

10-1980

Book Notes

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

(1980) "Book Notes," *East Texas Historical Journal*: Vol. 18: Iss. 2, Article 10.

Available at: <http://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/ethj/vol18/iss2/10>

This Book Note 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 NOTES

The *Journal* continues to receive many books for review, and a good number of them are appropriate for this column because they relate to the development of Texas historiography. A good example is Volume VI of Malcolm D. McLean's continuing publication of the *Papers Concerning Robertson's Colony in Texas* (The University of Texas at Arlington, UTA Box 929, Arlington, Texas 76019, 1979, \$25.00). This volume covers the period from March 6 through December 5, 1831, and primarily deals with Indians and their interaction with Robertson's colonists. Indeed, it seems as if most of the Indian tribes in Texas were represented in this effort to expel the alien Mexican and Anglo penetration from the Native American's homeland. But "home" was what the European descendant groups called the area also, and they were not disposed to go. So this volume presents papers which tell the story of their conflict, a contest ultimately won by the whites. Those who have followed the saga of the Robertson efforts will want to continue, of course; Native American scholars and scholars of Native Americans can use this volume independently. Once again the characters are real people, not romanticized heroes.

Two general works which will interest historians are *Notable Names in American History, A Tabulated Register* (Gale Research Company, Book Tower, Detroit, Michigan 48226, 1973, \$45), and *Bibliographic Guide to North American History, 1978* (G.K. Hall & Co., 70 Lincoln Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02111, 1979, \$75.00). *Names . . .* is a revision of earlier works by the same publisher which sought to produce a compendium of important public people in a single volume. This one contains 50,000 separate entries, and is designed as a handbook for students, research workers, editors and writers, public officials, teachers, librarians, and others seeking data concerning our nation's prominent citizens. Categories include cabinet officers, members of the judicial and legislative branches, the Confederacy, military and foreign service, federal and local governmental agencies, higher education, religious leaders and others. The *Bibliographic Guide* lists all publications cataloged during 1978 pertaining to North America by the New York Public Library and the Library of Congress. Major topics include Indians, exploration, Colonial and Revolutionary history, the Civil War, recent history, local and state history, and some material on Canada and British America for the earlier period. It will prove especially helpful for local histories.

One of the major publishing events of the decade, and perhaps of the century, is a formidable tome known as the *Encyclope-*

dia of Southern History (LSU Press, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70803, 1979, \$75.00). This five pound, three-and-a-half-inch-thick volume covers virtually every aspect of the "south," herein defined as the District of Columbia and all states which embraced slavery in 1860, in 2,900 separate signed articles by over 1,100 scholars. This *Encyclopedia* deserves its name; the user will find it difficult to stump. It includes articles, each with a brief bibliographic reference, for nearly everything and everybody who contributed to the development of the American southland. The editors labored for a decade to determine categories, assign and edit individual entries, and pastor the book through publication. They deserve unqualified credit and appreciation. This single volume contains the interpretative and factual conclusions of the present generation's research into the people, ideas, and movements of the South. The entries are concise but sufficient; they are cross referenced and indexed for easy use. Maps and tables also enhance the attractiveness of the volume. I would like to say that the essays on "The Mexican War" and "Jedediah Hotchkiss" are the best, but I had better not. However, I did find them the most interesting for a reason I shall not mention. This volume will stand for a generation as *the* ready reference for its topic.

Ernest Wallace's presidential address to the Texas State Historical Association has grown! Those who heard it a couple of years ago when he delivered it to the annual meeting in Austin will be happy that it has, and those who were not so privileged will be doubly profited by the Texas A&M Press's publication of *The Howling of the Coyotes, Reconstruction Efforts to Divide Texas* (Texas A&M University Press, Drawer C, College Station, Texas 77843, 1980, \$15.75). Texans remember the *Texas Monthly* article in the mid-1970s which discussed the efforts (we were never sure how serious) to divide Texas into five separate states. Few knew how close the state came in 1868 to separating into at least two halves. Wallace writes of exactly that, and here chronicles just how close the state came to suffering this fate. As usual, Professor Wallace, a distinguished East Texan whose career is more associated with west Texas and Texas Tech, does a superb job. He draws heavily on contemporary accounts to trace the history of the Radical movement to divide the state and control its parts, particularly its western half, free from the taints of its Old South tradition. It has plenty of the expected references to give it status with the guild, and Wallace has also delivered his message with good style. Among the most interesting features of the book is the presentation of the complete text of the proposed constitution of the state of West Texas. The Coyotes may howl

again in the future, but they need to read Ernest Wallace's book to appreciate their past.

Six years ago Stanley Marcus celebrated his career at Neiman-Marcus as the nation's leading retailer with a masterful book, *Minding the Store* (Little, Brown, & Company, 34 Beacon Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02106, 1974, \$10.00). The book was well received and its author was feted at autograph parties and the like, and not just in Dallas. Marcus has followed that success with what is also a fine piece of writing and a glimpse into the thought processes of a master manager-salesman. *Quest for the Best* (The Viking Press, 625 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10022, 1979, \$12.95) is not another story of Neimans, and yet it is about Marcus. It is a personal yarn and a confession of one man's search for quality. His list of "the best" contains some surprises, some expected entries, and some things us plain folk can not second guess him on owing to unfamiliarity. His "less than the best" approaches more common ground, but some still would quibble. Both of these books are interesting reading, and they constitute a kind of personal history of a man of taste.

Ever wondered if John Spradley of Nacogdoches County was much of a gun fighter? You can bet that Bill O'Neal can tell you. Bill's *Encyclopedia of Western Gunfighters* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1005 Asp Avenue, Norman, Oklahoma 73069, 1979, \$24.95) has a brief biography of Spradley, a nineteenth century sheriff of Nacogdoches County, and accounts of several of his best known gunfights. It does the same for 254 other gunfighters, famous as well as forgotten, and accounts of over 600 deadly encounters. Each entry gives name and aliases, dates of birth and death, occupations, and sketches of verifiable gunfights. Illustrations, tables, and a good index increase its interest and usefulness. O'Neal's writing transcends the encyclopedic style, and this should prove a fun book for students of the west.

We have received a bunch of reprints, and some of the best are discussed here. *King Crockett: Nature and Civility on the American Frontier* (The University Press of Virginia, Box 3608, University Station, Charlottesville, Virginia 22903, 1979, \$3.50), features "Davy" and David, the myth and the mythmaker. It was originally printed in the *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, and it examines the irony of Crockett's frontier life against the exaggeration of the tales about him. It should prove interesting for those who enjoyed Dan Kilgore's *How Did Davy Die?*

One of my favorites from a decade ago was A.C. Greene's *A Personal Country* (Texas A&M University Press, Drawer C, College Station, Texas 77843, 1979, \$12.95), now reprinted with a

foreword by Larry L. King, who shared the same country in his growing time. EastTexans often glow with appreciation for their section, and wonder why anyone would want to live "out there." They may still feel that way after seeing west Texas through the memory of Greene, but they will have looked on the other side of the trees and be better for it. Greene's book is not a history, simply, but it is more: it is an insight.

"*Dad Joiner*," *Wildcatter*, by J. Evetts Haley (Red River Books, Box 3006, Shreveport, Louisiana 71103), is reprinted from two previous ventures in pamphlet form to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the discovery of the East Texas Oil Field. And Frederick S. White Books (Box 3698, Bryan, Texas 77801) has reprinted limited editions of *San Antonio Scenery* (1888-1890), *Fall of the Alamo* by R.M. Potter (1860), and *The Industrial Advantages of Houston, Texas* (1894). And speaking of the Alamo, the University of Nebraska Press has reissued Walter Lord's *A Time to Stand* in paperback. This is the best modern writing on its subject.