Book Reviews

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BOOK REVIEWS

*Rangers and Pioneers of Texas,* by A.J. Sowell (State House Press, P.O. Box 15247, Austin, TX 78761) 1991. Illustrations. Index. P. 420. $29.95-Cloth.

Andrew Jackson Sowell was proud of his ancestry; therefore, he wanted to record their deeds as well as participate in the making of history. His grandfather moved to Texas in 1829, settling at Gonzales on the Guadalupe River. A blacksmith and gunmaker by trade, he constructed a knife for Jim Bowie which he named "in honor of" (p. 127) its owner. Early in 1836 he went to the Alamo and, by luck of an assignment "to secure some beeves, and drive them to San Antonio" (p. 136), escaped the Mexican massacre on March 6, 1836. Sowell's father also served Texas by enlisting in the Rangers under John Coffee "Jack" Hays. And on November 5, 1870, A.J. Sowell continued this tradition by becoming a Ranger private in Captain David Baker's company, and helped defend the northwestern frontier of Texas for the next three years. As a result of family involvement in Texas history, he decided in 1884 to record in-cidents and events in which friends, relatives, and acquaintances had participated or had knowledge. Or, putting it another way, Sowell hoped that "the names and deeds of these good and brave men may not be forgotten" (Preface).

As a consequence, *Rangers and Pioneers of Texas* is a collection of personal reminiscences, most of which historians have now dealt with in detail. Sowell recounts many stirring events of the Texas Revolution, beginning with the battle at Gonzales (October 2, 1835) and ending with the capture of General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna after San Jacinto. He then reviews a number of frontier events during the Republic, especially in regard to conflicts with Indians. And he concludes by relating his own personal experiences as a Texas Ranger fighting against the Kiowas and Comanches in the northwestern part of the state early in the 1870s.

What sets *Rangers and Pioneers of Texas* apart from most early works on Texas is that Sowell was a literate chronicler. He also vividly recounts, at times, how difficult and dangerous life was in Texas during those early years of colonization and revolution as well as the Republic and statehood. And he reminds Texans, perhaps unwittingly, how much they owe these early pioneers.

Ben Procter
Texas Christian University


Gifford White continues to add to his growing list of beneficial
publications which are and have been a great boon to historians, genealogists, landsmen, and all persons who search for kinsmen, missing heirs, and for proving land titles. This latest compilation consists of extractions from headright grant applications processed and reports of land commissioners after 1838 in nineteen of the thirty-two Texas counties existing in 1840.

In addition to the full name of the claimant and the amount of land claimed, the records reveal some or all of the following facts: wife’s name if married; children; entry date into Texas; details of participation and identification of fighting unit in the War for Independence; names of two witnesses and their testimony relating to the facts necessary for proving eligibility; name of the administrator if the claimant is deceased; and age, if the claimant volunteered and served before the age of seventeen years.

The detail of information varies from county to county. Apparently the General Land Office’s instructions about reporting provided to the county land commissioners was not well defined. Nevertheless, the author has managed to abstract all the important facts from the documents available.

A map of Texas counties in 1840 and an appendix providing a glossary of terms and a citing of the laws authorizing the various types of headrights and grants are most helpful adjuncts to a full understanding of the text.

The “Foreword” by Joe E. Ericson, past president of the Sons of the Republic of Texas, extols the usefulness of this effort by Gifford White to compile and index the mass of data in the land commissioners' reports.

Charles K. Phillips
Nacogdoches, Texas


This well-researched and ably written book tells the story of the first major U.S. Army expeditions against the Comanche before the Civil War. It is also the story of the elite Second U.S. Cavalry Regiment, a unit that would produce some sixteen general officers in the Civil War.

The Comanche were the most predatory and intractable of all the Plains Indians. With the annexation of Texas in 1845, they became the problem of the U.S. Army.

It was hardly in a position to intervene. The Army lacked a true cavalry arm and the line of forts built to protect the Texas frontier were garrisoned mostly by infantry. The Comanches simply rode around them.

Jefferson Davis, secretary of war from 1853 to 1857, realized that
a new policy was needed for the Great Plains. He added two new regiments of cavalry to pursue mounted Indians. One of these, the Second U.S. Cavalry, was formed for service on the Texas frontier. It fought approximately forty actions in the Southwest, and two of its major expeditions are the study of this book.

The first occurred in 1858 when Captain Earl Van Dorn led an expedition into Indian Territory in search of hostile Comanches. Van Dorn achieved tactical surprise after a forced march, and won a hard-fought victory that saw some seventy Comanche warriors slain, horrific losses for the Comanche bands that could not be replaced.

A second expedition in 1859 pursued a band of Comanches to southwestern Kansas, where on Crooked Creek the soldiers defeated them in a dismounted, close-quarters fight in a wooded creek-bed. The exertions of the Second Cavalry had put the Southern Plains Indians on the defensive by 1861. These expeditions set the stage for the great cavalry campaigns that followed the Civil War.

This is a detailed yet readable book that gives much information about the pre-Civil War Army; it adequately conveys both the "Big Picture" of events while examining specific incidents in detail. It is an important contribution to the literature of the American Southwest, illuminating two little known but important frontier military actions in a balanced treatment fair to both Red Men and White.

Robert D. Norris, Jr.  
Tulsa, Oklahoma

The Mystery of Y'Barbo's Tunnel, by Martha Tannery Jones (Hendrick-Long Publishing Company, P.O. Box 25123, Dallas, TX 75225) 1991.  

Jesse and Doug, who discovered the jewelry thief in The Ghost at the Old Stone Fort, are back at it again. The author uses a mixture of truth and make believe to write an adventure that is hard to put down. This time the mystery is closer to home. The adventure begins with a fishing trip that Jesse and Doug are planning to go on with Doug's dad, Jon Anderson, as soon as he finishes some business at the bank where he works. When Mr. Anderson does not return, the boys go looking for him. They arrive to find the bank locked, and the family car parked out front, but where's Dad? They know something must be wrong so they hurry over to the police station. Since the chief is ill, they have to deal with officer Nave Matthews, who thinks he knows everything. The bank president, Mr. Snodgrass, is summoned and they soon discover that the cash in the vault is missing. He and officer Matthews believe Doug's dad has stolen the money and left town. The boys set out to find Mr. Anderson and prove his innocence. Many clues lead Jesse and Doug to find his dad and the real thief who kidnapped him. I recommend that kids all over the United
States read this book if they like mysteries, because after every paragraph you want to keep reading more.

Barry L. Brown, Age 10
Garrison Elementary School


Geary has provided the Civil War student with an excellent study of the first draft conducted by the United States government. Year by year and state by state, the author details all possible aspects of subject that was not only controversial during the Civil War, but today as well. Geary presents an even-handed view of the subject, using private papers and news articles both friendly to the draft and in opposition to it. The book dispells such myths as “‘rich man’s war, poor man’s fight’” by describing the reasons behind this misunderstood section of the draft law. Although $300 was about one year’s wages for the “blue collar worker” during the Civil War, it certainly was not so great an amount that the worker was unable to get the money. In fact, $300 amount was included specifically in the law to prevent the burden of the draft from falling overwhelmingly upon the shoulders of the average citizen. This was accomplished by holding down the price of a substitute, as well as borrowing the money and paying it back in the now familiar terms of “easy monthly payment.” Added to this fact was the legislation of some towns, such as New York City, which raised taxes a little and provided the $300 to any citizen who found himself drafted. That person could use the sum to pay the government and escape military service, hire a substitute, or pocket the money and march to the beat of the drum.

The draft law also included a large number of exemptions by which one would be excused from the draft, and the working class also enjoyed these to a large extent. Many working class citizens avoided military service by using the “hardship” exemption, recent immigrants claimed the “alien” exemption, while others used the “medical” exemption. The study concluded that the Union draft during the Civil War was the most fair and most humane of all drafts in American history. The most unfair draft, according to the author, was the draft during the Vietnam War.

Students of the Civil War would receive valuable insight into one subject often mentioned in passing, but now studied in depth, by adding _We Need Men_ to their bookshelf.

David Stroud
Kilgore College

This book represents the Civil War journal (with forty-five accompanying sketches) of a young Texas Confederate soldier. Kept from 1861 to 1863, his diary offers a detailed and fascinating picture of the War in the Far West and in the Trans-Mississippi Theatre in Louisiana.

At the outbreak of the war, Merrick was a twenty-one year-old San Antonian and an ardent Southern partisan. He recorded in his well-illustrated journal the surrender of the Department of Texas to secessionist forces. As a Confederate recruit he saw garrison duty at Fort Davis, Texas, in the remote Trans-Pecos region, and later, with Lieutenant-Colonel John Robert Baylor's 2nd Texas Mounted Rifles, he participated in the Confederate invasion of the Mesilla Valley of southern New Mexico. He later saw service in Louisiana, notably against Union General Nathaniel Banks' Bayou Teche Expedition.

Merrick wrote well and in great detail, and his journal offers much meaty primary source material about events in west Texas (including Indian troubles), about the Confederate invasion of New Mexico, and much detail about campaigning and fighting in Louisiana in 1863. His drawings are well-executed, detailed, and revealing, and offer some rare illustrations about Confederate service both in the Far West and in the Trans-Mississippi; there is a positive dearth of pictorial material of all sorts in regard to both theatres and Merrick's drawings are a treasure.

The numerous and well-researched annotations by Jerry D. Thompson are an invaluable aid to fully understanding and appreciating Merrick's uniquely worthwhile writing and drawing, placing his narrative in the "Big Picture," and explaining small details with admirable precision. This is a superb addition to the literature about the war in the West and contains much of interest in regard to the far western frontier of Texas.

Robert D. Norris, Jr.
Tulsa, Oklahoma


Slatta's work, a volume in the Yale Western Americana Series, resembles the stereotypical "remaindered" book due in main part to its packaging: coffee table size, and suggestive but gauchely colored dust jacket by Ed. Lindlof—a mosaic of cowboy/gaucho/vaquero portraits surrounding a hollywood horseback silhouette coming over a ridge, the saffron-crimson sunrise or sunset behind him. Tiny globes of North
American and South American Continents are placed below and above the large silhouette—the only hint of the grand scope of Slatta's work.

This is definitely not a coffee table book. The author has "focused on the cowboy groups that achieved the status of national or regional types. As Alistair Hennessy has noted, 'Cattle and horse frontiers produce independent herders who are often taken to symbolize the national virtues'" (2). Slatta's focus is wide indeed. He treats in detail the cowboy of Alberta, Canada, and the Western United States; the *vaquero* of Northern Mexico, the Spanish Southwest, and California; the *gaucho* of Argentina; the *huaso* (guaso) of Chile; and the *llanero* of Venezuela. And he also touches upon the *llanero* of Colombia; the *vaqueiro* of Northern Brazil; the *gaucho* of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil; the *gaucho* of Uruguay; the *charro* of Mexico; and the *paniolo* of Hawaii. Whenever possible, Slatta has used firsthand accounts of the tools, trappings, procedures, work habits, and environment.

The author likens his approach to a movie—beginning with the sights, sounds, tastes, smells, and textures of close-up vignettes; moving to a "sweeping wide angle shot of the cowboy's environment—the great, grassy plains stretching toward an infinite horizon" (4).

Slatta terms his work "social history," his method "comparative analysis." Knowledgeable of the pitfalls of Turner's Frontier Thesis, and scrupulous in setting straight Hennessy's Frontier Thesis in Latin American History, Slatta professes agreement with Frederick Luebke's thesis that regions "are best conceptualized in terms of the interplay between environment and culture," and that they are best analyzed "through appropriate comparisons in time, space, and culture"(7). Presented are such diverse subjects as "Ostrich Hunting," cowboy "foot races," "Celluloid Cowboys," and cowboy poetry and song.

Among the more interesting sections is "White Cowboy Methology"; how the movement of the cowboy from "historical to cultural and literary figure" dissolved the hispanic and the black into invisibility (203). Slatta's insightful comments attempt to clarify the "mythical white west." And of course in "The Cowboys as Literary Figure," we not only meet again Owen Wister and Andy Adams, but are introduced to their Latin counterparts. The comparative method also introduces "Religion on the Frontier," and the terror of being "Fenced In." The reader soon becomes aware that our beloved Southwestern United States has no franchise on things "Cowboy."

This is a spectacularly entertaining book, lavishly illustrated with many color plates. It offers a grand sweep of country-by-country perspectives, documented with fine bibliography, readable notes, a bibliographical essay, and bibliographical-historiographical theories. It certainly belies its coffee table appearance. It should be on the shelf of every library and in the collection of every aficionado of the West. Not given to hyperbole,
I'll stop just short of Joe B. Frantz's book jacket blurb that Slatta's work may be "the definitive work on the world of the cowboy."

Much obliged, Yale University Press.

Lee Schultz
Stephen F. Austin State University


The second edition of a cookbook put together from recipes provided by the Cowboy Artists of America is more a feast for the eyes than anything else and the comment is not made in criticism. Yes, the recipes are mighty fine and run from the simple to the complex, from foods which might be prepared on the trail to feasts which need a kitchen. Main meals to desserts are included. The illustrations, however, keep the pages turning. Cartoons, drawings, and pictures of sculpture from the membership of CAA depict multi-cultural life at the camp fires of the past. Another pleasing aspect of the book is HOGS; that is Hints, Observations, Guides and Sayings, and each HOG is appropriately marked with a pig drawing and a box which offers a bite of wisdom, a pinch of folklore, a dash of information. In addition to art work, the book is divided by information about the annual trail rides undertaken by the CAA on various important ranches in the West. The cover is striking. "Too Many Biscuits," by James Boren, features a be-whiskered camp cook, pipe between his teeth, who is dressed in a bright red apron over an ample belly. He uses the long iron to move the skillet lids on three dutch ovens. Even without the title, I knew there were biscuits inside.

Joyce Roach
Keller, Texas


Natalie Ornish may inspire a hundred theses and at least a thousand historical papers with her history of the pioneer Jews of Texas. According to Ornish, the first Jew set foot in Texas in 1590; there was a Jewish buccaneer in the Galveston Island camp of pirate Jean Lafitte; a Jew died at the Alamo with Davy Crockett; a Jewish nineteen-year-old died at Goliad; a Jewish Texan helped blaze the Chisholm Trail; the first elected Texas congressman was a Jew; and a West Texas Jew wildcatting on University of Texas land brought in the Santa Rita discovery well, providing billions for the University Fund.

She believes that the earliest Jewish pioneers never were recognized
because they were forced by the Spanish Inquisition to hide their religion.

This history traces the Galveston Movement, which from 1907 to 1914 under the administration of Rabbi Henry Cohen, brought more than 10,000 European Jewish immigrants into the port of Galveston. It follows the descendants of some of those immigrants who became Texas' leading merchants, lawyers, physicians, surgeons, and civic leaders.

Unfortunately, Ornish concentrates on major cities and omits such outstanding East Texas merchants as the Weisman-Hirsch-Kariel family, which owned Joe Weisman & Co. department store in Marshall. Until that store closed recently, it was one of the oldest department stores in the state.

Readers should not miss the notes in this history. One quotes an interview with Minna Susser concerning early Texas: "During this era, it was not uncommon for Jewish men to abandon their families in their inability to cope with a culture that lacked traditions, harshness of the frontier, and unknown futures."

Cissy Stewart Lale
Fort Worth, Texas


In Coming to Terms: The German Hill Country of Texas, the second book in the Charles and Elizabeth Prothro Texas Photography Series, the history of German settlement on the Edwards Plateau is presented skillfully and artistically, through both photographs and prose. From several collections and through their camera lens, photojournalists Wendy Watriss and Fred Baldwin have masterfully created a pictorial essay about the people who pioneered the Hill Country. On each page are the images of determined, self-reliant German-Americans, their faces and eyes revealing the rigors of Texas frontier life. Interwoven between photographs of the past and the present is the historical essay by Lawrence Goodwyn, professor of history at Duke University. In just a few pages he vividly traces the story of the Germans of the Hill Country from the 1840s to the 1980s and the founding of the earliest communities, such as New Braunfels and Fredericksburg. At the same time he eloquently describes the rich German heritage which is so clearly imprinted on the land and the people of the Hill Country.

Unquestionably, Coming to Terms shows why the Hill Country is, as Goodwyn writes, "a special place," (p. 17) and, as Watriss and Baldwin see, "peculiarly compelling" (p. 137). For those intrigued by the history of East Texas and by the visual history from photographs, Coming to
Terms: The German Hill Country of Texas will be an enjoyable addition to a Texas history book library.

Janet Schmelzer
Tarleton State University


These two talented writers/researchers have brought the profession of treating animals from out of the dark ages into the modern world with engaging coverage which reflects honor to the pioneers who advanced the profession of veterinary science.

Tracing man's association with animals, first with canines and later other animals, the history brings readers to 1880 when the first classes in veterinarian medicine were taught by Dr. Mark Francis at Texas A&M. Dr. Francis was the first graduate veterinarian to teach in what was to become the School of Veterinary Medicine at A&M. His pioneer studies helped bring under control tick fever in cattle at great savings to the beef industry. Other pioneers who followed in his footsteps have helped bring under control all of the major diseases of animals to date.

During World War I and WWII, these veterinarians worked with the health of animals and became important cogs in the food chain for military personnel by inspecting the food they consumed and other health practices in military camps.

The book is profusely sprinkled with illustrations, photographs, and charts which keep the interest of readers and make the contents more enjoyable. Detailed lists of the names of outstanding veterinarians in Texas are included as well as an appendix, notes, bibliography, and index.

Biggest bonus of all and of special interest to many readers is the list of veterinarians licensed in Texas from 1911 to 1940. This gives the license number, home city, school, date of graduation, and date of each license.

As a non-professional reader, I was amazed at the number of familiar faces we have used in treating either livestock or pets over several decades in Texas.

In the words of the authors, in their preface:

"The story of veterinary medicine in Texas necessarily provides a very warm, sometimes humorous, all fascinating insight into that critical verge between the human world and animal kingdom. The
veterinary medical doctor is, we think you will agree, a special kind of doctor.’’

We agree.

Sam Malone
San Augustine, Texas


T. Lindsay Baker’s Lighthouses of Texas certainly looks like a ‘‘coffee table book.’’ Although sizeable, the book contains much information and many historic photographs of the ten lighthouses that survive either intact or in part and the two lightships that warned mariners of the hazards along the Texas Gulf Coast from 1852 to the present. Only the light at Port Isabel is accessible to the public as a state historical park.

Baker’s lights are not the only ones that blinked in the late nineteenth and early part of the twentieth-century Texas, but they represent the many different types of lighthouses that were constructed during the time period. Texas’ most unusual light station was the caisson-type lighthouse constructed at Sabine Bank, southeast of Sabine Pass. This caisson light station was the only one of its type located south of Chesapeake Bay. Using Lighthouse Service records in the National Archives, Baker describes the construction process for each one, the diverse architectural styles, and the change from lard-oil lamps to Fresnel lenses to automated electric lights and radio beacons. Today the Lighthouse Service is a part of the Coast Guard under the Department of the Treasury.

The majority of lighthouse keepers and their assistants were white men, although the Lighthouse Service employed a few women. In the nineteenth century, families were able to live at most stations, while in the twentieth century, only employees occupied the outposts. Keepers were responsible for maintaining their lights at night and for the general operation of the stations. Mariners identified their positions by the timed flash of each light along the coast and avoided unseen perils.

Keepers of light stations had to file detailed written reports, keep logs, catch seafood to supplement their diets, and aid sailors in distress. The brick-lined, iron tower at Bolivar Point served as a refuge for residents of Bolivar Peninsula in storms in 1900 and 1915. The Boliver Point lighthouse was also the only light station to be damaged by friendly fire. In 1917, artillery servicemen at Fort San Jacinto on Galveston Island were practicing firing their mortars, not realizing that the shells occasionally hit the lighthouse. Although privately owned, the Bolivar lighthouse is still viewed by thousands of tourists annually as they ride the free ferry from Galveston to the Bolivar Peninsula.
Harold Phenix' romantic watercolor paintings bring Baker's descriptions to life and remind us of a much simpler time when lighthouse keepers were willing to live an isolated life, often surrounded by stormy seas, for only a few dollars per year. Texas' lighthouses were diverse in style and construction and were important navigational aids for over a century. The work is well researched and written, and is enhanced by photographs and beautiful watercolors.

Patricia G. Kell
Baytown, Texas


Black, Red, and Deadly: Black and Indian Gunfighters of the Indian Territories, 1870-1907, provides a suitable contribution to the current emphasis upon multi-cultural history. The author is Art Burton, a native of Oklahoma who is the Assistant Dean of Students in the office of Multi-Cultural Affairs at Loyola University. Burton has described the exploits of African American and Native American outlaws and lawmen during Oklahoma's most lawless period. Many of Burton's subjects, such as Ned Christie, Cherokee Bill, Henry Starr, and Rufus Buck and his gang, are familiar to western buffs. Men whose careers are relatively unfamiliar include Sam Sixkiller, Bass Reeves, Grant Johnson, and Zeke Miller. The reader is introduced to "Lighthorsemen" (Indian police) and to other ethnic gunmen whose sanguinary adventures rank alongside those of Caucasian shootists of the old West.

There is an appendix of contemporary African American and Native American law officers, a glossary of appropriate terms, and an excellent collection of photographs. But the author relies heavily upon secondary sources, and a considerable portion of the text is devoted to lengthy quotations from secondary or primary materials. It is the responsibility of the historian to distill his research into artfully crafted prose which restores drama and color to a bygone time. For readers with an interest in western violence or ethnic frontiersmen, Black, Red, and Deadly presents a cast of characters whose lives frequently were dramatic and colorful.

Bill O'Neal
Panola Junior College

Edward L. Doheny was certainly one of the swashbuckling capitalists of his age. He was involved heavily in the exploitation of Mexican oil and he was one of the principals in the Teapot Dome scandal. Leonard Bates and Burl Noggle, among others, have explored single facets of his career, but no one has attempted a full biography of Doheny, largely because the necessary papers and records are no longer existent. Dan La Botz has attempted the task, anyway, with little success.

La Botz fills the vast gaps in his story with rhetoric and supposition. The rhetoric is the familiar brand, associated with radical journalists in the tradition that runs from Henry Demarest Lloyd to Anthony Sampson and onward. Thus the author establishes the Western setting for Doheny's career: "It was a world of rapacious corporations, intensive exploration, fierce repression, and the most bitter class struggle" (p. 15). In large measure, such hyperbole is supported by the author's use of non-scholarly sources. On Teapot Dome, for example, he lists but ignores Bates and Noggle; the Harding material comes largely from Francis Russell. Doheny's Mexican activities are reconstructed from the contemporary radical critiques of John Kenneth Turner and Samuel Guy Inman and the more recent work of Gabriel Antonio Mendenez and Gene Z. Hanrahan — part of the Yankee-Capitalist-Devil tradition of Mexican historiography.

Even with its ideological limitations, the book might have been more useful if the author had attempted less. His penchant for speculation in the absence of documentation is both persistent and disturbing. On the connection between Doheny and Albert Alonzo Robinson, we are told: "Doheny certainly would have known Robinson..." (p. 20). The creation of a counter-revolutionary movement in Mexico in 1917, was "probably at his behest" (p. 62). Doheny's influence on counter-revolutionary leader Manuel Pelaez is established by "presumably" (p. 67). The oil companies' attitude toward Felix Diaz is based on "apparently" (p. 67). Finally, presumption is used to blame Doheny for the assassination of Venustiano Carranza: "When Doheny's archenemy Mexican President Carranza stumbled into Doheny's petroleum state, Carranza was assassinated" (p. 184).

It is possible, of course, that Doheny did all of these things and more, but La Botz serves his readers badly by hauling Edward L. Doheny into the court of history without evidence adequate to support the strong indictment.

Roger M. Olien
The University of Texas-Permian Basin

Because Texas is located at the southwest end of "tornado alley," many Texans learn first-hand the awesome power of a tornado. If you have not had that experience, and wish to find out what it is like, this book is recommended.

First published in 1977, and now reissued with only minor changes, this slim volume was written by a newspaperman who had reported on the tornado which devastated Waco on May 11, 1953. That event provides the framework on which the author hangs observations on the culture and history of Waco and vicinity along with tornado and other weather lore ranging as far as Finland and parts of the Pacific. There are listings of such items as how long tornados have lasted at one spot and outstanding U.S. tornados (in terms of the deaths each produced) since 1925. Cloud photographs, historic photos of tornado funnels from several states, views of damaged Waco buildings, and a map showing the tornado path through downtown add to the book's interest and utility.

Those seeking a thorough explanation of the meteorology of tornado formation will be disappointed. The author readily admits his limited scientific background; and, since the 1970s much has been learned about tornado formation, types, and internal characteristics. The author's skill as a writer is evident throughout, particularly in his description of the reaction of various individuals to the tornado's approach and passage. Here the reader will be enthralled. It is good to have this book again available.

G. Loyd Collier
Stephen F. Austin State University


In Fort Worth Outpost on the Trinity, which was first published in 1953, Oliver Knight, historian and newspaperman, wrote the classic history of Fort Worth. In colorful detail he described such eras as the founding of the fort, the impact of the cattle industry, the coming of the railroad, the development of industry, and the growth of Fort Worth into a city. He also included maps, photographs, military correspondence, and lists of public officials.

After 1960 this book was out of print and difficult to find — until now. Fortunately, Texas Christian University Press decided to reissue Knight's book with a new chapter on the twentieth century, "Corporations and Culture," written by Cissy Stewart Lale, former editor and daily col-
umnist for the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*. Lale updated *Fort Worth Outpost on the Trinity* with historical information, maps, and photographs which have enhanced the original book. For instance, she covered the significance of the airline and defense industries, the pivotal roles of Amon G. Carter and Charles D. Tandy, the cultural contributions of local museums, and the restoration of historic sections of the city.

As a result of the reissuing of *Fort Worth Outpost on the Trinity*, many more people will have the opportunity to enjoy the classic Fort Worth history by Knight with the added insights of Lale.

Janet Schmelzer
Tarleton State University


For anyone seeking a study of water development in the West, this book is recommended. It is a history of the Lower Colorado River Authority, the Texas state agency that developed the Colorado River for multi-purpose use. As such it is a case study of New Deal activity in one state. Adams keeps the study in national perspective, showing that the development of the river was a cooperative project between state and federal governments. He also shows the politics of water development, and in this case the role of Lyndon Johnson and such as aides Alvin Wirtz in winning approval of federal authorities at various times.

Adams gives the Authority and its promoters high marks, saying the project stimulated the economy of central Texas and ended the flooding of the Colorado River. It also promoted rural electrification. He sees the experience of the Lower Colorado River Authority as a positive force in Texas history.

The author should be commended on his use of research materials. He examined and used primary materials at the Roosevelt Library, the Library of Congress, the National Archives, and several personal manuscript collections. His bibliography contains the best known works related to the subject. One flaw is apparent: he overlooked the importance of Sam Rayburn, whose promotion of a hydroelectric dam on the Red River preceded Johnson’s work on the Colorado. Rayburn’s part has been established in the literature. However, Adams’ coverage of the Colorado project is still excellent.

Given the combination of good resource materials, a national perspective, and fine organization, this book will be an excellent addition to the literature of flood control and New Deal history.

D. Clayton Brown
Texas Christian University

This is the story of a young girl’s growing up years in the Piney Woods during the 1920s and 1930s. It is truly a comprehensive account of the self-sufficient living by rural people in that era. Janie Ray Shofner’s life was governed by the seasons and was isolated in accordance with our standards.

The stories will stir forgotten memories for those who lived in this setting, and provide their children unique insight into the traditions and customs of those who came before them. The author grew up as the youngest of five children in a one-parent household. She saw much of country living and remembered it all, as seen on the pages of the book. Her memories reflect an encyclopedia of living experiences, including food, work, religion, cotton, and remedies.

The book is a valuable mine of data with good photographs of plows, plowing, and mules. It is an excellent review on planting and working the fields, with a focus on the staples, cotton, and corn. It captures the mood of quiet found on the farm in a simpler age.

The role of the tomato and the tomato sheds as an economic factor is interesting and entertaining. This business was a money maker for all involved—the farmer as the grower, those who worked in the sheds getting the tomato ready to ship, and the buyers for the outside world.

Throughout the book is a sense of community and family which is rarely found today. The book is an insightful primary source of the customs and values of folk of the Piney Woods.

Lincoln King
Gary, Texas

One Day in the Life of Angelina County, A Project of The Angelina Photographic Association (Angelina Photographic Association, P.O. Box 1574, Lufkin, TX 75902) 1990. Colored and Black and White Photographs. P. 144.

This is a wonderful picture book about people—all kinds of people. It is about the young and the old, the black, the white, and the brown. There are photographs of strong men, beautiful women, and those whose plain faces are lined with the experiences of living and working and enduring. A few are elegant in their homeliness and character. It is a touching tribute to the state of Texas, Angelina County style.

The photographs were shot in a single day as a project of the Angelina Photographic Association, and dozens of people were involved in the effort. It was inspired by the epic work, One Day in the Life of America.
But this Texas work is, in some respects, more satisfying. The target was more concentrated and many of the photographers knew who or where they wanted to shoot. The occasional scenery pictures give a strong sense of the land and the critters who dwell on it. Yet they fit well with the images of a number of hard working people at gritty or demanding jobs. One catches an abiding sense of Deep East Texas, at work, and play, and at quiet thought.

An outsider can get an insight into Angelina County, urban and rural, and in between. Those who took the pictures and those who selected them had a sophisticated agenda and they achieved it admirably. For example, they effectively portrayed industrial Lufkin at the center of a basically rural county. And always they presented the people, in striking variety. This strength, however, also touches on the volume’s only weakness. There are too many photographs for the format and the page limitation. Had the book contained more than 144 pages, there would not be some photo essays that are compressed into too small an area. Some lose their sense of identity by being packed tightly together. On balance, though, it is a glorious presentation of the heart of East Texas.

Allen Richman
Stephen F. Austin State University

The Early Years of Rhythm & Blues: Focus on Houston, by Alan Govenar, photographs by Benny Joseph (Rice University Press, P.O. Box 1892, Houston, TX 77251) 1990. Photographs. Notes. P. 96. $24.95 Hardcover.

Professional photographer Benny Joseph was the right man at the right time to document the flavor of his African American community that was Houston in the 1950s and 1960s. Among the fifty-eight plates reproduced in the book are formal and informal portraits of such notables in the civil rights movement as Barbara Jordan, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Thurgood Marshall, as well as images from the music world suggested by the title of the book, plus miscellaneous images representative of the general work his 4x5 Speedgraphic camera recorded both in the studio and on location.

Selections in the book were made into 11x14 selenium-toned gelatin silver prints in 1988-89 and exhibited in 1989 and 1990. The Early Years of Rhythm and Blues: Focus on Houston is first and foremost a volume of photography. Quality reproduction black-and-white prints (6x8¼, and 6x4¾ in size) are presented on 8¼x11½ size paper with generous white borders. Fuller data along with the plates would communicate better; it would be especially helpful with plates #12 “Felton Turner [a 1960 victim of racial, not street violence]” and #52 [two men] entitled “Dr. Arthur Riddle.”

Again, since the words and pictures are so integrally related yet so
spacially separated — with data given in both essay and end notes — Alan Govenar’s essay would be more helpful in documenting the photographs if sub-titles were given within the text to help orient the reader.

Nevertheless, Govenar’s scholarship greatly enhances the value of the photography, providing context and analysis of a very significant era. It was a time when the activism and the post-World War II energies were attenuating an entrenched institutional segregation in the city. It was a time when live music and the local disc jockey scene were vital components of the Houston scene. It was a time when one of Benny Joseph’s clients, black restauranteur and record publisher Don Robey, was at the peak of his career with over 100 singers and groups signed to his Peacock/Duke and other recording labels. It was a time when the Houston scene was a vital component of the development of American music.

Ouida Whitaker Dean
Nacogdoches, Texas


Emil Henry Marks was not only a very successful rancher, he was a preservationist. A cowboy made prosperous by Texas Longhorns, he continued to raise his purebred Longhorns when others had long abandoned the breed, owning at one time the world’s largest privately owned herd. A popular speaker and storyteller, he helped to preserve some of the songs and stories he first heard on the open range in the 1890s. A collector of relics of a bygone era, he had a log cabin on his LH7 Ranch filled with museum pieces of the state’s agricultural past. Through two world wars, a depression, and an urban explosion called Houston located at the edge of his ranch, he persevered and for the most part prospered.

The LH7 Ranch is his story, told largely through family papers and interviews and often in his or his children’s own words. Sizemore has written a book that is a delight to read. There is very little analysis here, and almost no information about the economics of this ranch except when economic realities made real differences in the lives of those living on the ranch. Instead, it is a moving account of life among a rural German community in Harris County in the first decades of the twentieth century, and of one man’s remarkable adaptability. The University of North Texas Press has also done a commendable job in producing a handsome book at an affordable price. It should be read and enjoyed by anyone interested in ranching or in the life of rural Texans early in the twentieth century.

Cecil Harper, Jr.
North Harris College
Houston, Texas
These days it seems that the United States is again having problems with Japan and so it is fitting that this narrative of an American POW who survived not only the Bataan Death March but over three years of incarceration in Japan itself, serves to remind us of the extreme and uncalled-for brutality displayed by Japanese soldiers toward Allied prisoners during World War II. Army Air Corps Captain John S. Coleman, Jr., from Wellington, Texas, was captured in April 1942 while serving in the Philippines. Along with thousands of other Allied POWs, most of whom were American, Coleman was forced to endure inhumane treatment from his captors virtually on a daily basis. He experienced torture, humiliation, starvation, and psychological damage at the hands of his captors. This well-written account of his and his comrades' long ordeal as POWs offers the reader an humbling personal picture of life as an American prisoner in Japanese-held territory.

Coleman details his time in the Philippines in the brutal Yodogawa Seiko camp in Osaka, Japan. He also includes his experiences in his final camp in Shikoku as well as his liberation and return to the United States. Coleman points out that the prisoners' worst treatment came at the hands of the Japanese troops in the Philippines and he stresses that Japanese civilians often gave assistance to the prisoners. He also details the barbaric treatment given to the POWs and discusses the intense fear held by the Japanese once American bombers began appearing unmolested overhead.

This book offers the reader an opportunity to experience a first-hand account of this terrible ordeal and should serve as a reminder that the Japanese treatment of American prisoners of war was brutal, inhumane, and totally unprovoked. In a time when it has become fashionable to lambast the decision of the Truman Administration to use the atom bomb, this book and others like it signify that what happened at Hiroshima was no more barbaric than what occurred at Bataan.

Mark Choate
Nacogdoches, Texas

Harry M. Kemp, a retired army officer who lives in San Antonio, has produced this detailed history of the 109th Infantry Regiment, Pennsylvania National Guard, a major component of the 28th Infantry Division in World War II. The 28th was wholly organized in Pennsylvania.
The 109th became known during World War I as the "Old Gray Mare Regiment" because of their regimental song, but more significant for understanding the title of this book, the regiment's motto was "Let the Citizens Bear Arms". Kemp, who enlisted in the regiment in 1937 and rose to command a company by 1944, diligently records the history of the 109th, using as his sources his own knowledge, official military papers, and a few books, but he relies very much on a large number of interviews with former regimental members.

This is military history of World War II. The entire book, with the exception of short chapters on beginnings, stateside training, training in England, and occupation and coming home, follows the regiment from the invasion at Normandy to deep in Germany, as the regiment fought its way across Europe. The closest this book comes to having an East Texas relationship is that the 109th regiment trained at Camp Livingston in Louisiana for a few weeks in 1942, and a few of its replacements during the war were from Texas. As a regimental history written by a retired army officer, one would expect this book to be focused on the trees rather than the forest, and that is the case. Kemp is obviously aware of the bigger picture of the war in western Europe, but his focus remains on the men, or the personnel of his regiment. His appendices include a roster of officers and maps to aid in following the fighting in western Europe.

E. Dale Odom
University of North Texas


Who, you might ask, was Peggy Hull? Intrepid war correspondent, vivid writer, resourceful self promoter, adventurer, contradictory woman. Henrietta Eleanor Goodnough was born in Kansas in 1889, covered military action on the U.S. Mexican border with Pershing, World War I in Paris, the Russian Intervention in Siberia, Japanese invasion of China in Shanghai, and World War II in the Pacific, married three times — to George Charles Hull, John Taylor Kinley, Harvey Duell, and died in Carmel Valley, California, on June 19, 1967.

Peggy Hull was resourceful, energetic, enterprising. She wrote for several U.S. newspapers, including the El Paso Herald and Morning Times. Although women journalists were not uncommon in the early twentieth century, women war correspondents were decidedly uncommon. The U.S. War Department accredited Peggy Hull by issuing a correspondent's pass to her in 1918 — the first woman so designated. Had she not possessed abundant energy and chutzpa, she could not have traveled so widely nor witnessed so much. The fierce discrimination against women journalists
affected Hull's career; however, she generally found some way to accomplish her goals. She used to good advantage a wide circle of contacts among newspaper publishers and writers.

Peggy Hull was not a particularly profound writer; however, she possessed an uncanny ability to know that her readers enjoyed human interest stories. Late in her career she wrote, that there would be no scoops, no prize awards, no Purple Hearts or memories of desperate hours well shared with brave Americans. I am a woman and as a woman am not permitted to experience the hazards of real war reporting. After a long and varied experience in the first World War, on the Mexican border, in France, Siberia, and China, these restrictions have laid a heavy hand upon my dreams. But I have found workd to do. There [are] the little stories to write — the small, unimportant story which [means] so much to the G.I., but for which no editor [will] use his wire service and which no "spot news" correspondent [has] time to seek out and write (p. 244).

Peggy Hull lived in contradiction. On the one hand, she longed for professional respectability as a journalist; on the other, she longed for the settled life of the housewife. She was equally at home wearing military uniforms and fluffy creations from Paris. While she would not have classified herself as a feminist, she broke barriers for women. Peggy Hull was not a "typical" woman — whatever a "typical" woman was or is — yet her life illustrates the range of possibilities and frustrations for professional women.

Wilda Smith and Eleanor Bogart have produced an able biography, admirably researched, crisply written. Although Peggy Hull's life and career did not reach East Texas, people who seek biographies of intrepid, interesting, truly alive characters, will enjoy this one. Students of women's history will find in Peggy Hull a woman whose life was torn by the contradictions so many women face.

Fane Downs
Dallas, Texas


Before changing the original title of this book to Texfake, the author had intended to subtitle it Plundering the Past, a more flavorful and equally fitting description of its contents. It is the story of one man, Dorman David, abetted by others in the book trade, who faked Texas history documents and sold them for big bucks to gullible collectors. David says he never intended to deceive anyone, that he merely set out to create a portfolio of facsimile documents to be sold as such to his clientele. But before completing the project his facsimiles landed in the possession of
other dealers, notably William Simpson and the late John H. Jenkins, who if they suspected anything, were not so candid with their buyers. Later, no one wanted to question, much less admit, that these documents might be spurious. Taylor himself was stung, and that led to his writing of this exposé.

Taylor also discusses at length the pilfering of authentic historical documents from institutional libraries and infers gross misfeasance on the part of certain library directors. Of course, none of these things would have transpired were it not for the compelling desire that some people have to own a piece of history and the avarice of others who would take advantage of that desire. Tom Taylor has told a sad and infuriating story of human frailty in a well-organized, very readable fashion. He is also the designer and publisher of his own book, and a handsome job it is. Worth the money? Yes.

Al Lowman
Stringtown, Texas


This volume, a treasure to family members, and also very interesting reading for the historian, reveals an eight-year glimpse of local history. Mrs. Carson was fortunate to have access to family letters, dating from 1841 to 1924, which had been kept safely in the desk of Henry Ralph, her great grandfather. Carson, who transcribed and printed those letters, carefully documented each letter and researched the Santa Fe Expedition, Gold Rush, and the exploits of the Thirteenth Texas Cavalry during the Civil War. Historical explanations of events add to the interest of the letters and make this volume a valuable contribution.

The letters span the time of the Mexican War, Civil War, Spanish American War and World War I. By portraying the life and hardships of various family members, they afford the reader an insight into the private lives of early Texas settlers. Several family photos and maps illustrate the book and give the reader a glimpse of the people who wrote the treasured letters.

Brief family genealogies are included for the families of Butler, Farr/Lowe, May, Waller/Pridgeon, Ralph, Dean, Isaacks, Pace, Dubose, Gregory, Rawls and Owens.

Carolyn Ericson
Nacogdoches, Texas

The authors bring much expertise to their analysis of the early Cold War years, having done extensive research in primary sources and wide reading in secondary works. The book takes the reader from the Yalta Conference, through the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan, to the North Atlantic Treaty. In their preface, the authors make clear that they offer essentially an "orthodox" approach to the origins of the Cold War. Hence, we find such traditional characters as Roosevelt, the ailing appeaser; Truman, the novice pushed rightward by hard-line advisers, congressional Republicans, and shifting public opinion; and Stalin, the ruthless expansionist.

Even so, the authors also draw on the extensive secondary literature of recent years, some of it not so orthodox — such writers as John Gaddis, John Gimbel, Robert Messer, Thomas Paterson, and Michael Hogan. Thus, the book contains echoes of revisionist arguments concerning atomic diplomacy, the global reach of the Truman Doctrine, the corporatist roots of the Marshall Plan, and United States miscalculations during the Berlin crisis.

The authors' main theme is that the Truman Administration pursued through 1945-1949 a policy of "flexibility and restraint" in developing "short-of-war" strategies to limit Soviet expansion. For Woods and Jones, this early Cold War stance clearly was correct and effective, reassuring allies and obstructing the Kremlin. The implicit globalism of the Truman Doctrine did not signify a confusion of ends and means. Rather, say the authors, the confusion began in 1950 with approval of NSC-68, a study which "meshed vital with peripheral interests" (p. 252) and abandoned the notion of limits to American power.

While it is too long and detailed for use with survey courses, this deftly written book should find a home in many upper-level courses of American and global diplomacy.

Scott L. Bills
Stephen F. Austin State University


Charles Brooks has screened an elite assortment of political cartoons from American and Canadian print media for the year 1990, dubbing them THE BEST. The work is filtered from the production of 172 artists, arranged in twenty-three topical categories. One to four cartoons for each
artist are placed in an appropriate topical section and indexed by individual artist. Eleven of the topical categories are entitled precisely the same as in the 1990 edition. Cartoons winning six prestigious literary awards lead off the compilation; a list of previous winners of these national/international kudos is placed at the end of the book.

Brooks does not indicate his criteria for choosing the Best of the year, letting the cartoons speak for themselves. Imaginative artists who combine artistic talent with keen powers of observation and interpretation make the editing job easier. Brooks prefaces each topical category of cartoons with a brief chronology of events within that particular category during the year.

Cartoons are assembled under the following subject matter titles: Award-Winning Cartoons, Persian Gulf Conflict (called Middle East in 1990), The Bush Administration, The Soviet Union (called Death of Communism in 1990), German Reunification, S&L Scandal, Foreign Affairs, The Economy, U.S. Congress, U.S. Defense, The Supreme Court, Politics, Budget Deficit, Crime and Drugs (called The Drug War in 1990), The Environment, Education, The Census, Space/Air Travel, Pornography, Health, Sports, Canadian Affairs, and Other Issues.

Great political cartoonists perform a graphic chemical synthesis, which condenses and concentrates all the interactions of our society...a kind of "photosynthesis," so to speak. Their work reflects the noble and banal, the amusing and the disgusting, high aspirations and failures, the uplifting and the simply terrifying aspects of modern public life.

Whatever the cartoons Brooks omits from his compendium might have revealed, the ones he includes reflect all the above attributes of the way we were in 1990. My only gripe is that he did not include any cartoons by Texas' Ben Sargent.

James G. Dickson
Stephen F. Austin State University

A Life Among the Texas Flora, Ferdinand Lindheimer's Letters to George Engelmann, by Minetta Altgelt Goyne (Texas A&M University Press, Drawer C, College Station, TX 77843-4354) 1991. Notes. Index. P. 236. $44.50 Hardcover.

Lindheimer, born in Germany in 1802, educated at German universities, and known as the "Father of Texas Botany," collected extensively for Engelmann in St. Louis, for Asa Gray at Harvard, and for others through Engelmann and Gray. Lindheimer arrived in the United States in 1834 and joined friends, including Engelmann, who were already living on a farm in Illinois, then moved on from there to New Orleans, Mexico, and Texas. He joined the Army of Texas in 1836, collecting botanical specimens while other soldiers drilled; for several years he
traveled in Southeast and Central Texas, using Houston as a base and searching for new plants; in 1845, he settled permanently in New Braunfels where he helped shape the new community and edited the *Neu-Braunfelser Zeitung* for two decades.

Goyne deciphered, translated, annotated, and published the more than forty letters still existing which Lindheimer wrote to Engelmann between 1841 and 1847. Those letters form a rich primary source for anyone wishing to know more about the natural history of early Texas, the difficulties of travel and collecting in the 1840s, and life and leaders in the early settlements. They include not only specific plant names and descriptions but also Lindheimer's perceptive comments about the people with whom he lived and worked. Goyne also includes part of Lindheimer's account of his experiences in Mexico, much carefully researched, biographical material, and chapter introductions which place the letters in their appropriate historical setting. Thoroughly documented, the book contains more information about Lindheimer than is available in any other single source. The author has provided a valuable service for Texas historians and botanists.

Sylvia W. McGrath
Stephen F. Austin State University

*I Wouldn't Be a Lumberjack (But I Couldn't Hack It!)*, by Van Craddock (The Best of East Texas Publishers, P.O. Box 1647, Lufkin, TX 75901) 1991. Forward. P. 142. $20.35.

For more than thirteen years, journalist Van Craddock has been chronicling the goings-on in his neck of the woods in a twice-weekly column for *The Longview News-Journal*. Some of Craddock's best pieces have been collected into a book published by The Best of East Texas Publishers in Lufkin.

Craddock's two favorite subjects are his family and East Texas history, and he brings a gentle touch to both. *News-Journal* readers have had an armchair's vantage point as he tells of the mishaps and special moments of "Better Half, Bozo and Bright Eyes." That's columnese for his wife and two kids.

There's the time Bright Eyes stuffed a Red Hot up her nose, and he and Better Half debated on what to do:

*I mean, nowhere in Dr. Spock is there a section on removing soap from the right nostril. You can't look in the yellow pages under "Red Hot Retrieval," either, and calling Roto-Rooter would probably be a bit radical.*

Then there are the vignettes from Longview's past, like the time Dizzy Dean came to town to pitch in an exhibition game. It was 1935, and the twenty-four-year-old future Hall of Famer struck out seven semi-pro
ballplayers while 1,500 watched in Fair Park.

Though Craddock tends to favor light-hearted subjects, on occasion his thoughts turn to graver matters, both in his life and before his time. Subjects like the Longview Race Riot of 1919, the death of his father-in-law, and seeing a half-scale model of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial are handled with compassion and feeling.

In one piece, Craddock, who graduated from SFA with a degree in journalism, recalls Francine Hoffman, who taught journalism there for many years:

_She didn't expect us to be perfect, of course. She demanded it._

_Some of my fondest memories of SFA (other than the obvious fact I met Better Half in journalism class) are of those late night sessions in the old Birdwell Annex, putting together another issue of the paper._

Craddock’s first collection of columns is an entertaining way to spend a night in the armchair.

Gary Bordors
Nacogdoches Daily Sentinel


Outside of the state, Katherine Anne Porter is Texas’ best known and most honored author. But within the state, many scholars and critics relegate her to the status of “minor author,” faulting the ethereal, feminine quality of her prose. Her contemporaries, J. Frank Dobie and Walter Prescott Webb, often reportedly referred to her work as “lady bidness.” She yearned for acceptance in her home state, but was shunned throughout her long lifetime.

Given the love-hate relationship that Porter evokes, it is not surprising that her biography, _Katherine Anne Porter: A Life,_ has become almost as controversial as the author herself. Since its original publication in 1982, two years after Porter’s death, biographer Joan Givner has been both excoriated and praised for bringing together so many of the disparate and contradictory threads of Porter’s life. Partially in response to some of her critics, we now have this 1991 Revised Edition, published by the University of Georgia Press. The original publisher was Simon and Schuster.

The Revised Edition will, of course, be the definitive version of the biography. Although the text is essentially unchanged, the Revised Edition contains a new Preface and an almost totally rewritten Epilogue which sites Porter squarely in the mainstream of modern American fiction writers. Says Givner, “...Porter’s work surprises by its accessibility to new theoretical approaches.” (p. 513).
The Preface is perhaps the most valuable feature of this new edition. In it, Givner clarifies and explains her position regarding Porter's alleged betrayal to the F.B.I. of her friend and fellow author, Josephine Herbst, and uses this incident as the basis of a reinterpretation of Porter's enigmatic short story, "Holiday." The Preface also brings to bear new data to help clarify Porter's nightmarish stay in a Texas tuberculosis sanatorium after the collapse of her first marriage. In light of this new evidence (another patient's scrapbook), it appears that Porter's frequent references to the ravages of the flu epidemic of 1918 are really based on her personal suffering from the less socially acceptable disease of TB, or consumption.

Givner also uses the Preface to graciously defend herself against some critics of the original biography by pointing out that "...the practice of having fiction writers review biographies is akin to having fundamentalist preachers review books on the great vineyards of France. The problem is not an untutored palate but a deep-rooted hostility to the whole process. Fiction writers often suffer from acute fear (biographobia) of the skill that is the hallmark of literary biography—the uncovering of repressed motivations in the fiction" (pp.3-4).

Finally, critics, and admirers alike must acknowledge Texas' debt to Givner's unrelenting campaign to have Porter recognized as one of the preeminent figures in Texas letters. With the inclusion of Porter, the term is less an oxymoron. Givner's campaign finally resulted in the unveiling of a state historical marker in the town square of Kyle, Texas, where Porter lived as a child. The Friends of the Library of Texas A&M University heeded Givner's call and provided the necessary support which culminated in the dedication of the marker on a fine Sunday afternoon in July 1991. Porter would have approved of the hand-pieced quilt that draped the bronze marker while the assembled guests, mostly proud local folks, partook of punch and cookies in the air-conditioned City Hall, protected from the sweltering Texas heat of which she spoke and wrote so often.

Sylvia Grider
Texas A&M University