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Book Notes

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BOOK NOTES

Books received and noted since last we met in this corner of the Journal:

Singing Cowboys and Musical Mountaineers: Southern Culture And The Roots of Country Music, by Bill C. Malone (The University of Georgia Press, Athens, GA 30603), originated as No. 34 in Mercer University's Lamar Memorial Lectures. Malone carved out a history field for himself with the publication of *Country Music USA* (1968), and he continues to be the guru of the field. These lectures mostly investigate the development of country music before it became commercial, the area of his earlier work. Malone brings real scholarship to a field sometimes lacking it, popular culture. Despite a gaudy cover which is neither a credit to the book nor an indication of the depth of thought and writing contained therein, this is an excellent book.

Everyone should enjoy Kent Biffle's *A Month Of Sundays* (University of North Texas Press, Box 13856, Denton, TX 76203), because it is a good place to corral a whole bunch of his Texana columns that appear each Sunday in the Dallas Morning News. Kent is one of the best friends ETHA has in the print world; it is a rare meeting – Spring or Fall – that doesn't result in a column that features one of the papers and the individual who presented it at the meeting. Among those featured here are Dan Rankin on T.J. Rusk, Bill O'Neal on outlaws in Longview, and Max Lale on many things. Divisions are on Texas History, Outlaws, and Folk and Folklore. The value of this is that you really get to see the wit and good writing skills our chronicler possesses.

Best Editorial Cartoons Of The Year: 1993 Edition, edited by Charles Brooks (Pelican Publishing Company, 1101 Monroe St., Gretna, LA 70053), continues the series. Topics represented include the Award Winning Cartoons for the year, the presidential campaign of 1992, Ross Perot, The Economy (Stupid!), Budget Deficits, Family Issues, Women's Issues, The Environment, Health, and Sports, among others. The cartoonist captures the moment with pictures and words, sometimes better than words alone can do. It is a window to the year that was, will be entertaining now, and should be a good research tool in years to come.

Old Friend Mike Kingston's *Texas Almanac, 1994-95* (Dallas Morning News, Box 655237, Communications Center, Dallas, Tx 75265 \$10.95) keeps the series and the spirit of Texas' leading "fact book" alive. Special features of this edition include Sesquicentennial of Statehood, War With Mexico, Texan's in Congress, Environment and Science, Counties, Crime, Population, State Constitution, State Symbols, Politics, Media in Texas, Business & Industry, Culture, State and Local Government, Judiciary, Legislature, State Spending, Blacks Win First Medals, Agriculture, Utilities, Transportation, Education, Minerals, Congress and Federal Taxes, Astronomical Calendar – and Index, thank goodness. A

more complete, current, or handy compendium on Our State would be difficult to imagine.

American Rodeo: From Buffalo Bill to Big Business, by Kristine Fredriksson (Texas A&M University Press, College Station, TX 77843), first presented in 1985 and printed again in 1993 is a review of this uniquely American Western (and Texan) sport, entertainment, celebration of culture – and sometimes controversial activity. Rodeo (pronounced “row-dee-o” in Texas and “row-day-o” in California and other places) has ties to the history and reality of American cowboying; this book pertains primarily to the professionalism and show-biz aspects of the industry.

Business history, a post-WWII field for non-muckraking efforts, is a growing field. A recent example is *From Texas to the East: A Strategic History Of Texas Eastern Corporation*, by Christopher J. Castaneda and Joseph A. Pratt (Texas A&M University Press, College Station, TX 77843). This is a history of a corporation formed in 1947 in Houston to transport natural gas from the southwest to markets in the northeast; principals in the corporation included some of Texas' leading business figures of the twentieth century, including Herman and George Brown. Castaneda is director of the program of Oral History of the Houston Economy at the University of Houston, and Pratt is Cullen professor of business and history at the same university. The book contains a multitude of illustrations as well as text.

Phillip W. Steele and Steve Cottrell wrote of the *Civil War In The Ozarks* (Pelican Publishing Company, 110 Monroe St., Gretna, LA 70053), their native area. Coverage ranges from a narrative of war activity in the area to stories of lost treasures and the outlaws spawned by the war, especially Jesse James. Good illustrations, and of interest because so much of Civil War study concentrates on areas and events to the east.

Want to go camping in Texas? What will you eat? Answers are available in Sheryl Smith-Rodgers' *Weekends Away: Camping and Cooking in Texas State Parks* (Eakin Press, P.O. Drawer 90159, Austin, TX 78709). Contents includes chapters on various parks available for over-night and day-use, advice on preparing for your trip, and tips on safety and “how to” camp. Then come the recipes and menu suggestions that fulfill the second promise of the title.

Eakin Press – see above for address – also published Louis Fairchild's *They Called It The War Effort: Oral Histories From WWII Orange, Texas*. This book contains some black-and-white illustrations, but the bulk of it consists of transcriptions of numerous interviews with veterans of the home-front war in Orange. Featured are the memories of children and teenagers, the life of women and blacks, and especially the shipyard activity so vital a part of life in Orange at the time. Many East Texans made their way to employment there and made a significant contribution to the U.S. victory. This is their story.

Michael C. Borton, *The Making of a Liberated Mind: John Henry Faulk. A Biography* (Eakin Press, same address as above, \$19.95) is a pro-

voking book. As advertised, it is a biography of John Henry – and a good one – up to the point of his legal difficulties with AWARE. Then, at about page 100, it becomes an analysis of blacklisting and for about a chapter or so Faulk is almost forgotten until an analysis of his trial and ordeal are presented. What happened to Faulk in his last two decades is sketched, and there is an Afterword that becomes pure advocacy against censorship. This makes for lots of purposes in one book, but it is written well and keeps you turning pages. I have a great memory of John Henry coming over to Nacogdoches as the luncheon speaker for our Fall meeting about fifteen years ago. He “became” the characters he created with his magnificent story telling. It was bittersweet: all that talent, in tact, but also wasted for so long. But also undefeated. A liberated mind, indeed.