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Book Notes

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BOOK NOTES

These books of special interest are noted:

He's Wetting On My Leg, But It's Warm And It Feels Good (Best of East Texas Publishers, 515 South first Street, Lufkin, TX 75901) is the latest of Bob Bowman's observations and reflections about Our Region of Texas. Subtitled "The Texas Thesaurus Of Good Ol' Boy Expressions and Sayings," the book follows in the tradition of *If I Tell You A Hen Dips Snuff* (1980) and *I Ain't Sure I Understand Everything I Know About This* (1984) in presenting everyday sayings of the folk to communicate just about anything. This is testimony to our penchant for using a dozen or more words when two or three would communicate what we want to say, but this way is so much more colorful. Some entries are repeats from previous books, but many are testimony to the success of those earlier publications because readers sent in suggestions for subsequent books. East Texans will understand it; "yankees," well, maybe some of it.

We note the *1996-1997 Texas Almanac And State Industrial Guide* (Dallas Morning News, Communications Center, Box 655237, Dallas, TX 75265), edited by Mary G. Ramos, who succeeded the late Mike Kingston. Every scholar knows the value of the *Almanac*, and every Texan who knows about it is aware of its usefulness as a compendium of information about Texas. Herein are the usual government surveys and reviews of education, agriculture, and what have you, but this edition also contains special articles on sports, Texas music, and other subjects.

John T. Hubbell and James W. Geary have edited *Biographical Dictionary Of The Union, Northern Leaders of the Civil War* (Greenwood Press, 88 Post Road West, Westport, CT 06881), and it provides what the title suggests: entries, arranged alphabetically, that vary in length. Each provides birth and death dates and a brief sketch for 872 biographees who "lived and died during that time [who] have in some instances become a part of the national consciousness; others have faded from the collective memory" (p. ix). Your editor wrote some of this, for whatever that may be worth.

The Mexican-American War Of 1846-1848, A Bibliography of the Holdings of the Libraries, The University of Texas at Arlington (The University of Texas at Arlington by Texas A&M University Press, College Station, TX 77843-4354), by Jenkins Garrett, is a monument to Garrett's collecting and support of UT Arlington over the past four decades. This is of special value to researchers. It is divided into chapters on general histories and reference works, political and diplomatic histories, military histories and registers, unit histories, and a wide variety of topics, including music and cartography. Given the thoroughness of Garrett's collecting, this reference tool opens doors to a superior depository on the subject.

May Nelson Paulissen and Carl McQueary's *Miriam, Miriam Amanda Ferguson, The Southern Belle Who Became the First Woman Governor of Texas* (Eakin Press, P.O. Drawer 90159), with a Foreword by F.E. Abernethy, is a biography of the first woman governor of Texas, the first elected woman governor of any state, and the only governor who previously was a First Lady of the state. Mrs. Ferguson and her husband, James E. Ferguson, dominated

Texas politics from 1914 until 1940, a time when “Fergusonism” divided Texans as completely as liberals and conservatives would do so in later times. The book is heavily illustrated and represents the first use of family materials in the Bell County Museum to produce a modern biography of Mrs. Ferguson.

Spicey Ridge and the Bear Creek Beat (Spicey Ridge Publications, Box 7345, Longview, TX 75607-7346), by T.O. Bell, is the second volume of a three-volume project, *The Story of Brookeland*. Brookeland is located in southern Sabine County, and at one time was known as Bear Creek. After the Civil War the community became active in the timber industry, then lost population when harvesting methods limited the supply of the necessary raw material. For fifty years the community has claimed approximately 400 citizens. The volume contains a narrative of the community’s history, a name index, and sixty rare illustrations, many of them not previously published.

Mark Busby’s *Larry McMurtry and the West: An Ambivalent Relationship* (University of North Texas Press, Box 13856, Denton, TX 76203-6856) attempts, it says in the Preface, to “examine Larry McMurtry’s writing career in order to establish the significance of his relationship with his home region.” Busby believes that “McMurtry’s writing is characterized by a deep ambivalence toward his home territory, a vacillation that cuts through his work and his attitudes about writing itself. The course of his career demonstrates his shifting attitudes toward, away, and then back again to his home territory and the ‘cowboy god’ that dominates its mythology.” Busby uses the next 300 or so pages to expand his argument.

The Texas Military Experience, From the Texas Revolution through World War II (Texas A&M Press, College Station, TX 77843-4354), edited by Joseph G. Dawson, brings together twelve scholars – including some of the best who have worked or continue to work in this field – Paul Andrew Hutton, James E. Crisp, Thomas W. Cutrer, Ralph A. Wooster, William H. Leckie, Sandra L. Myers, Joseph C. Porter, Martin Blumenson, Roger J. Spiller, Don Graham, Tom Pilkington, and Roger Beaumont, writing about the Alamo, the Revolution, the war with Mexico, the Civil War, the frontier, women, World War II, Audie Murphy, films, and literature. Military affairs are an important part of the Texas story, and these scholars have written across the sweep of that story.

The New South, 1945-1980 (LSU Press and the Littlefield Fund for Southern History, the University of Texas, Baton Rouge, LA 70803), by Numan V. Bartley, is the eleventh volume of the History Of The South series begun in the 1930s under the editorship of Wendell Holmes Stephenson and E. Merton Coulter. The series’ goal: to provide a comprehensive history of the American South from colonial founding to the modern period in ten volumes. But the “modern period” outlasted the original project, hence Volume XI. Bartley is a past president of the Southern Historical Association and a member of the faculty of the University of Georgia, and well qualified to write what obviously will be only the “latest” volume in a continuing series. He has done a good job. Focusing on desegregation, massive resistance to it, and finally on middle-class accommodation – the pervasive themes of the period

covered – Bartley joins an exclusive and sterling group of scholars to interpret a region that has played a pivotal role in U.S. history – as “the nation’s number one economic problem” as it was called sixty years ago, or the “Sunbelt” story of success in the 1970s. It is scholarly, but with enough popular culture to interest (he even mentions Elvis twice).