BOOK NOTES

The following items were of interest to the editor, who now passes along these musings:

A echo from the past – that is how I characterize Ronnie Pugh’s *Ernest Tubb: The Texas Troubadour* (Duke University Press, Box 90660, Durham, North Carolina, 27708-0660). Among my earliest memories is of my father, who died in 1944 of the same malady that felled Jimmie Rodgers, picking a guitar and trying to sound like his favorite singer. Unbeknownst to us, Ernest Tubb was doing the same earlier, and with a lot of luck and business sense, turned his worship into a half-century career. Ronnie completed a master’s thesis on Tubb at SFA in the 1970s and I was privileged to sit on the examining committee. From there he moved to Nashville to work in the archives of the Country Music Hall of Fame, met Tubb, and after two decades published this biography of his favorite country singer. The author lets the chips fall where they may regarding failed marriages and alcoholism or something close to it, and other humanities, but all the while it is the music, the songs that express the feelings of Tubb and the folk for whom he sang, that are featured. Reading it, I can hear “Walking The Floor Over You” again as I did fifty years ago, tuned in like many Southerners to WSM and the Grand Ole Opry.

*Jake: Beginnings On My On, The Washington Years, The Campaign Trail, A Lifetime Of Friends*, by Jake Pickle and Peggy Pickle, Foreword by Ann Richards (University of Texas Press: Austin, 1997, Box 7819, 78713-7819). The Tenth Congressional District had only three representatives from the 1930s until 1995 – Lyndon B. Johnson, Homer Thornberry, and Jake Pickle. Pickle served from 1963 until 1995, capping a career that began as student body president at The University, continued in various appointed positions under Governor Price Daniel, and concluded as a distinguished congressman. Pickle was a protégé of LBJ and a close friend of John B. Connally, and so was aligned with the “conservative” wing of the Democratic Party during the intra-party wars before the Republican assertion gave all Democrats a common opponent. Peggy Pickle, Jake’s daughter, described their team effort in an introduction: Jake dictated while she word processed, then he checked over the product. The combination worked well, because Jake’s story telling comes through splendidly, producing several laughs – especially at Old Friend Ed Clark’s toast at a party in the Supreme Court Building – and a tear when he described his eulogy of LBJ. Great book by and about one of our old-time pols.

Ron Stone’s *The Book of Texas Days* (Eakin Press: P.O. Drawer 90159, Austin, TX 78709-0159, $27.95), published first in 1985, has been reissued in an End of Millennium Edition. Format: starting with January 1 and continuing through December 31, events in Texas history occurring on specific days are discussed. A Time Line that begins in 1528 reverses the process, more or less. Illustrations break the columns and contribute significantly – such as a billboard from the presidential campaign in 1952 that shows a smiling Dwight Eisenhower wearing a Stetson, and the words, “Be a Texan (not a Trumanite) Vote IKE!” Truman wasn’t a candidate but he was the issue in the race, as far as many Texans were concerned.
Frank E. Vandiver's *Shadows of Vietnam: Lyndon Johnson's Wars* (Texas A&M Press, College Station, TX 77843-4354), is, and I knew it would be, the best written, best styled book on "that bitch of a war" in "that damn little pissant country." LBJ's personality, right down to these observations, on multiple wars against communist aggression in Southeast Asia and against poverty there and at home, is the theme. He never wanted "real" war; he wanted instead to make the world better, especially the lot of the ignorant, ill, and impoverished. Vandiver presents a warm LBJ who anguished over the loss of American and Vietnamese life and property. He does an excellent job of presenting the cast of advisors, aides, and others involved in the decision making that produces a greater appreciation of, among others, Jack Valenti. Through it all the observations of Lyndon's closest advisor and friend, Lady Bird herself, provides poignancy to his problems.

The most anticipated book on the Civil War in years, James I. Robertson's *Stonewall Jackson: The Man, The Soldier, The Legend* (Macmillian: 1633 Broadway, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10019. Maps, Illustrations, Index, Bibliography, Pp. 940, $40), appeared in 1997, and the product justified the anticipation. General Jackson has attracted a good many biographers, and all have featured his religious nature, secretiveness, and warrior spirit. Robertson eclipses all previous writing on this subject for depth of research and serious thought. I strongly recommend this book, but also issue this warning: there are 760 pages of little-bitty print. It is a commitment.

Hendrick-Long Publishing Company (Box 25123, Dallas, TX 75225) produces interesting juvenile books. *I Know An Old Texan Who Swallowed A Fly*, by Donna Cooner and illustrated by Ann Hillis Rife, and *One of Fannin's Men: A Survivor At Goliad*, by Isabel R. Marvin, are good examples. Cooner's book is just right for a four-year old grandchild, who shared a copy with Papa during last summer's vacation. And not only did The Old Texan swallow the fly - he consumed just about every other animal one could find in Texas. The rhyming is reminiscent of Suess and the illustrations complement well, which is what they are supposed to do. I'm here to testify that this one met the backseat test. *One of Fannin's Men* is for the older child, especially one who claims to dislike history, as does Benny, until he met some face to face. Couldn't hurt anyone to read more Texas history, no matter why they do it.

*The Papers of Jefferson Davis, Volume 9, January-September 1863*, edited by Lynda Lasswell Crist, Mary Seaton Dix, and Kenneth H. Williams (Louisiana State University Press, P.O. Box 25053, Baton Rouge, LA 70894-5053), continues a work begun four decades ago at The Rice Institute, now University, with Haskell Monroe as its first editor. James McIntosh and for some years now Lynda Crist have continued the standards of excellence established by Monroe. An excellent introduction by Judith Fenner Gentry sets the stage for the nine months covered in this volume, which includes full documents and a calendar of many others.

Texans never tire of the Alamo story, so comes now William R. Chemerka's *Alamo Almanac & Book of Lists* (Eakin Press, Box 90159, Austin,
Texas 78709, $16.95), which contains a review of the Texas Revolution and the “Alamo: From A to Z,” plus lists of everything imaginable associated with the subject. For example, “Texas Governors Who Had Brothers In Alamo Movies – there were two, believe it or not – and “Texas Bob’s List of the Tackiest Alamo Collectibles.”

Law enforcement fans, and maybe some genealogists (we all have horse thieves in our background), likely will be the audience for Fugitives from Justice: The Notebook of Texas Ranger Sergeant James B. Gillett (State House Press, Box 15274, Austin, TX 78761), with an introduction by Michael D. Morrison. This is a list of the bad guys the good guys wanted to find. I couldn’t resist looking for some McDonalds on the lam, but fortunately found none I know to have helped produce me.

Charla Jones’ The Cradle of Texas: A Pictorial History of San Augustine County (Eakin Press, Box 90159, Austin, Texas 78709), is a product of a search for a family history that grew into a pictorial record of a significant East Texas city. San Augustinians will like to see the pictures of their town.

Best Editorial Cartoons Of The Year, 1997 edition, edited by Charles Brooks (Pelican Publishing Company, 1101 Monroe St., Gretna, LA 70053), continues a series begun in 1972. As usual, it is a collection of the art work on the nation’s editorial pages that bites and snarls political commentary daily. This, according to Jones, is the best of the crop for 1997.