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Cypher, *Bob Kleberg and the King Ranch*, by Bob Glover

Flemmons, *Texas Shiftings*, by Joyce Gibson Roach

Bowman, *WAG: The Story of Texas Coaching Legend Floyd Wagstaff*, by Bob Glover


Marcus, *The Viewpoints of Stanley Marcus*, by A.C. Greene


McDaniel, *A Pictorial History of Sabine County, Texas*, by Fred McKenzie
This paper was presented to the East Texas Historical Association meeting in Nacogdoches, Texas, on September 22, 1995. "The Best Years of Our Lives" is really a figure of speech, not to mention an irony. The purpose of the following dramatic duologue is to show some of the effects of World War II and the immediate post-war years on the generation that fought it.

**AB:** The homecoming movie after World War II was the academy award winner *The Best Years of Our Lives*. It was no heroic *When-Johnny-Comes-Marching-Home-Again* movie with parades and people waving flags. It was about real psychologically and physically wounded soldiers and sailors coming back to a society of civilians and trying to adjust to a world that was trying to forget it had been at war.

The homecoming song – "I kissed her once, I kissed her twice, I kissed her once again; It's been a long, long time" – was a little gentler, more romantic than the movie and maybe just as true. But one thing was true: coming home after the war on "The Atchison, Topeka and the Santa Fe" (from Johnny Mercer's song of the same name) was a helluva lot more difficult than going to the service during the war.

**HAZEL:** We got to the Best Years of Our Lives through Drouth, Dust Bowl, and Depression in the United States and wars and rumors of wars abroad.

In 1931 Japan marched into Chinese Manchuria. This was the first event of a decade of aggression worldwide. I was four and Ab was six. For the next
ten years we witnessed war developing on every front. Although we were young some of those pictures we saw in newsreels and later in Life magazine were indelibly printed in our minds. We studied war in our geography and history classes in elementary school— not as ancient conflicts, but as current history. By the time December 7, 1941, came around, even children our age were rather fatalistic: it had been just a matter of time.

I was fourteen and Ab was sixteen when Pearl Harbor occurred, and our lives began to change immediately. At school, war stamp and bond sales and scrap drives took precedence over other activities and gasoline and food rationing changing our lives at home. Ab's life was affected more drastically than mine. He had to move from Palestine to Nacogdoches the summer before his senior year in high school.

AB: Hey!—we are talking major catastrophe here—not that my father, who was a Goodyear tractor tire salesman, had no tires to sell nor that to keep his job he had to move his family—No! the catastrophe was that I, who had a bonded circle of friends and a high profile job jerking sodas at Doc Murphey's Drugs, had to leave the sophisticated good life in Palestine and move to the outback rurality of Nacogdoches, where I became the new kid on the block. The war had interrupted some of the best years of my life!

HAZEL: He was the new boy in town, and he was cute, and by the end of that school year we were "going together."

I have to admit that my main motivation was to have a serviceman to write to. But as time passed my feelings got a little more serious, and by his graduation time we were a pretty love-sick pair. All of this was compounded by the fact that he and his family were moving to Gulfport, Mississippi, the day after graduation and that three weeks later he would be going into the Navy. This best year of our life was a very emotional time.

AB: Looking back, maybe those weren't the best years of our lives, but they were certainly some of the most intense. They were the years that stamped our generation's memories with scenes and songs that are as vivid and heart squeezing today as they were then. Maybe even more so; the mind has a way of saving treasures and tossing trash.

I was seventeen in 1943, and two life-changing events happened to me that spring: I joined the Navy and I fell in love. The hitch in the Navy lasted three years; the love affair lasted fifty-two—and it's still holding. And it had a dramatic start.

The ultimate going-away-to-war movie was Since You Went Away. Theatres were awash with tears when Jennifer Jones and Robert Walker parted at the train station, and then the music played, "Nights are long since you went away. I dream about you all through the day."

Our parting song was the old Eddie Howard ballad "For all we know, we may never meet again; Before you go, make this moment sweet again." We cried rivers! parted in sorrow, wrote long longing letters, and came together briefly and frustratingly on short leaves over the next three war years.

HAZEL: Ab was the first boy I sent off to war and it was certainly the most painful departure. But, as the spring of 1944 developed and my own high school graduation approached, all of the boys in my class began to take on a
new significance. We were only seventeen or eighteen years old. Most of us had known each other all of our school lives, and we had played together, studied together, and grown up together. Now suddenly these boys that we had taught to dance and that we had played clod wars with just a few months before were putting on uniforms and going off to fight in a real war.

These boys left one by one through the summer and fall of 1944 and by Christmas most of them were gone. Before each one left we feted them and hung on to them as if each one were the only boy in the world — and for that point in time he was. When a friend returned home on leave we were completely absorbed with him. It was his time and all other priorities disappeared. College classes certainly had no priority. We didn’t hesitate to say that a friend was in on leave so we couldn’t come to class, and usually this excuse didn’t meet with much objection. Everyone had people they would have dropped everything to see.

For the rest of the war the highlights of our lives were thecomings and goings of our friends in the service. As time wore on these comings and goings dwindled away — everybody was overseas.

**AB:** You know, I couldn’t wait to go to the service. My reading before we ever got into the war had been *G-8 and His Battle Aces* and *Bill Barnes Air Trails* and, most of all, a Navy recruiting pamphlet I picked up at the post office. So when I passed a test and got into an officer’s training program, I was in a hurry to go. But V-12 was too slow, and I was scared to death that the war would be over before I would get in it. I quit going to class and soon was in boot camp, then gunnery school, and finally went to sea in wooden-hulled mine-sweeper serving as a survey ship. I loved the sea and sailing and being in the Navy. I would not have chosen to be anywhere else at that particular time in history, and most of my shipmates on the USS *Harkness* felt the same way.

**HAZEL:** This was truly a war that everyone was involved in, whatever his age or job or position. People were volunteering for all sorts of war related activities. Businessmen gave up their executive positions and salaries and went to Washington to head up Government agencies as “Dollar-a-year” men. Movie and stage stars went all over the country selling war bonds and entertaining the troops. Bob Hope went to every battle front in Europe and the Pacific and became an icon of home for thousands of homesick American boys. Stage door canteens sprang up in Hollywood, on Broadway, and in every major entertainment center in the country. Nearly every town in the country that was near a military camp or convoy crossroads had some sort of USO. Even here in Nacogdoches, with a population less than 10,000, we had a USO.

Many major rail centers which had large numbers of troops passing through had volunteer groups of ladies who met every train with cookies and sandwiches and good wishes for these boys. The home front grew Victory gardens, and saved scrap metal, paper, tin cans, and even bacon grease. We car-pooled and made every trip necessary. We rolled bandages and knitted socks and mufflers. But most of all, we wrote letters and we prayed.

**AB:** But the war dragged on. A tired Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected president for the fourth time in 1944, and by then a sadness hung over the land.
We sang sad songs to our sweethearts on the other side of the big water — “I'll walk alone, for to tell you the truth I'll be lonely,” and “Long ago and far away I dreamed a dream one day” — and the words that still bring a lump in the throat of that generation, “I'll be seeing you in all the old familiar places.” Longing for home and loved ones and Peacetime! became a twenty-four hour process. The heroics of “Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition” had given way to the sad reality that a real war lasted longer than an Errol Flynn or Van Johnson movie.

HAZEL: On a happier note, 1944 was the year of D-Day, the Liberation of Paris, and the first smell of victory. As the Allies advanced rapidly toward Germany that fall we were all saying “They'll be home by Christmas.” That hope was dashed by the German break-through known as the Battle of the Bulge. America suffered 77,000 casualties in that engagement. It was the grimmest Christmas of the war. We recovered, and that spring we knew Germany was near the end. Even the bone-crushing news of FDR’s death on April 12 could not completely dim our optimism. For many in my generation, Roosevelt was “The President,” the only one we had ever known. When Germany surrendered on May 8, 1945, there was an accompanying sadness that The President had not lived to see the victory.

VE Day was reason to celebrate, but the job was only half-done. Most of my friends were in the Pacific, and the wait was still on. All of the predictions at home were that the Japanese would have to be driven out, island by island. So for us at home, as well as those in the Pacific waiting to start the invasion of Japan, the news of the atomic bomb was welcome.

AB: The Harkness was sailing somewhere around Okinawa on V-J Day. We were in convoy with a half-a-dozen other ships heading to God-knows-where. They never told us anything. We sailed blacked out and at battle stations, wearing helmets and life jackets, both of which we hated. We also had been listening to the radio and knew about the big bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, so we were sweating it out, hoping the war would end before we had to invade Japan.

Then, about ten o'clock that morning the destroyer leading the convoy blew its whistle and ran up the flags spelling “Victory!” We screamed and hollered and jumped around like a bunch of crazies, and some idiot yelled, “Unload through the barrels!” Well, we fired everything we had, the big gun — a three-inch fifty — twenty millimeters, fifty calibers. Crewmen broke out carbines, .30-06s, and .45 automatics from the gun shack and shot at anything that floated or flew. They did the same thing on the other ships, and it's a wonder we didn't kill and sink each other and every ship in the East China Sea.

HAZEL: I was working at Cason-Monk Hardware and operated the pulley-change system they had in the office at the back of the store. We all made plans about just what we would do when the news of the Japanese surrender came. I planned to grab hold of the central pulley and just ride it down the middle of the store to the front door. Fortunately for the Cason-Monk pulley system, we got the news in Nacogdoches after business hours with a blast of the civil defense siren and the sounding of all of the fire and sawmill whistles in town.
My father and I went down to the square, where many people like us just wanted to come together and celebrate but didn't quite know how.

AB: Our whole convoy headed toward Buckner Bay. We made port that evening, and the main thing I remember is the Japanese mourning dirge that played continually on all of their stations. Now that we were the victors we would allow ourselves – dimly – to recognize that a nation of human beings was bowed down in sorrow.

I don't remember much shipboard philosophizing about the morality of the A-bombs. Considering the bloodshed involved in taking Iwo Jima and Okinawa, admirals and deck apes alike agreed that if we had to march up the mainland of Japan and take it by force of arms, our dead would number in the tens of thousands. We were awed, even frightened by the power unleashed at those holocausts, but we never questioned the necessity or the morality. We would have been damn fools to have had it and not used it.

We tied up in Buckner Bay and kept minimal watches. Periodically we would hear firing from the island, when the Marines pried some die-hard Japanese soldier out of a cave and he tried to start up the war again. We rode out a typhoon, did some sounding and surveying, and then headed to Japan for the occupation.

We marched into a bombed-flat Nagoya with loaded rifles, not knowing what to expect. What we found was a defeated people who quietly welcomed us to what was left of their lives. People bowed and said "Konichi Wa" as if we were all human beings casually greeting each other on the street. Hirohito – at the "suggestion" of Douglas MacArthur – had so ordered it.

HAZEL: The immediate reaction was: "They'll all be home!" and "We can throw away our ration books!" The Office of Price Administration had set up price controls and instituted rationing early in the war. Rationing had begun with sugar in April of '42 and increased to include coffee, butter, meats, fat and oils, canned foods, shoes, and gasoline. These restrictions were lifted gradually in the spring of '45 but had to be reinstated on some items as shortages occurred. Rationing finally ended in 1947, when restrictions on sugar were lifted.

Price controls on everything but rent were lifted by the fall of 1946 but reinstated in 1950 because of the threat of inflation. All controls were removed by 1953, and the Office of Price Stabilization was abolished.

The War Department wisely set up a point system that would ensure a gradual de-mobilization. The system was set in place – so many points for age, for months in service, overseas duty, etc. As soon as this was published everyone started busily calculating when their return would occur. Ab wrote that he would probably be eligible in 1948.

A surprising number of veterans returned to school the fall of 1945 and even more the spring of 1946. So many, in fact, that a campus Veterans Association was established in February of 1946.

But the fall of 1946 was the real beginning of the post-war campus in everyone's memory. The enrollment at SFA jumped to over a thousand and early rumors said the ratio of men to women was 7-to-1 – officially it was said to be 3-to-1, and as we later realized many of these male students were married. Nonetheless it was a miracle to girls who had spent most of their
college years on a virtual all-girl campus.

AB: It's a wonder the Harkness remained seaworthy; we let her go to hell tied up in Nagoya. We packed the deck guns in cosmoline and stuck them in the hold. And we stood a semblance of watch, but we chipped no paint. All of the enthusiasm with which we joined the Navy and went to war was gone. Officers and men were marking time and counting discharge points, waiting to go home.

We finally sailed home in cold February seas, so badly provisioned that we were breaking C-Rations out of life rafts before we got to Guam. We finally got fresh stores on Johnson Island and sailed into Pearl Harbor stuffing ourselves with lettuce and tomato sandwiches on toast.

I left the ship at San Diego in March of '46 and rode the Atchison, Topeka and the Santa Fe through the southwestern desert back toward Texas. Somewhere in the sands of the Arizona desert we rolled for miles through a forest of airplanes - stored tail up, nose down - the waste of war that stretched as far as you could see on both sides of the track. I still think of that sight and wonder if those planes are still there.

They gave me $100 and a ruptured duck at the separation center in Norman, Oklahoma. I hitchhiked to Nacogdoches, stopping on the way to visit uncles and aunts, who welcomed me home with love. An uncle drove me from Tyler to Nacogdoches.

I had spent my entire enlistment with Hazel on my mind, daydreaming and nightdreaming what it would be like when the war was over and I would hold her again - with no more good-byes or even goodnights. I never doubted that we would get married, settle down, have children, and grow old together. No matter how bad things got, I could always curl up with her in a soft corner of my mind, and feel that everything would be all right when the war was over and we were together again.

And there she was coming across her yard to meet me in a tight, striped T-shirt; and the music played "I kissed her once, I kissed her twice, I kissed her again - It's been a long, long time."

HAZEL: De-mobilization was not necessarily the realization of the perfect dream for everyone, however. There were all sorts of problems involved in the return to "normal" life. Many men came home to the same problems that had existed before they left; the war had not cured those. Many found themselves asking what was normal after all - what was real?

These men who had left for war on a note of high drama, the center of everyone's attention, returned home to a heroes' welcome alright, but they soon found they were expected to blend back into everyday civilian life rather quickly, adjust, get with it - the war was over!

Ab's uncle dropped him at Heaton's Grocery store on North and East Austin streets, just up the hill from our house. He called to tell me he was on his way, and I immediately called my best friend to tell her he was home. When he came in our front gate and I ran out to meet him, it was just what the dreams had all been about. We could have been one of those "Back Home For Keeps" ads that Community Silverplate had run in the Good Housekeeping magazines all through the war. I had saved everyone of the series, picturing myself as the heroine, of course.
And it was wonderful – but – the urgency and the high drama and the shadow of his impending departure were not there anymore. He was going to be around, and I was pretty involved in college life by then. I was a sophomore. I was nineteen years old. I was also smarter than I had ever been before or ever have been since, and I had the lead in the College production of *Claudia*. I had classes and I kind of fitted Ab in where I could. It was a far cry from the times when he would come home on leave and nothing else mattered but being with him. He was very aware of the difference, and by the time he left things had kind of fallen flat.

**AB:** Can you believe that she had not put herself on “Hold” while I was gone! Her life had moved in its own direction. The result was that she had play practice that first night – and every other night that I was there – and I spent what should have been catch-up courtin’ time in a dark auditorium watching her do something that was as important to her as my company. And during the day she went to classes. I was not a part of her life’s activities.

I was not a part of any activities. I was a floater between a life in the service and civilian life, and I did not belong to either.

We pledged undying love, but sometimes when we kissed I caught her with her eyes open and kind of squinty, as if she were running through lines of her play.

I was subdued when I headed to Baton Rouge, where my parents now lived.

I met other service men at the edge of towns hitching rides back home, and we came together like long-lost brothers and sat on curbs, smoking and talking about how strange it was being back and how we couldn’t find a place where we were comfortable. Some even talked of going back in the service.

A lot of servicemen came back without a familiar home to go to, without a familiar room in a familiar town. Dads moved all over the country during the war, working in shipyards and defense plants. Orange, Texas, grew from a town with 7000 people to a town with 70,000 in a year, and those movers were coming from all over Texas. My best friend left a home in Woden (pop. 54) and returned to his parents’ new house in Houston. My dad’s company had moved him three times, so I – and thousands of barelly grown vets – came “home” to a house and town that we had never seen before.

Well, I lasted about two weeks hanging around the house before I nearly went berserk and took my parents with me. Dad’s suggested cure was to find a job. Mother tried to fix me things I liked to eat.

I hit the road the first week in April, vowing to find a ship and go back to sea. I ended up bumming around half of the United States, from New Orleans to Tampa to New York, Chicago, Winnipeg and then back through the wheat harvest to Texas. I slept behind sign boards, in fire stations, flop houses, and Salvation Armys. I washed dishes for a week in DC, milked cows for two weeks in Indiana, and worked the wheat harvest till it ran out in Kansas. And I met a host of wandering hobo vets on the road. I guess we were all looking for something: a place, maybe, or something of our old selves.

I made it back to Hazel and Nacogdoches around the end of July. That was not one of our better visits.

**HAZEL:** The next time I heard from Ab after his homecoming visit was
a brief postcard “on the road.” His plans were indefinite, and he would see me “sometime.” In the meantime, more and more of the Nacogdoches boys were coming home. Soon most of my high school crowd was together again, and we pretty much resumed the easy ways of our senior year, before everybody left for war. We dated some but usually it was just “our crowd” enjoying being together again.

One Sunday in late July I had a date to go on a picnic at Love’s Lockout – apparently I was the only girl in East Texas who had never been to Love’s Lockout. I had gone to the eleven o’clock church service and was sitting with a group of my girl friends when one of them nudged me and said, “Look.” There at the front entrance was Mr. C.K. Chamberlain, our high school principal and the official greeter for the church, and he was standing by the most be-draggled hobo I had ever seen and was pointing him in my direction. It was Ab, wearing the clothes he had been on the road in for four months and with all of his belongings in a little paper sack. He was walking over to me in full view of the whole congregation of the First Methodist Church. I was mortified! I was also glad to see that he was alive. The last communication had been a postcard from Kansas two or three weeks before with no indication when, if ever, he would be back in Texas.

Well, the visit went downhill from there. The boy I had a date with promptly broke it when he found out Ab was in town – I have yet to go on a picnic at Love’s Lockout. He and Ab were good friends. In fact, Ab spent the rest of the visit at his house regaling everyone with his adventures on the road. The end result was that we broke up in a stormy session in our front yard that ended with my Daddy coming out and ordering him off the premises with instructions never to return. Whoever thought the end of the war meant peace and dreams come true was not completely clued in.

Many engagements or understandings were broken in the postwar period, but more tragically many wartime marriages ended also. Just as the marriage and birthrates had skyrocketed during the war, the divorce rate in postwar America more than doubled. Romances and marriages that had flamed during the heat of wartime found that they had little to stand on in less urgent times.

AB: I spent the rest of the summer still floating, this time on a shrimp boat out of Morgan City. But I did make one decision as I sat on a bucket trying to make a living snapping shrimp heads; I decided I would go back to school. And since Nacogdoches (in spite of or because of Hazel) was the nearest thing I had to a home base, I decided to use the GI Bill and go to SFA.

Fifty years ago 88,000 WW II vets enrolled in colleges under The Service Man’s Readjustment Act. They were the first of 2.2 million vets who went to school under what was better known as the GI Bill of Rights. The beginning of the best years of many lives was the GI Bill, which gave vets a chance to start businesses, buy homes, and most importantly, go to school. The lucky ones went to college on the GI Bill and adjusted themselves to a world they had dreamed about when they were standing sleepy-lonely bridge watches from midnight until four a.m. The unlucky ones joined the 52-20 Club (twenty dollars a week for fifty-two weeks) and floated around, waiting for something to bring them back to a civilian’s earth. Incidentally, less than ten percent of those on 52-20 drew the full fifty-two weeks. Nobody wanted to go on welfare.
Most made it; some didn't. I did.

Dad dropped me off at the boys' dorm that September afternoon, and I sat and stared at a wall as uncomfortable as ever. Then somebody yelled up at my window, and I looked out to see four of my high school buddies draped around in a black jeep, circulating a fifth of Four Roses. We drove out in the East Texas countryside of an early fall, stopped somewhere near the top of Hayter Hill where it drops off into the Loco Creek bottoms, and welcomed each other back to civilian life. For the first time since I was discharged, I was back on earth and I occupied a piece of it that was mine, and I was home, where I belonged. The war for me was finally over.

HAZEL: The 1947 Stone Fort, the college annual, reflects the transformation on the campus at SFA. Along with an enlarged enrollment — predominantly male — there were new buildings to accommodate this growth. These were temporary buildings purchased at war surplus prices from de-commissioned army facilities. Temporary buildings were set up for the Music, Agriculture, and the newly established Forestry Departments. They were used, wooden, army barracks which were later brick-faced to up-grade them. There were also two Vet Villages constructed on campus, one for married and one for single vets.

These temporary buildings remained on campuses for many years. When we went to teach at Lamar in 1956 the auditorium and student center there were still in a rambling wooden army surplus Rec Center. College campuses all over the country were bursting at the seams, and de-commissioned Army facilities were running over with buildings that were no longer needed. The result was a decided new look to many stately ivory tower campuses.

The G.I. Bill was responsible for most of this growth. The educational part of this bill provided tuition, books, and a monthly stipend based on time-and-a-half in service, not to exceed forty-eight months. The stipend was $75 for a single GI, $90 for a married student, and $105 for a couple with a child. The student could attend any school that he could qualify for, university or vocational, SFA or Harvard, USA or overseas. Over two million veterans responded to this, and the educational level of this country rose significantly.

AB: College provided the first taste of normalcy most of us had seen in several years. And we went at it with a youthful enthusiasm that belied the age of some and the wartime experiences of all. We went to pep rallies and ball games, joined clubs and played campus politics, and we danced every dance.

My parents bought me a pocket watch and a suit. The suit was double-breasted with a long, single-button roll and the pants had cuffs that were slightly pegged. I looked as good in those civvies as I did in those Honolulu tailor-made dress blues that had eighteen-inch knees with thirty-inch bells that went flap-flap as I walked down the street and all the girls would sigh and say, "Oh, what a salt!" Well — I looked almost as good.

HAZEL: Clothes were a big part of that post-war campus. I worked all summer at Cason-Monk and saved every penny to buy clothes before the fall term started. For the first time since the beginning of the war there were beautiful clothes. I bought TWO pairs of shoes. Not the serviceable shoes I could buy, if I could find them, during the war, but darling, fragile dress shoes,
sling pumps with HIGH heels. One pair was brown kid with a semi-tailored bow on the toe, and the other pair was black suede with a scalloped open toe and grosgrain ribbon heels. I also bought a tan camel’s hair coat with big Joan Crawford shoulder pads and a blue gabardine dressmaker suit with a scalloped placket down the front of the jacket and little rhinestone buttons and BIG Joan Crawford shoulder pads and a tailored brown gabardine suit with BIG Joan Crawford shoulder pads.

The first home game of the season, when it was still pretty hot, I wore my new brown suit, my new brown sling pumps, and my camel’s hair coat. By half-time the weight of two sets of big shoulder pads had cut off the circulation in my neck to my brain, and this plus the heat of two layers of real wool combined to send me home in a faint. But these were the first good, new clothes I had had in five years, and I was going to wear them or else.

Imagine our dismay when hem lines dropped drastically with the New Look in the winter and spring of ’47-’48. These great new clothes we had all bought were soon hopelessly out of fashion. But our experience in wartime scrounging and making do came to our rescue. My mother scalloped the hem of my blue suit to match the jacket and added eight inches of blue velvet so I felt very stylish. Everybody’s skirts had some sort of addition that year, and you could tell at a glance what had been bought before or after the advent of the New Look.

On the whole, 1946-47 was a memorable year in every way. The fact that Ab and I were broken up added a sort of sad romantic air to everything and at the same time allowed us to date other people and have a great time. My father had told me at registration week that Ab was back. He was happier to see him than I was. Daddy was sure that his talk with Ab had made a better man of him and his coming back to SFA was proof of it. The year in general was what we had always thought college could be. All it had ever needed was men.

**AB:** Nacogdoches had no housing. I spent the first three weeks of school sleeping on various friendly couches. I still had everything I owned in a seabag. Then six of us rented a four-room house we called The Buzzard’s Roost. We slept two to a bed in three bedrooms, and we lived and ate and entertained at a big table in the kitchen, and within a month the Roost was put off limits to female students by the Dean of Men, who happened to be Hazel’s father. You can imagine his reaction when he found out that his daughter had brought me supper one night.

I spent the following year in the Vet’s Village army barracks, lovingly referred to as The Old Folks Home.

Vets came back to a housing shortage they could not imagine. Merle Travis wailed “No Vacancy” about a soldier whose only dream when the bullets screamed was a little nest where he could rest when the war was won. The US was woefully short on nests. Officially it was said that we were about 4,500,000 houses short for our burgeoning peacetime population. One apartment was advertised for rent in Atlanta, and over 2,000 people showed up to rent it. The Senate voted unanimously to turn over 75,000 units of surplus military housing to vets and their families. Private contractors bought surplus Army buildings and converted them to apartment buildings and dwellings. Vets tried to cope by building A-Frames or concrete block houses.
HAZEL: Ab and I did finally, inevitably, get back together, and got married in 1948. There was still a housing shortage, and wartime rent control was still in effect. We lucked into an apartment that we rented for $20 a month out of our $90-a-month GI money. We got the apartment because we knew the couple who were vacating it, and we got our names in at the head of the list. It was in an older house that had been converted into apartments. It had two large rooms and a converted sun porch that was called a kitchen because they had put a sink in it. We had to share the bath, but the rooms had twelve-foot ceilings and a fireplace in both rooms, which we couldn't use for fear of fire, but it was our kind of house. We bought a brand new Westinghouse refrigerator with Ab's terminal leave bond, and we were set up for housekeeping and many more of “the best years of our lives.”

AB: Believe it or not, vets never talked much about World War II before all these fiftieth anniversary proceedings began, but we have lived the rest of our lives with it. I got my bachelor's on the GI Bill. Hazel and I went to the University of Neuchatel Switzerland (so we could ski!) on the GI Bill. I got my master's and Hazel had a baby on the GI Bill, and I finally ran out my education time with a summer at UT working toward the Ph.D. We bought our first house with a GI Bill loan and bought our first land with a Texas Veterans' Land Bill loan. And let it be said of that generation that less than one percent defaulted on their government loans. Selling that Veterans' financed land bought our last house, the one we still live in. So – World War II was a long and bloody war, and it took some agonizing to get over it – but the United States of America more than paid me back for those three years that some called The Best Years of Our Lives.

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Together they have five children and six grandchildren.
Texas newspaperman A.N. Vaughan was very much a Southern man. He advocated the cause of Southern rights, defended the institution of slavery, demanded the protection of state's rights, opposed the election of Abraham Lincoln, and favored the secession of Texas. He was also a man of conviction and action. When the Civil War came, he was true to his politics. He gave up his newspaper business and joined the army of the Confederacy.

Editor and publisher of The Beaumont Banner, Vaughan produced his paper for just over one year, from the spring of 1860 until the beginning of the war, and published some sixty issues. Of this number, eleven are available for study, scattered from September 1860 to May 1861. These issues, filled with news, editorials, advertisements, and public notices, tell much about slavery and politics in Beaumont, about secession and the coming of the war. And, because the newspaper was the primary source of news and information and reflected public opinion, these issues provide valuable insights about Beaumonters and their political attitudes. Also, these issues, which demonstrate how Vaughan molded the political opinions of his readers, are important for understanding the secession of Texas.1

In addition, the paper provides a picture of Vaughan, the newspaperman. Born in Mecklenberg County, Virginia, in 1829, his complete name was Archibald Nicholas Vaughan. His given names must have seemed awkward to him because as an adult he consistently identified himself simply as A.N. Vaughan. Little is known about his early years but records show that he had arrived in Beaumont by 1858, when he was employed as teacher and principal of the Beaumont Male and Female Academy. By 1860, when he was only thirty years old, Vaughan was well-known in the town, serving as mayor of the Board of Alderman and publisher of the newspaper. A political and business leader, he boosted the town and worked to promote its commercial development, especially the railroads.2

Vaughan's career in Beaumont was similar to those of fellow editors in nearby Galveston and Houston. Willard Richardson, editor and publisher of the Galveston News, after migrating from Massachusetts to Texas by way of South Carolina, enjoyed an early career in Texas as a school teacher. Hamilton Stuart, proprietor of the Galveston Civilian, served as mayor of his city from 1849 to 1852. The editor and publisher of the Houston Telegraph, Edward H. Cushing, used his paper to encourage the development of railroads and other economic improvements for his city. Like Richardson, Stuart, and Cushing, Vaughan was prominent and influential in his town. And like these men, Vaughan was "sound" on the slavery question; he favored the institution.3

Vaughan's newspaper was one sign among many that Beaumont had become a real town. Well-situated on the Neches River in the farming and ranching country of Southeast Texas, the town in 1860 boasted more than 1100 people, with farmers, stock raisers, doctors, lawyers, and craftsmen. Its streets,

Robert J. Robertson lives in Beaumont, Texas
which hugged the high, wooded banks of the river, were lined with hotels, saloons, dry goods stores, sawmills, and woodworking shops. Nourished by a growing population, Beaumont was fast becoming an important transportation center; steamboats came and went and two railroads were under construction.

Vaughan's market area, the town of Beaumont and the three counties of Jefferson, Orange, and Hardin, possessed a definite Southern character, but the region was not typical of most of East Texas; in terms of cotton and slaves, it was not homogeneous with the Lower South of the United States. The three counties did not have a plantation economy; they were considered "poor" in cotton production and were not characterized by extensive cultivation of the popular staple. Instead, the economic base was diverse; agriculture and animal husbandry were mixed with goodly portions of business. In Jefferson County no more than thirty-five percent of the heads of households claimed occupations engaged directly in any kind of farming or stock raising; a large majority reported jobs in urban, commercial, and transportation activities. No one described himself as a planter.4

In Vaughan's corner of Southeast Texas, the system of slavery was firmly established but the actual number of slaves was modest. Over the entire state, slaves represented thirty percent of the total population while in some East Texas counties the bondsmen accounted for more than fifty percent of the whole. In contrast, the counties of Jefferson, Orange, and Hardin had a slave population of only seventeen percent, with 892 black and 4400 white. These were not unlike the numbers for Galveston County, a truly urban area, which counted a slave population of eighteen percent, 1520 slaves and 6709 free.5

Locally the percentage of citizens who owned slaves was not great; of the 269 households in Jefferson County, only about sixty-five, or approximately twenty-four percent, had residents who held bondsmen. In Beaumont itself about fourteen percent of the households listed occupants who owned slaves.6

Despite living and working in such a non-typical Southern region, with its diverse economy and relatively small slave population, Vaughan was completely orthodox in his political attitudes and activities. He was similar to the partisans of the Lower South on the important questions of the day, and was strongly committed to slavery and the Southern cause.

In every issue of The Beaumont Banner, Vaughan reiterated the original two-fold political mission of his paper: maintain the United States Constitution, with all its restrictions, and advocate the cause of the South and Southern rights. However, in the fall of 1860, with the presidential campaign and the election of Lincoln, his two missions became one: defend the cause of Southern rights against Northern interference, even at the cost of breaking up the Union.7

Among all the issues of Southern rights, the most important was slavery, its protection in the South and its extension into the territories of the United States. As previously noted, the institution was solidly in place in Beaumont and Southeast Texas. In Jefferson County, of which Beaumont was the governmental seat, there were seventy slaveowners and 309 slaves. As the economy of the county was diverse, agriculture combined with business and
transportation, so was the ownership of slaves. This diversity of ownership was in marked contrast to the rest of Texas where ninety-four percent of the slaves were held by masters who reported agricultural occupations and only six percent were owned by non-farmers. 8

In Jefferson County the ownership patterns were very different; agricultural owners held only sixty percent of the slaves while non-farmers owned forty percent. Among the farmers and stock raisers were William McFaddin, who had eight slaves, Joseph Hebert, who owned fourteen, and Alex C. Blanchat, who also held fourteen. On the other hand, non-farmers or “town people” held at least 120 blacks and employed them in urban and commercial activities, such as domestic service, sawmill operations, and railroad construction. 9

The variety of town people who held bondsmen showed the manner in which slavery was embedded in the business and society of the county. Surveyor James Ingalls owned three slaves; carpenter George Wilkinson, one; tanner David French, one; steamboat pilot Charles Burch, one; merchant Otis McGaffy, two; physician Sylvester Mansfield, two; and lawyer William Lewis, one. The slaveholder with the greatest number of bondsmen was John Stamps, a Tennessee railroad contractor, who owned twenty-six. Another significant owner was David Wingate, the operator of a sawmill at Sabine Pass, who owned thirteen. Vaughan was not a slaveholder. 10

About one-fourth of the slaveowners were women. Among them were Eliza Lewis, wife of a lawyer; Nancy Hutchinson, an innkeeper; Lucinda Ruff, wife of a sawmill operator; Sarah Herring, wife of a merchant; Mary Coffin, wife of a ship carpenter; and Elizabeth Junker, wife of a county official. 11

In Beaumont, the largest town in the county, slaveownership was common but not a requirement for holding public office. The municipal government, which was reorganized in October 1860, was comprised of Vaughan, the mayor, and five aldermen: George W. O’Brien, clerk of Jefferson County; Thomas Fletcher, farmer; John J. Herring, merchant; John W. Patridge, saloon keeper; and Nathan Wheeler, machinist. Among these city officials, only Fletcher and Herring were slaveholders. Early appointments by the Board of Aldermen confirmed that slaveownership was not a condition for participation in government. Henry E. Simpson, cabinetmaker, was appointed town clerk; Robert Ruff, merchant, was named treasurer; and Wilson A. Junker, blacksmith, was selected to be constable. None of these men were slaveholders, although Junker came from a family which owned bondsmen. 12

On the other hand, advertisements in the Banner demonstrated how important slave labor was to the region. A farm for sale in Hardin County had particular features: one well, two springs, comfortable dwellings with kitchen, overseer’s house, and Negro cabins. W.H. Dunbar, a general auctioneer at nearby Sabine Pass, offered his services to sell real estate, furniture, and slaves. Cave Johnson, a Beaumont saloon keeper and land agent, had a slave for sale in May 1861; describing him as “a likely Negro boy,” Johnson touted the twenty-two-year-old slave as a good blacksmith. 13

In a notice of an administrator’s sale, Dr. P.H. Glaze and Sarah Pattillo
announced the disposition of all the assets of the estate of W.C. Moseley. Included was "a certain Negro girl, of dark complexion, aged about seventeen years." The girl would be sold for cash to the highest bidder.14

Other advertisements in the paper revealed that slaves were employed in sawmill operations and railroad construction. Such practices apparently were not common in Texas, as shown in a recent study which discussed various employments of slaves but did not deal with their use in sawmills or railroads. At Beaumont such procedures were routine. In September 1860 the sawmill operator J.M. Long took out a notice "Negroes Wanted;" he needed five or six able-bodies blacks to work at his mill.15

On the railroad projects of Southeast Texas, the use of slave workers was extensive. Editor Vaughan often reported about the use of slave labor in the construction of the Eastern Texas Railroad. In September 1860, he told of "another gang of 50 slaves" from Rusk County which had passed through Beaumont on their way to Sabine Pass to labor on the road. Later, the editor mentioned a similar occurrence—105 slaves passing through town on their way north to work on the same line. In December, while praising the progress of the Eastern Texas project, Vaughan noted an ample supply of labor—"more than 500 hands, mostly Negroes owned by the stockholders."16

The use of slaves on the Texas & New Orleans Railroad project was also covered in the banner. In September, contractor W.J. Williams & Co. advertised for 200 Negro laborers. The company wanted to hire slaves and offered good wages to the owner, by the month or by contract. The next month Vaughan complimented the yeoman service being performed by Negro gangs under the contractor Minter and Gilder, saying the slaves were doing "excellent work."17

Another contractor working on the Texas & New Orleans project and hiring slaves was Marsh, Campbell & Co. Their advertisement, "Two Hundred Negroes Wanted," offered liberal wages, good frame houses, and attention paid to the slaves’ comfort. The company also promised to care for the sick, provide a well-ventilated building, and a physician who would give constant attention. These conditions of hire showed evidence of at least some humanitarian feelings for the bondsmen.18

Humanitarian sentiments towards blacks also were expressed in "The Latest Slave Murder Case," a lengthy story which the Banner borrowed from the Petersburg Express. In Mecklenberg County, Virginia, which was Vaughan’s birthplace, a white man had been convicted and imprisoned for the stripping, whipping, and murdering of his slave woman. The paper applauded the punishment of the white man, saying it vindicated Southern character against aspersions cast by enemies in the North. Southerners "utterly detest and abhor cruelty and barbarity," the paper declared, "whether to whites or blacks."19

Printed by Vaughan, these protestations against cruelty and barbarity were ironic. They were contradicted by other articles which he published and by his performance as mayor of Beaumont. In these activities he demonstrated his loyalty to the slavery system and his sympathies with racist ideas which
justified the enslavement and exploitation of African Americans. Like many Southerners and Texans, he apparently believed in the basic inferiority of the Negro, the extraordinary capacity of the slave to withstand heat and hard physical labor, and the inability of the black to govern and improve himself.\(^2\)

Vaughan borrowed materials from other publications to promote these racial concepts and to justify the institution of slavery. For example, he ran a long article about slave management which he took from The Southern Cultivator, a popular agricultural journal published in Augusta, Georgia; the anonymous writer supported the concept of Negro inferiority and suggested that slaves should be firmly disciplined, preferably with a cowhide whip. And in apparent support for expansion of slavery, and perhaps for the reopening of the slave trade, Vaughan printed a Harper’s Weekly essay which argued that only “the dark races” were suitable for laboring in the Southern climates. Because it was illegal to import slaves by force, the article asked, how were they to be had?\(^3\)

With the system of slavery came risks of slave escape and slave rebellion. Incidents of such were reported in September 1860, when the Banner carried stories about the “Texas Troubles,” a wave of hysteria and violence which spread across the state during the summer of that year. Destructive fires in North Texas, rumored to be the work of arsonists, produced tales of abolitionist plots and slave insurrections, of arson, murder, and rapine. Fear and panic in white communities prompted the organization of vigilante committees and the enrollment of patrol companies that regulated slave behavior. Numerous suspects were rounded up and subjected to whipping and lynching.\(^5\)

Perhaps as many as fifty men, black and white, died in the “Troubles.” The Waco Democrat reported the hanging of two men named Boatwright; one, Richard Boatwright, was described as notorious for stealing horses and tampering with slaves. The Colorado Citizen told of a Fayette County plot in which 200 Negroes had banded together and planned to escape to Mexico; the plot was discovered and the leader arrested. The affairs of the Athens Vigilance Committee were recorded by the Trinity Advocate. The committee had uncovered a Negro plot to poison water wells; one well was poisoned and slaves were discovered in possession of bottles of strychnine. The plot had been suppressed and the Vigilance Committee subsequently disbanded.\(^5\)

Details of the slavery system in Beaumont were revealed in November 1860 when the Banner published various town ordinances. Here editor Vaughan printed the laws which he had drafted and signed as mayor. And here, in a section entitled “Offenses related to Slaves and Slave Property,” he demonstrated his loyalty to slavery, his willingness to enforce the system, and his approval of whipping as a punishment. Also seen in these city regulations was the manner in which the institution of slavery was entwined with the city government. The citizens owned the slaves but the municipality claimed the right to regulate slave behavior and to control relations between the races.\(^5\)

The slave regulations for Beaumont were similar to urban slave codes adopted in other Texas towns such as Austin and Galveston. The Beaumont
statutes prescribed crimes and penalties. For white citizens, there were fines of $10 to $50 for various violations: allowing a slave unauthorized possession of guns, ammunition or intoxicating liquors; associating on terms of equality with any slave or slaves; or resisting the orders of any slave patrol company. For Beaumont slaves the ordinances set forth penalties for possessing firearms or alcoholic spirits, lounging in public, engaging in any insolent or boisterous behavior, or being found away from home at night. The punishments for the blacks were specific and brutal — fifteen to thirty lashes, "well laid-on by the town constable."7

As slavery was seen and discussed in the Banner, so the coming of the Civil War was reported in the paper. From September 1860 through May 1861, Vaughan covered a chain of critical national events: the presidential campaign, the victory of Lincoln, the secession of the Southern states, the separation of Texas from the Union, the formation of the Confederacy, and the mobilization of troops. The editor recorded the political attitudes of the voters of Beaumont and Southeast Texas, their opposition to Lincoln, and their support for secession of the Lone Star state. Here also, working to influence public opinion, Vaughan used his paper for advancing the Southern cause, opposing Republicans, and advocating the movement for secession.

In the presidential campaign, two matters were clear for Southerners, according to Vaughan. The Southern Democratic ticket of John C. Breckinridge and Joseph Lane was the preferred choice; Lincoln and the Republicans were completely unacceptable. Editorialis taken from other Texas papers made the case. Fellow newspaperman Hamilton Stuart of the Galveston Civilian listed his choices for president: first Breckinridge, next Douglas, then Bell, last Lincoln. Also favoring the Southern Democrats, the Redland Express claimed Breckinridge was the only man who could "drive back the tide of fanaticism and silence the waves of frenzy that lashed at the proud columns of the Union." Taking a slightly different angle, an article borrowed from Edward Cushing's Houston Telegraph attacked Stephen A. Douglas, the nominee of the regular Democrats. Describing the candidate as "bold, talented and unscrupulous," the writer predicted Douglas would cause a catastrophe — the defeat of Breckinridge and the election of Lincoln.26

In September, while writing about the presidential campaign, Vaughan lashed out at Texas Governor Sam Houston, castigating him for his attitudes of moderation and for his failure to provide strong leadership in the cause of Southern rights. Once hailed as the hero of San Jacinto and "the infallible man of Texas," now Houston was condemned for "his specious dogmas ... and electioneering cant," for his "blubber about the Constitution and the Union." For failure to face the hard issues, Houston should be ignored, along with moderates such as John Bell and Edward Everett, the candidates of the Constitutional Union Party. What was needed, Vaughan argued, was vigorous opposition to the Black Republicans. He recommended Breckinridge and Lane.27

The next month Vaughan stirred up the sectional controversy and tried to build opposition to the Republican Party. He published articles showing the fanaticism of radical Republicans and their hostility to the Southern way of
life. "Helper's Creed" was a distillation of the anti-slavery diatribe contained in *The Impending Crisis of the South: How to Meet It*. Written by Hinton R. Helper, the extremist book was denounced in the article as a Republican manual. Advocating immediate termination of slavery, the "Creed" recommended the unqualified condemnation and the total ostracism of all slaveholders.29

Equally obnoxious to readers of the Banner were the "irrepressible conflict" speeches of New York Senator William H. Seward, a prominent and provocative Republican spokesman. The collision between North and South was not accidental. Seward declared, it was an irrepressible conflict: "The United States must and will, sooner or later, become either entirely a slaveholding nation or a free labor nation."30

Also in October, the Banner reported a campaign rally in Beaumont. A Mr. Gammage had spoken in favor of Breckinridge and Lane but Vaughan thought it a poor effort, redeemed only by its cause. Gammage was followed by Judge E.A.M. Gray, a popular local lawyer, whose remarks the editor described as a brief but eloquent appeal to the Southern patriotism of the audience.31

In the paper of November 6, Vaughan included a brief notice: "Election Today." He predicted Jefferson County, the whole of Eastern Texas, the entire state would give an overwhelming majority to Breckinridge and Lane.32

Two weeks later the Banner furnished details of the Republican victory. Northern states, with large popular votes and great electoral power, had gone for Abraham Lincoln and Hannibal Hamlin. The South, including Texas, had voted for Breckinridge and Lane; that ticket had carried every Texas county by large majorities. As forecast by Vaughan, Jefferson and Orange County voters had given most of their ballots to the Southern Democrats – 283 votes for Breckinridge and Lane against ninety-one for a fusion ticket composed of anti-Lincoln electors.32

The same edition of the paper carried news of reactions to Lincoln's election: business distress in the North and political unrest in the South. In New York a financial panic was reported; trade was restricted and the bills and stocks of Southern companies were scarcely negotiable. Hoping to restore public confidence, three New York papers – the Herald, the Tribune, and the Times – called on Lincoln to issue a manifesto promising he would protect Southern interests and institutions.33

From Louisiana, Alabama, and Florida came reports of movements for secession and organization of armed militia. In South Carolina, where political excitement was intense, the legislature set the date for a secession convention. At Augusta, Georgia, thousands joined in a disunion parade, a hussar company was raised, guns were fired, and the "Marseillaise" was sung.34

Adding to the tensions between North and South was Lincoln's plain-spoken vow to maintain Federal authority in the Southern states. In a New York article appearing in the Banner, the President-elect insisted that he would maintain Federal laws at all hazard. He declared that his duty forbade his permitting the secessionists to take possession of Federal forts.35
Resistance to Lincoln and the coming Republican administration mounted in Texas. From Willard Richardson’s Galveston News came a long article by C.G. Forshey, Commandant of the Texas Military Institute. Forshey demanded that Lincoln and Hamlin resign their offices; failing that, Southerners should refuse to live under a sectional president. He wanted all citizens to decline service under Lincoln and all judges and postmasters to refuse to function. Suggesting that Texas send delegates to a general Southern convention, he recommended secession within a strong confederacy. If that was not possible, Forshey wanted Texas to go it alone under the Lone Star banner that floated from the flagstaff at the Institute.

Borrowing additional items from Texas papers, Vaughan printed more reactions to Lincoln’s election, reactions which promoted secession and which he no doubt wanted to encourage. Richardson of the Galveston News argued that the “election of a Black Republican president” meant the “hour of waiting was past” and the time for “a bold and decided Stand” had arrived. Waiting for an overt act from the new president was folly, the Rusk Enquirer declared; his election was an overt act. The Anderson Texian reported a company of cavalry had been organized while the Waco South-West told of Lone Star flags flying in the city. Recommending immediate secession, the Huntsville Item claimed it never saw the necessity of joining the Union in the first place.

At Orange, Texas, meetings were held in December to consider issues raised by Lincoln’s election. The crowds there were large and enthusiastic, the Banner said, much in favor of protecting the rights of Texas. A beautiful Lone Star flag was presented by the young ladies of the town to the young gentlemen.

Across the state of Texas, support for secession was widespread, but not unanimous. There were voices of moderation, but these were not heard in the Banner. Governor Houston and others urged caution, delay, careful consideration of the issues. Also recommending caution was Hamilton Stuart, editor of the Galveston Civilian. While not absolutely condemning secession, Stuart suggested “it will be hard to institute better governments or a happier order of things than we have hitherto enjoyed.”

For Vaughan, the need for protecting Southern rights was clear already. In early January, he invited his readers’ earnest and thoughtful attention to “The Address of the People of South Carolina ... to the People of the Slaveholding States...”. Here he offered Beaumonters a lengthy rationalization for secession.

Covering more than five columns, the open letter from the South Carolinians was an impassioned statement of the Southern position, including its historical development. Southerners had loved the Union and fought on her behalf. But all fraternity between North and South had been lost. The sections were driven apart by stern destinies. The North preferred a system of industry in which capital and labor were in perpetual conflict while the South had a system in which labor and capital were held in common, and capital therefore protected labor. Benefits of the Southern program were numerous; many fertile regions, where Caucasians could not labor, were brought into usefulness.
by the work of the Africans. The South Carolinians demanded to be left alone and invited Southerners to join them in forming a confederacy of slaveholding states.41

Vaughan was convinced of the necessity for Texas to secede. Echoing the impatience expressed earlier by Richardson of the Galveston News, Vaughan declared on January 8, 1861, that all argument had been exhausted and all appeals to the North were unheeded, that Southern rights would not be guaranteed if Texas remained in the Union. Urging decisive steps, he thought cooperation with sister Southern states was desirable but not essential. It was high time for action, he proclaimed, but what action? “Shall we remain silent? ... Shall we enter into resolve? ... No! ... Texas should take immediate action ... Let us ... disunite ourselves from a government, under which our most sacred rights are disregarded.”42

Some even believed that secession was not only necessary but also desirable, that separation would bring many benefits to the South. Probably embracing this view and wanting to persuade his readers, Vaughan ran an article from the London Times which suggested that if all the Southern states combined to form a confederacy, they would be the real United States, so far as prosperity was concerned. Every advantage was with the slaveholding states, the writer claimed. Mexico would be conquered and the Southerners would be the lords of the most magnificent domain in the world, controlling the passage between two oceans.43

By February the secession movement among the Southern states had made significant progress. On February 19, Vaughan published a status report: five states had seceded - South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, and Georgia; three - Louisiana, Virginia, and Texas - had called secession conventions; Arkansas, North Carolina, Missouri, Kentucky, and Tennessee had not acted.44

In Texas the secession question was considered in a special convention in Austin. Commencing on January 28, the conclave was covered in the Banner. A “Proceedings” report dated February 4 advised readers about various bills and resolutions. One demanded that General David Twiggs, commander of Federal forces in Texas, surrender all government arms in his possession. Another provided for the purchase of military weapons for the state. A third prescribed a referendum, the submission of the secession act to the voters for ratification.45

Feelings of Southern patriotism ran high. A reprint from the Austin State Gazette called on all Texans to stand by the state and the South in the struggle that was pending between the two great sections of the country. Late events had proved the validity of the Southern position. “Every man must raise his voice on behalf of the honor and safety of his state,” the article declared. “He who is not with us, is against us.”46

Locally, Colonel Henry C. Hicks, a lawyer from nearby Sabine Pass, addressed citizens of Beaumont about the questions then shaking the pillars of the nation. In a speech described by Vaughan as “cogent, beautiful and loudly applauded,” Hicks recommended the immediate secession of Texas. “Long live the Colonel,” the editor proclaimed, “and all such patriotic men.”47
The secession of Texas, approved by the Austin convention, was referred to the voters for ratification in an election set for February 23. Writing a few days before the vote, Vaughan counseled with his readers and argued in favor of separation from the Union.

The issue of secession had been forced upon the South, the editor wrote. Earlier, Southerners had submitted patiently to injustice, but continued submission would be the part of a people degraded, ignorant of their rights, too cowardly to defend them. Texas did not fear the coming election or its results. The honor, the tranquility, the future independence, and prosperity of Texas were safe in the hands of Texans. Threats of coercion had no effect on them, except to confirm them in their opposition to the oppression planned by a fanatical sectional majority.

Vaughan claimed that the Constitution had been violated by the North. Also, he vowed Texas would not bear allegiance to a national government inaugurated upon sectional issues. “We, as freemen, absolve the ties which bind us to it,” he declared, “protesting solemnly but peacefully, against the usurpations which impelled us to act.” He hoped “that the people of the North may yet concede that we are right” and that “they will learn to construe our national pact as we do.”

Closing his argument, Vaughan threw down the gauntlet; unless the people of the North fully corrected their ways, the editor warned, the people of Texas would regard them as enemies in war.

Even before the ratification of Texas secession, the Banner announced the mobilization of troops in Beaumont. A notice printed on February 19 ordered members of the Jefferson Light Dragoons to assemble for drill at the courthouse on the following Saturday afternoon. The orders were signed by Captain Frank P. Powers and Orderly Sergeant Ben Gammon.

The separation of Texas from the United States was approved by the voters on February 23. Across the state the vote was nearly four to one in favor of secession; in Jefferson County the numbers were even more decisive, with 256 in favor and only sixteen against.

With Texas officially separated from the Union, the next step involved realignment of the state with the new Confederate government. Covering this process, Vaughan told of a meeting in Beaumont on May 17 to select delegates to a convention in Jasper that would nominate a candidate for the Congress of the Southern Confederacy. George W. O’Brien, County Clerk, served as chairman of the meeting, and Felix O. Yates, principal of the Beaumont Male and Female Academy, served as secretary. O’Brien appointed six delegates: Joseph Hebert of Taylor’s Bayou, Messrs. Alexander, Hotchkiss, and Eddy of Sabine Pass, and John J. Herring and Cave Johnson of Beaumont. Hebert was a farmer; Hotchkiss, a county official; Johnson, a saloon keeper; Alexander and Herring, merchants. The delegates were instructed to support, insofar as it was possible, the nomination of Colonel Henry C. Hicks, the Sabine Pass lawyer who had campaigned earlier for secession.

In these early political activities of the new Confederacy, slaveownership was not a requirement for participation. Neither O’Brien or Yates were
slaveholders. Among the delegates, three – Hebert, Herring and Johnson – were slaveowners, while the other three – Alexander, Hotchkiss and Eddy – were not. Colonel Hicks, the proposed nominee, owned six slaves.\(^5\)

The separation of Southern states from the Union continued. On May 21 Vaughan happily reported the secession of Arkansas and Tennessee. He welcomed the Southern sister states with “open arms” and greeted them with “demonstrations of affectionate regard.”\(^5\)

While secession proceeded, preparations for war already had begun. The Banner provided numerous reports from the North and South; Federal troops were maneuvering and Confederate forces were taking up positions. At nearby Galveston the construction of breastworks and fortifications was almost complete. Fifteen hundred citizens were drilling, getting primed for the enemy. Houston and other area towns were preparing to send additional troops to assist in the defense of the island city.\(^5\)

Vaughan also printed stories intended to hearten the Confederates and belittle the enemy. Two articles ridiculed President Lincoln and a third made fun of Pennsylvania troops. Lincoln was depicted as a drunkard and at odds with his generals. The Pennsylvanians were described as unarmed, undisciplined, uncouth; woe to them, the article warned, when they met the mighty South Carolinian regiments.\(^5\)

In other attempts to encourage his fellow Southerners, Vaughan published articles showing a lack of resolve among some Northern leaders and their efforts to head-off a military collision. In late May he printed a long statement from Ohio Congressman Clement L. Vallandigham detailing his opposition to Republican policy and to the possibility of war. Presenting a similar view was a story about Indiana Congressman Daniel W. Voorhies, who asserted that Indiana had no quarrel with the South and that he would vote no funds to make war against fathers, brothers, and friends. And from the Baltimore Exchange came “The Position of Maryland.” Denouncing the tyrannical Republican government and its repression of the South, the paper pleaded for patience and peace.\(^5\)

At the same time Vaughan published “The St. Louis Massacre,” a bloody story which no doubt was intended to inflame his readers. An eyewitness account written by a Dr. Ed Crescent told of a violent incident in which Union soldiers had opened fire without warning on a crowd of Southern militia and civilians. Between twenty and 100 persons had been killed, including a fourteen-year-old girl and two young brothers. In anger, Dr. Crescent cried out, “We are now overrun by a horde of barbarians from Illinois and blood thirsty Abolitionists from Iowa and Wisconsin and Jayhawkers and freebooters from everywhere. But God is just,” he declared, “and by his help we will maintain the right.”\(^6\)

On May 30, Vaughan was not happy. The nonarrival of steamboats from New Orleans had prevented him from getting newsprint. Also, he had received no mail or newspapers and found it impossible to offer his readers any late news. In those critical times, when the need for news was so great, he was compelled to print only a half sheet – two pages instead of four. But even with
this last available, abbreviated issue of the Banner, he gave vivid glimpses of the days just as the war was beginning. Emotions were running high. Troops were being mobilized.

Being deprived of supplies and mail from New Orleans, Vaughan complained bitterly about the interruption of shipping in the Gulf of Mexico. He lambasted the steamship company of Harris and Morgan for taking their ships out of the Southern trade and sending them North. "Good riddance!" the editor declared; the company held "one of the most damnable monopolies ever practiced on a people ..., they have amassed millions of dollars, and in return — what have they done? Flown to Abraham's bosom for safety, of course!"

In Beaumont a vigilance committee was organized. According to a notice in the paper, the Beaumont Vigilance Committee ordered the expulsion of Peter B. Ennis, a twenty-eight year old carpenter and railroad worker from Pennsylvania. A unanimously adopted resolution required Ennis to leave Jefferson County by midnight, Sunday, May 26. Reasons for this action against the man were not given, but perhaps it was to suppress slave insurrections or root out Union sympathizers.

The paper reported continuing mobilization of troops in Southeast Texas. Orange County citizens met at Duncan's Woods to organize a fighting company. Dr. S. Gill, chairman of the meeting, spoke eloquently, declaring that the new company would defend the rights and liberties of a free and independent Confederacy, that they would meet any foe who might attempt to invade Texas soil, which had been bought most dearly by pioneer fathers. Officers were elected: David E. Lawhon, captain; William Gill, 1st lieutenant; George Haynes, 2nd Lieutenant; and Josh Harmon, 1st sergeant. Dubbing themselves the "Duncan's Woods Independent Rifle Company," the men spent several hours in good-order drilling.

Other East Texas troops were already on their way to various points. The Banner reported that the Woodville Volunteer Company had passed through Beaumont before dawn on Tuesday, May 28; the company of sixty men were going downriver on board the steamboat "Belle Sulphur." Having been accepted by President Jefferson Davis, the group first had to travel to New Orleans where it would await further orders. Vaughan applauded "these first class citizens of Tyler County," declaring they had no other object than to fight. "Three cheers for the Woodville volunteers!" he cried.

Men from the Beaumont area were also under arms near Brownsville, Texas. A letter "From the Rio Grande" provided a lively report from the Jefferson Mounted Rifles who were on duty at Fort Brown. Located opposite Matamoros, Mexico, the fort had been used previously to protect Brownsville and the United States border against Indian raiders and Mexican freebooters such as Juan Cortina. Now the fort was a point of contention between North and South.

Beginning "Dear Vaughan" and signed with the nom de guerre "Dragoon," the letter told of exciting times at Fort Brown. Union vessels cruised the coast and there was danger in trying to ship anything, even a bale of cotton or a pack of wool, out of Texas ports. The Confederates had seven
companies, about 600 men working day and night on the trenches. Soon they would complete the fortifications. If Northern troops took fort Brown, the writer vowed, “they will have to kill every mother’s son of us.”

Elated that the military spirit had taken hold of the good citizens of Jefferson County, “Dragoon” believed the Jefferson Mounted Rifles would prove themselves under fire. He hoped they would not allow any man to join them except those “prepared to go to Washington or the devil.” Having a high opinion of the men from Jefferson County, he called them “gallant fellows.” Truly, he said, the county was well-represented in the defense of her state.

Biding “au revoir” to Vaughan and readers of the Banner, the writer unleashed a round of Texas bravado: “After making a meal of the Yankees,” “Dragoon” declared, we will “take Cortina for dessert, Matamoros for dinner and the whole world for supper.”

The military spirit which had inspired the words of the Soldier “Dragoon” soon gripped the newspaperman Vaughan. In a short time, perhaps only one or two weeks after publishing the May 31 issue of the Banner, he abandoned his paper and joined the Confederate Army. Vaughan served with Company F, 5th Texas Regiment, Hood’s Brigade. He campaigned with the Southern forces, suffered episodes of debilitating illness, and was wounded severely in May 1864 in the Battle of the Wilderness. Staying with the army for the duration, he witnessed the defeat of the Confederate armies, the failure of the Southern cause, and the destruction of slavery.

After the war Vaughan returned to Southeast Texas but did not re-enter the newspaper business. He lived in Beaumont, taught school, and served for a while as tax assessor and collector of Jefferson County. He married Alabama E. Keith and later moved with her to Sabine Pass, engaging there in the shipping business. Then he and his wife relocated to Cairo, Jasper County, where he had an ownership interest in the Texas Tram & Lumber Company. Vaughan died at his residence in Jasper County in 1882 at the age of fifty-three. He was survived by his wife, a son Nicholas, and three daughters, Florence, Anna, and Addie.

In the period just before the Civil War, Beaumont and Jefferson County was different from East Texas and the Lower South. The area did not have a plantation economy and its business was varied; farming and ranching were balanced with operations of sawmills, steamboats, and railroads. Also, the number of slaves was modest, as were the quantity and influence of slaveholders. This section of the country was not dominated by planters or a slaveholding aristocracy. There were no planters and many of the city and county leaders, such as Vaughan and O’Brien, were non-slaveowners.

But the institution of slavery was completely ingrained in the society of Beaumont and Southeast Texas. And while the number of slaveholders was not large, their variety was great. Their chattels were found throughout the community, not only on farms and ranches, but also in sawmills, on railroads, and around the town of Beaumont, in hotels and stores, and in the homes of doctors, lawyers, and craftsmen. In short, slavery pervaded Beaumont culture.

Editor Vaughan was not a slaveholder, but he strongly supported the
institution with his actions as newspaperman and mayor. He published articles expounding racist theories which justified slavery and wrote approvingly about the employment of blacks on the railroad projects. And as mayor, he drafted and signed town ordinances which perpetuated the slavery system and regulated slave behavior.

With slavery deeply rooted in his community, Vaughan aligned himself and his paper with the politics of the Lower South, with the diehard defense of the institution. When slavery was threatened by national events, Vaughan used the Banner to promote the Southern cause. Writing editorials and borrowing like-minded articles from other papers, he worked to mold the opinions of his readers on the critical issues of the day. He opposed Lincoln and the Republicans, favored the secession of Texas, and endorsed the mobilization of troops.

Vaughan's readers agreed with his editorial and political policies. When given opportunities, the people of Beaumont and Jefferson County consistently supported the Southern cause. Even though their ownership of slaves was not great, they steadfastly demonstrated their loyalty to the institution and the Southern way of life. In the presidential campaign, they voted decisively for Breckenridge and Lane; during the secession crisis, they voted conclusively in favor of separation; and in a final test of their political convictions, the men of Southeast Texas took up arms and risked their lives to defend the South.

NOTES

1Issues of The Beaumont Banner are located as follows: September 11, 25, October 23, November 6, 20, 1860, February 19, 1861, in Tyrrell Historical Library, Beaumont, Texas; October 16, 1860, in the New York Historical Society, New York, New York; December 11, 1860, January 8, May 21, 1861, in the Newspaper Collection, Barker Texas History Center, University of Texas, Austin, Texas; May 30, 1861, in the San Jacinto Museum of History, LaPorte, Texas. For a discussion of the importance of newspapers, see Donald E. Reynolds, Editors Make War: Southern Newspapers in the Secession Crisis (Nashville, 1966), pp. vii-ix.


6United States Eighth Census (1860), Jefferson County, Slave Schedules.

7The Beaumont Banner, May 30, 1861.

*United States Eighth Census* (1860), Jefferson County, Texas, Slave Schedules.

*United States Eighth Census* (1860), Jefferson County, Texas, Slave Schedules.

*United States Eighth Census* (1860), Jefferson County, Texas, Slave Schedules.

*United States Eighth Census* (1860), Jefferson County, Texas, Slave Schedules. See also "Record of the Board of Alderman" (Official Minutes), October 2, 1860 through April 9, 1861. Among leading county officials, non-slaveowners were prominent. George W. O'Brien, county clerk, did not own slaves, and neither did A.J. Tevis, sheriff. Josiah Junker, chief county magistrate, was counted as an owner by virtue of bondsmen held by his wife and children.

The Beaumont Banner, September 25, December 11, 1860.

Campbell, *Empire for Slavery*, discusses the employment of slaves, including their hiring and rental, but does not write about the use of slave labor in sawmill or railroad work. The Beaumont Banner, September 11, 1860.

The Beaumont Banner, September 11, November 20, December 11, 1860.

The Beaumont Banner, September 11, October 23, 1860.


The Beaumont Banner, December 11, 1860.


The Beaumont Banner, September 11, 1860.


The Beaumont Banner, September 11, 1860.

The Beaumont Banner, November 6, 1860.


The Beaumont Banner, September 11, October 23, 1860.

The Beaumont Banner, September 11, 1860.

The Beaumont Banner, October 16, 1860.

The Beaumont Banner, October 16, 1860.

The Beaumont Banner, October 23, 1860.

The Beaumont Banner, November 6, 1860.

The Beaumont Banner, November 20, 1860. For a discussion of the 1860 election results, including the role of the Fusion ticket, see Buenger, *Secession and the Union in Texas*, pp. 53, 58.

The Beaumont Banner, November 20, 1860.

The Beaumont Banner, November 20, December 11, 1860.

The Beaumont Banner, December 11, 1860.

The Beaumont Banner, December 11, 1860.

The Beaumont Banner, December 11, 1860. See also Fornell, *The Galveston Era*, p. 278.

The Beaumont Banner, December 1860.


The Beaumont Banner, January 8, 1861.

The Beaumont Banner, January 8, 1861.

The Beaumont Banner, January 8, 1861.

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"The Beaumont Banner, February 19, 1861.
"The Beaumont Banner, May 21, 1861.
For results of the secession ratification vote, see Ralph A. Wooster, The Secession Conventions of the South (Princeton, 1962), pp. 132-133. Also see Block, A History of Jefferson County, p. 98.
"United States Eighth Census (1860), Jefferson County, Slave Schedules.
"The Beaumont Banner, May 21, 1861.
"The Beaumont Banner, May 21, 1861.
"The Beaumont Banner, May 21, 1861.
"Copies of Vaughan's military records, including Company Muster Rolls, are located at the Confederate Research Center, Hillsboro, Texas.
"Beaumont Enterprise, February 3, 1883. Vaughan family papers, including photographs, were made available to the writer by Vaughan's great granddaughter, Vallie Fletcher Taylor, Hico, Texas.
David B. Culberson (1830-1900) was a prominent political figure in late nineteenth-century East Texas history. A Democrat who served in the United States House of Representatives from 1875 to 1897, Culberson epitomized the Southern politician who championed party loyalty, worked to preserve the Solid South for the Democracy, sought to resolve sectional tensions, and promoted national harmony. A versatile, honest, and warm-hearted gentleman who possessed a masterful command of the English language, he intertwined the fortune of his party with his own destiny while endeavoring to ease the transition from the politics of the pre-Civil War era to that of the Gilded Age, the period between 1877 and 1900.

Generally overlooked by historians who have mentioned his name only briefly, if at all, in books on Texas, Culberson merits attention for the role he played in national politics. He remains an enigma largely because of the paucity of personal papers and the tendency of scholars to concentrate on the lives of his illustrious contemporaries, including Senator and Governor Samuel Houston, Governor and Senator Richard Coke, Senator Samuel B. Maxey, Senator John H. Reagan, Senator Roger Q. Mills, Congressman and United States Marshal Thomas P. Ochiltree, Governor James S. Hogg, and Culberson's son, Charles A. Culberson, an attorney general of Texas (1890-1894) who served as governor of the state from 1895 to 1899 and United States senator from 1899 to 1923. Letters that do exist, combined with Congressman Culberson's speeches in the Congressional Record, reveal several qualities about the Texan that deserve recognition. Culberson's historical importance is tied directly to his public policies and actions, and an examination of this conduct helps to assess his influence as a politician.

Culberson lived during exciting and turbulent times in Texas and American history. He was six years of age when the Battle of the Alamo occurred and fifteen when the Republic of Texas joined the Union. His twenty-two years of continuous service in Congress coincided with a generation of change that transformed the political, economic, and social order of the United States. The country was converting from a rural, agricultural, and homogeneous society into an urban, industrial, and heterogeneous nation. The rise of big-business enterprise, new tides of diplomatic adventures, growing interstate commerce, tariff duties, railroad building, and currency legislation, among others, occupied Culberson's attention. These changes and issues impacted Texas, and Culberson represented his constituency during a period characterized by postwar readjustment, the advance of the cattlemen's frontier, and agricultural ascendancy in which the currency cauldron, railroad rates, and tariff taxes assumed crucial importance.

Leonard Schlup lives in Akron, Ohio.
Born in Georgia, the son of a Baptist preacher and grandson of an Oglethorpe County planter, Culberson read law in the office of William P. Chilton, chief justice of the supreme court of Alabama and prominent Cotton Whig leader. After gaining admittance to the bar in 1856, Culberson relocated to Upshur County, Texas, where he practiced law and held a seat in the lower house of the state legislature in 1859. A Whig raised in the Hamiltonian school of thought, Culberson favored a broad constructive interpretation of the Constitution and wide use of legislative power to enact laws necessary and proper for the common welfare. Following the disintegration of the Whig Party, Culberson in 1860 voted for John Bell, presidential nominee of the Constitutional Union party. The election that year of Abraham Lincoln as president resulted in the exodus of Southern states from the Union. Firmly opposed to secession, Culberson, cognizant that his constituents disagreed with him on this matter, resigned his position in the legislature in 1861 and moved to Jefferson, a city in Marion County, which became his permanent home.

The Civil War marked a turning point for Culberson that propelled him into a political career. During that conflict, he enlisted in the Confederate army as a private but rose to the rank of colonel of the Eighteenth Texas Infantry, where Culberson earned a reputation for courage and resourcefulness. In 1863, Governor Pendleton Murrah appointed him adjutant general of Texas, but the following year he took his seat in the Texas legislature. The defeat of the Confederacy in 1865 convinced Culberson to return to his law practice. A successful trial lawyer, he easily won election to the state senate in 1873 and to the United States House of Representatives in 1874, the year of a Democratic congressional triumph.

Several factors characterized Culberson's years in the House. First, as a frequent chairman of the Judiciary Committee, he acquired valuable expertise on constitutional law and matters pertaining to judicial reform. Second, although he seldom delivered speeches on the House floor, Culberson was a fine speaker who tempered his remarks and arguments with clear expressions, factual data, substantiating evidence, and a brilliant display of diction. Third, Culberson introduced in the lower chamber the antitrust bill of 1890 and supported the measure to curb giant monopolies and combinations in restraint of trade. Fourth, the Texas congressman endorsed federal regulation of railways and assistance in their construction. Fifth, he fought for the principle of a tariff for revenue only, thereby distancing himself from the protectionist elements within the Democratic Party. Finally, while not a leading spokesman for silver, Culberson advocated the free and unlimited coinage of silver at a ratio of "16 to 1" with gold, and he entreated his colleagues to act reasonably on that volatile quagmire. In this respect, he voted for the Bland-Allison Act of 1878 and the Sherman Silver Purchase Act of 1890 as conservative steps to encourage bimetallism. Turning against President Grover Cleveland, a sound-money Democrat, Culberson in 1893 opposed the repeal of the 1890 act.

Of all the major issues with which he had to deal as a legislator, Culberson particularly excelled in the areas of railroad development, tariff reform, and currency expansion. All three were important to him; they were
national issues to which he devoted much time and on which he prepared some of his best speeches for the edification of his colleagues and the public.

With regard to railroad development in the Gilded Age, Culberson paid considerable attention to the growth of the Texas and Pacific Railway Company. Organized in 1871, this company resulted from the consolidation of three companies that owned trackage and maintained franchise rights, including a charter from Congress to build a southern route at the thirty-second parallel to California to meet the tracks of the Southern Pacific Railroad. The line opened from Longview to Dallas in 1873, but the Panic of 1873, with an ensuing economic slowdown, halted its westward expansion. The railroad finally reached Fort Worth in 1876, after which there occurred still more delay until Grenville M. Dodge, a prominent Iowan and political figure who had built the Union Pacific, headed the construction effort.

On May 3, 1876, during the impedimental period, Culberson addressed the House of Representatives on the subject of the Texas and Pacific Railroad. Urging Congress to come to the aid of this construction, Culberson pleaded with his cohorts in both parties to accept with amendments the elaborate bill introduced by Representative John Atkins, a Tennessee Democrat, to assist in the building of the Texas and Pacific Railway. After outlining the provisions of this measure, Culberson, in true Hamiltonian fashion, pointed out that Congress possessed the power to regulate commerce and promote welfare and so could engage in this enterprise, and he quoted Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe, John C. Calhoun, and Henry Clay, among other political predecessors, to substantiate his position. Culberson contended that one transcontinental line farther north was inadequate to meet either the needs of the government or the commerce of the country. The southern route through Texas, he noted, would benefit the nation and the region. Praising his state's "virgin soil," its freedom from "snow blockades" and the "perils of mountain ranges," and the suitable climate in the South for agricultural products, Culberson reminded the audience that the population of Texas was growing and that lands were increasing in value. "There will be no lack of demand for Texas lands," he predicted.

The main thrust of Culberson's speech revolved around the weak economy and how railroads could contribute to economic improvement. He painted a bleak picture of the suffering, destitution, and other problems of the recession that plagued the country. "The cry is for work; the demand for labor is too small," he explained, adding that the "great industries of the country are paralyzed. The fires have burned to ashes in the furnaces of factories, founderies, and mills. The spade and shovel are silent along great lines of work which gave labor to thousands and bread to many more. The bone and sinew of the country, outside of agricultural districts, are without employment, and states, cities, and towns are appealed to for work for the unemployed that starvation may be averted." Believing that this bill would give "life and activity" to America's great industries as well as bestow "the prospect of other blessings," Culberson demanded that nonpartisan action be taken immediately rather than postpone consideration of the measure until after the presidential and congressional elections of 1876. He concluded:
The Government needs the road, the people need it, and this company, owning a charter over the route desired, proposes to build it on the conditions named... The completion of this road will redeem the South from the thralldom of poverty. I enter no plea in behalf of her blighted fields, her destroyed industries, desolated homes, and broken fortunes... She is not what she once was... The war closed, and peace found us broken in fortune and without much hope for the future. The energy of her people has been severely taxed, but the waste places are being built up and the bruises on her limbs are healing. Her people are striving together to restore it to its former agricultural beauty and power. Politics and partisan spirit have delayed the work of restoration... Over all these hangs the blight of offended power and a feeling of constraint broods over the land. No enterprise, no token of national kindness, no emblem of sectional reconciliation could do more to rehabilitate the South and arouse her paralyzed industries than the adoption of this measure and the completion of this grand work. It would be an earnest from the heart and power of the nation that whatever of the past should be forgotten, and that in fact, as in theory, we are a brotherhood of States, and whatever of prosperity, glory, and renown may come to us in the future, the same shall be the common property of all.8

In addition to railroad development, Culberson expressed interest in reforming the tariff, a schedule of duties imposed by the government on imports. This issue surfaced as an important matter during the Gilded Age. Since the adoption of the Morrill Tariff of 1861, Republicans generally had favored a high tariff to protect American industries from foreign competition. Democrats, on the other hand, endorsed the concept of a tariff only for government revenue. Culberson supported the Democratic theory that no more money should be collected than that which public purposes required under an economical administration and that the burden of the tax should be in proportion to the ability of the taxpayer to bear the cost.9

Culberson outlined his ideas on the tariff in a speech before his House colleagues on April 30, 1884, the last year of the presidency of Chester A. Arthur. The occasion was to announce his support of the Morrison bill, a measure introduced by Representative William R. Morrison, a prominent Illinois lawyer and Democrat who served in Congress from 1873 to 1887.10 Morrison’s purpose was to revise the Tariff of 1883, which lowered schedules five percent but retained the protectionist principle. Culberson contended that the sentiment of the majority of the people demanded a reduction in the rates of tariff taxation and that it was the responsibility of the House, under the Constitution, to comply with this request, which fell within the legitimate sphere of the taxing power of the national government.

Cognizant that manufacturing industries were not in satisfactory condition, Culberson conceded that “wise and wholesome legislation upon the tariff must be based upon existing conditions to which it relates.” He thought that the Morrison bill offered a conservative approach toward a tariff for revenue that would relieve those individuals burdened by exorbitant prices. Denouncing protectionism as an oppressive, imperial, and iniquitous system of taxation, Culberson warned that “its tendency is to centralize wealth, to build up classes by forced contributions upon the people at large, to foster monopolies, and to create an aristocracy of wealth. It degrades labor instead of
Monopoly and servitude go in pairs, and both are the legitimate offsprings of a system which robs the public to aggrandize the few. The burden of the tax falls heavier upon the shoulders of the poor than upon those of the rich. It is the offspring of greed. Self-interest always rebels against open robbery, but fraud, robed in a patriotic garb, deceives while it plunders. Wealth is enthroned in palatial residences that shelter the bounty-fed barons of protection. There is no factor in American politics or policies that has contributed more to centralize the wealth of the country, to make the rich richer and the poor poorer, than the system of protection."

Continuing with his theme that the wealth of the country acquired under the protective system was divided unevenly, Culberson sought to remedy the situation by lowering the taxes. He complained about the "long role of banks and bankers fattening day by day upon the spoils gathered from the people by the favor of class legislation" and "the costly public buildings more fit for the scarlet henchmen of royalty to dwell in than the servants of a republican people." He warned that a "plethoric or overflowing" treasury invites "legislative spoliation and encourages wasteful extravagance." According to Culberson, when the outcome of any governmental legislation produces "unblushing tyranny" and "gross oppression," then the government has committed "an unpardonable crime against humanity." The Texan suggested that tariff reform would not only return the nation to prosperity but also would complete the work of Reconstruction. He said:

The Democratic party makes no war upon capital, but is now and always has been the champion of the rights of the people against the encroachment of power and unjust exactions. It has always battled for a pure and honest administration of Government. It has stood by the people throughout the long war which monopoly and centralized wealth have made upon their income and property. It has been the avowed foe of all class legislation. It has struggled to bestow the blessings and benefits of Government on all alike and to apportion its burdens among all the people. Time and time again it has gone down in defeat, overwhelmed by the combined elements of protection, monopoly, and centralized wealth. But undaunted by defeat, inspired by the great cause of the people against all opposing elements, it will ever be true to its principles and traditions in adversity or prosperity.

Another significant issue that concerned Culberson was the money question, a matter that had long troubled politicians. The Coinage Act of 1873 had demonetized silver by omitting the standard silver dollar from the coinage, despite an increase in United States silver production resulting from new discoveries in the West. Culberson postulated that demonetization constituted a link in the chain by which "the brain and muscle of the people were held in slavish servitude to the kingly power of gold." A friend of silver who wanted it on the same plane with gold, Culberson referred to the 1873 law as a "crime," declaring that "the will of the people seems powerless to enforce respect for the money of the people." Although never insisting that the public debt be paid only in silver, he did demand that no impairment or abridgment by legislative action or executive "despotism" exist to deny the option to pay in either metal. Culberson thus joined the chorus of other silver proponents who charged that a gold conspiracy sought to remove silver from its proper
place as a circulating medium. This explosive issue engendered class, sectional, and political divisions. For champions of the white metal, silver became not only a symbol but also an economic remedy to cure the nation’s ills and a sacred dogma.

In a speech in the House on March 27, 1886, during Cleveland’s first administration, Culberson addressed the issue of coinage. His speech was a plea for fair play for silver as well as for honest dealing with the American people. Professing that free and unlimited coinage of silver would help to correct economic evils in society, the Texas congressman predicted that a new era of prosperity would dawn upon the country. Culberson also denounced “the rapacious triumvirate of bondholders, banks, and syndicates of wealth” who contemplated a raid upon the value of money “for the purpose of exalting the value of gold.” He labeled this autocratic action as an “unhallowed scheme” foisted upon the “toiling millions” by an organized and disciplined aristocracy of wealth whose “sycophantic exhibitions of friendship” for the poor were disgusting. He mentioned that this greedy group, following the paths of “outrage and wrong” paved by Republican Party legislation, were analogous to the lion being the friend of the lamb and the spider posing as an ally of the fly until “the unsuspecting victim” fell powerless before its superior prey.  

Culberson saw an “irrepressible conflict” between the financial policy of the Democratic and Republican parties. Under the GOP monetary plan and presidential rule from 1869 to the 1880s, “a decade of spoliation and wrong,” according to the Jefferson, Texas, Democrat, many problems connected with ill-conceived and unjust financial legislation plagued the nation. The results were “withering” and “faltering” enterprises and “furnaces burned to ashes.” Culberson remarked:

Thousands of happy homes, where thrift and comfort once abounded, became the dwelling places of hunger and despair; labor looked down upon its rage and begged for bread; values perished in the fearful financial blight and property shifted into the hands of the fortunate possessors of gold and gold mortgages at gold prices. . . . The reign of the Republican party . . . had destroyed the volume of money and filled the land with panic and bankruptcy. It had covered into the strong boxes of wealth nearly a billion dollars wrung from tax-payers without consideration. . . . It had fastened the fangs of an infamous system of taxation in the vitals of the earnings of the people to provide coin to pay bonds which the people had reserved the right to pay in currency. It had severed empires from the public domain, God’s gift to the homeless, and donated them to corporations already fattened upon the spoils of financial legislation. It had made prosperity for the rich and despire for the poor by legislation.

In addition to his assailment of Republican policies, Culberson attacked the concept of allowing the secretary of the treasury wide discretion in interpreting laws. He cited the Bland-Allison Act of 1878 as one example. This measure, passed by Congress over President Ruther B. Hayes’ veto, required the treasury secretary to make monthly purchases of between $2 and $4 million worth of silver at the market price and convert such purchases into standard dollars. Although pleased with the partial restoration of silver,
Culberson complained, first, that unlimited purchase and coinage had not been attained, and second, that the treasury head had too much latitude in his discretionary powers and conservative use of them, making only minimum monthly purchases authorized by law. Culberson also chastised an act in 1881 that authorized the secretary of the treasury to apply so much of the government's surplus from time to time to the reduction of the public debt "as he may consider proper." Culberson queried his cohorts about the will of the people when one non-elected official possessed such extraordinary power.

Culberson wanted the law changed to forbid these judgmental practices. He contended that the public welfare should not be dependent upon the knowledge of any one departmental head. for he could exercise his rights in such a manner as to defeat the will of the people, dwarf the volume of money, and plunge businesses into financial distress. Culberson proposed that this power be withdrawn and "the stern command of law substituted in its stead." He insisted that "the love of the great popular heart can only be maintained and cherished by fair treatment and equal laws."

Culberson's pronouncements on currency often bordered on presenting images of chaos channeled by various groups hostile to the well-being of the average citizen. He virtually incarcerated these individuals without hope of redemption in speeches tailored to attract agrarian support in his eastern Texas constituency. Many of his ideas and terms later came to fruition in 1896 with the presidential candidacy of William Jennings Bryan, a Nebraska Democrat who campaigned on a free silver platform. Without question the currency issue was complex and vexatious. Some of Culberson's contemporaries, such as Vice President Adlai E. Stevenson, found themselves paralyzed by competing political sensitivities on the money issue, and their positions were buffeted by the breezes of public opinion and their own sagging spirits. In this respect, Culberson never wavered in his support of free silver and found himself more at home with the agrarian elements in his party than those representing eastern, conservative business interests.

Friends expected Culberson to seek a Senate seat in 1896 upon his retirement from the House. Instead, he stepped aside to permit his son, Governor Charles A. Culberson, to serve in that capacity and bring even greater recognition to their family name in Texas. In 1897, President William McKinley, a sound-money Republican from Ohio, appointed the elder Culberson to serve on the commission to codify the laws of the United States. Culberson died in Jefferson, Texas, while still participating in this endeavor.

Culberson was a man of absolute integrity and a decent public servant during the Gilded Age. A gentleman of the old school and a politician of principle, he held an elective position in a time of intense professional partisanship and rapid change that characterized the distended society of late nineteenth-century America. As a representative from an agrarian Texas constituency, he fought for economic justice, reduced taxation, and a more flexible currency. Culberson, a family patriarch and knight of the Texas vanguard, battled for his vision of democracy – an idealistic mixture of informed citizenry and enlightened public servants combining to produce a politically, economically, and socially acceptable environment.
Culberson's reputation as a politician centered both in his devotion to the constitutional system and his fluent appeal to his constituents and colleagues to believe in their institutions. Nobody ever persuaded him to act against his own basic instincts. At times he was too moralizing in his pronouncements of political characterization in an age of excess and far too unyielding in his determination to avoid compromising on certain issues. The evils of a gold standard, for instance, were not as he imagined, and he overlooked the benefits that sensible tariff protectionism afforded several Texas products from foreign competition. While he condemned Republicans for "unblushing tyranny" and "gross oppression" with regard to their tariff and currency policies, Culberson ignored the high-tariff protectionists and sound-money advocates within his own party.

The Congressman's pragmatism on some matters clashed with his idealism on others. He also showed a strangely incongruous espousal of both Jeffersonian and Hamiltonian ideals. Moreover, Culberson revealed a growing frustration with the lax political morality of the period, especially with regard to railroad investments, and the incumbents' abuse of their privileges. He scolded legislators who disregarded the general good in favor of personal or selfish interests, a common complaint against late twentieth-century American politicians as well. Despite his shortcomings, Culberson was a dedicated and competent government official and a fascinating figure in Texas history. His years of service earned for him a place of honor in the finest traditions of American political life.

NOTES


2Culberson left no collection of papers. There is a Culberson and Culberson Company Ledger (1 volume, 1880-1888) in the Archives Division of the Texas State Library at Austin. A handful of Culberson's letters are in the Grover Cleveland Papers, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress, Washington, DC. See, for example, Culberson to Cleveland, December 8, 1884, October 9, 1885, and March 21, 1893.


1Dallas News, May 8, 1900.

Information on the Civil War and Reconstruction eras in Texas history can be gleaned from Carl H. Mooneyhon, Republicanism in Reconstruction Texas (Austin, 1980); William L. Richter, The Army in Texas During Reconstruction (College Station, 1987); Paul L. Haworth, Reconstruction and Union: 1865-1912 (New York, 1987); Otto H. Oleen, Reconstruction and Redemption in the South (Baton Rouge, 1980); and Charles W. Ramsdell, Reconstruction in Texas (Magnolia, MA, 1964).

2This subject is covered well in Stanley B. Ilrshson, Grenville M. Dodge: Soldier, Politician, Railroad Pioneer (Bloomington, 1967). For further insights on Dodge and railroad growth in the South, examine the Grenville M. Dodge Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines, and railroad materials in Special Collections, University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City.

3David B. Culberson, Texas and Pacific Railroad (Washington, 1876), pp. 1-17. In addition to the Congressional Record, a copy of this speech is in The Center for American History at the University of Texas at Austin.

4Culberson, Texas and Pacific Railroad, pp. 1-17. Additional information on railroads in Texas can be found in George R. Taylor and Irene D. Neu, The American Railroad Network, 1861-1890 (Cambridge, 1956); Charles P. Zeltovich, Texas Railroads: A Record of Construction and Abandonment (Austin, 1981); Robert E. Riegel, The Story of the Western Railroads from 1852 through the Reign of the Giants (Lincoln, 1963); Albro Martin, Railroads Triumphant: The Growth, Rejection, and Rebirth of a Vital American Force (New York, 1992); Reuben McKitrick, Public Land System of Texas, 1823-1910 (Manchester, NH, 1979, reprint of 1918 edition); Walter L. Buenger, Secession and the Union in Texas (Austin, 1984); Charles S. Pette, Railroad Transportation in Texas (Austin, 1909); and St. Clair G. Reed, A History of the Texas Railroads and of Transportation Conditions (Houston, 1941).

5Excellent studies of the tariff question are The Tariffs of 1883 and 1890 on Imports into the United States (Washington, 1890); John M. Dobson, Two Centuries of Tariffs (Washington, 1976); Richard W. Thompson, The History of Protective Tariff Laws (Chicago, 1888); Frank W. Taussig, The Tariff History of the United States (8th ed.: New York, 1931); Edward Stanwood, American Tariff Controversies in the Nineteenth Century (2 vols; New York, 1903); and Tom E. Terrill, The Tariff, Politics, and American Foreign Policy, 1874-1901 (Westport, CT, 1973).

6Morrison's proposal in 1884 provided for a general horizontal tariff reduction of twenty percent. Opponents assailed the measure as unscientific, but this bill failed to win approval in the House by only five votes. Like Culberson, Morrison, who popularized the idea of tariff reform, thought that protection other than that incidental to revenue was spoliation. See David E. Robbins, "The Congressional Career of William Ralls Morrison" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1963), as well as valuable letters in the William Ralls Morrison Papers, Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield.


Lucas No. 1, the nation's first spectacular oil gusher, blew in on January 10, 1901, on a salt dome known as "Spindletop" located just south of Beaumont, Texas. Named for its developer, Captain Anthony Francis Lucas, the phenomenal well shot oil 175 feet above the derrick and ran unchecked for ten days. For seven months it produced an average 40,000 barrels per day and touched off a boom that turned the nation's oil industry on its head.

Less well known is the discoverer of Spindletop, Pattillo Higgins, a self-taught geologist, wildcatter, consultant, promoter, and so-called "prophet" of the Texas oil industry. He was instrumental in bringing Spindletop's oil potential to public attention in the 1890s, yet his name does not appear on the tall obelisk that was erected on the fiftieth anniversary of the Spindletop discovery well.

Higgins first conceived and promoted a Southwestern counterpart to the Standard Oil monopoly that would have integrated production, refining, distribution, and marketing, yet he lacked the resources, the corporate connections, and the good luck needed to make his entrepreneurial dream a reality. For a quarter of a century he was a phenomenal oil finder, locating nearly fifty good prospects in Texas and Louisiana that eventually came into production. Yet his role at Spindletop is barely mentioned in corporate histories, and his subsequent career largely has been ignored by geologists and historians alike. Only in the last few decades has he begun to receive some scholarly attention.

For four decades after the Pennsylvania discovery at Titusville in 1859, oil was a commodity with limited production and utility used primarily for lubrication, illumination, and patent-medicine. Under the Standard Oil Trust and its near-monopoly of distribution, both market demand and price held steady. All that changed with Spindletop.

The Beaumont monument gives credit to the Spindletop oil pioneers for helping to launch a second transportation revolution by flooding the industrialized world with cheap oil and gasoline. But there is a darker side the inscription does not mention. The Lucas well ushered in a chaotic era of price instability, frenzied speculation, extensive exploration, erratic production, gross waste and inefficiency, aggressive competition, labor exploitation, social turbulence, and explosive urban-industrial growth—all familiar topics to western historians. Indeed, mining booms, oil booms, land rushes, and other popular excitements between the Civil War and the 1930s are part of the same grand theme, the collective heritage of American Trans-Mississippi western development in an unregulated economic era.

As extractive industries, hardrock gold mining and oil drilling are closely comparable. Both required technical knowledge and experience to be

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successful. Technical knowhow was scarce in the formative years of both industries, but early miners and drillers gained enough practical experience through trial-and-error methods to achieve some measure of success. As the pioneer eras for both industries gave way to modern industrial development. The demand increased for more sophisticated training. The result was that fewer seat-of-the-pants pioneers could be found in either industry after the early booms ended.

The early career of Patillo Higgins illustrates both the promise and pitfalls of oil speculation in the pioneer era. Born in the 1860s, Higgins, like many early mining engineers, had a practical rather than a formal education. His schooling ended in the lower grades, and most of his formative skills as carpenter, mechanic, and draftsman he learned from his father, a machinist whose ancestors had immigrated from either England or Ireland. 8 Higgins' entry into the petroleum industry was both slow and circuitous. Big and tough for his age until he lost his left arm in a gunfight, he worked respectively as millwright, mechanic, metalsmith, woodcutter, and river crew boss for a logging company, then real estate broker. While inspecting rural property he discovered a red clay deposit near Beaumont and by 1886 had started a brickyard. That first turned his attention toward petroleum, which eastern yards were just beginning to use as fuel for brick kilns. 9

From the perspective of the 1990s it is not hard to understand why Higgins became an apostle of Texas oil despite his lack of schooling in geology or business. He was ambitious, aggressive, strong-willed and inner-directed, willing to take great risks for the sake of his convictions. He also was literally perched on top of a salt dome that marked the location of a prolific oil field. A trip through eastern oil fields, followed by intensive study and comparison of gas seeps, sour water, and other surface indicators, convinced him by 1892 that oil was present in large quantities on what he thought was an anticline or uplift of cap rock at a depth of about 1,000 feet under the mound near Beaumont. He held these views regardless of the conventional wisdom of inexperienced contemporary geologists who found no rocky outcrops indicating subsurface oil-bearing strata along the Gulf Coast and therefore who rejected the prospect of finding oil there in commercial quantities. 10 He was also stubborn, refusing to give up after repeated failures by drilling crews hired by the Gladys City Oil, Gas and Manufacturing Company, the firm Higgins was instrumental in organizing with local capital to bring in the first well. 11 In 1895 a dispute with his board of directors over field operations led to his resignation as manager. He sold his interest in the Gladys City Company but continued to promote the Spindletop field and advertised in eastern papers for technical assistance to bring in a well. 12 He received only one response, but that set the stage for Captain Lucas and the first great gusher.

The boom at Spindletop restored Higgins' reputation and made him a millionaire. Before the first gusher the early drilling failures had undermined his credibility and had led one professional geologist to dismiss haughtily "the idle dreams or insane notions of irresponsible parties in the vain outlook for either oil or useful gas." 13 Higgins had been squeezed out of a direct financial stake in the Lucas discovery well, but he held thirty-three acres on the mound
and with it organized the Higgins Oil and Fuel Company. By the end of 1901 his firm was one of the Big Three at Spindletop, the other two predecessors of Gulf Oil and Texaco.\(^4\)

Had Higgins conformed to corporate culture he might have risen in executive ranks and joined the industrial hierarchy whose deeds are etched in the Spindletop monument and enshrined in the boardroom photographs of the nation's petroleum giants. But he was an aberration, a maverick who wanted to control both management and field operations. When the Houston Oil Company bought up a majority of stock in his firm and took over its board of directors, Pattillo sold his interests “for a reported three million dollars” and set out on his own as a Texas wildcatter.\(^5\)

In his classic account of the Southwest petroleum industry, Carl Wister defined a wildcatter as an independent operator who generally worked in unproven ground, took great risks, explored remote areas, often made and lost several fortunes, and who was motivated more by the “thrill of discovery” than by financial gain.\(^6\) Wister may have romanticized the definition, but it comes close to describing the career of Pattillo Higgins.

After Spindletop, in the words of his biographer, Higgins was “the prototype of the wildcatter: a here-today, gone-tomorrow, boom-bust, never-give-up speculator and promoter...”\(^7\) Organizing the Higgins Standard Oil Company in November 1901, he prepared a lengthy promotional brochure that, among other things, proclaimed him the discoverer and prime mover at Spindletop, or “Higgins Oil Field No. 1,” as he chose to label it. The pamphlet described plans for an integrated global oil empire based at Beaumont and founded on nearly 200,000 acres of acquired property and leases in Texas and Louisiana. It also chastised professional geologists who had rejected his anticline theory for Spindletop. Some of them, he said, “ought to be out on a farm making rails and following behind long-earned mules.”\(^8\)

It is my understanding and belief that geologists have done nothing in the way of developing minerals, and when others go forth and develop them, they come forward and say it is a peculiar place. They are afraid to venture out into the world and point out where valuable mineral deposits will be found. They work and plan on the safe side only. Therefore, through their ignorance they think they have escaped the condemnation of the scientific world.”\(^9\)

It was clear that Higgins considered himself a scientist, if not a geologist per se. Intensive study of available literature, combined with extensive field investigation and applied research, had equipped him with all the essential skills of a professional oil locator. He was remarkably adept at finding oil on the basis of surface indicators, using techniques that after World War I were supplanted by seismographs, magnetometers, and other geophysical tools for locating subsurface formations. Although he kept abreast of oil developments and remained an avid reader throughout his career, the methods he used changed little over the years. He continued to rely on surface evidence as the primary test for oil.\(^10\)

In 1902, supremely self-confident, Higgins set out to build an independent oil empire on the Texas Gulf Coast, the ultimate dream of a
maverick oilman determined to fight the corporate giants. For nearly two decades following Spindletop he was the archetypical wildcatter. Relying on his own experience and on leads from eager landowners, he explored dozens of prospective sites. When field tests proved promising he tied up the mineral rights with funds acquired from his Spindletop land sale. Then he organized an independent investment company to finance exploration. One good gusher would be all that was needed, he figured, to attract thousands of small investors and launch a genuine oil boom.

His experience at Hockley, one of many salt domes Higgins prospected along the Gulf Coast, will help illustrate the uncertainties of this phase of his life as an oilman. Hockley is a lesson in frustration and failure, a story that might never have been told fully had it not been for the serendipitous intervention of a California junk dealer who early in the 1970s rescued a pickup load of papers from the San Francisco City Dump. The papers had been part of the "trash" cleaned out of the Mills Building in the heart of the city's financial district when it was undergoing remodeling. I was fortunate to stumble across the dealer one Sunday morning at a regional flea market. Attracted to the piles of old ledgers and correspondence he was offering for sale, I purchased one cardboard box of likely-looking items. What piqued my interest were some incidental records of several Sierra mining companies. Buried in the carton was an old document case containing nearly fifty holograph letters from Pattillo Higgins to Daniel M. Kent, Secretary of the Higgins' World's Oil Company, the firm organized to raise development capital for the Hockley field. I must confess I knew little about the Texas oil business then and nothing about Higgins. The carton held other, more intriguing "secrets" at the time.21

It took years to work back down to that old document case at the bottom of the box. Indeed, I had nearly forgotten about my cache of papers, but my interest was rekindled by the publication of the first full biography of Higgins in 1989. This was the first substantive source of published information about Higgins' career after 1901, but it provided few details on the Hockley field and nothing about the California financial connection which made the Hockley exploration possible.

In the first decade after Spindletop Higgins spent most of his private capital in a futile quest for oil up and down the Gulf Coast. Often his money went into oil leases acquired to thwart competitors but never developed. He leased thousands of acres around Sabine Pass in 1901-1902, but lost them eventually without drilling a single hole.22

In the summer of 1902 Higgins plunged heavily at Barber's Hill, a salt dome located twenty-three miles east of Houston. Identifying it as an anticline, Higgins predicted that it would be "... twenty miles larger than the Beaumont [i.e. Spindletop]" and that gushers there would surpass any on record.23 The year before he had organized Higgins Standard Oil Company to raise development capital for such projects, but at Barber's Hill he spent much of his own money drilling five shallow dry holes over the next three years. Eventually he pulled his rigs but kept up most of his leases. His optimism paid off in 1918 when deep drilling by another firm finally found oil and helped
rescue him financially.  

But it was a long wait, and the intervening years were filled with frustration and failure. That was the story at Humble, which Higgins explored in 1904 but withdrew, less than a year before another wildcatter opened the first gusher.  

Frustration and failure also dogged him at Goose Creek, which he explored as early as 1907. Lack of development capital, legal disputes, stiff competition, and bad luck all took their toll on his resources and resolve. He eventually gave up and sold all his interests, just a few months before the first big gusher started a boom. For twenty years Goose Creek's annual production topped a million barrels of crude.  

Hockley was not much different, only we have much more detailed information from the Higgins letters that arrived regularly at the San Francisco offices of Higgins World’s Oil Co.  

From the 1850s to World War II San Francisco remained the financial capital of California and the Far West. Its stock exchange, organized in 1862 during the bonanza years of the Comstock Lode, was the second oldest in the country and a major source of development capital for mining, milling, shipping, construction, and other formative industries throughout the West. Much of the wealth supporting this imperial outreach came from Nevada gold and silver mines. The Comstock bonanza ended by the late 1870s and sent mining stocks in a tailspin for nearly a quarter of a century. But the opening of Tonopah and Goldfield bonanzas after 1903 revived San Francisco’s mining investors and triggered a four-year boom that reached its peak just as Pattillo Higgins opened the Hockley field.  

Precisely when Higgins made the San Francisco connection is not clear from the available records, but doubtless he was attracted by California oil interests. Since the 1890s the California oil industry had been growing by leaps and bounds. Oil developers looked to San Francisco for financial help just as had regional locators of gold and silver mines. An Oil Exchange grew up alongside two mining exchanges and the older Stock and Bond Exchange on Pine Street to accommodate the increased volume. Dozens of brokers and salesmen occupied this section of the City’s financial district. One of the most experienced was Daniel M. Kent, who had set up business on Montgomery Street late in the 1870s as a mining secretary and general collector. By the early 1880s he had moved to an office at 330 Pine Street, nearly adjacent to the exchanges. He was still there when the Tonopah rush revived mining in 1903, and the district soon filled with brokers and salesmen peddling mining stock. Kent had at least nine separate gold mining companies under his wing at the time Higgins opened the Hockley field.  

In the 300 block of Pine street, where Kent had his office, there were thirty-five mining stock brokers listed in the directory for 1905. One of the most important was Joseph B. Toplitz, president of the Oil Exchange and member of the older Stock and Exchange Board. He shared an office with Kent and may have been Kent’s employer, although the nature of the relationship will probably remain unclear because all the business records
before 1906 were destroyed. At any rate, the proximity of mining and oil finance was personified by D.M. Kent and his associates who provided financial connections and capital for promoters seeking financial backing for a variety of ventures in both industries.29

On April 20, 1906, just two days after the great earthquake and fire laid waste to four square miles of downtown San Francisco, including all the exchanges and the brokerages in the financial district, Texas papers published the first news of Higgins' exploratory work at Hockley. He had arrived there early in 1906 at the invitation of Tom Jordan, son-in-law of the land owner, a cattleman named John Warren. Scattered hardwoods mixed with tall grass covered a gentle rise that distinguished the site, located in a bee-line 108 miles from Spindletop, with Humble directly in between. A decade earlier, long before the Texas oil excitement, John Warren had hired a driller to dig a water well but the drill crew had given up after hitting hard rock at twenty feet. Higgins inspected the area and found gas seeps, salt marshes, sour water, and paraffin dirt—welcome signs to a “creekologist,” as surface geologists were then often labeled.30 Figuring the mound was an anticline with oil strata at less than 1,000 feet, he leased 8,000 acres on the spot and in April brought in a crew from Barber’s Hill to begin a test well.31

With his own finances severely drained, Higgins looked to West Coast investors to finance the Hockley exploration. Early in 1906 articles of incorporation were drawn up forming the Higgins’ World’s Oil Company, capitalized at $6 million with its headquarters in San Francisco.32 Most of the initial assets came from Higgins, including a half-interest in his Hockley lease, another half-interest in 150 acres at Barber's Hill, and a half-interest in an exploratory well his drilling crew was still working on there.33

Higgins' past association with Spindletop and his glowing initial reports on the new field stirred enough interest in San Francisco that his fledgling company had little difficulty at first raising funds. By the end of April, with the first well at only eighty feet, Higgins had received nearly $8,000 from D.M. Kent, the company secretary, much of it from the sale of heavily discounted stock to members of the board of directors.34

But that was not nearly enough at Hockley, despite Higgins’ rosy predictions. He thought Hockley and Spindletop were both anticlines that trapped oil under caprock within a thousand feet of the surface. The rocky strata his drilling crew struck in well #1, first at twelve feet and then again around eighty feet seemed at first to confirm his theory even though his light rotary rig nearly ground to a halt.

Higgins was anxious to tap the deeper strata and bring in a paying well while backers were still enthusiastic. Early in May he hired another driller to begin a second well a few hundred feet from the first. By the middle of June it was down twice as far as #1, but hard rock and water at 500 feet slowed the work appreciably. Still he remained positive, at least to his backers. “I am fighting the rock hard and believe that I will soon get through it and bring in a big gusher,” he wrote early in August.35

Rock and water were not his only troubles that summer. The tough
ground ate up money faster than the Higgins' company could raise it through stock sales. At the beginning of the operation the board had hired a field representative, F.D. Wolfrom, and had sent him East to raise funds. But his salary and expenses consumed much of the revenue from stock sales. Other sales representatives, working on commission, traveled to New York and Florida with a suitcase full of stock certificates but found few buyers. Higgins was inclined to find fault with their sales pitches, although they blamed the lack of success on barren results from the field. One big gusher would be all that was needed.

Higgins stubbornly pressed on, but by November 1906 he had run out of funds and nearly out of credit. All summer his drill crews had worked through strata intermittently hard and soft, occasionally producing a "showing" of oil or gas but nothing in commercial quantities. Higgins continued to assure his backers that a gusher was just a matter of a few more feet, but his letters showed the strain. On November 19, with the first well at 730 feet, the second at 869 ft., and contractor costs eating up his resources, he wrote Kent that he had decided to shut down both wells and shift #2 rig to a third site two miles to the south where he believed he could find oil in thirty days. "I had done so," he said. "I think we would have had oil long ago. We have done enough work on wells No. 1 & 2 to have drilled a dozen wells." But the promoter's instinct still prevailed: "I do not feel discouraged in the least," he wrote. "I feel sure that we will develop a big oil field at Hockley and Barbers Hill." Despite the confidence, his drillers had no better luck with Well #3 than with the earlier tries. Still thinking he was over an anticline, Higgins at first tried to tap into shallow oil strata at 200-400 feet, where he had found some prospects in earlier wells. Failing in that effort, his crew drilled deeper but hit hard rock at 300 feet. The light rotary rig ground away a few feet a day, aided by the use of adamantine or steel shavings dropped down the drill pipe to add abrasive—a pragmatic innovation in drilling technology. It took nearly four months to get through the hard strata, but core samples below it showed nothing of commercial interest.

In the meantime Higgins backers lost patience. One investor with hardrock mining experience wondered why the third well was started when the other two were still unfinished. It seemed to him that Well #3 was like "digging too many tunnels before striking vein." Others pressured the company to investigate the field management. Although the board reaffirmed its confidence in Higgins as field manager, stock sales fell off drastically, even at heavy discounts, as the months wore on without positive news.

By February 1907, Higgins was desperate. Drillers threatened to sue for back pay; long-suffering creditors made ominous noises; even his leases at Hockley and Barber's Hill were in jeopardy without cash to renew them. Pressed to the wall, Higgins resorted to financial manipulation. He paid the lease fee at Barber's Hill with stock in the Hockley enterprise. When one of his drillers quit and brought suit for $349 in back pay, Higgins told Kent he would let the suit continue "until about day of the trial and then pay him, which will be about three months." Despite the accumulating worries Higgins did not lose confidence. "Everything looks bright," he concluded, "but we
In April, with his company living on borrowed time, Higgins changed strategy. He abandoned Well #3 at 550 feet and shifted the rig to a new site 200 feet away from #2, hoping to reach shallow strata quickly and bring in a low-volume producer that would generate some positive cash flow. On May 15 the crew, short-staffed by defections, spudded in Well #4. In three days it was down eighty-two feet in hard shale. Gas and water boiled up out of the hole when the crew raised the bit, exciting Higgins with "indications [that] look extra fine for a good paying well." He hoped to finish the well within a week, but the next 120 feet was a steady grind in hard rock and shale. The drilling continued into June and through torrential rain which washed over the creek banks a half mile from the derrick and flooded the field. On one trip Higgins drove his wagon through a sea of water a foot deep, watching gas seeps over "hundreds of acres ... boiling up like a pot of boiling water."

Still the drilling continued. At 263 feet "a fine showing of oil came up," but not in paying quantities. When more oil traces showed between 320 and 400 ft., Higgins pulled the drill and reset with strainer to test the strata, but the results were disappointing. The next 100 feet tantalized him with oil trace mixed with rock and water, but the drilling was tough and took a month to penetrate. He kept on, thinking he was finally punching through cap rock, but then disaster struck: he hit groundwater under high pressure and had to plug the well at 400 feet. On July 27 he wrote the board of directors the bad news; he had abandoned Well #4 and was pulling all the pipe. That same day, taking umbrage from a letter prepared after a board meeting that called his field operations into question, he retorted: "I am not a bull dog and do not work on bull dog principles... I do not drill wells in a guess like way... I am willing to take advice from the board or anyone else but it must be advice of merit."

Higgins refused to give up despite the four barren holes, but he was financially drained. He had exhausted all sources of cash and credit in fifteen months of futile exploration. Only the indulgences of the field owner's son, John Warren Jr., who lent the drillers material and machinery, boarded the men and used his own teams to haul company freight, kept the Higgins company solvent during the last ten months. When the board of directors questioned Higgins' judgment in donating company stock in lieu of cash for these services, Higgins blew up:

...I know that I understand drilling more thoroughly than any other person in this section of the country and I am the largest stockholder in the company and I have used every advantage for success of the company... and I have made myself personally responsible for debts of the company in order to make it a success, and after all this the Board is ready to listen some unreliable source and accuse me of mismanagement. I think it an outrage and shows a liking [lacking] in common sense on the part of the Board."

He held on a few more weeks, trying desperately to recapitalize, but by late August he saw the handwriting on the wall. "...[I]f I fail within the next thirty days I am going to give up and quit," he admitted; "I cannot go much further by myself." But the old promoter spirit died hard. One of the last extant letters he wrote Kent ended with a familiar line: as soon as we raise the
money I believe "we will get a big gusher soon." 48

Pattillo Higgins never found that big gusher at Hockley, and neither did anyone else. Another Texas oilman, John Little, later reminisced about Higgins and others who wildcatted at Hockley: "[They]... never got any oil — only salt was all they got," he said.50 Unlike the unusual salt dome at Spindletop, which had productive oil strata under its cap as well as along its flanks, Hockley was barren of oil in commercial quantities. Even its flanks proved unproductive. Higgins had thought both were anticlines and had drilled on the top of both domes. Later he revised his thinking to incorporate salt dome theory, and even developed from core samples a mushroom-shaped model with an overhang that more accurately delineated the subsurface structure and that earned him the respect of professional geologists. But as late as 1917 he was still writing that Barber's Hill, the salt dome that eventually paid a fortune to Higgins, was an “anticlinal... the most wonderful and most simple geological structure that I have ever studied...” 51

Higgins as wildcatter is an example of the difficulties faced by independents bucking the tide of corporate merger and control. While other small companies with good leases usually sold out to corporate giants, Higgins resisted. Always short of adequate development capital, he was forced to rely on old equipment, skeleton crews, and obsolete rigs. As a result he was unable to drill quickly or to penetrate deeper levels. Frequent breakdowns hampered drilling; money shortages stalled supplies and payrolls, slowing drill progress and crippling development. His deepest wells penetrated little more than shallow strata. Lacking equipment and money to sustain an effective drilling program, he resorted to spot wells in unsystematic guesswork efforts and had to shut down before reaching commercial strata. His efforts as wildcatter illustrate the shortcomings of the little man trying to protect his investments by refusing to give in to corporate takeover and development.

In contrast, as an oil finder Higgins was phenomenal. He carried on his search for a quarter century after the pioneer era ended and professional geologists had emerged as the leading oil locators. That the pros learned to respect his skills is a testament to Higgins' natural abilities. His ideas were good, but he could not develop them as a wildcatter. Luck might have helped, but his undercapitalized operations needed better financing and systematic exploration at depth. Only a few more hundred feet of depth at both Barber's Hill and Goose Creek would have produced gushers which in turn would have helped offset the bad luck that followed him for nearly two decades after Spindletop.

NOTES

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For example, in 1945 the American Petroleum Institute’s pamphlet on Spindletop mentioned Higgins as among a “handful of men” responsible for opening the Spindletop field but gave most of the credit to Lucas. *Spindletop – A Texas Titan; the Story of the Lucas Well...* (New York, 1945), p. 1.

Higgins rated a sentence or two in early U.S. Geological Survey studies, especially in Fenneman, *Oil Fields of the Texas-Louisiana Coastal Plain* (Bulletin 260; Washington, G.P.O., 1906), but was not mentioned in a recent geological reminiscence published by the profession (Blakey, *Oil On Their Shoes,* 1985).

R. Coke Rister’s classic survey *Oil: Titan of the Southwest,* (Norman, 1949), mentions Higgins in the context of a brief essay on Spindletop and its significance. Walter Rundell’s pictorial history of the early oil business in Texas expands the Higgins’ treatment to several scattered sentences, but miscredits Higgins with developing a “salt dome theory.” *Early Texas Oil: a Photographic History, 1866-1936* (College Station, 1977), pp. 21, 35, 48, 65.


McDaniel, *Pattillo Higgins,* pp. 9-12; Pattillo Higgins interview, July 1952, Oral History of the Texas Oil Industry, Box 3K19, Tape 19, Barker Library, UT Austin. hereinafter cited as OHFOT.


*Pattillo Higgins,* pp. 50-55.

*Pattillo Higgins,* pp. 46-47.


Rister, *Oil, Titan of the Southwest,* pp. 185.


*Pattillo Higgins,* *The Truest Story of the Beaumont Oil Field* (1901), as quoted in *The Beaumont Enterprise,* October 5, 1941, located in OHFOT, Box 3K11.

McDaniel, *Pattillo Higgins,* pp. 147-152.


San Francisco City Directories, 1884, 1904, 1905, 1907, 1908; *San Francisco Call*, August 12, 1906, p. 48 c. 3.

Boatright, *Folklore of the Oil Industry*, pp. 3-5.


When Higgins first made connections with what was still the financial capital of the West remains something of a mystery, since few corporate records in San Francisco survived the 1906 earthquake and fire. His personal papers may shed light on his West Coast financial affairs, but they are still in family hands and not open to researchers. The earliest letters in my collection date from August 1906, at least four months after the operation began.

ALS, Pattillo Higgins to Daniel M. Kent, May 14, 1906, Higgins Papers, author's collection, hereafter cited as HP RHL.

ALS, HP to DMK, 30 April 1906, HP RHL.

PH to DMK, 1 Aug 1906, HP RHL.

ALS, PH to DMK, May 3, 1907, HP RHL.

ALS, PH to DMK, September 12, November 19, 1906, HP RHL.

ALS, PH to DMK, January 16, 1907, HP RHL.


TLS, W.A. Boscow to DMK, January 15, 1907, HP RHL.

TLS, PH to DMK, March 29, 1907, HP RHL.

ALS, PH to DMK, March 30, 1907, HP RHL.

ALS, PH to DMK, May 20, 1907, HP RHL.

ALS, PH to DMK, June 3, 1907, HP RHL.

TLS, PH to DMK, July 27, 1907, HP RHL.

TLS, PH to DMK, July 27, 1907, HP RHL.

TLS, PH to DMK, August 17, 1907, HP RHL.

TLS, PH to DMK, August 17, 1907, HP RHL.

ALS, PH to DMK, August 22, 1907, HP RHL.

John Little interview, Belton, Texas, August 7, 1952, in OHTOI, Box 3K20, Tape 45.

THE MYSTERY OF PELHAM HUMPHRIES

by Gilbert M. Cuthbertson

The name Pelham Humphries is certainly one of the most mysterious in Texas history, for this "not so gallant" Pelham would certainly have been the richest Texan today had his fortune survived. The Pelham Humphries League is legendary as the site of Spindletop in Jefferson County. The search for Pelham Humphries has led to much litigation, for the principal has been only slightly less elusive than the Wild Woman of Navidad. The "taking of Pelham" evokes a tale of Dickens, the unfinished Mystery of Edwin Drood or the interminable litigation in Bleak House. Little wonder that Carlyle relished the Regulator-Moderator War in the Redlands with an "unholy glee." Even after sifting through the early records, the historian cannot offer final answers. Pelham may have sought anonymity. Although the Humphries were certainly not known for minding their own business, they probably did not appreciate their neighbors' meddling in their affairs.

Among the American claimants were people from Georgia, Kentucky, and Tennessee, readers of books on heirs to lost fortunes, buried treasures, and lost mines. Old settler John Payne testified that he had never heard of Pelham Humphries "until they started lawing at Beaumont." J.T. Spradley had heard that Pelham had been murdered for his property. Others claimed that Pelham meant "bearded youth" to the Mexicans. Opposing contestants claimed the meaning was "smooth face" and that Pelham was synonymous with William. The name was altered to William on the original grant but not by the hand of the registering clerk. J.T. Coble, who asserted that Pelham and William were identical, left Panola County because of indictments. He was later arrested at Ennis for using abusive language.

Supplementing numerous Humphries heirs, claims were made to the title of the Pelham Humphries League by the English, Sniveley, Dozier, and Love families. Each group alleged earlier transfers from the original Pelham. The English title relied on an alleged transfer of February 14, 1835, from William Humphries to William English, not filed, however, until December 26, 1860. H. Masterson, the attorney, stood to receive eighty-eight acres if the English claim succeeded. The Sniveley title developed from a conveyance of "right, title, and interest" in the league to David Sniveley by title bond of October 27, 1860, with the eventual transfer of the entire survey to William King. The Dozier title stemmed from a transfer of September 2, 1859, executed to Stephen Dozier by Pelham Humphries Jr. and William Humphries, children of the original grantee. The Love title was based on a conveyance by William Humphries to John G. Love of 599 acres in the northeast corner of the league. The conveyance was registered in the land office records on September 17, 1840. If Love's litigation succeeded, a 4/15 part was assigned to lawyers, John H. Broocks and Hugh B. Short. Most of these claims maintained the existence of a Pelham Humphries but left open the possibility that Pelham and William were identical.

Claimants in Anderson v. Lucas alleged that several of the relevant
documents were forged. Since the days of the Fredonian Rebellion forged land titles had been part of the San Augustine tradition. Forgeries continued to be an issue in the Regulator-Moderator War. Witnesses testified that Bob Lusk was an arch-forger, along with otherwise anonymous land dealers named Brown, Legrand, and Watson. Not long gone was that woman at the ford of the Brazos who was said to sign Sam Houston's name better than he could himself when he was sober.

Conflicting chronology caused specific difficulties for some of the claimants. If Pelham had died in 1837 or 1838, a document signed by him twenty years later was a "Texfake." The validity of Pelham Humphries Jr.'s conveyance depended on establishing that the original grantee, whether William or Pelham, had a son by that name. It is possible that there were several Pelhams. Testimony claimed that there were two unrelated Joseph Humphries living near San Augustine. One, however, had moved to Gilmer, and Pelham is a more unusual name than Joseph. In a principal section of the controversy the Tennessee heirs and the Halliburton interests each plumped for a real but different Pelham.

As the Tennesseans had it, Old Betsy Wilkerson lived twelve miles from Knoxville. Before lighting her pipe she would always take out her prayerbook to show any visitors several entries, which may or may not have been in her own hand:

"William, son of Elizabeth Humphries, born at Charlotte, North Carolina, the first da Ginary 1796

Pelem Humphries, the son of Elizabeth Humphries, was borned at Hi Pint Hawkins Tennessee 17 da Nov 1898 (sic)

(Myra at Rogersville 10 da Dec 1799

Patsy 6da of April 1804)"

The opposition was so ungracious as to suggest that the error in the transcript might be the correct date for this Pelham's birth rather than 1798. On the other hand S.M. Shipe asserted that Betsy Wilkerson's was John Humphries, a cousin. Shipe remembered that when he was nine he had seen William and Pelham skinning squirrels. Marcus Price stated that the father was called Jack and his half-brother was Joseph. Another half-brother may have been named Luna. Nancy Faulkner claimed to have seen William and Pelham frequently, including at the Hopewell camp meeting of 1835. She remembered hiding under her bed when the sheriff came to arrest them for stealing James Smart's horses. She recalled that Betsy (Elizabeth) cried and told her they had been "hung." The brothers, however, were merely G.T.T. The camp meeting, the horse theft, the hiding under the bed, all have a circumstantial quality to them which hints of authenticity rather than fabrication. James McCloud supported the Faulkner testimony with the fact that Joseph Humphries was Pelham's half-brother and had married McCloud's sister.

The Halliburton interest focused on Pelham's Texas connection. Joseph, Pelham's father, had arrived in Texas in 1824. He settled in Shelby County with his son William and daughter Tiny. His wife had died on the journey from
Tennessee. His son Pelham returned there. Joseph then married or "took up with" Sally Story. Their children were Tom, Rile, and Phil. Members of that family of Humphries admitted that Rile had incited a mob to sack Carthage in 1866 and that he and Phil were both hanged for horse theft. Joseph's daughter Tiny married Joseph Story at Nacogdoches in 1835. This couple had four children. The youngest, Jennie, married Sam P. Halliburton in 1879. Joseph died in 1841 at Pulaski, located on the east bank of the Sabine River in Harrison (now Panola) County.

Pelham in this version arrived from Tennessee in 1834. He settled in Nacogdoches. He acquired the famous league on February 14, 1835, and died intestate in Nacogdoches in 1837 or 1838. R.B. Wilkerson testified that Pelham was killed by Mexicans over a horse, which certainly leaves open the possibility that he was hanged. Under the prevailing Mexican land laws the league would have passed to his father and then to Tiny and William and any half-brothers. Between 1829 and 1836 William had married Polly McFadden. The Halliburton version is fairly cohesive. It is even just possible that it can be reconciled with the Tennessee version. There certainly could have been good cause for not publicizing his past in Tennessee, even for taking a page or two out of Sam Houston's own account.

If Pelham's birth was shrouded like that of Governor Pendleton Murrah, so was his death. Oldtimers from San Augustine could have concocted a "round song:" "Oh how did Pelham die, boys, oh how did Pelham die?" There were certainly enough personal friends to muddy that picture considerably. The Attoyac River gained on Edgar Lee Masters' Spoon River as old settlers rose in court to tell their tales of Pelham's death.

James T. Chamberlain, a fading seventy-eight years of age in 1901, declared that he had arrived in Texas in 1836. That was the only unchallenged part of his testimony. He stated that he and Pelham fought Indians west of Nacogdoches in 1837 and 1838. Pelham accidentally shot and killed himself when his gun's hammer struck the gallery of the old Frost Thorn House. Pelham went to immortality saying, "Oh Lord, it will kill me." Chamberlain caught the dying Pelham in his arms, and he and John Ingram laid him out for burial. Ned Simpson, a former teamster in General Zachary Taylor's army at Buena Vista and a former slave of John J. Simpson, corroborated the account of accidental death. "Old Ned," who had been pressed into service at Camp Sabine, Louisiana, in 1838 or 1840, restified that he had seen Pelham with George Antonio Nixon and a Major Henry, land commissioners. He also stated that Joseph Humphries had lived near Carr's Crossing on the Attoyac River. The last statement went unchallenged although there was also a Squire Humphries who lived several miles away. Active in the Regulator-Moderator War, Squire was hanged in the 1840s.

Tarring the Chamberlain-Simpson testimony merely categorized them with other local characters such as "Winding Bladed Legged Nath" David and José Manchaca, "notorious as a standing witness to prove up old events." Ranson H. Horn, born in 1823, mentioned Chamberlain's reputation during the Civil War for tales of "bear hunts and bee ranches." Wyatt Teal, former San Augustine sheriff, tended to agree that Chamberlain was unreliable. D.A. Earl
did not believe that Chamberlain himself had served with General T.J. Rusk in
the Indian campaign, but Martha Earl did think that Chamberlain had swindled
her mother out of her headright. John Brewer, eighty-six, an old Indian fighter
from 1835 to 1845 under Captain Isom Bradford, "was in raids after the pet
Mexicans and Indians who agreed to break out on a certain moon. The
Mexicans broke out a moon too soon, causing the outbreak, and the Indians
were caught unprepared." Captain Maddett and his men were on scout from
San Augustine, but what of Chamberlain? According to Clayton Lucas,
Chamberlain was then perhaps twelve and weighed seventy or eighty pounds,
which, of course, was neither an absolute barrier to fighting Indians or telling
the truth.

The story of Pelham’s accidental death also ran afoul of the alleged
location, the Frost Thorn store, later owned as Thorn, Edwards, and Company.
Mrs. Thorn was the daughter of Haden Edwards, who had done his share to
liven up San Augustine. The storehouse and the residence were about 500 feet
apart, according to Azele Durst, Mrs. Thorn’s sister, who had married Judge
William Hart. The house, known as Hart House, was not used as a tavern until
1866. Leo M. Thorn verified that point which meant that part of Chamberlain’s
recollection was faulty. He recalled only three deaths: a Juan Cruz, who was
killed by a clerk; a brother-in-law of John Rusk, and a man named Donavan.
Charles Raguet, an early resident, remembered a killing on the gallery. Charles
Sterne recalled a knifing on the gallery in 1838 of a man named Jordan, who
might have become Chamberlain's Pelham. S.W. Reid, who had lived in
Nacogdoches since 1836, recalled a gun accident in July 1838. He did not
know if the man was named Humphries.

In additional testimony, Robert T. Hughes knew William Humphries in
1841. He lived with Jesse, who may have been his brother, on the Attoyac
River at Powdrill Settlement. Hughes ran the post office for this community.
He also met Squire Humphries, who was hanged in about 1842. According to
Hughes, Squire was a son of a Mrs. Humphries, probably William’s widow,
who married Sam Strickland, brother of “Tiger Jim” Strickland of Regulator-
Moderator fame. No wonder Sam Houston once wished that the area with all
its controversies would simply disappear from the face of Texas. The
inhabitants of the Redlands were indeed a litigious people, a trait inherited by
some of their descendants.

In unraveling the mystery only one fact is certain: Pelham Humphries
received a grant of land on February 14, 1835. From there conjecture begins
with the likelihood that he was from Tennessee and settled on the Attoyac
River or near San Augustine. William Humphries may have been either his
brother or his father. The suggestion that a land clerk misheard Pelham for
William is possible but unlikely although the name on the grant has been
altered from one name to the other. Pelham could easily have been involved in
horse theft in either Tennessee or Texas. The best evidence seems to give him
a violent death in San Augustine in 1837 or 1838. The Texas courts have tired
of the thousands of pages of litigation accumulated since the beginning of this
century on the relationship of Pelham Humphries to the league at Spindletop.
Litigation has continued sporadically until fairly recently. Like the drawing of
the line at the Alamo, the death of Crockett, and the shot fired in the Archives War by Angelina Eberle, Pelham Humphries is part of Texas' historical mythology. Humphries' mystery still remains to challenge historians.

NOTES

'Joe B. Frantz and M.E. Cox reproduce the original Pelham (altered to William) land grant in *Lure of the Land* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 1988), p. 62. The remainder of the information for this article is abstracted from copies of the original legal depositions in the author's collection.
In an editorial entitled “A Pilgrimage to Perdition,” written in 1890, William Cowper Brann, owner-editor of the Waco, Texas Iconoclast, defended journalistic realism by contrasting it with the immoderate public optimism of Sir Edwin Arnold, author of “The Light of India.” Arnold recently had proclaimed, via The New York Times, that “the course of mankind is constantly toward perfection.” “I believe in humanity,” he avowed, “and I believe in the world’s great future.” “The trend of human events,” he insisted, “emphasizes the truth of this statement, for though we may be horrified today by reading of a brute who butchers his wife, those events should not shake our faith.” “If we look at the matter philosophically,” he reasoned, “we will see that they are a diminishing series, and that the world is growing grander and nobler.”

Sir Edwin’s pollyannaism sounded naive to a case-hardened journalist like Brann. He began his riposte with characteristic directness: “Sir Edwin,” he said, “is a palace-car passenger on the great world-train, and knows little of the perils of the track. His coach rolls smooth and he takes his ease and indulges in optimistic rationalizing, while those who serve him look Death in the Face so frequently that they learn to mock him.” But “it has been my lot,” he said, “to look at life from the cab windows, from the point of view of a man with the grimy hand and the soiled jacket.” “And whereas,” he added, “I know something of that hideousness, poverty and despair, that make it a Purgatory for the many.” And in an accusatory tone, he rebuked Sir Edwin for his seeming ignorance of the real world, saying, “If Sir Edwin had explored the infernal vortex beneath his feet he would not talk so complacently of the ‘trend of human events.’” Then, with his argument growing in severity, he addressed Sir Edwin’s thesis with the acerbity of a street savant. It is Brann at his best.

“Come with me,” he dared, “and I will show you thousands of families in this city alone [Houston, Texas] who have not had in six months as good a meal as could be picked out of your garbage barrel...” He offered to present on demand “hundreds of families that sleep this winter on the bare floors of filthy tenements or huddle like swine on an armful of foul rags and straw...” He told frighteningly of “delicate women and children dying for lack of proper warmth and nourishment,” and of the “hundreds of men who regard it ... a godsend to get arrested that they may have shelter from the piercing winds of the night.” He closed with words intended to silence even the most vociferous optimist: “Put your head into a 10-cent lodging house if you want to get some new ideas regarding the ‘trend of humanity.’ Glance into a low groggy — but one of several thousand in this great city — and size up the gang before being too sure that a pessimist is simply a person troubled with a superabundance of black bile!”

This piece alone, written when he was an editorial writer for the Houston George E. Knight lives in Euless, Texas.
Post, exhibits the intensity and the conviction with which Brann approached his work. It also embodies the spirit of his "great world-train" philosophy, coupling emotionalism with harshness and sentimentality with contempt in an effort to supplant immoderate public optimism with sobering realism. A brief account of Brann's formative years will explain his ambivalent nature.

Brann was orphaned at the age of two when his mother died from an undiagnosed illness in 1858. His father, a bereft and penniless Presbyterian minister named Noble Brann, left him with the William Hawkins family of Humboldt Township, Illinois, before exiling himself to a lifetime of servitude to the Indian nations of Oklahoma.

Brann was a precocious child who, although he reached only the third grade in the Humboldt school, became an able reader and a promising writer. Hawkins obviously encouraged his children, including young Brann, to enrich their minds through reading. After all, such history-making events as the American Civil War, Abraham Lincoln's assassination, and the great Western migration captured the nation's headlines during this time, and probably were topics of conversation in the Hawkins household. Via the popular newspapers and magazines of the day, every young person in late-Victorian America learned of the building of the Brooklyn Bridge, the exploits of the Robber Barons, and countless other contemporary happenings. Perhaps it was the romantic lure of such exciting and distant events that caused young Brann to run away from the security of the Hawkins home. In 1868, the same year that U.S. Grant was inaugurated president, Brann collected his few possessions and scurried into the darkness and away from the only home he had ever known, never to return.

Brann, then aged twelve, spent the next nine years living alone and working in small towns in Illinois, Missouri, and Texas. Because he was tall for his age, and astute, he was seldom out of work. He worked as a bellhop, a painter's helper, a grainer, a railroad brakeman, and a semi-professional baseball player before finding his niche in life when he became a printer's devil for a weekly newspaper in Rochelle, Illinois, a small town about seventy-five miles west of Chicago.

From the beginning, the newspaper trade exercised Brann's agile mind and vented his creative energies. He applied himself dutifully and advanced from printer's devil to street reporter in only two years. By the time he was twenty-two, he had advanced to the position of editorial writer.

During this time, American newspapers were known more by the personalities of their editorial writers than their banners or mastheads. Melville Stone, for example, was the Chicago Daily News in 1876. William Nelson was the source from which the Kansas City Star drew its brilliance. And Henry Grady, by the sheer force of his mind and his dominant personality, made the Atlanta Constitution "The Voice of the South" in the 1880s.

Then as now, newspapers had to compete in the journalistic marketplace with the popular magazines of the day. Magazines were formidable rivals, for they, too, included lively and highly personal editorials. And like newspapers, they furnished their readers with a great variety of timely topics. The Postal
Act of 1879 helped newspapers and magazines alike by promoting reading nationwide, especially in the less literate South. This act, which made bulk rates available to the publishing trades, enabled the nascent American print media to flourish during the Gilded Age and thereafter.

During this period the leading magazines of the Progressive Era came into being. Munsey’s, for instance, was founded in 1889 by Frank A. Munsey, a staunch practitioner of “personal journalism.” Samuel S. McClure, a free-thinking ex-newspaperman, established McClure’s Magazine in 1893. These and other publications, including the popular newspapers, were mass circulated before the turn of the century. Many of them embodied the reformer spirit and worked to expose a multitude of social, political, and economic abuses in American life. After 1900, Lincoln Steffens, Ida Tarbell, John Spargo, and other “muckrakers” made maximum use of these powerful reform vehicles. Their provocative articles, many of which were in series, exposed certain iniquitous sources then threatening the nation.

Steffens, Tarbell, Spargo, and other muckrakers of the Progressive period were not the first journalists to rake social and political muck from the streets, factories, pulpits, and statehouses of mainstream America. To be sure, other equally resourceful and dedicated journalists preceded them. In fact, on the eve of the Progressive Era, in the waning years of the Gilded Age, numerous obscure but effective journalists, such as Brann, labored without fanfare to stimulate the mass demand for reform in American society.

On the whole, newspapermen such as Brann were street-tough and savvy to their environment. At some time during their early careers, most of them had been subjected to daily doses of murder, rape, armed robbery, and other types of social debauchery. It is no wonder that most were hard-cases, pessimists, or at best, realists. Brann believed himself to be of the latter sort.

The decades of the 1870s and 1880s helped develop Brann’s realist mindset. In these decades the last great Indian battles were fought in the American West, including the Battle of the Little Big Horn; the cattle industry arose from its cradle in south Texas and spread northward at an unprecedented rate; gold was discovered in the Black Hills of South Dakota, and Colorado was admitted to the Union as the thirty-eighth state. This world-in-transition paralleled Brann’s formative years in the newspaper trade. Too, it introduced him to new ways of thinking about society, politics, race, business, and religion. Social Darwinism, especially the type then being espoused by William Graham Sumner, reshaped the patterns of American thought and changed forever the habits and mores of a once moralistic society. The Gilded Age was unquestionably a challenging time for Brann. It was also a time of personal loneliness for him. He longed for a companion with whom to share his promising life.

In 1877, at the age of twenty-two, Brann won the hand of Miss Carrie Bell Martin, the auburn-haired daughter of an Iowa physician. Carrie gave Brann the settled homelife of which he had deprived himself as a youth. She gently buried the rough edges off of an otherwise course product of the streets. In many ways Carrie reclaimed Brann from the clutches of his untoward
circumstances, from his rambling course, and from a life style that encouraged him to sample life’s wine and vinegar from the same jar. She made of him a responsible person, a person who willingly learned to be a player as well as a spectator in life’s bitter-sweet charade. And it was she, more than anyone else, who encouraged him to educate himself through reading and to nurture his almost total recall. With her aid and encouragement, he broadened his horizons by dedicating himself to relentless self-study.

Current events, history, philosophy, and the Greek and Roman classics headed his list of favorite subjects. He became versed in the works of John Milton, William Shakespeare, John Locke, Thomas Paine, and others. His knowledge of the Old and New Testaments of the Christian Bible grew vast. His vocabulary became inexhaustible and precision-honed. His unique blend of acquired knowledge and street savvy, when combined with his satirical wit, developed into literary genius before he was thirty. Of course, the term literary genius connotes a strong, individualistic writing style, which Brann certainly possessed. But to understand why his style was applauded worldwide, one must know more about his “great world-train” philosophy — “the stare 'em down-and-tell 'em straight” mindset of one who sees life not from the parlor car windows but from the locomotive cab windows.

In a short piece about harshness, he wrote, “People frequently say to me, ‘Brann, your attacks are too harsh. You should use more persuasion and less pizen.’ ” His reply was, “Perhaps so; but I have not yet mastered the esoteric of choking a bad dog to death with good butter.” To drive home his point, he advised his well meaning critic to “Never attempt to move an ox-team with moral suasion, or to drown the cohorts of the devil in the milk of human kindness. It won’t work.”

Brann’s style supports all evidence that he was, from center to circumference, a journalist of the hard-school. “He attacked real persons. He uttered his own ideas freely. He set little or no restraint upon his pen.” Those he shocked with world-train realism and iconoclastic verve, he later charmed with satirical wit or moved to tears with emotional portrayals of real life situations. “If he lacked polish,” a critic said, “he escaped narrowness in his self-education. What his writing lost to good taste it gained in honesty and vigor. His meaning was always clear — pungently and provocatively clear.”

Unfortunately, these qualities did not always endear Brann to his publishers. Many of them found him hard to work with, claiming that he was too independent. In 1883, perhaps for this reason, Brann was released from the weekly newspaper in Rochelle. Bolstered by Carrie’s faith in his genius, Brann sought editorial work elsewhere. Immediate success was not forthcoming. In fact, his career remained in a downward spiral for several years, a situation which forced him to move his growing family from town to town in search of editorial work. He and his loved ones grew accustomed to musty old boardinghouses and used clothing shops during this time of lingering poverty. Between 1883 and 1894 Brann worked for several newspapers, including the St. Louis Globe-Democrat, the Galveston Evening Tribune, the Galveston News, the Houston Post, and the San Antonio Express.
Tragedy befell the Brann family in 1890. During his abbreviated stay at the Houston Post, his thirteen-year-old daughter, Dottie, committed suicide after an emotional disagreement with him about the attention she was receiving from a boy in the neighborhood. She took a bottle of morphine pills that she found in the communal bathroom at their boardinghouse. A neighbor lady witnessed the child's self-destruction. Unwittingly, she watched Dottie "walk to the wood house in the back yard and drink water from a glass into which she emptied something. [Then] the little one went to the hammock and laid herself down as if to take a nap."

Bereaved and guilt-ridden, Brann found consolation only in Carrie and in his writing. By day, he buried himself in work at the Post; at night, he spent tortuous hours at his writing desk in an effort to retain his sanity. Carrie later told friends that "Harry," her nickname for Brann, never got over losing Dottie and that "he became not more tolerant of human weakness, but less - he took on a holy mission to right wrongs."

In 1891, with money he had earned lecturing, Brann moved his family to Austin, Texas, where he made a failed attempt to start his own newspaper, the Austin Iconoclast. In 1893 he was offered an editorial post at the nearby San Antonio Express. It, too, was of short duration: he was asked to depart the Express after an irate subject beat him severely, and publicly, for libeling him in an editorial. His self-esteem was diminishing rapidly when the Waco Daily News, one of the most progressive newspapers in the state, offered him a position on its editorial staff. Brann wasted little time in accepting the job. To acquire the money for the move to Waco, Brann sold his letterpress to an Austin friend, William Sydney Porter, for $250. Porter later became famous as O. Henry.

The Brann family, which now included Billy, age two, and Gracie, age seven, arrived in Waco in the summer of 1894. They took up residence in a modest boardinghouse on Austin Avenue, not far from the Daily News. Brann started his new job with a renewed determination to be the best editorial writer he could be. After only a few months on the job, however, it occurred to him that his present editorials were no less stric ted than those he had written for the Houston Post and the San Antonio Express. His ambition to publish his own newspaper resurfaced and occupied his every thought, leaving him no choice but to resign from the Daily News and follow his destiny.

Once free of officialism, Brann concentrated on printing the truth as he saw it. So with the ardent pen of a Thomas Paine, the love of truth of a Socrates, and the energy of a man possessed, he launched the successful but short-lived Iconoclast — his "great world-train" embodied — which was, in effect, a just manifestation of himself. But unlike literal trains, Brann's worthy vehicle operated free of restrictive rails. Brann could pilot it anywhere he pleased, and he did. Its most frequent stops, to continue the simile, were in the metaphorical cities of Shysterville, Politico Junction, and Amen Corners, U.S.A., communities that he knew to be rife with cheats, fools, and hypocrites.

The denizens of Shysterville, for example, kept Brann forever miffed. He waxed often and eloquent about the lawyers who resided there. To him,
Shysterville lawyers were the seed germs of "rightful injustice" and should be culled from the ranks of rightminded legalists.

In the Gilded Age, and perhaps throughout American history, unscrupulous lawyers were perceived in the public eye as men whose temperament, training, and ambitions made them virtual cannons in the arsenals of big business and politics. Most attorneys of this ilk willingly served the uncharitable and amoral plutocrats who exploited John Q. Public as chance permitted.

Brann sometimes colored his denunciations of shyster lawyers with satirical wit. For example, he identified the villainous shyster as "The little tin-horn attorney whose specialties are divorce cases and libel suits," and as those who incite "good-for-naughts to sue publishers for $10,000 damages to 10-cent reputations." He described them as those who are alternately ready "to shield Vice from the sword of Justice as to defend Virtue against stupid Violence." He saw them as being "for sale to the highest bidder," and as men who kept "eloquence on tape for whoever cares to buy." The nation's legal lechers, he thought, would "rob the orphan of his patrimony on a technicality or brand the Virgin Mary as a bawd to shield a blackmailer." And about their sanctified positions as court officers, and their assumed immunity under the law, he said, "More's the pity! But its some satisfaction to believe that, if in all the great universe of God there is a hell where fiends lie howling, the most sulphurous section is reserved for the infamous shyster — that if he cannot be debarred from the courts of earth he'll get the bounce from those in Heaven."

Brann's readers loved what they read in the Iconoclast. They did not mind in the least that his beloved newspaper — his "great world-train" — was the vehicle of his personal protests against the negative elements of a rapidly changing society. They did not want to be deceived from reality and he obliged them. He and the Iconoclast were, vicariously, their mouthpiece in the flush face of threatening change. So great was Brann's national appeal by 1897 that the paid circulation of the Iconoclast reached 100,000, a figure which equaled or surpassed the circulation figures of most of his contemporaries.

Another stop frequented by Brann's "great world-train" was Politico Junction, U.S.A., a peculiarly sordid place where all the citizens had the last name, Me, and who, with but few exceptions, fit the description of "They." Brann, forever the opportunistic publicist, made much journalistic capital from roasting this desperate lot and the calling they professed. Charles Carver, author of Brann and the Iconoclast, however, takes the opposite view. He thinks that politicos and politics were near the end of Brann's preferred topics and that the Iconoclast devoted little space to political issues. According to Carver, "Brann's interest in political questions of the day was as dispassionate as that of a poet or a priest ... because [he] was a social satirist [and] preferred to ridicule Mrs. Grundy rather than President Cleveland."

Carter's analysis is inaccurate. It is obviously based on an inventory of titles and not on article content. Neither is it based on a sure understanding of Brann's political interests, a fact which wrongly bespeaks his journalistic prowess. After all, the period of Brann's most compelling work paralleled the
political chicanery of the second Grant Administration and the flagrant and widespread political hypocrisies of the Gilded Age. Brann was too good a journalist not to reap such a harvest.

In fact, Brann's powers of observation had long been focused on the ironies of the American political system. As a street reporter in Rochelle, St. Louis, and elsewhere, he had observed the workaday activities of local Republicans as they struggled to build the foundation for a central government with national authority. In numerous articles written between 1880 and 1898, he publicly scrutinized the politics of the day. In such socio-political articles as "Grover's New Girl," "Slippery Bill McKinley," "Politicians and Pensioners," and "Gold, Silver and Gab," Brann informed his readers of the nation's political climate. More than once he opined about the busy Republicans who, throughout the period, thrashed the Democrats repeatedly at all levels of government, greatly weakening the donkey's resolve toward state's rights, decentralization, and limited government.

Political claptrap was as prevalent in the Gilded Age as it is today. Then, as now, politicians promised their constituents parfume but delivered essence of offal. This kind of public fraud outraged Brann, and he worked diligently for its eradication. His plan was two-fold: kick-start the moral motors of the pie-counter politicians by exposing their self-serving actions in public print; and, incite the readership of the Iconoclast to resounding anger, reaction, and the ultimate denouement of the politicos cited.

The success of Brann's efforts to keep politicians dutiful to their constituents cannot be determined, but he never stopped trying. Consider the message he so forcibly imparted in "The Age of Consent." It is emblematic of a time in American history when such statutory protections as legal age were not sufficiently guaranteed to its citizens by law; a time when Robber Barons, with their batteries of lawyers and their private police forces, used and abused the wards of their powers; a time when abject poverty abounded amid full employment; a time when working men, women, and children spent twelve to sixteen hours a day at their work stations, earning starvation wages and harboring no hope of social or financial betterment. Those victims of Progress who turned to their democratically elected representatives for redress of their grievances - as the Bill of Rights so encourages - most often met with political stone-walling from politicos in the service of unprincipled businessmen.

Throughout the 1890s, mothers nationwide feared for the well being of their young daughters. Brann shared their fears and sought to protect children by attacking the public miscreants who continued to support inadequate legal age legislation on behalf of their patron saints. In "The Age of Consent," he exclaimed, "What is the record of the American legislatures about this important matter? Most of them fixed the age of consent at ten years. Think of it, ye men with daughters completing their first decade!" Fixing blame, he added, "The men chosen by popular vote to make laws for a people boasting of their enlightenment, declared that a girl scarce old enough to prepare her trundle-bed or dress her dolls, was amply qualified to pass upon the most momentous question that can confront her between the cradle and the grave!"
Passionately, he told of the plight of countless American mothers, saying, "for ten years the ladies, supported by public opinion, the pulpit, and the press, have attempted to secure legal age protection for their little daughters." And fearful that the nation's political sycophants might miss his gist, he added, "I cannot understand why the legislature of any state should decline to protect little school girls in every possible manner, unless it be dominated by lecherous demons more utterly depraved than those that inhabit the amen­ corner of hell." In this matter and others, Brann the realist viewed the equality-under-the-law precept as only so much "fetid wind." Of this he once said, "The popularity of the myth that all men are equal can be explained only by the widespread prevalence of inequality."

The fact is, Brann looked upon the whole political process as being ill­conceived and inherently divisive. He thought political parties were unnecessary and dangerous to republican forces or government. In an article about this subject, entitled "Political Parties," he addressed a statement made by George Washington during the Federalist period. He said, "The prediction of Washington has been fulfilled - partisan politics has become the curse of this country."

Brann insisted that "Party names are not the badges of American, but of partisan slavery." He presented an illuminating example of the underlying meaning of the common exclamations, "I'm a Republican," and "I'm a Democrat": "It means that should a majority of the partisan organization with which one is allied, decree that white is black and the urine of a skunk is sweet incense, he should accept the fiat and devote his best energies to the promulgation of the folly!"

Brann often attacked the split-tongue crows who flocked to the state capital in Austin. More than once he attempted to scatter them with loud noises. He was especially critical of Texas' Governor Charles Culberson. He distrusted Culberson immensely and let it be known via a whistle-blast from the Iconoclast. He wrote, "A man who can run with the hare politically while holding with the hounds personally, is almost too versatile to be virtuous."

Perhaps Charles Carver should reconsider his statement that "Brann's interest in political questions of the day was as dispassionate as that of a post or a priest." The opposite is evidently true, for although much of Brann's political satire was masked in social, economic, and religious contexts, it was nevertheless present and remains a major characteristic of his work.

Amen Corners, because of its proximity to the offices of the Iconoclast, was another frequent stop for Brann's "great world-train." In fact, it was at Amen Corners that it derailed for the first and only time, "frogged" from its track by the collection of hypocrites who resided there, hypocrites who could not, within the dictates of their isms, tolerate the religious freedom Brann so ably purported.

Brann was the nemesis of counterfeit clergy everywhere, especially those whose personal agendas for the wholesale redemption of mankind included the usurpation of its religious rights. For this reason, many of his remarks about the "professional godly" were designed to provoke while others were
intended to incriminate. He greatly resented the fact that this camouflaged breed operated with impunity among the bona fide flocks.

One Baptist minister invoked Brann’s special contempt. His name was T. DeWitt Talmadge, a hell-fire and brimstone specialist whose published sentiments were syndicated in more than 3,500 newspapers throughout the South. Talmadge labeled Brann “The Apostle of the Devil” for publicly criticizing his far-flung and off-Broadway type crusades. Much to Talmadge’s displeasure, however, Brann wore the stigma like the Medal of Honor, turning its malicious inference into rhetorical capital. Thereafter, Brann chirpily referred to himself as “The Apostle,” as did his closest friends and associates. On one occasion Brann charged Talmadge with being a religious faker and offered a $10,000 bounty to “any man who will demonstrate that T. DeWitt Talmadge ever originated an idea – good, bad or indifferent.”12

Reverend M.D. Early, superintendent of Baptist Missions for the State of Texas, also drew a whistle-blast from the Apostle. In “Brother Early’s Bazoo,” an article about the foreign mission fake, Brann wrote. “It has been estimated by men who have spent much time abroad, that it costs $14,000 to convert a Buddhist to Protestant Christianity, and nearly double that to pull a Mussulman loose from his prophet…. Yet while we are peddling high-priced saving grace in pagan lands, our own country is cursed with godless heathen and reeking with crime, and in the garret of our great cities starving mothers give the withered breast to dying babes.” “Our theological exportations,” he exhorted, “belong to the same class with Early – men who condemn without investigation; who consider that in the little knots on the end of their necks God has cached all the wisdom of the world.” But in fact, he added, “They are the intellectual heirs of those … who condemned Christ unheard, poisoned Socrates on idle supposition and refused to even consider the Copernican theory.”15 Why did Brother Early receive such a roasting from Brann? Because the week before, Early had “insisted that he had never read a copy of the Iconoclast and would not do so, yet he declared it awfully immoral.”16

Certain religious publications of the day also raised Brann’s ire. One was the Texas Baptist Standard. This popular monthly magazine had, in Brann’s opinion, crossed the line separating gospel from commercial vulgarity. It had accepted morally repugnant advertising for publication in its issues, a practice which Brann viewed as mammonistic and hypocritical. In an article entitled “A Brotherly Rebuke,” Brann directed his criticisms of the magazine’s advertising policy to the editor himself, the Reverend J.B. Cranfill.

“It grieves me to note,” he said, “that the purveyors of ‘panaceas’ for private diseases regard the religious press as the best possible medium of reaching prospective patrons.” He referred here to the Standard’s advertisements for syphilitic nostrums, lost manhood restorers, abortion pills, and so forth. “It shocks my sense of propriety,” he scolded, “to see a great religious journal … like the Texas Baptist Standard flaunting, in the middle of a page of jejune prattle about the Holy Spirit, a big display ad for the ‘French Nervo Pill – guaranteed to re-stallionize old roues’.”17 This article infuriated Cranfill, but the indignant minister-editor turned the other cheek and said
nothing in the magazine’s defense.

Brann publicly defended the rights of all faiths to exist, a personal liberty too often ignored, he felt, by the brethren of Amen Corners. When the world renowned Jew-baiter, Herr Dr. Altwardt, spoke in Waco late in the 1890s, Brann attended the lecture. Afterward, he wrote, “The Herr Doktor can tell [us] nothing about the Jew ... that we do not already know. We have neighbored with him for 200 years or more, and feel fully competent to estimate him without the adventitious aid of a strolling mountebank, who could never have landed in this country had it been necessary to produce a certificate of good character from a respectable source.”

“The Jew,” he explained, “is a good citizen. He is seldom a crank. He is never a fanatic. All his influences are cast upon the side of law and order.” “Alwardt,” he scorned, “belongs to that class of pestiferous busy-bodies and fat-headed fanatics who make dangerous agitation their occupation and thrive upon the misfortunes of their fellows.” “Let the Herr Doktor gnaw a file and work his jaws until he foams with anti-Semitic fury,” he concluded, “[for] he is harmless as Bottom imitating the king of beasts, and the American Jew is sufficiently intelligent to ... enjoy the frantic genuflections of this imported pismire.”

Brann’s words seldom rang hollow when uttered in defiance of the breed of religious bigots and self-appointed demigods who peopled Amen Corners. Unfortunately for Brann, this pernicious lot had the capacity for violence, especially when confounded by his resounding logic and angered by his public disclosure of their socially damaging hypocrisies.

History records the interaction of violence between Brann and his adversaries. Such will not be reiterated here. Suffice it to say that by mid-1897, two hostile groups existed in Waco: the local Baptist, including those at nearby Baylor University, and the supporters of Brann and his “great world-train,” the Iconoclast. Men on both sides carried firearms and threatened to use them against their enemies.

At four o’clock in the afternoon on April Food’s Day, 1898, Brann and his business manager, William Ward, left Laneri’s, one of Waco’s busiest saloons, and walked south on Fourth Street toward the Cotton Belt Railway depot. As they neared Banker’s Alley, a shot rang out, then another, and still another. Brann was knocked forward by the first bullet; his hat flew from his head and into the gutter. He groped awkwardly, instinctively, for his own weapon. Feeling the cold steel of the pistol in his hand, he wheeled and pointed it at the wild-eyed man who continued to shoot him from a distance of about ten feet. Briefly, through the gunsmoke, he saw William Ward attempt to wrest the barking revolver from the shooter’s hand, only to be wounded himself. After an interminable instant, Brann’s large calibre pistol responded—once, twice, three times, and more—striking his attacker in the upper torso and sending him to the sidewalk in a staggering sprawl.

Horrified, Brann continued to snap the trigger even after the gun’s cylinder was empty. His face registered disbelief and shock. He slumped to one knee and gazed quizzically at his assailant, who writhed in agony nearby.
A heavy silence suddenly descended upon the fight scene. The gunbattle had ended as quickly as it had begun.

A stern voice pierced the stillness—"Come along, Mister Brann." It was Sam Hall, a well-known Waco policeman. Hall seized Brann by the arms, lifted him to his unsure feet, and hurried him several blocks to City Hall. En route, Brann told Hall that he had been shot but that he knew not where. His shoes were full of blood by the time they reached the City Hall steps. Inside, two local physicians, Dr. J.W. Hale and Dr. M.L. Graves, urgently examined his body for bullet wounds. They quickly discovered that he had been struck three times, with the critical wound in the upper back. While a police sergeant telephoned ahead, one of the doctors asked Brann if he wanted to be taken home; the answer registered clearly in the dying man's eyes.

Brann was laid gently in the bed of a hastily commandeered delivery wagon that stood waiting in front of City Hall. His coat was rolled up and placed beneath his head as a pillow. Then the wagon lurched from the curb and raced pell-mell down the brick street toward The Oaks, Brann's beloved new home on South Fifth Street.

Concerned neighbors watched as the policemen and doctors carried Brann into The Oaks and placed him in his own bed upstairs. One of the doctors talked briefly with Carrie. Then, silently, the official party left the house and returned to the delivery wagon. They had to make their way through a large crowd that had gathered on the front lawn.

Brann regained consciousness when Carrie's reassuring hands began to stroke his beaded brow. He asked her about William Ward and she assured him that his friend had suffered only a hand wound during the fracas. She also told him what the police sergeant had told her about the gunbattle: that the shooter was an East Waco man named Tom Davis and that his condition was critical; Brann's return fire had struck him four times. Carrie would not know until the next day that Davis, like Brann, was a devoted family man, and that he died in great agony on April 2 in the Pacific Hotel. His wife and children attended him until the end. Only later would the world surmise that Tom Davis, a religious zealot and an aspiring local politician, killed Brann to win political favor in the Waco Baptist community.

Brann lingered at death's door throughout the night of April 1. Carrie remained at his bedside all the while, vigilant of his every move. Billy and Gracie slept fitfully in a wing-back chair nearby. Brann awoke a final time at 1:30 A.M. on April 2. He passed away shortly thereafter.

Figuratively, the Iconoclast died with Brann. After a failed attempt to continue its publication, Carrie sold it to F.M. Marple for a thousand dollars. Marple removed the once proud gazette to Chicago where he hoped it would enjoy immediate success. He was mistaken; it failed miserably. Without Brann to stoke it, his "great world-train" steadily lost steam until its income from subscriptions and newsstand sales could no longer support its publication and it shuddered to a halt for all time.

More, however, remains of William Cowper Brann than a meaningful grave marker in Waco's Oakwood Cemetery. The particulars of his life reveal
a being of rare personal and professional qualities. His legacy, despised in certain quarters even today, is rich in the intellectual tradition and the American experience. He dared to remain in control of his moral self at a time in American history when rampant change insinuated an opposite course of action.

Brann, in characteristic gadfly-like fashion, cautioned his readership against compromising their morals and ethics in favor of material gain and other false rewards. Often right and sometimes wrong, this man with the "griny hand and the soiled jacket," peering ever outward from the cab window, insisted that rationalized conformity to irrational change leads to moral and ethical indecision and unwitting hypocrisy. He understood the vulnerability of the late nineteenth-century mindset, and he freely used his "great world-train" to warn a susceptible public of the dangerous excesses of a rapidly changing world.

NOTES

6 Carver, p. 28.
7 William Cowper Brann, The Writings of Brann the Iconoclast with a Foreword by J.D. Shaw (New York, 1938), p. 103.
8 Carver, p. 130.
9 Brann, Writings of Brann, p. 39.
10 Brann, Writings. p. 39.
11 Haldeman-Julius, Little Blue Book, p. 64.
13 Brann, Writings, p. 428.
14 Carver, p. 43.
15 Brann, Writings, p. 375.
16 Brann, Writings, p. 375.
17 Carver, p. 47.
19 Carver, p. 182.
20 Whitaker, "W.C. Brann, His Life and Influence, pp. 96-97.
EUGENE C. BARKER: A HISTORIAN FROM EAST TEXAS

by Hong-Kyu Park

Eugene C. Barker, a native of East Texas, was a prominent historian of the American West. He distinguished himself in the field of Texas history, its role in the Southwest, and more importantly in the life of the nation. In addition to many books, he wrote and edited countless articles for many historical journals of the nation.1 This paper is a bibliographical note on Barker’s achievements as a Western historian, with emphasis on his major works on Texas history in the context of the American West.

Barker was born on November 10, 1874, in Riverside, Texas. His father died when he was fourteen, and his family moved to Palestine where young Barker worked as a blacksmith. In 1895, at the age of twenty-one Barker entered the University of Texas at Austin and received his B.A. in 1899 and his M.A. a year later. Upon receiving his master’s degree in 1900, he joined the University of Texas history faculty. In 1906 Barker took a leave of absence for his doctoral study at the University of Pennsylvania and received his Ph.D. two years later. He returned to the University of Texas at Austin, where he advanced to head of the history department from 1911 to 1945. In addition to his teaching duties, Barker was editor of the Southwestern Historical Quarterly (1910-37), president of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association (1923-24), a member of its Executive Committee (1924-30), on the editorial board of the Mississippi Valley Historical Review (1914-17), and twice a member of the Executive Council of the American Historical Association (1915-17 and 1938-41).

When Barker retired from the University of Texas in 1950, the Texas History Center on the campus was named for him. According to William C. Pool, Barker’s student and biographer, “Aside from his teaching and scholarship, Eugene C. Barker’s most significant service to the University of Texas was the building of a department of history that came to rank with the finest among the state universities of the nation.” Barker died in Austin, Texas, on October 22, 1956.

Barker made an important contribution to the understanding of Anglo-American Texas when he completed the three volumes of The Austin Papers. The first volume was published by the U.S. Government Printing Office in 1924 as a part of the Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1919. It contains all the papers in the Austin Collection at the University of Texas covering the years 1789 to 1827. The second volume, also published by the U.S. Government Printing Office in 1928 as a part of the Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1922, covers the period from 1828 to 1834. Many of the papers in this volume had been obtained from the Williams Papers in the Rosenberg Library in Galveston. The final volume, containing Austin’s papers from 1834 to 1837, had been published by the University of Texas Press in 1927. The Austin Papers should be of interest to every serious student of Texas history and the American West.

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Barker's greatest contribution to the historiography of the American West, as well as Texas, was *The Life of Stephen F. Austin, Founder of Texas, 1793-1836: A Chapter in the Westward Movement of the Anglo-American People.* In this complete and thoroughly documented biography, the founder of Texas emerges as a cultured, sensitive, and patient gentleman who was foremost among those frontiersmen who won the Southwest for the United States. *The Life of Stephen F. Austin* remains one of the classics in American biography.

Three years after the publication of Austin's biography, Barker published *Mexico and Texas, 1821-1835* in 1928. This book contains Barker's conclusions on the causes of the Texas Revolution. According to Barker, "the causes of the Texas Revolution are more than a study in local history," because "it is the misfortune of the United States to have acquired three-fifth of its continental territory from Spain and Mexico." Barker contends that "denial of religious toleration and the restriction on slavery were a source of serious and continued annoyance, but the irritation caused by them was not acute enough to cause revolution." In Barker's view, "much more exasperating were ... the prohibition of immigration from the United States and the crying deficiencies of the judiciary system..." Yet the Mexican legislation of 1834 prepared the way for the removal of both these grievances. "What was it, then, which precipitated the Texas Revolution?"

In answer to the question, Barker states that Santa Anna's overthrow of the nominal Republic of Mexico and "the substitution of centralized oligarchy precipitated the revolution." Barker also notes that none of these causes was fundamental. He wrote:

Always in the background was the fatal fact that the Mexicans feared and distrusted the Anglo-American settlers, while the settlers half despised the Mexicans. A permanent atmosphere of suspicion magnified and distorted mutual annoyances which might otherwise have been ignored or adjusted. The apparent determination of the United States to obtain Texas heightened Mexican apprehensions... At bottom the Texas Revolution was the product of racial and political inheritances of the two peoples.'

In 1929 Barker edited *Readings in Texas History for High Schools and Colleges* in response to demands from teachers in search of a satisfactory textbook on Texas history. There was no adequate text covering the entire field of Texas history. So Barker compiled important studies and documents to make a reasonably continuous narratives of Texas history. In collaboration with Amelia W. Williams, Barker also edited the eight volumes of *The Writings of Sam Houston, 1813-1863,* published by the University of Texas Press. The first volume came off the press in 1938, and the last volume in 1943.

Barker was the coauthor of several textbooks on Texas history and the history of the United States which ranged from the third grade through high school. With Charles W. Ramsdell and Charles S. Potts, Barker published *A School History of Texas* in 1924, which was the state adopted text in the sixth grade for many years. For textbooks on U.S. history Barker was associated with Henry Steele Commager, William E. Dodd, Frederic Duncalf, and Walter
Prescott Webb. During the last years of his life, Barker compiled his *Speeches, Responses, and Essays: Critical and Historical*, which was published by the Eugene C. Barker Texas History Center in 1955. It contains the selection of both published and unpublished articles by Barker.

At the time of his death in 1956 Barker was eighty-two years of age. He was an eminent scholar whose greatest contribution to the field of the American West came in the area of Texas history. Barker had done "more than any other historian to show the influence that Texas exerted in shaping the destiny of the United States."10

**NOTES**


3 Published by the Cokesbury Press of Dallas in 1925, this book was recognized immediately as a definitive work. For a review, see E.M. Violette, *American Historical Review*, 32 (January, 1927), pp. 348-349.


5 Barker, *Mexico and Texas*, p. 100.

6 Barker, *Mexico and Texas*, p. 146.

7 Barker, *Mexico and Texas*, p. 146.

8 This book was published by the Southwest Press of Dallas, Texas.

9 The publisher of this book was the Row, Peterson & Co., of Chicago.

In 1933, Robert Frost made an eleven-day lecture tour in Texas which included Baylor University, Southern Methodist University, The University of Texas, Stephen F. Austin State Teachers College, Sam Houston State Teachers College, and Texas State College for Women. This paper details Frost's visit to Stephen F. Austin State University on April 26, 1933.

Karle Wilson Baker, who was on the English faculty at Stephen F. Austin State Teachers College, was the initiator and driving force behind the famous poet's visit to Nacogdoches. Baker herself was proclaimed at that time by many as the best poet in Texas. Only a person of such literary stature could have attracted a two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning poet to a fledgling college in a rural East Texas community. Unpublished correspondence from the Karle Wilson Baker Papers in the Steen Library at Stephen F. Austin State University between Baker and the poet's wife, Elinor Frost, yields important details regarding the arrangements that were necessary for the Frost visit before, during, and after his lecture. An interview with Baker's daughter, Charlotte Montgomery, who attended the Frost lecture in Nacogdoches, provided additional insight. Contemporary newspaper coverage and reviews from the *Pine Log* college newspaper and the *Daily Sentinel* of Nacogdoches also supplied essential information for this paper.

Baker had been working during 1932 with Dr. A.J. Armstrong at Baylor University, Dr. Leonidas Payne at the University of Texas, and Earl Huffor at Sam Houston State Teachers College to arrange a lecture tour with Robert Frost giving public readings of his poetry at institutions of higher learning in Texas.

The day after Christmas, December 26, 1932, Baker wrote to Elinor Frost to confirm that the poet would be coming to Stephen F. Austin State Teachers College to give a public reading of his poetry on April 26, 1933:

December 26, 1932

Mrs. Robert Frost
Amherst, Mass.

My dear Mrs. Frost:

It has been arranged, I understand, that we are to have the very great good fortune of having Mr. Frost with us on April 26th, next. Mr. Huffor, when he told me the good news, said that you were coming, too. Maybe that is what has emboldened me to ask you will be guests in our home during your stay: thinking that, perhaps, you will speak for me!

Maybe "guests" is an unfortunate word. I have done a little of this sort of thing myself (travelling about, I mean, to give readings and make speeches) and I know how it tires and drains one — in spite of its pleasant and rewarding features. ["I have often dodged being a guest, in addition to "stuck out"] I have sometimes felt that being a guest, in addition to being the show, was a little more than mortal frailty could bear. But I would try to give you the quiet and freedom that I long for myself, and would find my abundant reward in having you both under my rooftree. Also (though I'm
tempted to withhold this) I shall understand if you prefer not to be "entertained" at all, but to take your chances with such hotel facilities as small towns like ours afford.

I met Mr. Frost once, at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, but again my own scant experience instructs me that with the best will in the world, he might ["would probably":struck out] not remember me. But I know him very well; and so do my students. He is always the favorite of the majority of them, among contemporary Americans. Perhaps he would not be especially pleased by that; but he would be, I think, by the reasons that some of them give.

Do you think you might stay at our house?

Karle W. Baker

Mrs. Baker's letter exemplifies her typical modesty. Indeed, as a charter member of the Texas Institute of Letters, she was prominent in Texas literary circles and was sought after for speaking engagements at various colleges and universities. Baker's letter also reveals that she understood Robert Frost well enough to know that he was receptive to teasing and that he would be curious to know the reasons why her students liked his poetry.

Elinor Frost did not reply to Karle Wilson Baker's letter until April 11, 1933, because both Frosts had been ill most of that winter and their plans were uncertain. Elinor Frost felt she might have to stay at home.

15 Sunset Ave.
Amherst, Mass.
April 11th

My dear Mrs. Baker,

I hope you will pardon me for this long delay in answering your letter. Mr. Frost was ill when it came, and it was weeks before he regained his usual strength, and then, later, I was ill. Also, there have been more things to do than usual, here in Amherst.

But now spring is here, and the journey to Texas is soon to be undertaken. My uncertainty about going, myself, has contributed to my delay in writing to you. Even now, I have not quite decided, though as I fear the traveling would be a little too hard for me, I think now that I shall stay at home and rest while Robert is away. He will be very pleased to be with you and your husband, while he is in Nacogdoches, and if I come too it will give me much pleasure to meet you. Thank you very much for the kind invitation. I will let you know a few days in advance, if at the last moment, I decide to accompany Robert. It would be very interesting to have a glimpse of Texas; especially at this time of year. I have always been told that spring is very lovely there. We are having a very unsatisfactory spring in New England—very cold and rainy.

Mr. Frost joins me in sending kindest regards.

Sincerely yours,
Elinor Frost

Baker was not the only one who did not know Mrs. Frost's plans. On February 7, 1933, Dr. A.J. Armstrong, chairman of the Department of English at Baylor University, wrote to Mrs. Baker that Elinor "Would probably join Mr. Frost at my home allowing him to come ahead. I felt a little doubtful of
the arrangement." In March 1933, Mrs. Baker received a letter from Earl Huffor at Sam Houston State Teachers College in Huntsville that Mrs. Frost was still undecided, but that she would likely join Mr. Frost in Texas on April 19 and 20.5

Robert Frost's rigorous Lecture Tour of Texas began at Baylor University in Waco Hall on April 18, 1933, where he gave a public address to the state convention of the Sigma Tau Delta honorary English fraternity. The next day he spoke at Southern Methodist University in Dallas at the McFarlin Auditorium, sponsored by the Mortar Board Society and the department of English, Dr. John Beatty, chairman. He returned to Waco on the night of April 20 for another speaking engagement. Elinor Frost joined her husband at that time as a guest in the Armstrong's home. Frost spoke again at Baylor on April 21 and yet again at a dinner meeting of the Texas Folklore Society in Waco on April 22. The poet had been asked to speak to the Texas Folklore Society at the invitation of Dr. Leonidas Payne who was an officer in the organization. Afterwards, Payne drove the Frosts to Austin where Robert Frost gave lectures to the general public and to the Phi Beta Kappa Society.

On Wednesday, April 26, the Frosts left Austin by train for Jacksonville where they were met at four o'clock in the afternoon by Karle Wilson Baker and her brother, Ben Wilson, who drove them to Nacogdoches. Elinor Frost described the journey:

Frost delivered his address at Stephen F. Austin State Teachers College at eight o'clock on the evening of April 26. A reception followed the lecture. Mrs. Frost did not attend either because of fatigue from the journey. However, she mentions an account of the evening in a letter:

Karl Wilson Baker's daughter, Charlotte Montgomery, remembers the Frost visit very well. She attended Robert Frost's lecture at Aikman Gym that evening. Mrs. Montgomery was teaching at Kilgore Junior College at the time and drove with several friends to the lecture. When she arrived in Nacogdoches, she went first to her mother's home at 1015 North Street. She entered the house and was surprised to see an unknown woman at the top of the stairs in her robe. It was Elinor Frost. Charlotte, surprised and embarrassed to find anyone home, left quickly with no further ado.

In our interview, Mrs. Montgomery said that Frost's reading of "The Death of the Hired Man" had impressed her more than any other part of the program. Mrs. Montgomery also confirmed that the audience was large. She
stressed, and accurately so, that it was due to her mother's efforts that such an important person as Robert Frost would come to a young, little-known college to speak. The Stephen F. Austin student newspaper, the Pine Log, reported that over 1200 people attended the lecture in Aikman Gymnasium and listed the poems that Frost read during the lecture:

The first poem read was "Mending Wall," which with "Blueberries," "Just Men," and "The Runaway," was reminiscent of his life as a New England farmer. The speaker gave an instructive and understandable analysis of the art employed in "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening." He also read "The Road Not Taken," "Nothing Gold Can Stay," and "Past Active Shoes." "Death of the Hired Man," a poem in blank verse, was read by request. "Pasture Spring," concluded the evening's entertainment.

It is likely that Karle Wilson Baker was the person who requested the reading of Frost's famous dramatic narrative, "The Death of the Hired Man," and perhaps that is why it was Charlotte's favorite.

Before Frost's arrival in Nacogdoches, the Pine Log ran a long article announcing the poet's upcoming visit to the small city. The article praised Frost as "among the three outstanding living American poets" and quoted the poet and critic Louis Untenneyer as saying that Mr. Frost "is the best living American poet." To familiarize the general public with Robert Frost, the article included a short biography of the poet's life, career, and works. The reporter concluded:

Now, even if you did not know it before, you know that we are to have with us one of the foremost living poets. As Mr. Frost has made quite a reputation as an interesting speaker, we certainly have something to look forward to. On Wednesday evening, April 26, we will have the opportunity to hear Mr. Robert Frost.

Another short biography of Frost appeared in the Pine Log on April 22, 1933, just a few days before his arrival. The fact that this article emphasized that Frost was a farmer as well as a poet and teacher was perhaps intended to impress the rural community. The local newspaper, the Daily Sentinel, also ran a short article announcing the Frost lecture. The fact that much longer articles appeared in the student newspaper suggests that Baker had control of the information about Frost and was making sure he received proper publicity on campus.

On Thursday, April 27, Baker and Ben Wilson drove Robert and Elinor Frost to Huntsville, where they were met by Earl Huffor of the department of English at Sam Houston State Teachers College. Frost had been invited to Sam Houston by the Lyceum Committee sponsored by Huffor. Prior to the poet's arrival, Huffor had written to Frost in care of Dr. Armstrong at Baylor explaining the last-minute change in plans delaying the visit to Huntsville due to the Phi Beta Kappa ceremony in Austin. He wanted to assure Frost people at Sam Houston were eager for his visit. Elinor was supposed to take a bus to Waco, but she was too fatigued. Frost had sent word from Nacogdoches to Dr. Armstrong that his wife would come to Waco the next day.

In a letter to Baker, Elinor described the visit in Huntsville: "That ride to Huntsville was a great pleasure. Robert's audience at Huntsville was mostly
students—college and High School students, and even some youngsters from the grades. It was an appreciative audience, and we liked young Earl Huffor and his wife very much indeed.”

The next morning the Frosts left Huntsville at nine o’clock by bus for Dallas. Frost continued by train to Denton and Texas State College for Women, and Elinor went to Waco. Even though Elinor Frost had not been present for the lecture in Denton, she commented in a letter to Baker that “He [Robert] found an intelligent audience at the Denton Women’s College.”

On Saturday, April 29, the Frost’s began their trip home by train from Dallas. According to Elinor Frost in a letter to Karle Wilson Baker, they arrived in Amherst, Massachusetts, on Monday about noon, almost too tired to do anything. In this letter of thanks, she wrote of their visit in Nacogdoches:

15 Sunset Ave.
Amherst, Mass.
May 5th.

Dear Mrs. Baker,

Forgive me for not writing before this. We reached home Monday noon, and found so many things that had to be attended to at once that we have had to keep very busy, though really too tired to do anything.

I have thought often of the pleasure of meeting you and your family—and of the song of the wood thrush in the tall pines.

I believe Robert is intending to send you a book instead of writing a letter, but he joins me in sending greetings and thanks to you and your husband, and to Mr. Wilson, who was such a pleasant companion on the roads.

Yours most sincerely,
Elinor Frost

Robert Frost did send a book to Mrs. Baker in gratitude for her hospitality. The wrapping materials for the book postmarked from Frost’s farm at South Shaftsbury, Vermont, on June 22, are among the Karle Wilson Baker Papers. The package was addressed by hand and contains the famous Robert Frost signature in the return address.

Elinor Frost had been so impressed with Karle Wilson Baker as a poet as well as a person that less than a year after the visit she wrote to Baker requesting some of her poetry to present in a program for her study club in Amherst. She also commented that a photograph showing the Stephen F. Austin campus with its tall pine trees would interest the club. Baker responded by sending Elinor Frost a book of her poems illustrated with original sketches by Charlotte Montgomery.

When Mrs. Frost wrote to thank Baker for the book and sketches, she mentioned how well the program was received: “They especially liked, I think, my description of Nacogdoches, with its pines and birds, its varied history, and the personal touch of Charlotte’s sketches was welcome.” In a gesture of friendship, Mrs. Frost closed her letter with these words: “I hope you will get some publisher to print your travel history of Texas. I think it would be fascinating. I will try to interest Mr. Thornton, of Henry Holt and Co. in it,
when I see him."22 Henry Holt and Company was, of course, the American publisher for all of Robert Frost's poetry.

Karle Wilson Baker continued to work to bring outstanding literary personalities to Stephen F. Austin State Teachers College. During her tenure on the faculty, both students and the Nacogdoches community were exposed to the genius of nationally known men and women of the arts such as Theodore Dreiser, Carl Sandburg, Amy Lowell, Louis Untermeyer, and Sara Teasdale.

Robert Frost made other lecture tours in Texas after 1933, but he never returned to Nacogdoches to visit the woman to whom he referred as "a lovely person ... in the so-called piney woods."22

NOTES


3Elinor Frost, Letter to Karle Wilson Baker, April 11, 1933, SLSFA.


5Earl Huffor, Letter to Karle Wilson Baker, March 22, 1933, SLSFA.


7Ibid., p. 392.


11Ibid., p. 4.


15Earl Huffor, Letter to Robert Frost, April 18, 1933, Dartmouth College Library, Hanover, New Hampshire.

16Robert Frost, Note to A.J. Armstrong, c. April 27, 1933, SLSFA.

17Elinor Frost, Letter to Karle Wilson Baker, May 5, 1933, SLSFA.

18Ibid.

19Ibid.

20Elinor Frost, Letter to Karle Wilson Baker, January 17, 1934, SLSFA.

21Elinor Frost, Letter to Karle Wilson Baker, February 21, 1934, SLSFA.

These pages are devoted to notes and personal observations on recent publications that are of interest to our readers.

One of the prettiest volumes received this year is Alan K. Sumrall’s *Battle Flags of Texans In The Confederacy* (Eakin Press, P.O. Drawer 90159, Austin, TX 78709-0159, $29.95), which contains a foreword by Howard Michael Madaus, a glossary, table of Confederate military organization, an introduction, and illustrations with explanatory text of sixty-eight battle flags used by Texas units during the War. Appendices on Texas units at the Battle of Mansfield and a most useful time line, herein called A Synoptic Table of Events in the War Between the States, follows, as does a section of notes, bibliography, and acknowledgements. It is the illustrations of the flags themselves that is so outstanding. The colors are reproduced vividly, and a useful addition is the dimensions for each.

Thirty-six years ago, your correspondent enrolled in the doctoral program in history at LSU, specifically because T. Harry Williams, then the leading scholar on the American Civil War, taught there. His “Lincoln And…. ” books on the president finding a general and on the Radicals had appeared already, as had his biography of *P.G.T. Beauregard, Napoleon In Gray*. LSU Press delivered this biography in 1955, and now it appears again as part of that Press’ Southern Biography Series, edited by William J. Cooper, Jr. Williams went on the publish a good deal more on the War before turning to Huey P. Long, which won him a Pulitzer Prize in 1969, but Beauregard had been captured forever in this magnificent earlier work. He remains a proud, vain, and competent Confederate general whose personality conflict with President Jefferson Davis left the reputations of both damaged. Still the best work on this subject.

Also nearly four decades ago, the project to publish *The Papers of Jefferson Davis* began at Rice University. The latest installment to appear, Volume 8 covering 1862, lists Lynda Lasswell Crist as editor, Mary Seaton Dix as coeditor, and Kenneth H. Williams as assistant editor (Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, LA). Grady McWhiney provided an introduction. The volume contains the texts of quite a few letters from Davis and provides calendared coverage of many more. As usual, annotations identify individuals, events, and issues mentioned in the letters. This may seem to the longest tenured of the “papers” projects, and it will certainly be among the most carefully prepared of them. This was an important year for the Confederacy that Davis served as president; it was a year of military victories when hope for continued success seemed real. If you have the first seven volumes, you need to keep the string going.

*Memories of Chireno*, published by the Chireno Historical Society (contact Alton Holt, Box 335, Chireno, TX 409-362-2333), is dedicated to all citizens of the community “where valiant deeds and everyday living led to the creation of the City of Chireno.” The first hundred or so pages are devoted to a general community history, followed by sections on churches, education, clubs and societies, sections titled “Special Stories,” “Nostalgia,” and
“Tributes and Remembrances.” Every community could use such a wonderful resource – to settle arguments, to grant and renew recognition of past peoples and events, and to remember what life is like in small-town America and East Texas.

Since 1972, Pelican Publishing Company (Box 3110, Dept. 5BEC, Gretna, LA 70054) has published Best Editorial Cartoons Of The Year. Comes now the edition for 1995, edited by Charles Brooks, which features editorial cartoons from 1994 arranged into the following categories: the 1994 Election, the Clinton Administration, Foreign Affairs, Crime, Health (care reform), Politics, The Economy, Congress, The Family and Society, Jimmy Carter, The Middle East, Education, Immigration, The Simpson Case, Canada, Sports, …and Other Issues. Like the editorial pages of newspapers they inhabit, all are possessed of a point of view; thus, some you like, some you don’t, depending on whose ox is gored. Out of the scores of cartoons that deal specifically with President Clinton, none were complimentary, few understanding of the complex problems, and only one – depicting the continuing problems with Iraq – acknowledge that the problem existed before his administration. In a way, then, these cartoons are a reflection of what some people thought in a specific year and so are good artifacts to study.

David Westheimer’s Death Is Lighter than A Feather (University of North Texas Press, Box 13856, Denton, TX 76203, 1971, 1995) features an interesting premise: the atom bomb was not dropped on Japan in August 1945 and Operation Olympic, the plan for the invasion of our then enemy’s home islands, took place in November as planned. Westheimer’s story follows the plan of invasion, humanized in the activities of U.S. and Japanese military personnel – some based on actual persons although not in this situation, for after all, the bomb DID drop – and some civilians. A Prologue sets the scene and moves so smoothly from fact in the summer to fiction in the fall of 1945 that you have to know your history to define the line. An Afterword by historian John Ray Skates, author of The Invasion of Japan: Alternative to the Bomb, certifies that Westheimer’s statistics on casualties and such are likely what would have happened if the invasion had occurred. A good book with which to close the fiftieth anniversary of WWII.
BOOK REVIEWS


Despite their private role in southwestern history, the Caddos of East Texas and Louisiana have only now become the subject of a comprehensive chronicle. Elements of their saga have been available in various writings on regional history and ethnology, while two recent books present, respectively, Herbert Bolton's dated reconstruction of the southern Caddos and oral traditions from a modern tribe member, Vynola Newkumet. But Smith's volume is unitary, treating all three Caddoan confederacies - Hasinai, Kadohadacho, and Natchitoches - from DeSoto's time to removal. It is exquisitely researched and written, aside from a few minor mistakes in the early pages, and explains events from an Indian perspective while maintaining scholarly objectivity.

Smith shows how the three confederacies coordinated to survive and sometimes prosper by buffering competing colonial interests. Able diplomacy by leaders such as Tinhiouëni and Dehahuit kept the Spanish, French, Mexicans, and Anglo-Americans from antagonizing the Caddos and one another. The Texas Revolution brought an end to the balancing act; Smith's detailing of this period and its wrenching aftermath is especially valuable. Intertribal relations also get appropriate attention. The confederacies contended with Apaches, Osages, Choctaws, and Comanches, and between 1817 and 1834 the Cherokees were a worse threat to Hasinai security than Anglo-Americans. All told, this is a choice reference.

Daniel J. Gelo
University of Texas at San Antonio


The subtitle of this book, *The Wreck and Recovery of an Eighteenth-century Spanish Ship off the Louisiana Coast*, is descriptive of its contents. Charles E. Pearson, director of the Cultural Resources Division at Coastal
Environments, Inc., a consulting firm in Baton Rouge, has joined Paul E. Hoffman, professor of history at Louisiana State University, to present this finely crafted book. It explores the fate of a Spanish ship caught in a hurricane and run aground on the Louisiana coast early in September 1766. Following the wreck, Spaniards attempted salvage operations with some success, but a substantial portion of El Nuevo Constante's cargo lay undisturbed until parts of it snagged the net of a shrimper in 1979.

Thus began an intriguing tale of recovering artifacts that included copper, gold, and silver ingots, as well as cannon, iron fittings, and Mexican ceramics. Aware that the vessel's remains lay in waters belonging to the state of Louisiana, and cognizant of the legal snares that had accompanied salvage efforts on Spanish ships sunk off the coasts of Texas and Florida, the shrimper and his Free Enterprise Salvage associates quickly and sensibly brought in the Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism. Under the state agency's aegis, assessing the historic and archaeological importance of the discovery was placed in the hands of professionals, while the ship's discoverer and original salvagers received fair compensation.

Hoffman journeyed to the Archive of the Indies (Seville), where he found "an abundance of primary documents" (p. 99) relating to El Nuevo Constante and the 1766 fleet of which it had been a part. The reader is treated to the most exciting kind of historical research (detective work) and a thorough examination of Spanish sailing vessels. Along the way, one learns a good bit about the carrera de Indias (Spain's overall commerce with the Americas) from a text enhanced by seventy-six illustrations and six tables.

Donald E. Chipman
University of North Texas


*Remember Goliad!* by native Victorian Craig H. Roell is the current addition to the Fred Rider Cotton Popular History Series published by the Texas State Historical Association. The book is a well-crafted, lucid narrative of the first 150 years of Nuestra Señora Santa María de Loreto del la la Bahía del Santo, popularly known as Presidio La Bahía.

Roell recounts the establishment of the outpost on the ruins of Fort St. Louis, two miles from the mouth of Garcitas Creek in what currently is
Victoria County, and the subsequent removal of the presidio to its present location in Goliad County. Throughout the era of Spanish Texas the fort was a vital link between the interior of Mexico and the frontier settlements in East Texas. Because of its strategic position, the presidio was a target for a string of adventurous foreigners. Presidio La Bahía is remembered, however, as the site of the Goliad massacre during the Texas Revolution. Roell maintains that this infamous episode was the end product of several factors such as the military ineptness and personal shortcomings of James W. Fannin, the commander of Texas troops at the fort, and the Texans' lack of information on the movements of the Mexican force led by General Jose Urrea.

Although the volume does not break any new historical ground, *Remember Goliad!* is a worthwhile contribution to state and local history. Individuals who have a general interest in the state's heritage as well as scholars will find reading this book a profitable experience.

Charles Spurlin
Victoria College


E. Merton Coulter's *Travels in the Confederate States*, published originally in 1948 as the first of several volumes on the South in the American Exploration and Travel Series, is far more than simply a bibliography of travelers' accounts. Casting his net as widely as possible, Coulter included diaries, collections of letters, autobiographies, and histories written by participants in the Civil War. Virtually everyone involved in or affected by the conflict—soldiers, prisoners of war, journalists, civilians, refugees, women, chaplains, surgeons, etc.—was given an opportunity to speak. Moreover, Coulter provided elaborate annotations for each entry, describing the role of the author in the war and, if possible, the travel route of each in the South. The annotations also offered critical analysis of the value and reliability of each account.

Louisiana State University Press has reprinted *Travels in the Confederate States* exactly as it was first published by the University of Oklahoma Press. Users should appreciate having complete titles and full bibliographic citations just as Coulter provided them. They should also use that information to read the source for themselves rather than accepting Coulter's annotation at face value. He measured most accounts, especially those written by Federal soldiers and prisoners of war, in terms of their "bitterness" toward the South.
and apparently considered those that were the least bitter as the most unbiased.

Texas, because of its relatively remote location in the Confederacy, is not the subject of a large proportion of Coulter's entries. Only 51 from a total of 492 deal with visitors to the Lone Star State. However, no student of the Civil War in Texas could afford to overlook these sources, and Coulter's work provides a convenient and detailed guide and introduction. LSU Press is to be thanked for reprinting this bibliography as a relatively inexpensive paperback.

Randolph B. Campbell
University of North Texas


Students of the American Civil War are familiar with William A. Fletcher's *Rebel Private: Front and Rear*. First published in 1908 by Greer Press of Beaumont, Texas, Fletcher's account of his experiences as an enlisted man in the Civil War has long been regarded as a classic in Civil War literature. In his introduction to a 1954 edition published by the University of Texas Press, the late Bell Wiley, the premier historian of the Confederate common soldier, declared that Fletcher's account is "one of the most satisfying memoirs of Confederate service" (p. xiii).

A native of Louisiana, Bill Fletcher was living in Beaumont where he was roofing a house when he heard the news of the firing on Fort Sumter. He immediately enlisted in Company F, Fifth Texas Infantry. After several delays he was on his way to Virginia where the Fifth Texas became part of the Texas brigade commanded by John Bell Hood. Fletcher's first battle experiences were in the Seven Days around Richmond, early in the summer of 1862. He was wounded seriously at Second Manassas later that summer but rejoined the regiment in time for the Battle of Fredericksburg. He saw action at Gettysburg and Chickamauga in 1863, but a wound in the Tennessee campaign forced him to transfer to cavalry service. He spent the remainder of the war with the Eighth Texas Cavalry (Terry's Texas Rangers) serving in Georgia, Tennessee, and the Carolinas.

Fletcher's memoirs have been out of print for several years. Republication by a division of Penguin Books will make the classic once more available not only to Americans but British Commonwealth readers as well. An introduction by Civil War historian Richard Wheeler and an afterword by
great-granddaughter Vallie Fletcher Taylor provide additional personal information on this East Texas Confederate.

Ralph A. Wooster
Lamar University


Gideon Lincecum was a most extraordinary man. His lifetime adventures could keep a person spellbound and the incredible things he accomplished could fill many lifetimes. He is much like a Teddy Roosevelt with feelings, emotions, intellect, and experiences which mold his life and those around him. Much information is given on people, places, Indians, flora, fauna, and geography throughout the book, but especially on Texas from a scouting trip lasting several months during 1834-1835. Of great interest is the description of wildlife, especially the whooping cranes and geese, along the Texas coast, and deer hunting and fishing inland. From journals Lincecum wrote as he explored, the reader can learn how to kill any animal (deer, bear, fish, etc.) in his description of proven techniques of the time, and descriptions of the wild goose “language” and the market for venison in settlements on the Texas frontier give a dimension not found in many accounts.

Lincecum, the oldest child of Hezekial and Sally Hickman Lincecum, lived the life of a western pioneer, moving with his family constantly until he and his family arrived in Texas in 1847. This book does not include much of his life in Texas but does discuss his support of the Confederacy during the Civil War and his move to Mexico for a brief time after the war. While in Mexico he continued his investigative studies, especially of aboriginal life in the area.

Of great value are the accounts of Indians (especially the Choctaw or Chahtas in Mississippi), including their nature, livelihood, tribal descriptions, language, treatment, medicine, and movement west. Interwoven in this is Lincecum’s study of medicine, including his practices of the “old school” and conversion to the “steam doctor” or Botanical medicine.

The editors do an excellent job of following four major sources of Lincecum’s writings to inform the reader of pertinent things. Exhaustive work was done to prove or disprove Lincecum’s facts. Using census records, the
Editors attempt to locate every person mentioned in the journals. They corresponded with many historians on topics and events to establish credibility for the reader, even if doing so sheds doubt at times. This was important to Jerry Bryan Lincecum since he is a direct descendant to the writer. A large part of the book does not deal with Texas, but it is a must for Texana enthusiasts. What happened in Lincecum's life happened to a large percent of people who came into Texas during the nineteenth century. It is more documented than other Texas memoirs and recollections of the same time frame and describes the "true intellect" that A.C. Greene calls him in the Foreword.

Linda Cross
Tyler Jr. College


The Hungarian Texans, James Patrick McGuire's history of this ethnic minority in Texas, the first of its kind, is synthetic and descriptive. The author and his research associates resolve the difficulties of a multiplicity of languages and sources, and spellings and sounds strange to the American ear. The relatively small number of Hungarian immigrants to Texas before the Hungarian Revolution 1956 precludes McGuire from analyzing and writing about them in the traditional sociological format that is associated with several recent examinations of German Texans.

McGuire, rather, weaves the chronological, biographical, and genealogical strands together about this people. The many stories about numerous individuals and families capture the essence of Hungarian immigration to Texas. It came in four distinctive segments: a few scattered individuals during the Texas Republic; the political refugees from the failed Revolution of 1848; the economic pioneers of the 1880s and 1890s; and, finally, the refugees escaping from the ruins of World War II and the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. They generally drifted to the larger cities and became artisans, craftsmen, and mechanics. Many, however, farmed or worked in the East Texas lumber industry. Unlike some other, more numerous immigrant groups to Texas during the last 160 years, the people of all four Hungarian immigrant eras rapidly assimilated the language and dominant social characteristics of Texas. They have quickly blended into the Lone Star community.
The Hungarian Texans avoids being a recapitulation of anecdotal vignettes about long-ago immigrant days. McGuire captures the singular, melancholic sense of this peculiar people, one who lamented that his Anglo-American neighbors could not hear the "song" of his spirit. Within the constraints of strange-sounding and strange-looking names and places, the author has produced a very well-researched and generally well-written work that fulfills its role of a beginning primer for the study of Hungarian Texans.

Melvin C. Johnson
Texas Forestry Museum


The historical study of Texas women, particularly black women, is a neglected area. Ruthe Winegarten’s interest in the study of black women evolved from the Texas Women - A Celebration of History museum exhibit that toured the state for two years in the 1980s. Ruthe Winegarten researched African-American Texas women, and she wrote Black Texas Women to illustrate the prolonged and continuing struggle of minority women against oppressive institutions and people. While combating both racial and sexual discrimination, black women built homes, developed strong communities, and had careers. Winegarten focused the attention of her study on women who took initiatives in the public sphere, and she provided information from the perspective of black women by writing brief paragraphs about their lives.

The book reveals the struggles of black women from their arrival to the area in the colonial period to their current struggles. Until recently, most black women in Texas worked in domestic labor. During the Republic period, the Texas government tried to expel all free blacks. However, many free black women petitioned for their residency and maintained their importance in society by being seamstresses, washerwomen, and cooks. After suffering under the institution of slavery, black women attempted to reconstruct families and develop communities through involvement in churches and missionary societies. Under the Freedmen’s Bureau, schools for black children and adults were opened, and many were run by black women. Teaching became the sole profession that black women could enter that was not labor intensive. Recently, African-American women have made careers for themselves as doctors, lawyers, artists, astronauts, politicians, and actresses. In this book,
Ruthe Winegarten successfully demonstrated the continuing rise of black Texas women.

Karen Heinefield
Nacogdoches, Texas


On June 14, 1877 Henry Ossian Flipper graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and received his commission as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army. What distinguished lieutenant Flipper from his classmates was that he was an African American, the first to graduate from West Point, and a former slave. Four years later Flipper was accused of embezzling funds under his supervision, court martialed, found guilty of "conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman" (p. 21), and dismissed from the U.S. Army. In The Court Martial of Lieutenant Henry Flipper, Charles M. Robinson surveys Flipper's brief military career and details his arrest and trial. Robinson argues that Flipper was a victim, both of an army that was not ready for black officers and a commanding officer who provided his young officer with inadequate guidance and supervision, and then, largely because of racial bias, overreacted to what were really rather minor failures in Flipper's conduct of his office.

As the title of this book suggests, Robinson focuses on the trial itself. Using trial transcripts supplemented by newspaper accounts and Flipper's memoirs, Robinson reconstructs testimony and the arguments of the prosecution and defense. He concludes that in spite of the racism of the late nineteenth century, Flipper got a fair trial - he was acquitted on the charge of embezzlement but found guilty of the more ambiguous charge of conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman; the injustice was not the verdict but the sentence - dismissal from the military was out of line with the penalties assessed other officers found guilty of similar offenses.

Robinson effectively reconstructs the trial of Lieutenant Flipper. While we wish that Robinson had been more ambitious and had linked the trial and its appeals more closely with other developments in late nineteenth century African American history, we can find no fault with the conclusions or the methodology of this convincingly argued and well written little book.

Cary Wintz
Texas Southern University
If I felt that I needed a guide for a tour of the Big Thicket, I would hire Howard Peacock, the author of the *Nature Lover's Guide to the Big Thicket*, or Maxine Johnston, who wrote the preface. They are both long-time Nature Lovers and Thicket Lovers who have tramped the baygalls and bayous of that southeast Texas natural phenomenon from one end to the other and who have fought in the Thicket's battles for survival since the fray began back in the early Sixties.

And if Howard and Maxine cannot go when you want to, all you need is Howard's handy-dandy almost-pocket size *Nature Lover's Guide*. It contains everything you need to know about Thicket life, whether you are a first timer or old timer in the Big Woods. Trees, birds, plants, and animals: if it jumps at you or crawls up your leg, you can identify and make friends with it with the aid of Howard's book.

Howard introduces the Big Thicket as America's Ark because of its plentitude of plant and animal life. He identifies 3,500,000 acres as the "Primitive Big Thicket Region," a size and area that seem to me much too large and diverse to lump into one category. But he comes back to reality when he discusses the present-day nearly 100,000-acre Big Thicket Natural Preserve. He divides the Thicket into its ten habitats or ecosystems and leads the reader on a tour of the biology, geology, and geography of each one. If you have paid any attention at all, you will have a good understanding of Big Thicket habitat by the end of Chapter II.

Howard is at his best leading a tour. He talks with an understanding and a gentle smile, recognizing that his listeners do not have his biological education and his background years of wandering through the Thicket.

In Chapter II Howard takes you to each of the nine units of the present Big Thicket National Preserve. He shows you how to get to each of the units, and then he tells you what to look for once you get there. He has special chapters on the trees, plants, and animals. He tells you where to look and, with photographs and drawings, how to recognize what you see.

If you wish to do more than tramp around, Howard has included a chapter on recreational activities, such as camping, canoeing, hunting, and fishing — where to camp and where to put in for a canoe trip, how to fish and where to hunt.

He has also included a chapter on nearby nature attractions: the Larsen
Sandyland Sanctuary, Sea Rim State Park, and other tours, nature trails, and national forests.

The Nature Lover's Guide to the Big Thicket is a mini-encyclopedia for the naturalist who wishes to learn more about these big woods of southeast Texas. And you could not get a better teacher than Howard Peacock.

Francis Edward Abernethy
Stephen F. Austin State University


This little book of popular history spans the seventy-year career of West Texas oilman, Claude Wilson Brown. Although he referred to himself as "a roustabout from McCamey," Brown was born December 7, 1904, in Coleman County, Texas. His first introduction to the economic promise of the oil industry came through a much-needed division order from an assignment inherited by his mother in 1916. After graduating from Ballinger High School in 1922, Brown went to work for his uncle, J.K. Hughes Oil Company, as a roustabout in the Mexia field. He worked his way to the position of production superintendent, learning the business. When Hughes sold his company in 1928, Brown and a friend, Ben Crowder, bought a rotary rig to drill on their own. After Crowder was killed and the Great Depression hit, Brown lost his business. In 1935 he went to McCamey to work as a cable-tool driller for Dave Duncan on one tour and as an independent oil-field parts dealer on a second shift. By 1937 he had quit drilling and opened Brown Pipe and Supply Company, which expanded to six locations by 1940. From the supply company he branched into drilling and pipeline businesses. Eventually, Brown moved into banking, a car dealership, and real estate.

As a successful businessman, Brown turned to philanthropic and political interests. He gave his time and money to the Methodist church and to the Democratic Party. Brown also helped individuals, especially minorities, to make good starts in education and business. He was portrayed in the book as one who cared about people. Brown received several local and regional awards for his endeavors.

The book, written by journalists who said they knew Brown for forty years, cannot be offered as a scholarly work. Although the authors stated that
they based their efforts on interviews with Brown and his family and on Brown’s personal papers, neither the interviews nor the papers were cited. In fact, only six of the fourteen chapters carried any citations and those attempted to document events other than Brown’s experiences. For those who enjoy seeing the names of West Texans in print or reading episodic narratives about Texas oil fields, this book meets their expectations.

The title of the book suggests that it is the biography of Claude W. Brown, however, it is actually a superficial Texas oil history, giving as much attention to its own pseudo-epic style as it does to Brown’s career. Perhaps, the man who tried to build a better McCamey, Texas, than he found in 1935 deserved an in-depth study of the events and results of his generous civic contributions and successful business ventures. It is certain that the petroleum history of the Permian Basin does.

Julia Cauble Smith
University of Texas-Permian Basin

Bob Kleberg and the King Ranch: A Worldwide Sea of Grass, by John Cypher (University of Texas Press, P.O. Box 7819, Austin, Tx 78713-7819) 1995. B&W Photos. $27.95. Hardcover. P. 239.

Edna Ferber was a guest of the Klebergs while she was writing her novel, Giant. She could not have chosen a better place than King Ranch to understand and absorb the atmosphere, culture, mentality, values, and vastness of large cattle operations. King Ranch was (and is) a world unto itself. The story of King Ranch can be found elsewhere. This book is largely a biography of Bob Kleberg, the guiding genius behind the twentieth-century greatness of the ranch, as told by the best person for the job. John Cypher was Kleberg’s right-hand man through which all of his ideas and directives flowed, from procurement of Scotch whiskey to arranging meetings with foreign heads of state. Cypher not only writes well but he is a great story teller and gives the reader probably the best of what will ever be known of the inner Bob Kleberg.

It was not enough that Kleberg developed the first American breed of beef cattle and perfected a world-renowned dynasty of quarter horses. He had to do more. The vast King Ranch spread, under lease to Humble Oil Company, provided the capitalization for exporting Santa Gertrudis agribusiness overseas. Eventually there would be King Ranches in Argentina, Brazil, Australia, Spain, and Morocco. While most of these now have been liquidated and Bob Kleberg has passed on, the King Ranch in South Texas remains one
of the state’s proudest entities. This book is recommended to all who are interested in bigger than life personalities, cattle ranching, and horses.

Bob Glover
Flint, Texas


Jerry Flemmons, a Texan’s Texan and journalist in many forms, borrows his title from a magazine published in Austin in 1881 by Alexander Sweet. Like seining for minnows, dry panning for gold, or catching bits and pieces in the sink drain, Flemmons found Texas-stuff “browsing-sifting—in old Texas books and publications.” There are prayers—“Goodbye, God. This will be the last chance I get to talk to you. We’re moving to Texas;” recipes—how to cook a rattlesnake and four ways to make coffee without coffee; definitions—“A Texan ain’t nothing but a human being way out on a limb;” phrases—“Pert night, but not plumb;” letters—a Texas Ranger writes to his mother from a Mexico City prison in 1843 just before he is hanged; observations—Steinbeck’s “Like most passionate nations, Texas has its own history based on, but not limited by, facts;” instructions—how to skin a buffalo; and maxims, sayings, poetry, tales, wisdom, wit, diary entries, and stories—one about an unknown Comanche brave who “rode through a prairie fire to rescue a white girl.”

As Flemmons says, “We are a wordy bunch,” but he has found the best, the worst, the funniest, the saddest, the truest of all the words ever gathered together about Texas. and he says, “If [the] story is romanticized, and it often is filtered through our mythology, so be it. Aggrandizement is an old Texas habit, though I, as many others, believe that the state really is larger than life.” The subtitle of the book declares, “A bold and uncommon celebration of the Lone Star state,” and indeed it is!

Joyce Gibson Roach
Keller, Texas
WAG: The Story of Texas Coaching Legend Floyd Wagstaff, by Bob Bowman
(Tyler Junior College, P.O. Box 9020, Tyler, TX 75711). 1994. B&W Photographs. P. 112.

On a hot August morning in 1974 I waited patiently for the last of my students to finish their final exams, ending another semester of American History. I noticed one young man in particular who agonized over his answers, rethinking, changing some and finally, having done his best, turned in his paper and left. As he exited the back door of Jenkins Hall he saw a man lying unconscious near the curb. The young student, a Vietnam veteran, applied mouth-to-mouth resuscitation and probably saved the life of Coach Floyd Wagstaff. I have often wondered what a few more, or less, questions on that exam would have made in the life of one of East Texas' greatest coaching legends.

It is a pleasure to review Bob Bowman's biography of Wag because the coach is a personal friend of mine as well as a colleague of some twenty-five years standing. The biography would be well-warranted on the strength of Wag's coaching career at Tyler Junior College; a record that is outstanding by national collegiate standards. But, Wag is so much more than just a successful coach: he is quite simply one of the great human products of East Texas. He is a philosopher, counsellor, wit, and possesses more common sense in his little finger than most of us acquire in a lifetime. Further, he has that rare gift of being a great story teller.

Bowman has done an admirable job of bring out these human qualities in his subject. The book is organized topically around the major events in Wag's life, there being some twenty-three chapters or, vignette chapters. There are numerous photographs throughout depicting relatives, winning teams, and others who touched his life. Chapter twenty-two, one of my favorites, is on the wit and wisdom of Wagstaff.

Everyone who loves East Texas, sports, and the better angels of this region should add this biography of Floyd Wagstaff to their library.

Robert W. Glover
Shiloh ranch
In his third volume dealing with early Texas river ports, Keith Guthrie has compiled a valuable collection of historical information relating to East Texas. Covering ports along the Trinity, Neches, Angelina, and Sabine rivers, Guthrie highlights the economic importance of nineteenth-century river traffic, identifies numerous steamboats and their captains, and chronicles the rise and fall of more than twenty-five river villages and landings. In addition, the author recounts many amusing tales relating to the frontier river towns and the colorful Texans who populated them.

By way of the river ports and the boats that served them, East Texas was linked to the outside world, exporting cotton and lumber, and importing needed manufactured goods. Many of the early ports, such as Sebastopol, Wiess' Bluff, and Belgrade, have long since disappeared, while a few such as Beaumont, Port Arthur, and Orange have survived to become significant maritime centers.

Guthrie's book includes a number of historical maps showing the locations of the river towns and landings. However, it would have been helpful if the author could have provided a comprehensive map showing the East Texas region, its network of river transportation, and its connections with Galveston and New Orleans in the Gulf of Mexico ocean traffic.

Guthrie, a retired newspaperman, has written five other books dealing with Texas history and folklore. This new volume, loaded with facts and anecdotes, is almost encyclopedic in nature. When consulted in combination with the excellent index, the book will be interesting and useful to students of East Texas history.

Robert J. Robertson
Beaumont, Texas

It is trite to say that someone "is a legend in his own time," but how else may Stanley Marcus be characterized? He recently (1995) celebrated his 90th birthday, hale and hearty in body and mind; he is, without doubt, still the...
world’s best known Dallasiite, and although he had been out of retail operations for several years, his voice still carries great respect in the international fashion business. (And as a consultant, so does his fee!) But first and foremost, Stanley Marcus is a salesman. One of the more delightful essays in this book is his “The Lost Art of Salesmanship.” He is not dogmatic, but he is definite. That alone puts him in a higher category than most essayists or editorial writers (I was one). But Mr. Stanley is also a good writer.

Stanley Marcus has carried on his weekly column in The Dallas Morning News for ten years and has never suffered an editorial change (i.e. censorship). For anyone who has ever written a newspaper column that information is both envious and astounding. But back to the product(s) on hand: naturally, these essays are mainly about changing methods and manners in American culture and business. But do not turn away at the word “business.” Remember, Neiman Marcus was not developed as a “business;” it grew from an idea. Ideas are what Stanley Marcus projects over and over in this book. Read carefully, these essays will teach even a mediocre professor (what? there is such?) to become more effective.

A.C. Greene
Salado, Texas


Kathleen Huson Maxwell, daughter of the well-known attorney and historian from Refugio, Texas, has edited a trilogy of her father’s histories of that part of the South Texas Gulf Coast known as Coastal Bend. Two of them are welcome reprints of Huson’s accounts of the settlements of two once-important Texas ports – El Copano and St. Mary’s. There is also a previously unpublished manuscript about two captains, both named Johnson, their families, and their friends who lived and worked on St. Joseph’s Island and in the towns of Lamar and Rockport. Hundreds of families are mentioned in Huson’s trilogy, making this a useful source for genealogists with South Texas roots.

In the section entitled “El Capano,” the author discusses the evidence of early Spanish and French exploration of the area, the securing of grants from Mexico by two early empresarios who brought settlers to Texas from Ireland, and the landing of the Mexican army under General Martín de Cós at El Capano in 1835, which Huson suggests marked “the first overt act of war” and
thus the beginning of the Texas Revolution (p. 71). The growth of the towns of St. Mary’s and Rockport, along with the problem of inadequate water supplies, led to the decline and death of the community of El Capano by the 1800s.

In "St. Mary’s of Aransas," Huson tells of the railroad promoter and his efforts to develop a railroad connection and a turnpike for the port of Lamar, and then how the town of St. Mary’s was founded and grew to become an important center for the importation and re-shipment of lumber and other building materials to West Texas. Huson describes the political development of the area, the important leaders, and the prominent families.

Texas historians and genealogists will welcome this trilogy as an important source of information about the early history and peoples of the Coastal Bend area.

Naaman J. Woodland, Jr.
Beaumont, Texas

A Political Education, Harry McPherson (University of Texas Press, P.O. Box 7819, Austin, TX 78713-7819), Black and White Photographs. Index. P. 495. Paper.

This book, first published in 1972, was re-released in paperback this year. The author is a native Texan who graduated from The University of Texas School of Law in 1956 and immediately took a job as a legal aide to Lyndon Johnson, who was then Senate majority leader. McPherson stayed with Johnson until the latter became vice president at which time the author was given a job at the Pentagon. This was followed by a stint in the Department of State which lasted until 1965. With Johnson in the White House, McPherson was asked to become Special White House Counsel and, of course, he accepted. He remained with the president until 1969, then joined a private law firm in Washington where he remains today.

For its perceptive character sketches of leading politicians, for its insider’s view of American government at work, for its dispassionate analysis of the domestic and foreign policy issues that beset the nation during the late 1950s and 1960s, this is "a must read" for serious students of American political history. Unlike the usual memoir, it is not self-serving in any way. The author admits his own biases and errors of judgment even as he critiques the actions of others. The narrative is compelling, drawing the reader into itself and creating a sense of involvement in the events described.
This new edition contains a Preface written in 1993 and a Postscript, written in 1988. The former compares the Washington of Johnson’s day with the present and suggests that despite the monumental differences, Bill Clinton could learn much from the Johnson presidency. The Postscript contains a brief summary of presidential politics since 1969, including a needless savaging of Jimmy Carter. It concludes with the assumption that Michael Dukakis would win the election of 1988. It is weak and probably should not have been written, but it does not detract significantly from the overall value of the book.

Kenneth E. Hendrickson, Jr.
Midwestern State University


If “One picture is worth ten thousand words,” according to the old Chinese Proverb, what must be the worth of 530 pictures? In excess of five million words, by quick calculation, which should be enough to tell one a lot about over a century of life and progress in a deep East Texas county. Such is the case of a new, colorfully jacketed picture book about the “Big Thicket” area along the Sabine River where it separates Texas from Louisiana. The photographs, ninety percent of which are half-page glossy and the rest full page, begin with Hemphill, the county seat, and continue through the towns of Pineland, Bronson, and “Other pioneer communities around Sabine County.” They include court houses, past and present, county officials, former grand juries, the venerable old county jail, street scenes, outside and inside shots of businesses old and new, and numerous pioneer homes. Photos of Temple Lumber Co., the county’s leading industry, make up a major portion of the book with many shots of their mills, offices, lumber yards, and employees. There is even a shot of a sizable “moonshine” operation, one of the county’s smaller industries.

Many scenes are of early modes of transportation, beginning with ox teams, mule wagons, horses and buggies, and extending to early day automobiles. Included is the “School Train” that transported high school students from East Mayfield to Hemphill. Other photos are of church, school, and lodge groups, syrup mills, cotton gins, family groups, a 1930s CCC camp, bridges, ferries, and a full-page aerial photograph of the town of Hemphill in 1994. More than 2800 individuals are shown with names of each in captions and in the index.
There are photos of a dozen or more steam locomotives, logging trains, and various other aspects of large-scale lumbering. There are more pictures of other saw mills and their supporting operations. Log hauling from ox teams through mules to modern trucks is depicted in many photos.

Some of what is shown pictorially is now lost forever under the waters of huge Toledo Bend Reservoir. This includes the towns of Fairdale, Robinson Bend, Sabintown, and Pendleton. There are present and past photos of McMahan's Chapel, considered to be the oldest Protestant church in Texas. It is still on dry land having escaped the waters of Toledo Bend.

Robert C. McDaniel is to be commended for his efforts in compiling this unique collection of old photographs for the benefit of present and future generations. Pictorial records such as this play an important role in recording an area's historical past.

Fred McKenzie
Avinger, Texas
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