 1874 further drove him to seek Indian duty in hopes of forgetting his problems.

A similar controversy would arise over Reno's role in the Battle of the Little Big Horn in present Montana. Custer's forces engaged a large gathering of discontented Indians under Sitting Bull during the campaign of 1876. Apparently in violation of his orders, Custer attacked the Indians, first sending Reno into the camp and then attacking them himself from another position. Reno's small force of 112 men barely escaped to high ground, where they managed to repulse the Indians. Meanwhile, the main body of the enemy was decimating Custer's command some four miles away. Overwhelming odds precluded an army victory. The ensuing publicity, much of it inspired by Custer's vindictive widow, portrayed Reno as the scapegoat. A court of inquiry in 1879 finally cleared Reno, who was nevertheless cashiered out of the army the next year for conduct unbecoming an officer. He died a pauper in 1889.

The authors make a good case for Reno. Drawing on both official records and secondary works, they reveal him as an unfortunate victim of circumstances. At the same time, they leave little doubt concerning their scorn for Custer, who is depicted as egotistical, self-seeking, and incompetent. They charge that he sought military fame to propel himself into the presidency. While the literary quality of this book is pleasing, the careful reader will be disappointed in the lack of documentation, and Custer scholars will doubtless find errors of fact.

B. H. JOHNSON
Stephen F. Austin State College

The Johnson Eclipse: A President's Vice Presidency. By Leonard Baker. The Macmillan Company, New York, 1966. 280 pp. \$5.95.

The Johnson Eclipse is the story of Vice-President Lyndon B. Johnson. The author began his account of this phase of President Johnson's life on January 20, 1961, and ended it at twelve-thirty P.M. on November 22, 1963. During the interval between these two eventful dates, Leonard Baker skillfully traced the decline of the man who had once considered himself to be as powerful or possibly more powerful than President Eisenhower. The inauguration was not pictured as a day of victory but as a day of recognized defeat by Johnson. As stated by Baker, Johnson may have told his friends that "power is where power goes" but he knew better than to believe his own words.

Baker's most outstanding quality as an author is his ability to emotionally involve the reader in the book. One can almost feel the sorrow and the anger that Lyndon Johnson underwent as he found himself without an effective voice in the Kennedy administration and as he was ignored and ridiculed by the "Irish Mafia." In describing these problems of the Vice-President, the author correctly mentioned that Johnson was partially responsible for his not having a more significant voice in Washington and that President Kennedy never sanctioned any rudeness or mistreatment of his Vice-President. Also the respect Lyndon Johnson had for John F. Kennedy and his appreciation of the President's public expressions concerning the alleged importance of the Vice-President are evident.

While *The Johnson Eclipse* is a work with many assets, the book also

has very serious liabilities. The paramount fault with this study is a lack of documentation. Instead of identifying individuals who make alleged remarks, Baker frequently omits the person's name. Baker's nineteen footnotes are of little value. Indeed, several of them deal with data as unmeaningful as when President Johnson's youngest daughter changed the spelling of her name from Lucy to Luci (p. 7). Rather than worry about the name of the present Mrs. Nugent, the author might have stated the source of his conclusion that Governor John Connally had encouraged President Kennedy to make the fateful Texas trip.

Like the documentation of the book, Baker's brief note on his sources is inadequate. The author listed his personal experience as a reporter in Washington, published materials, and interviews as his sources. Unfortunately the book does not contain a bibliography. Since Baker stated that the study was primarily based on interviews, this reviewer believes the author had an obligation to print both the names of those interviewed and the dates of the interviews.

In general, *The Johnson Eclipse* is an interesting book to read but the lack of documentation has greatly weakened the study.

WILLIAM J. BROPHY

Stephen F. Austin State College

PORT CADDO—A VANISHED VILLAGE And Vignettes of Harrison County. V. H. Hackney. (Marshall, Texas: The Marshall National Bank, 1966).

Mr. Hackney has produced in this booklet a collection of concise facts concerning the early history of the Caddo Indians and Harrison County up to 1850. The years 1850 to 1930 are passed off with a simple mentioning of the main developments. The booklet would appeal more to local historians of Harrison County and surrounding areas, rather than to a general audience.

Mr. Hackney has accumulated a valuable collection of primary and secondary sources which are presented in his bibliography. Although specific citations may not be expected in a booklet of this type, the validity of outstanding information could have been established with the use of footnotes.

For a short history of Harrison County and the Caddo Indians, *PORT CADDO—A Vanished Village and Vignettes of Harrison County* is a valuable collection of essential facts.

GLYNDA FAYE WAGGONER

Stephen F. Austin State College

Intellectual Movements in Modern European History. Edited by Franklin L. Baumer. New York (The Macmillan Co.), 1965. 149 pp. \$1.50.

This collection of ten essays by distinguished western writers and professors of philosophy, literature and psychology along with an introduction by the editor, professor of history at Yale University, comprises

another in the "Main Themes in European History" series appearing under the general editorship of Professor Bruce Mazlish. These essays concern intellectual movements that constituted "revolutions" in modern European history. Their authors contend that an intellectual revolution occurs when the underlying "unwritten philosophy" of a culture begins to change significantly—that is, "when for a variety of historical reasons thinking men in significant numbers begin to ask new questions and to be concerned about new problems."

It is also a leading contention of this work that intellectual historians have been reluctant to investigate closely these important revolutions in man's philosophy. Thus, as one of the contributors concludes, "our knowledge of the past suffers twice over because of it: first, because history that devotes itself too exclusively to what we call material facts such as a military victory, the fall of a ministry or the opening-up of a railroad-track, seriously falsifies our perspective of what took place." This means that "our knowledge of the past suffers additionally because historians, by turning aside from the history of ideas and sentiments, . . . abandon these research subjects to men less trained than themselves in exact methods of study of history."

The ten contributors, none of whom is a professional historian, challenge European historians to apply themselves to the study of some nine significant movements in modern European history that have "revolutionized" western ways of thinking and thus helped to shape the modern mind. Paul O. Kristeller recommends the study of "humanism" and its effect on the Renaissance in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth centuries; Ernst Troeltsch, the effect of Protestantism on the Sixteenth Century; Leonardo Olschki and Basil Willey, science and the scientific method on the Seventeenth Century; Henri Peyre, the Enlightenment on the Eighteenth Century; Arthur O. Lovejoy, romanticism on the Eighteenth Century as well as Darwinism on the Nineteenth Century; H. B. Acton suggests Marxism while Thomas Mann suggests Freudian psychology on the Nineteenth Century; and finally Rollo May recommends the effect of existentialism on the Twentieth Century.

No single theme runs through these essays, but each is a provocative study of its theme. The Peyre essay on "The Influence of Eighteenth Century Ideas on the French Revolution" and the Lovejoy articles on "The Meaning of Romanticism" and "Aspects of Darwin's Influence on Modern Thought" are especially noteworthy, but each of the others is well worth reading.

The student of contemporary Europe, its history, its culture, its political philosophy, and its future, will find this collection a valuable source of ideas and understandings. It would be even more valuable if the editor and author had seen fit to expand its contents to include an index.

J. E. ERICSON

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