

10-1976

Book Reviews

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/ethj>



Part of the [United States History Commons](#)

Tell us how this article helped you.

Recommended Citation

(1976) "Book Reviews," *East Texas Historical Journal*: Vol. 14: Iss. 2, Article 13.

Available at: <http://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/ethj/vol14/iss2/13>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by SFA ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in East Texas Historical Journal by an authorized administrator of SFA ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact cdsscholarworks@sfasu.edu.

BOOK REVIEWS

With Santa Anna in Texas: A Personal Narrative of the Revolution. By José Enrique de la Peña. Trans. and ed. by Carmen Perry (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1975. xxix + 202 pp. Illustrations, notes, and index. \$10.00.)

Historians as well as participants in the Texas Revolution have written extensively on the dramatic events of that brief period, often disagreeing both as to facts and interpretation. While Sam Houston presented the American-Texas position through Henderson Yoakum, *History of Texas*, Juan Nepomuceno Almonte, Vicente Filisola, José Urrea, Juan José Andrade, José Juan Sánchez Navarro, and Antonio López de Santa Anna recorded the Mexican viewpoint quite differently. To confuse the issues further, Carlos E. Castañeda in *The Mexican Side of The Texas Revolution* and Walter Lord in *A Time to Stand* raised points which contradicted or at least questioned the overwhelming volume of material which most Texas historians had accepted for over a century. Now, through the efforts of the late John Peace of San Antonio and former teacher and government translator Carmen Perry, the Texas A & M Press has published a fascinating eye-witness account by José Enrique de la Peña, which should help clarify or buttress certain issues.

In recording events "as they took place" (p. xxv) from January to June, 1836, de la Peña urges Mexicans to judge the facts for themselves, and then "let your terrible verdict fall upon those who may deserve it." (p. 190) Immediately, therefore, his diary assumes the aura of authenticity and objectivity. And in the unfolding pages it continues to reinforce such feelings. For instance, he praises William B. Travis and James W. Fannin, who acted bravely, though perhaps unwisely in military situations; yet he denounces those Americans who coveted Mexican soil as pirates. In turn, he criticizes his superiors, especially Santa Anna, Filisola, Ramirez y Sesma, and José María Tornel, while openly admiring General Urrea. But equally impressive are accounts which describe his revulsion to the senseless slaying of Texans at Goliad, to Santa Anna's useless sacrifice of Mexican soldiers to appease his vanity, and to the torture and execution of seven defenders at the Alamo who were taken prisoner (specifically David Crockett).

Consequently this diary, *With Santa Anna in Texas: A Personal Narrative of The Revolution*, is of utmost importance to those interested in Texas history. Besides obtaining insights into the thinking and character of Mexican leaders, the reader will better understand the wretched conditions from which ordinary soldiers — and camp followers — suffered. He will also be enriched by the excellent introduction of Llerena Friend. And possibly he will appreciate even more the extraordinary talent and ability of A & M Press director Frank Wardlaw.

Ben Procter
Texas Christian University

Sabers on the Rio Grande. By Jerry Thompson. Illustrations by Bruce Marshall. Austin (Presidal Press), 1974. p. 235. Bibliography, illustrations, index and notes.

Jerry Thompson, a student of Rio Grande settlements, has produced a good history of life and events at Laredo from its founding in 1755 through the American Civil War. He has researched and written vivid accounts about this chief port of entry on the United States-Mexican border, and the people who played important roles in its development.

Bruce Marshall's illustrations enhance chapter division pages, but frequent typographical errors spoil what is a fine and well-edited volume. This does not mean, however, Thompson's work goes for naught. His challenge that the Spanish explorer Alvarez de Pineda spent forty days at the mouth of the Soto la Marina and not the Rio Grande certainly deserves serious consideration despite age-old testimony by noted historians.

An instructor at Laredo Junior College, Thompson's work is the first of two volumes. If the second is as well written as the first, we can expect to learn more about this important gateway on the Rio Grande. Hopefully the galley proofs will be read more carefully so as to eliminate unnecessary typographical mistakes.

Maury Darst
Galveston College

Robert Simpson Neighbors and the Texas Frontier, 1836 - 1859. By Kenneth F. Neighbours. Waco (Texian Press), 1975. P. 349, illustrations, bibliography, index.

From the time of his coming to Texas in 1836 until his untimely death in 1859, Robert Simpson Neighbors served the Republic and later the State of Texas in various capacities, including service as a legislator, a military officer, and an Indian agent. This book portrays the life of this famous Texan, dealing principally with his service to the Texas Indians and their problems with the encroaching white civilization.

Neighbors came to Texas in 1836 to enlist in the army and serve in the War for Independence. There is some speculation that he might have served in the Battle of San Jacinto, but it is more probable that he arrived too late for this. Neighbors, however, did serve in the new Texas army and rose to the rank of quarter-master. In 1842, when he was stationed in San Antonio, Neighbors was captured by General Adrian Woll of the Mexican army and was marched into Mexico and imprisoned at the fortress of San Carlos de Perote. After two years of confinement, Neighbors and his comrades returned to Texas. In 1844, Neighbors received a commission from Anson Jones as agent to the Lipan and Tonkawa Indians and from this time until death he worked for the peaceful coexistence of the Indian and the white man. The California gold rush brought the need for a link with the West, and in 1849, Neighbors led an expedition from San Antonio to blaze a trail to El Paso. His connections with the Indians proved helpful as he successfully charted this new route. He returned to El Paso in 1850 as a commissioner to organize the western counties of Texas. He was successful in his organization at El Paso, but ran into a stern opposition from local political tyrants at Santa Fe. This Rio Grande boundary dispute was later settled by the Compromise of 1850. Neighbors briefly represented the Bexar and Medina District in the state legislature for two years, and then returned to the frontier as a supervising agent for Texas in the United States Indian service. Neighbors set up a reservation for the Texas Indians along the upper Brazos. He introduced the Indians to white customs of farming and education and he protected the Indians from white aggression. As hostilities on the frontier increased, Neighbors came under increased criticism and he was accused of protecting reservation Indians who had committed depredations against white settlements. An official commission, called to investigate these charges, found Neighbors innocent. The situation on the frontier became intolerable and Neighbors was ordered to move his reservation further north. On his return trip from the exodus to the North, Neighbors was murdered at the settlement of Belknap.

Kenneth Neighbours' presentation defends the generally peaceful attitude of the Texas Indians during these times. He attributes this quiet on the frontier to the work of Neighbors and his subordinates. The author also discusses the relationships of the local key figures along with a detailed account of the early landmarks and geographical features of the area.

This volume is recommended for those interested in local Texas frontier history. The text contains numerous quotations and is generously illustrated. There is also an extensive bibliography and index.

Jordan Holt
Dallas, Texas

Texas Heartland: A Hill Country Year. By John Graves with Photographs by Jim Bones, Jr. College Station (Texas Agricultural and Mechanical University Press), 1975. P. 102. Text and photographs. \$21.50.

By using J. Frank Dobie's ranch "Paisano" as a microcosm of the Texas Hill Country, the author is able to present a panoramic image of the settlement of that part of the state. To his way of thinking the Hill Country was settled by pioneers who drew their strength from the land. In time the land was used up, its tall grasses overgrazed and its soil eroded. Even as the land nurtured these men's lives, it also took their youth. When it was over nothing remained except the destroyed land and the people who either died or left. Their sons were not interested in remaining in that country in order to wrest the last sustenance from a ruined earth. With the absence of people, the Hill Country, by some majestic process and in a halting, painful manner, began to reinvigorate and replenish itself.

As one of its in-residence fellows, Jim Bones, Jr., spent a year photographing the general area around "Paisano". With a richness that only high-quality, color photography could make possible, he presented the Texas Hill Country in all of its rugged beauty. It was a beauty of the hard over the soft, the stark over the ordinary, and the wild over the tame.

In order to catch the essence of the country, Bones was prepared to take whatever chances were necessary. In order to photograph a particular water scene, he found it useful to stand in a pool of water beside a water moccasin in order to get the desired photo. On another occasion he was taking pictures in a thunderstorm and was almost killed by a lightning bolt. As a result of his devotion to his photography, the reader is treated to some exceptionally good photos.

For all of its good aspects, this is a "living room" book. The quality of its paper and the richness of its photography precludes it from being a part of the family's regular reading. It would be the sort of book that one would give to a guest to read. This is a "show book"—a table volume to be admired.

Thomas J. Summers
Nacogdoches

Some Still Do: Essays on Texas Customs. Edited by Francis E. Abernethy. Austin (The Encino Press), 1975. \$10.00.

Some Still Do was edited by Francis Edward Abernethy. Furthermore, "Ab" contributed an introductory note, two of the articles, and the photographs for another article. For anyone who is familiar with his unique blend of scholarship and down-to-earth realism, that should be enough said. However, this publication of the Texas Folklore Society deserves to have even more said about it than that.

In a foreword, Wilson Hudson describes the blend of amateurism and professionalism which characterizes the Texas Folklore Society, which paves the way for a collection of articles written by both amateurs and professionals. But, as Hudson explains, the difference is not necessarily one of the degree of skill in telling a tale; the articles are about how things use to be, and in isolated pockets of resistance, are still being done.

These are tales of clay eating and bee coursing along with tales about syrup making and buttermilk to whet the appetite.

The work ethic finds expression in stories about cowboys and cedarcutters, chimney dobbin' and wax making. And for pure entertainment, there is muhle playing at Winedale and fiddling festivals at Crockett, tradin' tales in Canton and Whittlin' in Tenaha. A Texas heritage based on faith is strong, and like most things Texan, practical. Articles on faith healing and water witching give accounts of two of these practical faith activities, still practiced hereabouts.

Some Still Do, like a Faberge Easter Egg, contains stories within stories, within a story.

R. G. Dean
Nacogdoches, Texas

Correspondence of James K. Polk: Volume III, 1835-1836. Edited by Herbert Weaver and Kermit L. Hall. Nashville (Vanderbilt University Press), 1975. P. 872. Map, illustrations, notes, and index. \$25.00.

The presidential campaign of 1836, in addition to being the first national contest between Jackson's Democratic Party and the emerging Whigs, was a milestone in the career of James K. Polk. Taking an active role in the Democrat-Whig conflict, Polk labored unsuccessfully to prevent a serious split in his party throughout 1835 and then he campaigned strenuously on behalf of Martin Van Buren against Tennessean Hugh L. White, one of the Whigs' regional presidential candidates. His efforts failed, and White won a substantial victory in Tennessee, but during the campaign Polk solidified his position as the leading Jacksonian in the state and an influential figure in the national party. He was elected without opposition to a sixth term as Representative from the Ninth Congressional District of Tennessee in August, 1835, and achieved further prominence by being elected Speaker of the House of Representatives in December of that year. His triumph over incumbent Speaker John Bell was especially satisfying because it reversed a defeat Polk had suffered in his bid for that post in 1834.

These political events provide the background for Volume III of the *Correspondence of James K. Polk*. The Polk correspondence in 1835 and 1836 illustrates both Polk's deep concern for preserving a unified, national Democratic Party in the face of the Whig challenge and Jackson's encouragement of his efforts. Polk's own letters indicate that he, like his correspondents in Tennessee, actually preferred White to Van Buren but chose to remain loyal to Jackson and the party's candidate. Communications with Jackson, Senator Felix Grundy, Representative Cave Johnson, and Polk's relatives and constituents provide a clear picture of the Democratic viewpoint and tactics in the factional struggle.

Polk's correspondence, especially after his election to the Speakership, also reflects the concern of Tennesseans over the slavery issue. Uneasiness over the activities of the abolitionists is an important theme in the letters of Polk's constituents.

The book itself retains the same format and, more importantly, quality, of the first two volumes. Kermit L. Hall has replaced Paul H. Bergeron as associate editor of the Polk Project and has collaborated with editor Herbert Weaver to produce another well-edited addition to the series. The Project continues under the joint sponsorship of Vanderbilt University, the Tennessee Historical Commission, the Polk Memorial Association, and the National Historical Publications Commission.

The 690 letters included in this volume are arranged chronologically, with each identified by author, address to which it was sent, and present location. Where necessary, footnotes further identify authors, addressees, and persons and events mentioned in the letters.

The volume of Polk's correspondence grew with his political stature, a development which necessitated greater editorial selectivity in the preparation of Volume III than was necessary in the first two. Nearly one thousand letters were examined, of which 506 are published in full and 184 are summarized. This latter group is composed mainly of routine requests for information which Polk made of cabinet officers and requests for political favors from his constituents; their inclusion in summary form seems adequate for most purposes.

As in the first two volumes, Polk's own letters comprise a relatively small percentage

of the compilation—in this case, 118 of the 690 letters. Although the reader, in examining replies to Polk's letters, often wishes the originals could have been included, their unavailability is certainly no reflection on the accomplishment of the editors and does not seriously detract from the usefulness of the available correspondence. Taken as a whole, Volume III of the *Correspondence of James K. Polk* successfully presents an important period in Polk's political career.

Edward C. Nagy
Seaford, New York

Axes, Owen, and Men: A Pictorial History of the Southern Pine Lumber Company. By Laurence C. Walker. Diboll, Texas (Angelina Free Press). N.P.G.

This pleasant volume is a history of the early days of The Southern Pine Lumber Company, complete with pictures and text. Most of the illustrations originally appeared in *The American Lumberman* in 1908 as part of a special issues on Thomas Lewis Latané Temple and his lumbering enterprises. Dr. Laurence C. Walker, Dean of the School of Forestry at Stephen F. Austin State University, has selected the most interesting photographs and has written an informative narrative to accompany them. T.L.L. Temple was a strong man with advanced ideas about selective cutting and sustained yields in logging practice. He also had strong views about the behavior of his employees and the nature of a company town. These characteristics are apparent throughout the account. To indicate the continuing nature of the story, Dean Walker has chosen as the last photograph, a picture of a jet plane of the Temple Industries fleet taking off from the Angelina Airport for "foreign" parts. This well-designed and attractively printed study should be a valued possession for all the people who have worked for the Temple Industries and a welcome addition to the collection of everyone interested in the early days of lumbering in East Texas and the Southwest.

Robert S. Maxwell
Stephen F. Austin State University

Louisiana: A Pictorial History. By Leonard V. Huber. New York (Charles Scribner's Sons) 1975. Illustrations, maps. \$20.

Leonard V. Huber, resident and successful businessman from New Orleans, has made the study of his home state a life long avocation. He is widely published and his books and articles cover many aspects of the state's history. His most publicized work is, *New Orleans: A Pictorial History*.

In preparing *Louisiana: A Pictorial History*, Huber has drawn extensively from his personal collection of over 10,000 pictures and illustrations. Although most historians write the text and then pick the pictures to illustrate it, Huber has done the reverse. He chose pictures that covered every aspect of Louisiana life, then provided a narrative to make them meaningful.

These 800 pictures illustrate the state's 300 year existence, from its earliest beginnings to the present time. They show artifacts of the Indians who lived in the lower Mississippi Valley thousands of years ago and trace the history from French and Spanish rule through the American Revolution, the Civil War, Reconstruction, the Jazz Age in New Orleans, to the present. Illustrations of old advertisements, political cartoons, theatrical handbills and Mardi Gras decorations show the richness and diversity of life in Louisiana. Virtually every aspect of life, from epidemics to life in prison camps, to the survival of French culture to industrialism, is represented in Huber's book. Many of the illustrations have never been reproduced before.

The Introduction is a twenty-one page, double column, historical sketch covering

Louisiana's history from April 9, 1682, when Rene-Robert Cavalier, sieur de La Salle, planted a wooden cross at the mouth of the River Colbert and took possession of a territory so vast that it would take more than a century for men to realize its full extent, to the 1970s. The Introduction is filled with factual data plus humorous anecdotes. It is an entertaining as it is informative.

Leonard Huber's book is excellent and highly recommended for anyone interested in one of America's most beautiful and unique states.

Catherine Peterson
Shreveport, Louisiana

France and North America: The Revolutionary Experience. Mathé Allain and Glenn R. Conrads, eds. Lafayette, Louisiana. (The USL Press), 1974. P. 260. Foreword, Illustrations, Index. \$10.00.

As all proceedings and symposia, this volume varies considerably as to smoothness of style, depth of insight, and general adequacy in preparation. Allain and Conrad are to be congratulated on an excellent job of editing on such a diverse miscellany as this book represents.

The book contains sixteen essays ranging from the keynote address which essentially deals with what is history and revolution, to the student uprising in Paris, 1968. Obviously, in a short review, each cannot be analyzed, summarized or even listed with author's credits. The essays here are directed, perhaps by chance, perhaps by design, to show the inter-relationship between cultural elements that in one fashion or another almost inexorably force a people to undertake action directed toward changing their political, social, economic, and financial situation—to mention only a few things, revolutions, if they are real revolutions, do change. That purpose is achieved in this collection, and it should serve well those of us who recognize history as an ongoing, unfinished production.

Ert J. Gum
University of Nebraska at Omaha

Conquest and Commerce, Spain and England in the Americas. By James Lang. Nashville, Tennessee (Academic Press), 1975. Map, tables, selective bibliography, index. P. 261. \$12.50.

Published as part of the "Studies in Social Discontinuity" series, this book by James Lang considers the relationship between Spain, England, and their colonies in the Americas. The primary purpose of this study is to focus on the distinctive institutions which these two societies produced in America. Lang states that "the states of Western Europe brought elements of a common cultural heritage to the Americas. But from that common tradition they constructed radically different societies."

The book is divided into two sections; the first is a discussion of Spain and its institutions, and the latter deals with England. When discussing these two countries and their colonies, one must consider that there is a difference in time. The Spanish began their colonization prior to the Reformation and the English not until over a century later.

One other important difference, Lang points out, is that the respective monarchies were of different strengths at the time of colonization. Spain brought a tradition of strong government. The Hapsburg monarchy needed only to transfer an efficient bureaucratic machinery to a different location. The primary goal of these kings was a unified empire.

The English, however, were not controlled by a strong monarchy. When colonialization began it was under the shadow of a struggle between Parliament and the King. The colonies, also, began as an enterprise on the part of joint-stock companies, and were more obviously a commercial venture. The title of the book is derived from the fact

that the Spanish colonial scheme was one of conquest while the British was one of commerce, or as Lang states "the Spanish state dispatched bishops and judges to America, the English sent customs officials."

While seeing considerable value in this book as a viewpoint of the basic policies of these two countries toward their American colonies, my reaction was negative. The book loses continuity at times, thereby making it difficult to read, and it relies on too much secondary evidence. It is, nevertheless, an important addition to the "Studies Discontinuity" series.

Terry Teaters

"Give Me Yesterday": *American History In Piano Music, 1890-1920*. By Lester Levy. Norman (University of Oklahoma Press). 1975. P. 420. Bibliography and index. \$17.50.

Give Me Yesterday is the third volume in a series of works on popular music in America's history. The first, *Grace Notes in American History*, focused on songs of the nineteenth century, and the second, *Flashes of Merriment*, dealt with the comic songs of the same period. This newest edition reviews American music between 1890 and 1920.

The cultural history of any society is always reflected in its songs, and *Give Me Yesterday* puts its hand on the heartbeat of American life from the "Gay Nineties" to the "Roaring Twenties." Trolley cars, suffragettes, infamous crimes, funny papers, and marching off to war are just a few of the subjects remembered in songs. Mary Pickford, William Howard Taft, Rube Goldberg, and the gentleman burglar, Jimmy Valentine, have also embossed their names in the history of American lyrics. The music between 1890 and 1920 not only reflects the history of those years, such as the sinking of the *Titanic* or the building of the Panama Canal, but the attitudes of the people as well. This can be seen in such songs as "When America Is Captured By The Japs," "Standard Oil," and "We Take Our Hats Off To You, Mr. Wilson." Lester Levy has compiled and categorized the sheet music on these and other topics but he has also added the history behind each of the songs. If not for his detailed approach to the significance of each song the importance of the book may have been lost.

The reproductions of the covers of the original sheet music, in both black and white and color, give the flavor needed to totally sweep the reader back in time. The artwork involved in these illustrations is indicative of the times and therefore contributes an importance which might otherwise go unnoticed. Add to this the readable style of the author and *Give Me Yesterday* becomes a book for not only nostalgics and music lovers but historians as well.

George Schaade
Angleton, Texas

History of the Congress of the United States. By Alvin M. Josephy, Jr. New York (McGraw-Hill), 1975. P. 407. Bibliography, Index. \$27.50.

Books about Senators and Congressmen, and about various aspects of their two shops are rife, but *The American Heritage History of the Congress of the United States* by Alvin M. Josephy, Jr. is the first to put the start-to-finish story of these raucous, intransigent, and vital Congressional bodies into one historical narrative.

In fast-moving prose, Josephy lifts the Capitol's lid and takes the reader down the main corridor of America's history, along the thundering hall of politics. As he points out, politics is at the core of a Senate and a House that have always been tumultuous, engaging, clownish, and — again and again — patriotically, democratically, inspiring.

"Congress is the People," growled Thaddeus Stevens, and here are 94 sessions of wonderous people with the bark on, full of brilliance and rascality, nobility and

pettifoggery, magnanimity and meanness. The "people" of Congress are a major theme of the book.

A second theme is the evolution of Congress as a basic institution of government; and a third is the constantly shifting relationship of the Congress and the Presidency.

This first illustrated history ever published on the subject presents more than 300 historical pictures — many in color — of the most motley, posturing, dynamic, important men and women the U.S. has ever produced. History cartoons, little-known paintings, action sketches, and a wealth of portraits offer an unprecedented visual history of the institution that tries to be invisible when it is in session — no photos or sketches are allowed. Here also is drama on the Capitol steps, from KKK rallies to airplane takeoffs; the Capitol belowstairs; and even such member-of-the-club amenities as haircuts, bean soup and junkets.

Victor de Keyserling

A Centennial History of Texas A&M University, 1876-1976. By Henry C. Dethloff. Foreward by Joseph Milton Nance. Two volumes. College Station (Texas A&M University Press), 1975. Appendices, Figures, Tables, Bibliography, Index. P. 712. \$25.00.

A Pictorial History of Texas A&M University, 1876-1976. By Henry C. Dethloff. College Station (Texas A&M University Press), 1975. Illustrations, P. 232. \$15.00.

Every now and then a book (or, in this case, books) come along and stimulates an editorial urge to violate the normal processes of reviewing and do the thing yourself. Henry Dethloff's history of the Aggies, complete with pictures, is a case in point. Partly this is for Henry's sake. There are so many Longhorns, Mustangs, Bears, Horned Frogs and others who could not resist that other urge to enliven these pages with rich, southwestern Aggie humor (?), and so many former Aggies whose objectively might be equally questioned, I finally figured that only a former Rice Owl could do his work justice. Partly it is for the A&M Press' sake, because Frank Wardlaw has done a magnificent job of getting this new publishing house off to a good start. But mostly it is for A&M's sake, because it and these books which represent it deserved a good review.

Long ago a former professor spoke a truism to me: "In the background of every Texas girl is an Aggie." He might as well have broadened his claim to every Texan, because they are there. Most of us who grin at the silly jokes about them secretly admire and envy their spirit, their devotion to the place, even their boots. They hail from the senior public institution of higher education in the state, they are celebrating their centennial, and they are to be commended. So is Henry Dethloff. In this two volume narrative tracing A&M's first one hundred years he has done a magnificent job of compiling the information and getting it out, despite the necessity of statistics, in a literate presentation. Dethloff enjoyed unlimited access to university records, but he also interviewed widely and evidently got into all pertinent records in Austin as well. The result is a fine contribution to the history of higher education in Texas which can be read with profit, if not the emotion of insiders, by all students of Texas history and education.

The pictorial volume requires a special note. From the Schiwitz drawing on the cover to the Bradford illustration of Aggie uniforms on the last page, it is a delight. Most of the illustrations are black and white because they cover the full century, but there are color photos as well, and a text that ties it all together admirably. Make what you will of it, I especially like the caption on page 226 which shows that new phenomenon on the Brazos — a female student — "The faces have changed, and the fashions . . . and the way they talk . . . but Aggies are still Aggies."

Archie P. McDonald
Stephen F. Austin State University