BOOK REVIEWS


We brought it all back on December 7, 1991. Fifty years had passed since the shock of recognition we remember as Pearl Harbor on December 7 in 1941. That was a day that will live in infamy, and that was a day that will live in the mind of every American who was old enough to have a memory. And when a memory gets to be fifty years old, no matter how bad it might be, it is time to take notice of it.

Texans celebrated Pearl Harbor and its consequences at the University of North Texas with The Governor's Conference on WWII, under the directorship of James Ward Lee. They brought in the old heroes and warriors to tell of their deeds. They brought in scholars to intellectualize the battles and the victories. They brought in musicians to play the songs men sailed off to and made love to and ached in loneliness to. And they put together a very creditable memento of both WWII and the Governor's Conference in this book, 1941: Texas Goes to War. The book is blessed with a very thoughtful foreward by Governor Ann Richards herself.

Texas Goes to War is an oversize paperback, with readable print, and with a couple of fine WWII pictures per page. That takes care of the basics and means that the reader can learn and enjoy a lot by just flipping through the pages. One step beyond: the book is organized in chronological chapters from “Remember Pearl Harbor” to “Coming Home.” The content deals with the home front as well as the battlefields and beachheads, because this world war was fought everywhere.

The individual chapters are readably written by historians who punctuate the narratives of their texts with accounts by those who were involved in the action at the time. In Denise Kohn’s chapter, “Texans in Combat,” William Wilson tells of being shot down over France and interrogated for days before being sent to a POW camp; Don Graham tells about Audie Murphy’s CMOH deeds of valor; and Mother and Daddy send Jasper a V-Mail letter after V-E Day, praying that he and the rest of that generation’s children will hurry home. The chapter includes entries from Elmer Monk’s diary of the Okinawa invasion. Texas Goes to War is a vividly personal book.

On the home front, Stanley Marcus tells how Neiman-Marcus responded to the shortages of WWII. Scrap drives, rationing, and war bonds became parts of everybody’s life. When silk hose wore out, ladies darkened their legs to hose-color with makeup and then drew a seam up the back with an eye-brow pencil. “Is this trip necessary?” was posted on signs in bus and train stations, and service men were always given first seating on trains and busses.
In spite of continued segregation, to the point of internment camps for some Japanese, minorities participated in all phases of the war effort and gained steps in their movement toward desegregation and equality. Segregation began its breakdown as white Texans were forced into close contact with blacks, some for the first time. The Negro 477th Bombardment Group distinguished itself in the European Theatre, and 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses were awarded to Negro pilots. The Nisei Japanese, 442nd Regiment in France fixed bayonets and charged German lines that had held out for days; their motto was “Go For Broke!” WWII broke ancient racial and ethnic barriers.

On May 8, 1945, V-E Day, Americans thought we were at least halfway home. On the following August 6 we dropped The Bomb and demanded the immediate surrender of Japan. On August 9 we dropped the second and finally got the Japanese’ attention. The joy on our side of the water was unanimous. The U.S. was saved from staging an invasion of Japan that, we believed, would be bloodier than Tarawa, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa to the tenth power. I was in Okinawa at the time, and nobody I knew questioned the use of The Bomb then or now.

The boys came home in Michael Hobbs’ last chapter in 1941: Texas Goes to War, and the coming for many was harder than the going. The vets came back to a world in which a whole generation of boys were looking for jobs and a place to live, and a whole wartime of industry was closing down. They came back to a world different from the one that they had left. But it was a damn sight better than being in Okinawa.

Francis Edward Abernethy
Stephen F. Austin State University


From a deceptively simple but readable beginning, Texas author Marianne Verges leads her audience into a daring episode in World War II history with the heroines who flew through the air and created magnificent female history associated with the Army Air Forces.

As the chapters unfold, one becomes an admirer of the depth of research from whence came details of the background of some of the individual air women, as well as the overall picture of ladies of great heart, who took to the skies to become the Women’s Airforce Service Pilots – WASP. They ranged from the original group of licensed pilots to those who learned their craft under the direction of two distinguished aces. Under the direction of Nancy Harkness Love, the WAFS – Women’s Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron – flew every kind of aircraft under every conceivable
condition; and with Jaqueline Cochran's tutelage, the WFTD - Women's Flying Training Detachment - beginners learned to pilot and service planes until the two groups merged as the WASP.

The author brings the reader into the lives of the participants, particularly the principal movers and shakers, with Love described as a dynamic but conservative leader, and Cochran as a flamboyant egotist. Both made their contributions through stultifying periods on one hand, and enormously successful times on the other, until the premature deactivation of the WASP in December 1944.

Marianne Verges has achieved the purpose of informing the public in easily understood terms. She has judged none, but simply recorded black-and-white details for posterity - such as how these female flyers fought prejudice, frustration, and delay from the time Nancy Love first suggested a plan in May 1940 for the use of ladies - to Jackie Cochran's August 1941 offer to use 500 licensed women pilots.

Formerly, the WASP was mentioned only in passing, and now their accomplishments come to light here. Sadly, lives must be sacrificed in wars, and thirty-seven of these women perished during their duty time.

Our ladies, on their silver wings, remained at arm's length - neither in nor out of the military which was geared only to the commissioning, use, and needs of men. It was not until 1977 that these female flyers were accorded the privileges and honors of veterans. Texas was host to much of the training and housing. Texas towns with airfields large and small, saw quantities of these women in locations such as Harlingen, Sweetwater, Dallas, Lubbock, Pecos, Brownsville, and more.

We forgive the misquotation of the early WAAC title which is correctly - Women's Army Auxiliary Corps.

Good reading!

Clarice Fortgang Pollard
Author of LAUGH, CRY and REMEMBER
-the Journal of a GI Lady


*Sitting It Out* is a detailed account of one B-24 crewman's experiences as a prisoner of war in both Italy and Germany during World War II. David Westheimer, a Houston native who later became a prominent journalist and novelist, was a crewman aboard the first American bomber shot down over Italy. He was held captive in various internment camps in Italy and Germany for almost three years. Immediately following his liberation, Westheimer wrote a massive 200,000 word manuscript, describing in minute detail his experiences. After his return to America, he busied him-
self as a novelist, producing at least one major success. *Von Ryan’s Express*, and consequently, his memoirs remained unpublished until recently.

Westheimer chronicles virtually every facet of his life as a POW, relating to the reader such matters as treatment by guards and civilians, escape plans, friendships made with other prisoners — including Russians and Yugoslovians — food and rationing, and the fears of the prisoners when Allied bombings took place near the camps.

This reader, already familiar with other books written about POW experiences in World War II, was somewhat surprised that Westheimer’s incarceration, for the most part, seemed to lack the horrors normally attributed to such circumstances. He and his fellow prisoners either were spared many cruelties suffered by other captives or else he chose to downplay the bad times he encountered. This book, though methodical and redundant at times, deserves the attention of anyone interested in the story of POWs in World War II.

Mark Choate
Round Rock, Texas


Otha C. Spencer has brought to life the true experiences of thousands of American airmen in their battle with the world’s most dangerous air routes — The Hump — the Himalayan Mountains. He records a part of the history of World War II that is accurate in every detail from the political maneuvering which goes with a war, the perils of the monsoons, storms over the mountains, and the uncharted parts of China, even in 1945. It is told in a manner that the reader is not only informed but can relive, to some degree, what these men faced in their quest to be the life and bloodline of the China, Burma, India Theater. This is a *must read* book if one is a pilot or in any other part of aviation. If one is an historian, and likes history told as the adventure that it is, or an American, who is proud to have been a part of this history, it makes for interesting reading. Then there is one more revelation to be told — there were no atheists flying the Himalayans, I know for I, too, was a Hump Pilot in the C.B.I.

Gean B. Hale
Nacogdoches, Texas

The editor of this volume contends that social historians generally have neglected the study of the impact of war on society and that American historians particularly have ignored the social changes caused by their Civil War. Vinovskis’s assessment overlooks many excellent recent works written by Southern historians such as Jonathan Wiener, Dwight Billings, Stephen Ash, and George Rable, addressing this issue, but on the whole, the conclusion is an accurate one. The seven essays in the book, six of them written for it originally, are explorations of the interaction of war and society. The central theme of the essays is the focus on different aspects of that question. The war-time experience of the North is the subject of all seven.

The importance of this book is the overview that it provides of the topics social historians think are interesting and the types of methods that are being used by them. All of the essays are excellent examples of well-researched, modern social history. The first two essays, written by Vinovskis and Thomas R. Kemp, are case studies of three different communities, one in Massachusetts and two in New Hampshire, that address the demographics of military service. Both authors reach conclusions that challenge standard generalizations. They discovered that enlistments were from all sectors of society and cut class lines. They found, however, that foreign-born residents did not enlist in the army in the same proportion as the native-born. They also determined that a larger percentage of the male population served in the army than they had expected. Although they do not examine the problem in detail, the authors found that “significant” casualty rates among those who served caused immediate and continuing problems within local society. Vinovskis does look at one aspect of the war’s long-term impact, examining the Federal program of veterans’ benefits, which he contends served as a sort of old-age pension for Northerners through the end of the nineteenth century.

Reid Mitchel takes a different course in an essay on the relationship between local communities and the lives of soldiers. While the other authors were concerned with how the war affected society, Mitchel’s essay emphasized how society influenced the war. He found that, despite the efforts of army leaders to impose a formal military organization upon Civil War soldiers, the ideas, values, and relationships of local communities withstood such attempts and helped to define the military experiences of the soldiers.

J. Matthew Gallman’s essay on voluntarism in the organization of Philadelphia’s Great Central Fair and Robin Einhorn’s study of Chicago municipal government during the war investigate the war's impact on urban institutions – in these cases charity work and government. Gallman
concluded that war-time experiences in Philadelphia did little to centralize charity work or to breakdown barriers to the integration of women into that work. Einhorn found that problems created by the war in Chicago did lead at least in part to a greater role for local government.

The final two studies, Stuart McConnell’s examination of the men who joined the GAR in three communities and Amy Holmes’ study of American widows and the pension system, looked at long-term effects of the war on communities. McConnell’s analysis of the GAR discovered that the organization served as a fraternal institution for local elites, yet because it drew its membership from a broad cross section of the community, it also helped to minimize the development of class tension in these communities. Holmes found that the pension system provided an effective old-age pension and cushioned the damage caused by the death of family members.

While offering useful insights into how war may change society, the conclusions offered here underscore the problem of such studies relative to military and political history. Military and political historians usually deal with problems that present fairly clear cause-effect relationships. With some reservations, most historians would agree that Civil War military action brought about a Northern victory and the political preservation of the Union. The changes the American Civil War produced in American social institutions, however, are not so obvious and these studies provide no clearer picture of the war’s impact. Seeing the Civil War as critical for social change is difficult in the face of conclusions such as Gallman concerning voluntarism, that “signs of change seem outweighed by the evidence of persistent localism and gender divisions” (p. 112), or of Einhorn, that the “Civil War did not ‘cause’ machine politics in Chicago, though it sped the developments that did” (p. 138). This is not to suggest that the war was not decisive, but these studies indicate the need for much more work before any such conclusion may be made.

Carl Moneyhon
University of Arkansas at Little Rock


When Ulysses S. Grant took the oath of office as president in 1869, most Americans had great expectations for their former military hero. They hoped he could bring to this position the same qualities of leadership that had successfully propelled him to victory during the Civil War. Yet Grant assumed this new role with little political experience, and many historians have asserted that he entered this new phase with few political beliefs. Historians tend to separate his victorious military career from his failure to become an effective politician.
In this book, Brooks D. Simpson argues that it is impossible to separate one phase of Grant’s life from the other. He believes that during the war Grant developed an acute understanding of politics, and he used this as a foundation for his later policy. This study covers the maturation of Grant’s political beliefs, from the early days as a military commander to his last military position as general-in-chief. The author argues that Grant’s “military operations, and the means used to carry them out, were shaped by his understanding of political as well as strategic ends” (p. xviii).

To prove his claim that Grant was politically astute, the author has relied heavily on Grant’s attitude toward blacks. In many ways, this book is as much about the evolution of the government’s position on emancipation as it is about Grant the military leader. Simpson argues that early on Grant recognized that “federal policy toward fugitive slaves was intertwined with efforts at reconciliation” (p. 23), and he understood that there must be a “controlled transition between slavery and freedom” (p. 32). Grant decided to seek higher office because he was “very concerned lest the achievements of the war be jeopardized, even lost, by the course of postwar partisan politics” (p. 245).

Throughout the book Simpson contends that Grant was ahead of his time in understanding the problems that emancipation would bring, but concludes, nevertheless, that Grant was willing to allow the “perpetuation of racial injustice as the price of sectional reconciliation...” (p. 263). Simpson offers an intriguing argument, but it still remains difficult to reconcile the Grant that the author portrays from 1861 until 1868 with the Grant that many historians depict from 1869 until 1877.

Anne J. Bailey
Georgia Southern University


Abraham Lincoln continues to fascinate and perplex historians. Now the biographer of Stephen A. Douglas and, fittingly, the J.G. Randall Distinguished Professor of History at the University of Illinois, Robert W. Johannsen, turns his attention to the sixteenth president and his political ideas about slavery and the South from 1854 until 1861. Johannsen, who clearly favors the politics and efforts of Douglas in behalf of the Union during these years, popular sovereignty notwithstanding, discovers that Lincoln desired the extinction of slavery, contrary to what he claimed, and promoted a conspiratorial thesis about the South.

Before the Kansas conflict in the mid-1850s, Johannsen argues, Lincoln followed the Henry Clay middle-of-the-road approach to the slavery questions: “opposition to slavery in principle, toleration of it in practice, and a vigorous hostility toward the abolition movement.” (21-22) But
Douglas’s bill, which shattered the old compromise coalition, destroyed any complacency and brought forth from Lincoln pronouncements about an inevitable conflict over the survival of slavery. Referring to the institution as a “black demon,” the future chief executive began to formulate some ineradicable ideas that would lead to the conclusion that slavery must be eliminated, for the Union could not survive a schizophrenic labor ideology.

In order to combat Democratic charges that he intended the “ultimate destruction” of slavery, Lincoln, according to Johannsen, responded with the slave conspiracy charge, which offered him a “neat, simplistic, and emotionally charged stratagem for persuading Republicans of the great gulf that separated them from Douglas, for convincing the voters that slavery was a serious threat to free society in the Northern states, and for branding his opponent as a dangerous and devious plotter bent on subverting the republic.” (86)

Johannsen, whether he intended it or not, simply proves how sly, tactful, and skillful a politician Lincoln became. By maintaining a “masterly silence” during the 1860 campaign and not committing himself to a program that would continue a debate over the slavery issue, Lincoln did put the institution on the road to its destruction. Unquestionably, Lincoln vacillated on some aspects of the slavery question and may not have been a small “d” democrat in trusting the people’s wishes as with Douglas. But he did understand that the national government had to stand above the issue of state’s rights and perhaps even serve as a moral guide for the nation when it involved the slavery controversy.

Barry A. Crouch
Gallaudet University


Before the Civil War, there was something singularly American about compromise because Americans had so much to compromise about. The Constitution itself was built on compromises over slavery and federal-state relations. No compromise, no Union. Constitutional Unionism, or at least Henry Clay’s version of it, called for sectional compromise over slavery as a mutual sacrifice for the public good, carried out by disinterested gentlemen in a political culture of deference. For Clay, in Peter Knupfer’s words, the significance of compromise “lay not in its details but in its general effects” (p. 114). The “‘real’ compromise... – the agreement to restrain sectional passions in the general interest – was abstract and affective, not concrete and specific” (p. 233, note 9). Clay orchestrated compromises like this in 1820 and 1833, and tried again in 1850.
By 1850, however, the politics of conciliation and deference had given way to a politics of organized mass parties and pluralistic interest groups who saw compromise as barter, not as sacrifice for the public good. In Knupfer’s view, if Clay pursued compromise as an escape from partisanship, Stephen Douglas pursued it as the product of partisanship. When the six-foot Clay, ancient and tubercular, could not get the parts of the Compromise of 1850 passed together as an omnibus package, the sawed-off Douglas, youngest man in the Senate, took over and got them passed separately. Four years later, Douglas engineered passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, and all hell broke loose. Did Douglas and pluralism bring on the war?

When he comes to the 1850s, Knupfer pays closer attention to details of compromise and legislation. Did details matter more and affection less in the decade that led to war and the final reckoning over slavery? Did compromise ultimately miscarry just because of tactical mistakes by Douglas and the Democrats? Because of fundamental flaws in pluralist democracy – in contrast to the deferential political culture that had nurtured decades of compromise? Because of a breaking of the bonds of affection so necessary for any lasting compromise, whatever its details? Or because slavery was, at last, beyond compromise? Though his subject suggests these questions, Knupfer does not come to grips with them.

The book’s chief contribution is its discussion of the sources and setting of Constitutional Unionism as practiced by Henry Clay. But its tendency to reduce statesmen to political-science abstractions makes the book a chore to read.

Patrick S. Brady
Puget Sound Civil War Round Table


At the beginning of the Civil War more men volunteered for the service than could be accommodated. However, as the war dragged on and casualties mounted, the Federal government was forced to institute a program of national conscription. In We Need Men: The Union Draft in the Civil War, James Geary traces the creation and evolution of the draft as it effected the civilian and military population. Unlike the Confederacy, which used a selective approach to conscription by exempting men in certain occupations, the North relied on a system of universal liability for certain age groups.

In early 1862 Congress and federal officials instituted two programs, the tradition of bounties and the Militia Act of July 17, for the mobilization of Northern manpower. The Militia Act was a departure from the past practice of volunteerism and marked the first step toward a program of national
conscription. Superseding the Militia Act was the hotly contested Enrollment Act which required “all able-bodied males citizens” ages 20 to 45 to enroll for the draft. Following the Militia Act in August, Edwin Stanton called for a Militia Draft of 300,000 militia men.

The system became a bureaucratic nightmare headed by Provost Marshall James B. Fry. For example, the 1863 draft exempted more men than it drafted. Sixty-five percent of the men examined were exempted for physical disability or hardship. Fifty-three percent of those held for service paid a $300 commutation fee, while twenty-nine percent furnished substitutes. Of the original 292,441 names drawn in the draft, only 9,881 became conscripts.

“A rich man’s war and a poor man’s fight” and the New York draft riots are the two main themes associated with conscription. There were accusations of class discrimination with regard to the draft because a draftee could buy his way out. Geary proves, however, that even the working man could take advantage of commutation and substitution.

Despite problems, the system worked. Through detailed reports made after the war, experiences of the system provided information used even by the present Selective Service System. Consulting little-used sources at the National Archives, Geary has generated a useful volume on one of the more obscure facets of the Civil War. We Need Men: The Union Draft in the Civil War is recommended reading.

Blake A. Magner
Westmont, N.J.


The author, a South Texas newspaper editor and student of western history, has put together what is, in essence, an anecdotal history of Fort Griffin, one of a string of military fortifications running across Texas from Fort Worth to near the Rio Grande. Established in 1867, Fort Griffin functioned to meet the needs of the U.S. Army as it pursued the last of the Plains Indians in the years after the Civil War. In the 1870s, as the Native Americans were driven to the reservations, the fort became a center for buffalo hunting, hosting the hunters themselves and serving as the initial collection center for the buffalo hides. Eventually, with the passing of the great herds of buffalo, Fort Griffin and the town that grew up around it welcomed large numbers of cowboys and cattlemen accompanying the cattle herds on their annual trek to market. On May 31, 1881, the U.S. Army stopped using Fort Griffin as a military post, thus removing an important source of local income. Thereafter, local businesses that had been estab-
lished to serve the needs of the military personnel either drifted to the nearby town of Albany or moved out of the area and Fort Griffin soon disappeared.

Relying on primary as well as secondary materials, the author asserts that Fort Griffin was every bit as notorious as Dodge City, Tombstone, or any other of the better known cattle towns in the West. His arguments for the violence of life in and around Fort Griffin are persuasive, although no drastic revision of western history appears imminent, and this book, along with Rister’s work on Fort Griffin, gives us a further glimpse of life late in nineteenth century frontier Texas.

Donald R. Walker
Texas Tech University


Weber has written this decade’s definitive study of the “Spanish Borderlands.” Though he eschews that traditional label coined by Herbert E. Bolton, Weber’s history of the Spanish frontier in the present United States brings this venerable subject into our era. Unlike most earlier accounts, which highlight either Texas and the West or Louisiana and Florida, Weber’s book treats the Eastern and Western Borderlands with equal thoroughness and as parts of a whole. The author also departs from Boltonian tradition by giving serious consideration to the perspective of the first Americans. Rather than depicting the Indians as “challenges” to be conquered or converted, Weber shows them responding to the intruders creatively and according to their own interests. He offers us Native American societies in their dynamic complexity, not cardboard cut-outs before which the newcomers acted.

The author touches upon the vast and lightly-explored subject of the environmental transformation unwittingly initiated by the Europeans. Old-World diseases ravaged American aborigines, often radiating through helpless peoples in advance of the invaders themselves. Acting more slowly but ultimately with profound impact, animals and plants introduced by the newcomers reshaped tribal societies; in one obvious example, the horse precipitated among the Plains Indians a social and economic revolution still rapidly unfolding when the Anglos arrived in the nineteenth century.

Weber’s new look does not alter one aspect of the traditional view – Spain’s hold on its northern frontier was tenuous. Legislation designed to prevent abuse of Indians meant that after the 1570s missionaries played a decisive role in expansion, and they often objected to the presence of Spanish soldiers. Whether this policy benefited the Native Americans is
debatable, but this approach, coupled with chronic underfunding, meant that Spain seldom had sufficient force in its northern marches to repel the hard-probing French and British, and especially the acquisitive citizens of the new American republic.

Yale University Press has produced a large, handsome volume bristling with useful illustrations and maps, and is astonishingly free of typographical errors for a modern book. Weber is generous with wide-ranging and informative endnotes. The work also includes an exhaustive bibliography of primary and secondary sources. The author's treatment of the struggle between Spanish and Indian cultures is sensitive and even-handed. This excellent and comprehensive study displays sound scholarship and perspective but still offers classic adventure and good storytelling.

D.S. Chandler
Miami University (Ohio)


The News from Brownsville: Helen Chapman's Letters from the Texas Military Frontier, 1848-1852 is a rare historical gem. Editor Caleb Coker, a Chapman descendent, began with an amazing collection of correspondence and then did a remarkable, Pulitzer-nominated job of organization and clarification. Readers will be hard-pressed to criticize the work on any level.

The book relates, in their own words, the story of William and Helen Chapman's sojourn on the southwestern frontier. New Englanders by birth, the couple arrived in Texas after the Mexican War when he was assigned to help establish Fort Brown. Thus began "a rich personal chronicle" (p. xi), Helen Chapman's constant stream of letters to family members back home. Here she describes, in clarity and detail, local Hispanic society and customs, the hardships of frontier life, the development of Fort Brown, and the earliest days of Brownsville.

These writings reveal the remarkable style and mature wisdom of their author. Chapman is particularly moving in expressing her own fears and emotions. Her earliest reports to her mother complain of rampant drunkenness and the "frolics" of married men, but she reassuringly adds that her husband is "as kind and attentive as a mother" (p. 71). Before the birth of daughter Helen, she confides her concerns to General Chapman and reminds him that "the living should never be sacrificed to the dead" (p. 272). She later realistically tells her mother that "If it [the baby] lives, my vocation is fixed for some time to come" (p. 274). To son Willie, who eventually will join his parents, she writes that he cannot come yet because
The torturous heat, the lack of schools and churches, and the bad habits of local children, who "say bad words, and do not behave well" (p. 78). She advises him to focus on his studies because "people who do not think can never be useful or comfortable in the world" (p. 78). While such observations may not be particularly unique, the manner and tone of the writing brings new immediacy and appeal to the story of woman's life on the frontier.

_The News from Brownsville_ is not simply the tale of an army wife; it is a narrative of an expanding nation. This work is indispensable to social, western, and Texas historians. Chapman presents an astonishing first-hand account of a place and time, while Coker, a graduate of Stanford University and Duke Law School, provides extensive footnotes and an informative and concise introduction. The illustrations, maps, and index are more than adequate, the bibliography intricate. The twelve chronological chapters are followed by an epilogue and two appendices — one providing extensive identification of "Military Personnel and Major Figures," the other a collection of newspaper articles about William Chapman and pertinent events. Both are truly astounding. For true scholars of the period, this is a delicious and seductive volume.

Vista K. McCroskey
University of Texas at Tyler


On a brisk autumn day in October 1884, in the rugged and remote mountains of western New Mexico Territory at a small village called Frisco Plaza (present-day Reserve), a nineteen-year-old deputy sheriff named Elgego Baca fought off as many as forty angry and drunken Texas cowboys for over thirty-six hours in one of the most famous gunbattles in the history of the American West. In the years that followed, the one cowboy Baca killed in the shootout became four, and the estimated 400 shots that were exchanged, became 4,000. Baca went on to become a casino bouncer, sheriff of Socorro County, a lawyer, the owner of a detective agency, a real estate and mining promoter, publisher of a Spanish-language newspaper, and an enemy of Pancho Villa. In so doing, Baca rubbed elbows with some of the more important, and often corrupt, figures in New Mexico territorial politics. These included Pat F. Garrett, George Curry, Bronson Cutting, Albert Jennings Fountain, Albert B. Fall, and Thomas Catron. Baca also claimed, probably falsely, that he once met Billy the Kid in Albuquerque. When Baca died in August 1945 at the age of eighty, he was still practicing law and hoping for public office.
Larry Ball, Professor of History at Arkansas State University and author of the well-received *The United States Marshals of New Mexico and Arizona Territories, 1846-1912*, and the recently published *Desert Lawmen: The High Sheriffs of New Mexico and Arizona, 1846-1912*, has put together the first really good biography of Baca. What the reader will find in Ball's study of Baca is not the legendary gunman of Walt Disney's "The Nine Lives of Elfego Baca," but a self-centered politico caught up in the unforgiving world of New Mexico territorial politics. Eliminating much of the myth, some of which Baca had cultivated carefully, Ball gives us an objective and well-documented account of this fascinating and extraordinary figure. *The Life and Times of Elfego Baca* is highly recommended.

Jerry Thompson
Laredo State University


In 1934 journalist C.L. Douglas produced this work on the Texas Rangers – and he did so in a most readable fashion. He explained the need of such an organization in frontier Texas during the 1820s and 1830s, then demonstrated Ranger history and traditions through the exploits of revered and honored captains. He told about the exploits of John Coffee "Jack" Hays in combating the Mexican army at San Antonio in 1842, John S. "Rip" Ford in defeating Chief "Iron Jacket" and the Comanches in 1858, and Sul Ross in mortally dueling with Comanche chief Peta Nocona along the Pease River in 1858. Douglas next shifted to the post-Civil War era, relating both interesting and entertaining stories about Captains Leander "Lee" McNelly, John R. Hughes, and Bill McDonald. And, in the twentieth century, he was effusive in his admiration of Captains Tom Hickman and Frank Hamer.

At the time of publication in 1934 *The Gentlemen in White Hats* served a useful historical purpose – but not for long. In 1935 Walter Prescott Webb published *The Texas Rangers: A Century of Frontier Defense*, which was researched thoroughly and scholarly written. On the other hand, Douglas has recounted a number of famous Ranger episodes and incidents in an engaging fashion, but with mistakes both as to facts and dates. Thus, this reprinted volume is for enjoyment and general knowledge.

Ben Procter
Texas Christian University

Over the last ten years publishers have become increasingly fascinated with the Texas Rangers. As a result, a number of books have recorded the institutional history of the organization as well as accounts and biographies of individual members. At the same time, Ranger pictures and photographs have grown in value and importance because of their scarcity. The Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio has fallen prey to such demands, hence the emergence of The Texas Rangers: Images and Incidents.

This work is an attractive, popular history of the Rangers. John L. Davis, a free-lance researcher and writer who is a lecturer at The University of Texas at San Antonio and a part-time teacher at San Antonio College, has produced a readable account of the Rangers and has accompanied his rendition with numerous paintings and black-and-white photos. He has not attempted to give an indepth study, but rather, as the subtitle indicates, has presented images and tales about the Rangers. This work is, therefore, not for scholars. But for those who continue to be lured by the history of the Texas Rangers, Images and Incidents will be both pleasurable and enjoyable.

Ben Procter
Texas Christian University