

3-1982

Book Notes

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Recommended Citation

(1982) "Book Notes," *East Texas Historical Journal*: Vol. 20: Iss. 1, Article 13.

Available at: <http://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/ethj/vol20/iss1/13>

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BOOK NOTES

If I Tell You A Hen Dips Snuff . . . By Bob Bowman. (Lufkin Printing Company, P.O. Box 589, Lufkin, TX 75901). p. 121. Index.

If I tell you a hen dips snuff, Bob Bowman can tell you where to look for the evidence—under her wing. This is supposed to mean that if I tell you something, you can believe it. When I first heard this expression, it involved a gnat of specific function and a freight train, but, as Bowman admits, many idioms have varying wordings and meanings and meanings in different places. I also once heard John Wayne say the same thing as Rooster Cogburn regarding a chicken and a freight train, so that must be Hollywood style. What this book contains is East Texas versions of everything, a la Bowman. They are produced by the region's mixed geographic and ethnic background, a result of the cowboy and Old South collision in the piney woods. This produced "a distinctive way of expressing things . . . a linguistic potpourri of farm-boy homilies, ranch-hand proverbs, and log-cutter sayings." Bowman admits that some of his collected sayings may not mean much to the Dallas or Houston housewife or businessman, but I'll bet they will. Everyone can understand the meaning of most of his sayings because the successful idiom is descriptive and clear. Of course, some are so specialized as to require translation.

This is a good successor for Bowman's *BEST OF EAST TEXAS*, and follows a simple format. He presents a folksy idiom in boldface, then translates its meaning for those who need it. Mostly he is as clear as crystal, and for one who knows that the show's not over 'till the fat lady sings, I must repeat his Epidomy of Idiomy from page 74, where he defines one idiom with another; "DON'T SHOOT YOUR HORSE 'CAUSE YOU DON'T LIKE THE WAY THE RACE WAS RUN" means "Don't cut off your nose to spite your face." That Bowman is a real going-Jessie.

Malcolm D. McLean's pace on his *Robertson Colony Papers* project is quickening. Volume VII, on materials covering the period from December 6, 1831 through October, 1833, is now available (The University of Texas at Arlington, UTA Box 929, Arlington, TX 76019. Price: \$25.00). This volume covers Stephen F. Austin's application for the Nashville Colony lands previously awarded to Sterling Robertson as agent for the company. Austin and his partner, Samuel M. Williams, obtained a charter for the land, but, according to Robertson, the Nashville charter had not yet lapsed. McLean continues to make a case for the Robertson position on this century and a half old controversy in this volume. The book includes materials on John Austin, Thomas Jefferson Chambers, Robertson's suit for the colony, the appeal to Mier y Teran, Sam Houston's arrival in Texas, and other subjects. This

is a continuing saga, so anyone who has followed the Robertson version of the story through the first six volumes will surely want to continue the string.

The Texas State Historical Association has produced a useful book for those interested in a topical approach to Texas history. *Texas Vistas: Selections from the Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, edited by Ralph A. Wooster and Robert A. Calvert, is reminiscent of our own *Eastern Texas History* in that it is a reproduction of articles which previously appeared in the *Quarterly* in book form. It is available from the Association (Sid Richardson Hall 2.306, University Station, Austin, TX 78712. \$6.50 paper or \$11.95 cloth). *Texas Vistas* contains articles by Herbert E. Bolton, Robert S. Weddle, Eugene C. Barker, R. Henderson Shuffler, Dorman Winfrey, Llerena B. Briend, Wayne Gard, John Edward Weems, Robert V. Haynes, Wooster and Calvert, and others. Each article is well written, of course, and the editors have exercised good judgment in their selections to illustrate Texas history.

The Danish Texans, a 1980 publication in the *Texians and the Texans Series*, of the Texan Institute of Cultures, marks a departure from their previous publications in the series. This item is a book-length presentation of the contribution of the Danish people in Texas. It is the product of considerable field research and interviews with prominent Danish peoples in Texas, including Lloyd Bentsen, Sr. Many of the volume's stories are personal accounts, and this is the first publication to deal with the contribution of this ethnic group to Texas. The book is well illustrated and printed in an eye-casing browntone. It is available from the Institute of Texan Cultures, P. O. Box 1226, University of Texas at San Antonio, San Antonio, TX 78294.

The Newton County Historical Commission has sponsored the publication of *A Journal of the Coincidences and Acts of Thomas S. McFarland*, an early pioneer of East Texas. McFarland's *Journal* is available from Nortex Press (Drawer AG, Burnet, TX 78611) and is published on the 100th anniversary of his death. McFarland served in the war for Texas independence, represented Jasper and Jefferson counties in the Congress of the Republic and in such local offices as Chief Justice of San Augustine, Postmaster of Belgrade, and as notary public. His *Journal* is useful in showing the development of East Texas, particularly in the river front communities.

For those interested in the story of oil in East Texas, Al Eason's *Boom Town: Kilgore, Texas* (Kilgore Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 1582, Kilgore, TX 75662) will prove fun reading. The book is well illustrated with photos of Kilgore's oil boom days. It is divided into sections entitled "Tales of a Boom Town," including stories on

"Fighting Females" and "Boom Town Justice;" "The History of Kilgore"; and a section on "Pioneer Families."

F. M. McCarty's *New Texas Guidebook* (Eakin Press, Box 178, Burnet, TX 78611, \$7.95) is an interesting and useful volume, especially if you keep it handy in your car when travelling. It provides a guide to the Travel Trails of Texas established in the administration of Governor John B. Connally, plus items of interest along the Interstate highways. With photos and narrative, McCarty covers Texas from the plains to the forests to the mountains and the Rio Grande Valley. It could be handy if you are showing someone around during the Sesquicentennial and need a quick reference to an item of historical or public interest.

The Saga of Texas Cookery, An Historical Guide of More Than One Hundred Twenty Recipes Illustrating The French Influence on Texas Cuisine, The Spanish Influence, and the Mexican, Including Also Contributions From the European Settlers In the Republic of Texas and From The Resourceful Southerners During the Confederacy, As Well As From Texans of Every Sort Right Down to the Present, by Sara Morgan, wins this issue's prize for the longest and most descriptive title. It is available from the Texian Press (Box 1684, Waco, TX 76703, \$10.95). I think I will try the recipe for jambalaya when I get a chance. The volume is full of interesting recipes of the food which sustained our ancestors, and just reading them makes me think they ate pretty well.

In the continuing revision of the traditional version of the battle at the Alamo, the Jenkins Publishing Company (Box 2085, Austin, TX 78768, \$9.50) has published *A Mexican Sergeant's Recollections of the Alamo and San Jacinto*, by Francisco Becerra as told to John S. Ford in 1875, with an introduction by Dan Kilgore. Kilgore's part is an excellent review of nineteenth century literature on the Alamo and its role in modern interpretations of the Alamo story. Because of slimness of the volume and its price, this is a collector item, but it also offers an additional chapter in the never ending obsession of Texans with the Alamo.

The Texas Navy, Governor William P. Clements, Commander in Chief, has produced a beautiful portfolio of paintings and drawings of naval vessels by Bruce Marshall, Emil Bunjes, Frank Karppi and Don Davis. Text, compendium, and other illustrations complete the project, and tell the story of the Texas Navy in its nineteenth century glory. A most interesting and useful portion is a list of "Memorable Dates in Navy Annals" which provides an excellent chronology of naval activities. It is available from the Texas Navy, headquartered at Box 125, Galveston, TX 75500.

And the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, James Frederick Gover Chapter, Hemphill, has published a useful volume, *History and Tax Records of the Sabine District and Sabine County*. This brief book contains county historical maps, a history of the district and the county, the 1809 census of the Nacogdoches District for Sabine County citizens, the 1837 Sabine County Tax Records, and the 1846 Tax records.

Lloyd Lyman continues to produce exquisite books at the Texas A&M Press (Texas A&M University Press, Drawer C, College Station, TX 77843). At hand are two new publications, *The Texas Hill Country Interpretations by Thirteen Artists* (\$29.95) and *Texas West of the Pecos* (\$29.95). The first contains paintings by Texas' best, including Kelly Fearing, Michael Frary, John Guerin, Woody Gwyn, William Hoey, William Lester, Ivan McDougal, Clay McGaughy, Ancel E. Nunn, Emily Guthrie Smith, E. Gordon West, Ralph White, and the incomparable E. M. "Buck" Schiwetz. This is volume five in the Joe and Betty Moore Texas Art Series, and A. C. Greene, an artist with words, painted a sensitive introduction to the rest of the art in the book. John Leeper provided an interpretative Foreward. You just have to see the paintings to remember how beautiful Texas can be. And Jim Bones' photographs of *Texas West of the Pecos* are almost too beautiful to believe it is Texas. With a touch equal to that of Ancel Adams, he has captured every possible hue of nature. This is superior to his previous work on the Hill Country.

The Amon Carter Museum (Box 2365, Fort Worth, TX 76101) has published their first Anne Burnett Tandy Lecture in American Civilization, entitled *The Southern Landscape Tradition in Texas*, by John Brincherhoff Jackson. Jackson discusses The Virginia Heritage: Fencing, Farming and Cattle Raising; The Nineteenth-Century Rural Landscape: The Courthouse, the small College, the Mineral Spring, and the Country store; and The Sunbelt City: The Modern City, the Strip and the Civic Center.

Governors are getting a lot more press these days. Not long ago the Texas State Archives published a volume on selected inaugural addresses of Texas governors that we kind of liked, and now Arkansas and Louisiana are into the act. Sidney J. Remero's "My Fellow Citizens": *The Inaugural Addresses of Louisiana's Governors* (Center for Louisiana Studies, USL, Box 4-0831, Lafayette, LA 70504) begins with territorial governor W. C. C. Claiborne and concludes with current Governor David Treen. Huey Long and Edward Edwards are there too, of course. The volume is well illustrated and edited. *The Governors of Arkansas: Essays in Political Biography*, edited by Timothy P. Donovan and Willard B. Gatewood (University of Missouri Press, 200 Lewis Hall, Columbia, MO 65211) is composed of sketches of the

state's first thirty-nine governors, beginning with James Sevier Conway in 1836, and ending with David H. Pryor in 1979. Former Governor Bill Clinton, who served from 1979-81, wrote a Foreward. Each essay is written by a different biographer and a line drawing of each governor is included.

William W. Savage's, *The Cowboy Hero: His Image in American History and Culture* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1005 Asp Ave., Norman, OK 73069) begins with an introductory discussion of the elusive historical cowboy. Savage reviews the cowboy hero in his various guises—as a cowboy doing the work of cowboys, as musician, as performer on stage and in wild West shows, and as a man's man. He analyzes the use of the cowboy image in contemporary advertising. And his book has a picture of Willie Nelson. Savage's work is a thought provoking look at our own time, and should prove stimulating to those interested in popular culture, as is the writer.

Finally, Ernest Speck's entry in the Boise State University Western Writers Series, No. 49, *Benjamin Capps*, examines the life and career of this Archer County author. The series will eventually contain monographs on nearly all writers on the west, although the editors are trying not to duplicate work done in the University of Minnesota American Writers Series or the Steck-Vaughn Southwest Writers Series. Capps has written eight novels and three non-fiction books, mostly dealing with Indians and Indian-White relations. The approach is more analytical of Capps' writing than biographical, but Speck's wit is not surprised by the format. He does good work.