

3-1996

## Book Notes

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/ethj>



Part of the [United States History Commons](#)

Tell us how this article helped you.

---

### Recommended Citation

(1996) "Book Notes," *East Texas Historical Journal*: Vol. 34: Iss. 1, Article 14.

Available at: <http://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/ethj/vol34/iss1/14>

This Book Note is brought to you for free and open access by SFA ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in East Texas Historical Journal by an authorized administrator of SFA ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact [cdsscholarworks@sfasu.edu](mailto:cdsscholarworks@sfasu.edu).

## BOOK NOTES

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. Appendeses 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 to 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.