Book Reviews

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Henri Joutel’s journal of the La Salle expedition is an exciting, suspenseful, educational good read if you have even the slightest interest in colonial American-Texas history. Joutel was La Salle’s second in command, and he tells the story of that ill-fated expedition from its sailing from France in August 1684, through its mislanding in Texas early in 1685, and to La Salle’s unfortunate exodus in 1687. Joutel continues his journal after La Salle’s death until he has reached the Mississippi River on his way back to Canada.

La Salle was an arrogant, dominating, and self-righteous leader. His ship captains were mutinous, and his army captains were resentful. The bulk of his company were shanghaied from the skid rows of various French ports. And La Salle missed the hell out of the mouth of the Mississippi, his planned port of call. He landed in Texas, in Matagorda Bay, among rattlesnakes, mosquitoes, and unfriendly Indians. He did not have an auspicious beginning.

Henri Joutel was the recorder of La Salle’s mishaps. He was there and keeping his journal when La Salle’s ships sank or sailed away, leaving the expedition beached and far from friendly Frenchmen. And Joutel was with La Salle in January 1687 when La Salle began his trek eastward to find his lost Mississippi River.

The animosities ran deep in this expedition, and in March, near where the Navasota flows into the Brazos, one faction set upon La Salle and slew him, his nephew, a servant, and his Indian guide. Joutel was spared and lived to see the murderers slain by one of their own conspirators. Joutel and those who were left were bound closely enough together to make it to the Mississippi, and then to Quebec, and in the following year back to France, where Joutel told his story.

If Joutel’s story of the La Salle expedition were all, the book would be worth the purchase. But Joutel’s journal is complimented by William Foster’s intelligent editing, his insightful historical introduction, his supplementary and explanatory footnotes, and his logical and educated deductions about the route of La Salle’s journey. The maps of La Salle’s and Joutel’s route through East Texas are as close to definitive as we are likely to ever get. And his location of the deathplace of La Salle should satisfy most scholars and put an end to that debate.

I was most amused by finding La Salle’s deathplace as being near Navasota. Navasota’s Main Street statue of La Salle has been much maligned by historians as the product of Chamber of Commerce wishful thinking and creative history. Now that city can stand fully justified by academia as the site of one of the dramatic episodes in Texas-American history.

La Salle’s misadventures in Texas gained him nothing but his death and
gained France the animosity and scrutiny of the Spanish. What it did for Texas was to start its beginning as a province, then a republic, and finally the state we know now. As soon as the Spanish learned of the French intrusion of their territory they began activities northward into the land of the Caddo-Tejas that culminated in the selling of the East Texas frontier as a barrier against further French intrusion. Texas began as a result of La Salle’s mistake.

I admire and cherish the richness of William Foster’s edition of Joutel’s journal of La Salle’s expedition. I shall recommend it to my friends for the sake of their minds’ betterment and for their recreation amidst substance. And I shall keep it at my deskside (along with Foster’s Spanish Expeditions into Texas: 1689-1768), as the ultimate reference to this most dramatic and influential episode in early Texas-American history.

F.E. Abernethy
Stephen F. Austin State University


For longer than most of us can remember, writers and historians have been turning out books about the Alamo. Unfortunately, few of them have developed any new information about the 1836 landmark battle.

While Mary Deborah Petite’s new book doesn’t contain much new information, it is presented in an unusual and interesting way.

As a result, 1836 Facts About The Alamo & The Texas War for Independence is a easy-to-browse compendium of essential facts not only about the Alamo, but on the Texas Revolution itself.

Scattered here and there are nuggets of information that remind you of how interesting the Alamo battle was.

For example, most of the Mexican infantrymen were armed with British Brown Bess muskets. And many of the Alamo’s defenders had the same muskets. What they didn’t lack in firearms, the Alamo garrison lacked in proper artillery ammunition. They did not have enough to keep the enemy from reaching the walls. The gunners had enough powder to fire more than 1,200 rounds, but the 686 solid shot were all but useless against the attacking infantry. The Alamo had less than 500 grape and canister loads to beat back the enemy assault.

Petite’s book is the second in a series of similar “facts” books. She has also produced 1876 Facts About Custer And The Battle of Little Bighorn and 1912 Facts About Titanic.

Bob Bowman
Lufkin, Texas

Bruce Marshall is an internationally recognized artist-historian who specializes in Texas history. In this work he combines his artistic talent and reveals his passion for historically accurate detail—the result of extensive research into archival collections in Texas and Mexico as well as numerous secondary sources. The result is a colorful and accurate account in words and pictures of the uniforms worn in the Republic of Texas, 1836-1846.

Historians have been skeptical that there even were uniforms during the Republic period. Marshall believed they did exist, then discovered and developed proof that uniforms were not only designed (based primarily on the then current US uniform designs) but then ordered, inspected, paid for, shipped and received and worn, and worn out. Marshall’s research was more productive than even he anticipated: one surprising fact he discovered was that at one point there were more uniforms than there were soldiers to wear them! The result of Marshall’s efforts is an exhaustive textual interpretation of those uniforms illustrated with twenty-six, full-page, water colors depicting them on soldiers, sailors, marines, and coast guardsmen.

The documentation verifying the existence of these colorful uniforms is sparse and scattered, but a few actual uniforms still exist in part. Further assistance came from contemporary descriptions by men who wore them. A few artists of the Republic period left their own renderings as well.

Uniforms is published in an 8-1/2 x 11 inch format; the text is illustrated handsomely with full-page water colors. The appendices include a facsimile reproduction of the Army of the Republic of Texas Uniform Regulations (1839), a facsimile reproduction of the Navy of the Republic of Texas Uniform Regulations (1839), and twelve black-and-white photos of Republic of Texas military buttons. The book concludes with an extensive bibliography for further reading.

Chuck Parsons
Luling, Texas


This volume builds upon the author’s work published in 1984 under the title, Texas Veterans in the Mexican War, Muster Rolls of Texas Military. This prior work was limited to muster rolls of the various Texas military units and an index of the individual soldiers in alphabetical order. These muster rolls were mined by the author from nineteen rolls of microfilm published by the National Archives as “Microcopy 278” which contain the service records of the volunteer soldiers from Texas. These consist of a jacket-envelope for each soldier, giving his name, rank, unit served, and includes vouchers and other
papers relating to that particular soldier. One is immediately struck by the Herculean task the author accomplished in compiling the muster rolls from these microfilms.

The recent publication contains an interesting 140-page chronicle of many of the major contributions and exploits of the Texans under the commands of General Zachary Taylor and General Winfield Scott. To this narrative the muster rolls published in 1984 are added as "Appendix." It would seem that the useful alphabetical index of the volunteers, included in the 1984 publication, would have been appropriate in this work. The endnotes and bibliography provide a list of rich research material.

Walter Prescott Webb, Henry W. Barton, Frederick Wilkin, and Spurlin are among those who have written excellent summaries of the contributions of these frontier seasoned Texans to the successful conclusion of the Mexican War. But the story of the Texas Volunteer has not been exhausted. The breadth of the events, recollections, myths, interpretations, and records accumulated concerning these Texans, together with the multiple incentives for participating, are limitless. I agree with the author that the great story of the Texas Volunteers is yet to be told.

Those interested in the Mexican War, and particularly Texans, should enjoy this volume.

Jenkins Garrett
Fort Worth, Texas


One of the more obscure backwaters of the Civil War was that along the bayous and swamps of southeast Louisiana. David G. Peña, assistant professor of Nursing at Nichols State University, has published a history of those clashes in that region. Since Peña is author, publisher, and owner of C.G.P. Press, he may have overtaxed his abilities to produce a clean book. This is one of the few works I have seen in recent decades with a erratum sheet containing twenty-four corrections pasted to the front page.

In spite of the author's efforts to correct his typos after the fact, many misspelled words and typographical errors abound throughout, even to misspelled words on maps. So many errors suggest that serious proof-reading was abandoned prematurely. The book is flawed by this.

Civil War buffs interested in history and not so much in term-paper correctness will enjoy Peña's bringing to light military operations that occurred in the swamps of South Louisiana from 1863 to 1865. The research seems thorough enough and Peña's style of writing moves quickly. This reviewer enjoyed learning more about the war in that area, although it becomes tedious at times. It really is not necessary to repeat verbatim the
official reports of federal naval commanders looking for Confederate snipers along the banks of the lower Mississippi River.

For all the book's flaws, Peña does end it with an interesting epilogue on the effect of the war on the economy and demography of that region. His statement that the property values of the Lafourche District did not regain their 1860 level until 1920 underscores the lingering tragedy of that war throughout the South.

This book is recommended for Civil War buffs and public school libraries.

Robert W. Glover
Shiloh Ranch


Renewed interest in the Karankawas of the Texas Gulf Coast and the Tonkawas of interior Texas has stimulated innovative scholarship on these lesser-known tribes. Here the eradication of the two societies is explained in terms of world-system theory, a macro sociological approach for understanding local human organizations in relation to global modernization, specifically the spread of Western European industrialized capitalism. The arrival of sociology to the study of historical Texas Indians is itself notable. And the theme of rapid and total supersedence under an expanding modernity, laid forth in the preface and supported with two appendices, plays well enough in this particular inquiry, as the author anticipates many of the criticisms effectively aimed at the general theory since its development in the 1970s.

Chapter 1 presents an overview of the tribal cultures and the development of Anglo-American Indian policy prior to 1821, the watermark year in the American surge toward Hispanic Texas. The Anglo-Texan invasion of the tribal areas, construed as a shift in the regional political economy, is then detailed in the second chapter. Chapters 3 and 4 look respectively at the eras of the Republic and early statehood, each tracking further the evolution of the political and economic environment as it affected the two tribes. The last chapter returns to sociological theory, summarizing the tribes' experiences as a case study in conquest.

So little is retrievable of the actual lives of Karankawas and Tonkawas that the Indian "social mind" can only be inferred, yet the author provides a number of valuable insights about human agency, showing in the words of Stephen F. Austin and others how the tribes were saddled with claims of savagery and cannibalism that served the process.

Daniel J. Gelo
University of Texas at San Antonio
Telling our own story is a challenge for anyone. Selecting what to include and what to leave out can border on the impossible. This long book, if it errrs, errs on the side of inclusion. Many readers will find more than they might want to know about this man’s life, i.e. the courses he took while a scholar and the foods cooked for meals he served while entertaining socially. But, if the reader is looking for an appealing account of student life at A&M, the experience of an East Texas boy turning into a superbly educated physician, the business history of a well-renowned clinic central to the medical development of Houston, and the choices made during those mature years of life, this book is for you. Mavis Kelsey, Sr. took to the challenge of writing a personal and professional life story with great enthusiasm and has created a nostalgic and readable ramble through those experiences. Do not look in these pages for an historian’s meticulously researched story, but do enjoy reflections on the past that have been placed into the ongoing changes time brings to life. There is no formal bibliography because the material comes from the mind’s scrapbook that Dr. Kelsey shares with his readers. A few endnotes exist to supply additional contextual information. A solid index provides a crucial means for navigating such an extensive autobiography.

As the medical community in Texas moves past the frontier era of starting something new in a fast-growing Southern community and reflects on the solid accomplishments of the past forty-five years. more and more medical personnel are recording their contributions to that growth. Dr. Kelsey’s participation in capturing his experiences provides an insider’s eye to the group-practice physician and the development of the Kelsey-Seybold Clinic of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. He is to be commended for making the effort to hold onto that past. Other writers will follow and eventually tell the fuller tale of the Houston medical community in which Mavis Kelsey, Sr. was a key player.

Barbara Rozek
Houston, Texas


Legendary Texas writer A.C. Greene has experienced a lifelong fascination with the “Santa Claus bank robbery.” Two days before Christmas in 1927, four men looted the First National Bank of Cisco. One of the thieves, Marshall Ratliff, wore a Santa Claus suit as a disguise because he was known in Cisco. A wild shoot-out ensued and men were struck on both sides. One of the thieves was wounded fatally, and two policemen went down, apparently shot by “friendly fire” from excited citizens. The surviving robbers managed
to escape but they left behind their sack of stolen currency. Soon they also left behind their car, because they had forgotten to check the gas tank.

When this bungling trio of ex-cons fled into the countryside, officers launched a massive manhunt. Wounded and starving, the fugitives finally were cornered. One was sentenced to ninety-nine years and another died in the electric chair at Huntsville. But Marshall Ratliff engineered a jailbreak while in custody in Eastland. Before he could be subdued, Ratliff fatally wounded a popular local officer. A huge mob descended upon the jail and dragged Ratliff from his cell. Half a hundred men and boys hoisted the killer on a makeshift gallows, but the rope broke. Ratliff was still alive, so another rope was found, and the grisly lynching was completed.

A.C. Greene grew up in Abilene, only forty miles west of Cisco. From boyhood he heard stories about the spectacular crime. While later working for an Abilene newspaper, Greene interviewed participants, including the sole surviving bank robber, who had been pardoned in the 1940s and changed his name. After writing journalistic accounts of these dramatic events, Greene crafted a "nonfiction novel," *The Santa Claus Bank Robbery*. First published in 1972, the book is not a conventional history, but there is a fine photo collection, and Greene's prose indeed reads like a novel. The most recent edition of *The Santa Claus Bank Robbery* brings to life one of the most famous crimes in Texas history.

Bill O'Neal
Panola College


*Early Texas Physicians* is a welcome addition to the body of Texas medical knowledge. Surprisingly, medicine is one area needing more research and publication—especially documentation of early physicians, nurses, procedures, and hospitals. Robert S. Sparkman, M.D., originally came up with the idea for this book, but failing health prevented his completion of the rather extensive project. He turned it over to R. Maurice Hood, M.D., who had been professor and chairman of the Department of Thoracic Surgery at Texas Tech Scol of Medicine in the 1970s and who had authored four surgical textbooks. Hood's credentials include other writing and editing projects in the medical field.

*Early Texas Physicians* is a collection of nineteen chapters covering early physicians, each written by various members of the Texas Surgical Society and other Texas physicians. This structure is both a credit and a discredit to the published volume. Inclusion of nineteen authors gives the book great variety in writing styles and scholarship levels; Sparkman's original directive to the chapter authors must have been fairly limited because there is no pattern or criteria visible when chapters are compared. This structure leaves the reader wondering what the editor's purpose was in putting the book together. From the title, it might be assumed that the common thread was the development of
medicine in Texas from frontier days to 1915. However, the chapters do not back up this assumption. Some chapters present a chronological picture of the development of medicine in Texas, some present the backgrounds and contributions of individual physicians, and some outline Texas history itself, mentioning the featured physicians only briefly.

Even with these faults, Early Texas Physicians provides useful information in many areas. Early conditions in the state are evident in each chapter, including common illnesses, environmental conditions, and population characteristics. The level of physicians' medical knowledge and experience are presented along with comments on ethics. Finally, nearly every chapter chronicles medical "firsts" in the state that were important to the general development of medicine.

Overall, Early Texas Physicians is a valuable contribution to the history of medicine and its practitioners in the state and should be appreciated for its effort to document information before it is forever lost. In spite of its wandering focus, this book is a valuable addition to the history of Texas medicine.

Beverly J. Rowe
Texarkana, Texas


Harry Noble examines the lives of fourteen San Augustinians through this reprinting of sixty-eight articles that first appeared in his weekly series in the San Augustine Tribune. They range from one article on Dr. Oscar Fitzallen to eight each on William G. Anderson, John G. Berry, and Iredell Dickinson Thomas. Though the fourteenth section centers on an evening's shoot-out in 1919, the other articles emphasize the period from 1825 to 1865, time "at the heart of this research" (p. 9). Here Noble recounts, in an informal and sometimes conversational tone appropriate to the original weekly format, the personalities of these early citizens and ties them to larger developments of Texas history, such as the Siege of Bexar, the Battle of Coleto Creek and subsequent slaughter at Goliad, and the fighting between the Regulators and Moderatos. George L. Crockett's Two Centuries in East Texas and Margaret Henson and Parmelee's The Cartwrights of San Augustine provide points of reference for his material combed from old newspapers of East Texas, records in the San Augustine courthouse, the Robert Blake Collection at SFASU, collected papers of old families, and the like. Although Noble provides no footnotes or endnotes within the text, his context, frequent internal references, and lists of sources at the back of the book afford the family historian-genealogist locations for his own further research.

In his introduction, Noble says that "(t)he-narrative could become a bit heavy at times with land transactions or court appearances, but these were integral parts of pioneer living in Texas" (p. 10). Indeed, these transactions may
be the only documentary evidence left by some of our forebears, precious scraps that Noble has collected in his series for those who have not the opportunity for such time-consuming research on persons not known outside a small area and now dead. The eight-page index of approximately 1200 names lists even those that appear only once on a list of buyers at an estate sale. For a reader with no family mentioned even so fleetingly, the beginnings of each section concerning the fourteen subjects’ origins in the older states and their travels to the Ayish Bayou country provide something on the patterns of migration shared by so many of the early settlers to the state in general and to East Texas in particular.

William Lynch Fuller
Bellville, Texas


In this important study Blackwelder focuses on the lives of women—Anglo, Hispanic, and African American—in the Alamo City during the Depression, detailing the extent to which the Depression affected women’s lives socially, politically, and economically. Not only is the study of these women important in a sociological sense, it shows the effects of economic and ethnic factors on them as individuals as well as members of groups.

Classified by segregation and lifestyle, the three distinct groups of women often were separated by economic and social factors that are brought into stark relief by the effects of the Depression. Using primary source materials and interviews, Blackwelder gives us poignant portraits of the lives and miseries of San Antonio women, their concerns for their families, their work or lack of it, and their social and economic status. The portraits of poverty, misery, and lack of power are compelling.

Particularly important are the studies detailing unemployment relief and the ways in which emergency job programs were set up using women workers. Also important are studies focusing on the labor movement and the role of women within union movements, including one of the most extensive studies of Emma Tenayuca and Rebecca Taylor in the San Antonio labor movement.

Blackwelder’s book, with its sociological basis, is also important as an inclusive study of the politics, economics, and lifestyles of one Texas city during the Depression and the role of women. Her quantitative studies and her portraits of three distinctive groups of women, separated by caste and culture, mark her book as important to anyone studying the lives of Texas women.

Ann Fears Crawford
Houston, Texas

Fertile Ground, Narrow Choices analyzes women on Texas cotton farms in Hunt, Ellis, McLennan and Williamson counties. With interesting recollections of women, Sharpless considered gender and family relationships, housekeeping and clothing in the Blackland Prairie, food production and preparation, women's labor in the fields, women and their communities, and urbanization and the depopulation of the rural Blackland Prairie, 1900 to 1940. She correctly presented a proper balance of the topics. For example, the most important subject, gender and family relationships, received the most emphasis.

Throughout the book, Sharpless identified, compared, and contrasted proportionally by population the experiences of Anglo American, Mexican, German, and Czech women in a very clear, organized and logical order. Practical conclusions ended each chapter. Women and men on the Blacklands experienced hard times. Women were important and exercised considerable power and were not victims of male domination. Women assumed many roles—wife, mother, daughter, sister, capable managers, teacher, Spiritual leader, a person whose opinion in the house had to be reckoned with and respected. Correctly, she concluded that 1940 witnessed the end of an era for agriculture on the Blackland Prairies. These and other valuable conclusions rested upon excellent research from oral histories, manuscripts, and publications.

Rebecca Sharpless achieved her objectives with excellence. Rural women's stories received important historical recognition. May this success breed another book. Males also experienced narrow choices as cotton farmers on the Texas Blacklands. Could we expect a companion volume on the ideas and feelings of male farmers? Fertile Ground is a significant contribution to twentieth-century Texas women's, social, and agriculture history.

Irvin M. May Jr.
Blinn College - Bryan


Reading The Tiny Hawkins Story is like picking up the scrapbook of a stranger; the pictures are nice and some of the clippings are interesting, but in the final analysis there is not enough substance for the reader to identify with the scrapbook's subject.

The book commences with photographs of unidentified subjects and there are too many such photographs throughout the book. Unfortunately the dialogue is disconnect as well. The reader is forced to wait for a chronology
on the last page to learn that Ms Hawkins was deeply involved with the South Dallas community, with the proprietor of a nursing home, and was the recipient of numerous civic awards, but what she did to earn the honors is unclear. The book is of great interest, I’m sure, to members of the large Hawkins family, but the average reader is left asking, “Who is Tiny Hawkins?”

Gail K Beil
Marshall, Texas


Teachers of Texas history will delight in this interesting and informative collection of original documents designed for use by teachers in the classroom. Waller has selected her documents and first-hand accounts well, including some rare and unusual material not readily available.

The author includes material relative to Native Texans, the life of everyday Texans, and women on the frontier, plus a rollicking selection of Texas folktales and legends. Some of the most interesting deal with Texas animals, including lively accounts of mustang catching and hog-killing time.

Davy Crockett’s heartfelt letter to his sons and daughter describing Texas land and his expectations of his life in Texas, plus a letter from “Caroline” to her “Ichabod” detailing her love for him are but two of the Texas documents teachers will relish using with students.

Suitable for seventh-grade students and beyond, this collection will find a place in every teacher’s file of enrichment material for the Texas history classroom. Although the publishers offer a workbook designed for use with students, it would have been wise to offer the sampler, itself, in a larger, more effective format so that students could explore the documents on their own.

Ann Fears Crawford
Houston, Texas


Thad Sitton and James H. Conrad have created in Nameless Towns: Texas Sawmill Communities 1880-1942 a valuable commentary about the almost-forgotten lumber mill towns of the East Texas pineys. The fact that nearly 800 such towns (none of them nameless, by the by) flourished during the heyday of Texas Southern Pine, some as large or larger than the local county seat, has long dictated a work like this. The authors’ document the vibrant socio-cultural world of the men, women, and children who shared a vital and
dynamic way of life that created in part the modern world of East Texas.

Both historians are competent researchers. The secondary sources, although not plumbed as well as they could be—particularly the life and development of rail logging—do capture the essentials of the era’s history. What brings this work to life is their use of oral histories, a field in which both writers are masters. They weave the stories and memoirs with a sharp skill that heightens the reader’s interest and excites his imagination. One must be aware, however, that the preponderance of oral history comes from the perspective of the white male. This is not a criticism but a recognition that crucial work needs to be done in recapturing the stories of the women and minorities of the pineys.

The graphic style and structure employed by Sitton and Conrad work well. It is smooth, at times almost seamless in the recording of the story. The formatting of the major telling within the minor context of the general workday at the Wiergate Mill in Newton County, from before “can’t see” to after “can’t see,” works well. The writers turn what promised to be an intrinsic weakness (the expansion of the story from what was to be an original telling of the Wiergate Mill and town history) into a literary coup by transforming the Wiergate story into the representative metaphor for the larger mill culture as a whole. The end of the book entwines three closings: that of the typical mill town day; that of the Wiergate Mill’s final day; and that of the end of an era. Although stark in the telling, it is also strikingly emotional and oddly fulfilling to this reviewer.

Sitton and Conrad have performed yeomen’s duty. Nameless Towns has the significance of other important regional works as Sitton’s Backwoodsmen: Stockmen and Hunters along a Big Thicket River Valley, Robert Maxwell and Robert Baker’s Sawdust Empire: The Texas Lumber Industry, 1830-1940, and Ruth Allen’s East Texas Lumber Workers: An Economic and Social Picture, 1870-1950.

Melvin C. Johnson
Layton, Utah


In Red, White, and Green, Michael Nelson Miller attempts to correct “a serious lacuna in the writing of modern Mexican history” by undertaking a cultural and historical analysis of Mexico during the administration of Manuel Ávila Camacho (1940-1946). Miller focuses on the way in which avilacamachismo “was an attempt on the part of the state to create a mass media-based cultural nationalism” (p. 1) and the book, which is impressively researched and well-written, is an engaging, thoughtful, and useful account of the Ávila Camacho sexennium.

After chronicling the events that led Ávila Camacho to power in 1940—providing, in the course of this narrative account, much of the cultural
context for the success of *avilacamachismo*—Miller moves to separate discussions of the roles of radio, the film industry (which was exceptionally busy during this period in Mexico), art and architecture, and the government agency behind all of it, the Secretariat of Public Education (SEP). Most interesting and relevant are Miller’s discussions of the film industry and the influence of Franklin D. Roosevelt—and U.S. culture generally—on Mexican politics and culture during the 1940s.

A lack of complexity in Miller’s theoretical position, most notable in his stance on the relationship between “high” and “popular” cultures, the placement and focus of the two penultimate chapters, and the lack of a fuller discussion of the structure of the SEP all weaken this text. The second of these is the problem most worth mentioning: two chapters before the conclusion are dedicated to women in Mexican culture at this time. While the chapters are themselves interesting and laudable studies, they do not fit the framework Miller has used carefully throughout the book, and therefore seem oddly out of place. These weaknesses of the text, however, are minor compared to the book’s potential contribution.

Sean Chadwell
Texas A&M International University


In the last fifteen years there has been a renewed interest in developing land ethics that merge disparate environmental perspectives into sustainable land use policies. Current public debate struggles to find this resolution between economic development generally at the expense of the land base vs. sustainable use policies of resource utilization that protect the environment. In *Texas Land Ethics*, Gunter and Oelschlaeger developed arguments that clearly evinced the need for land use alternatives to be implemented to correct centuries of environmental neglect. First the book points out the global scale of environmental degradation. Then, the authors recount past patterns and present land use practices in Texas, citing statistics that support the need for immediate action to save or restore balance in critical natural systems. Several key premises emerge from this discussion. First and foremost, Texas is not a limitless, bountiful resource base as was assumed by the frontier mentality during the nineteenth century, a notion that has persist in the present. Second, in the authors' opinion, urban sprawl threatens sensitive ecosystems and are an affront to landscape aesthetics. Lastly, the process of changing land use practices toward more environmentally sound resource management strategies will be difficult but not impossible to achieve.

In the course of detailing the plight of Texas landscapes, the authors provide a solid context that demonstrates the need for people to evaluate their ethical, social, and economic perspectives concerning the land base in Texas. This was developed by a critical examination of selected resources, including
water, air, waste, and population. The enormous impact economic development and urban expansion have on the environment are presented well by the authors.

Less well developed are the strategies to reduce or reverse the patterns of environmental decay in Texas. The broad-brush approach they presented left this reader interested but not informed of direct methods to solve the dilemma. Even less well used in their arguments are the maps in the text. In particular, the Population Distribution map series lacks clarity for use in supporting the position that urban sprawl is a significant issue to environmental health in Texas. By this statement I mean that the reader has no clear concept of density or intensity of population settlement, just shaded areas in Texas. Another example is found later in the book during the discussion of the Big Thicket. Here, the maps lack scale to provide the reader with a true sense of place and extent for this significant relic landscape.

In sum, Texas Land Ethics, presents a strong discussion of the problems facing Texans in maintaining a healthy land base. The book attempts to bring those issues to the public's attention. The authors provide limited information of how to implement a land ethic that will sway existing practitioners to substantial change land use strategies for the sake of the Texas landbase. In my opinion, the book will be best received by environmental advocates.

Darrel L. McDonald
Stephen F. Austin State University


The Raw Frontier: Armed Conflict Along the Texas Coastal Bend is the first of two volumes on a sixteen-county region west of the Colorado River by noted South Texas author Keith Guthrie. This particular work is primarily a cursory account of Texas Revolution era occurrences. Among its topics are the attempt by Mexican soldiers to seize the Gonzales cannon in 1835, the Battle of Lipantitlan, the siege and fall of Bexar, the disastrous Matamoros expedition, the Goliad-Refugio campaign, and Mexican Texans and Irish who supported the Centralists. Also, there are brief chapters on Spanish land grants, the Cart War, and cattle drives that originated in the Texas Coastal Bend.

The book suffers from several shortcomings. It is excruciatingly selective in what armed confrontations are addressed. Personal and military encounters in the focus area were not limited to the fight for Texas independence and the Cart War. Noticeably absent from the volume were the Comanche raid in 1840, the Civil War clashes, and the Taylor-Sutton feud. The chapter on cattle drives is chronologically disconnected, which may result in some confusion for the reader. Moreover, closer attention to proofreading would have prevented misprints of surnames.

Despite its defects, the work does serve as a limited introduction to a portion of antebellum western Texas and to some of the prominent Texas Coastal Bend ranchers who were involved with cattle drives before and after
the Civil War. Unfortunately, no mention was made of the legendary George West or Margaret Borland, said to be the only woman known to lead a trail drive to Kansas. A worthwhile segment of the publication is the appendices which provides a convenient source for the various military units associated with the commands of James Fannin and Philip Dimmitt at Goliad.

Charles Spurlin
The Victoria College

_The Jazz of the Southwest: An Oral History of Western Swing_, Jean A. Boyd
(University of Texas Press, P.O. Box 7819, Austin, TX 78713-7819)
$37.50. Hardcover.

This is a readable book about western swing based on a large number of interviews with musicians who played the music. In the author’s introductory overview of the development of the music, she contends that western swing is akin to _Conjunto_, the music of the Hispanic working class in Texas, and maintains that it was a Texas product because its rise and popularity was due to a kind of Texas mindset or mystique. Although the music was popular both in Texas and California Boyd makes it clear that the western product was a Texas transplant. She also argues persuasively, but unconvincingly to me, that western swing, although it had country roots, was southwestern jazz rather than country music. Even though I may disagree with her emphasis, I find her introduction and the remaining chapters informative, well-organized, and very easy to read.

Boyd’s organizational scheme makes some repetitiveness inevitable but she skillfully diminishes this by carefully editing and blending her oral interviews into a smoothly flowing text. What she does after the overview is produce a chapter based on interviews with western swing fiddlers, one on guitarists, another on steel guitarists, one on banjo and bass players, piano and drums, and finally a chapter on horn players and vocalists. The chapters get progressively shorter as she moves from the most important musicians—fiddlers—to the least important, vocalists and horn players. In dealing with the various artists who produced the music, Boyd, understandably, never gets far away from Bob Wills because his relationship to western swing is much like that of Bill Monroe to Bluegrass, and because Wills hired and fired over 600 musicians during his career as a bandleader. Most of the musicians interviewed worked for him at one time or another.

The main thing this book offers is a considerable amount of detailed information about the many artists who were responsible for the development of southwestern jazz, as the author calls it, western swing as the public knows it, and country swing as I insist on calling it. This volume belongs in the libraries of all those who are interested in the history of Texas music.

E. Dale Odom
Denton, Texas

This is not a conventional country music history volume nor is it a conventional biography of Willie Nelson. Opdyke basically presents the history of Nelson’s recordings. Mostly in chronological order, the author lists the songs on various recordings and albums by Willie, writes recording notes, and gives a bit of the history of most of the songs. He lists the authors of the songs and sometimes explains why they were written, or the inspiration, for songs such as Ted Daffan’s “Born to Lose” or Scott Wiseman’s “Have I Told You Lately That I Love You?” Interspersed throughout the book is much chatty, almost stream-of-consciousness, discussion about songs, song writers, and artists, Willie Nelson’s adventures and his musings, recording executives, technological improvements in recording, and country music in general.

Opdyke interviewed Nelson on several occasions and had access to him many other times to check on questions that arose during his work on the book. He spent time at RCA Nashville, BMG Entertainment, and Sony Music in New York, as well as at other music companies. As indicated by this and by his bibliography, the author has consulted most of what has been written about Willie Nelson and a great deal of what has been written about country music. Consequently, the book is authoritative even though it is lacking in depth and will probably have limited appeal to academic country music historians. But it will be appealing and informative to fans, particularly those who already know something about country music, and, of course, it will especially appeal to fans of Nelson. Everyone will appreciate having a collection in one source of information about all the recordings of Willie. This is the book’s unique contribution. A considerable number of black-and-white pictures, many of which are not often seen, also enhance the attractiveness of the volume.

E. Dale Odom
Denton, Texas


The establishment of the state’s first mental institution in 1856, The Texas State Lunatic Asylum, and the building of the state prison in Huntsville a few years earlier, constitute clear evidence of the obligation the leaders of the new state of Texas felt toward persons who could not function normally in society. Over the course of their histories, both institutions proved to be costly to maintain and repeatedly generated controversy, with scandals surrounding their management and the treatment they provided to their residents. This book attempts to describe aspects of the care, both medical and custodial, provided to patients at the mental hospital.
The book draws almost exclusively from a series of interviews done in the 1990s that the author conducted with former hospital personnel. Of necessity the great bulk of the narrative focuses on activities at the hospital in the middle twentieth century as related by those individuals. Little research was done in the papers of the governors, in the state's leading newspapers, in legislative journals, or in the records of either national accrediting organizations or state oversight agencies, all of which would have yielded significant insights into matters touching on the care, treatment, and quality of life of the patients. The book suffers as a result.

There is little information that describes the management and operations during the early years of the hospital's existence. Additionally, much of the material presented is of an anecdotal nature and, therefore, superficial. A number of important questions should have been addressed. For example, one would like to know how the Civil War and Reconstruction affected the institution; the influence, if any, of Progressive reformers; the impact the Great Depression and World War II had on the institution, and so forth. Also, how did the Texas hospital and its care for patients compare with similar institutions in the region and other parts of the nation? What were the intentions of state legislators toward the institution through the years? Who were the people who worked at the hospital, especially those whom the author interviewed, and what was the level of their formal education and specialized training? Were there differences in the treatment of patients owing to their skin color or gender? All of these are legitimate areas of inquiry that bear significantly on the institution.

In conclusion, one must address some of the more serious errors of fact in the book. The Radical Republican Governor of Texas was Edmund (not "Edmond") Davis and he served one term only, not two (pp. 28-29). The governor of Texas in 1875 was Richard Coke, not "David B. Culberson" (p. 29). Indeed, the only Texas governor surnamed Culberson was Charles A., son of David B., who served from 1895-1899, and his name was not spelled "Culbertson" (p. 45). The individual who preceded Lyndon B. Johnson representing the Tenth Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives was James P. Buchanan, not "J.O. Buchanon" (p. 44). Finally, the photograph dated 1959 (p. 148) identifies one of the persons in the picture as "Texas governor Preston Smith." Smith did not become governor until 1969.

The history of the state's first, and most important, mental hospital, and the care it provided patients, remains to be written. The interviews upon which most of this book is based will provide a good starting point for a future researcher.

Donald R. Walker
Texas Tech University

Simply put, this is the best book yet written on the Texas--or the American--oil industry. Here Lawrence Goodwyn describes the Texas independent oil man as the protagonist of the mythical "American Dream," that is, the idea that everyone has an opportunity to make something of himself through his own efforts. In this context, the independent oilman is cast in the role of successor to Jefferson's yeoman farmer and the cowboy, the individualistic heroes of an earlier time. And like his predecessors, the independent oil man--the "wildcatter"--has faced obstacles in his quest for self-fulfillment. These are represented by the major oil companies and the United States government, both of which--one in the private sector and the other in the public sector--consistently behave in such a way as to hinder the "wildcatter's" quest.

Like the farmers and the railroads or the consumer and big business, the "wildcatters" and the major oil companies are locked in a deadly embrace. They need each other and yet their purposes and goals are often in conflict. Both court the government for support in an arena where power and effective lobbying usually prevail.

Early in this conflict the independents sought to strengthen themselves, as had many other groups in American history, by organizing. In this case they formed the Texas Independent Producers and Royalty Owners Association (TIPRO) in 1946, and continued its development ever since. Through TIPRO, the independent oilmen of Texas have confronted and in some cases overcome difficulties from the state level to the world-wide scene. Moreover, they have demonstrated time and time again that even though they can disagree on tactics their common devotion to one principle never wavers, and that principle is the survival of their kind.

In discussing the origins of TIPRO and its activities over the past six decades, Goodwyn offers some of the most lucid explanations and descriptions of the complex issues facing the oil industry ever written. Among these are the "hot oil" debate of the early 1930s, the unitization controversy, the debate over importation after World War II, the incredibly convoluted issue of natural gas pricing, and the constant struggle to forge policies that the majority could accept.

Anyone--whether scholar or layman--with even a passing interest in this vital sector of the American economy should read this book.

Kenneth E. Hendrickson, Jr.
Midwestern State University
At age nine, I saw my first rural ghost on a forty-acre farm cut out of the woods between Broadhead Creek and Little Branch, which trickled from our fishpond of several acres in Alabama. The farm had a pre-Civil War grave surrounded by a log wall of huge trees exactly like the ones in the log cabin which now makes up one of the four rooms in the remote farm house. On visits, I slept in the log-cabin room in case I should ever run for office.

I saw the ghost first when I went after dark to retrieve a book left under a shade tree; I promptly ran into a barbed wire fence. The local Uncle Remus said “Ghosts won’t hurt you, boy; they jes’ make you hurt yo’ self.” I have scars to prove it.

Readers would never find that site, which still exists, but cousins never repaired the ancient farm house.

Happily, you find the sites of the ghosts in this book, as I did long ago. Take the ones in Austin’s Driskell Hotel. In 1965, as president of the Texas Folklore Society (TFS), I had the presidential suite for an Easter weekend and slept where President Lyndon Johnson had slept. No ghosts of Johnson, but Honorary Colonel Driskell (who lost the hotel in a poker game) kept the elevators coming to the penthouse at all hours of the night. I could not see his secret guests; they were a brush of cold air. If Colonel Driskell was with them, there was a momentary smell of an ancient cigar. In an empty afternoon ballroom, I caught a foggy glimpse of him in a magnificent wall mirror. The book adds details that I do not doubt.

A decade ago the TFS and Sarah Greene rented every sleeping room in Jefferson for an Easter weekend convention. In this book is the first accurate listing of the ghosts reported to Sarah and me by Sunday. That alone is worth the price of the book, as is the introduction by Texas writer Leon Hale.

I think Richard Stewart did tell me he saw the ghost of Diamond Bessie in the famous Excelsior Hotel, but I saw her at the graveyard where her grave is surrounded by a Victorian fence. At midnight, like Abe Rothschild does, I left a dozen real red roses by the fence gate and by 1:00 a.m. I had seen a diamond-studded, long white gown pick them up. It was a friendly ghost, for the next morning there was a pink “unmentionable” hanging on the fence (I have witnesses)–I took that as a friendly sign.

This entire volume is a folklorist’s dream of a book. The skill of the two writers is best seen in the tale of the Abernethy ghost(s). You dare not miss it (them). I bet author Stewart that they did not call Ab Francis.

James W. Byrd
Commerce, Texas
By all contemporary accounts, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was the most highly regarded of the myriad “alphabet soup” agencies launched by the New Deal to cope with the Great Depression. Most Americans knew it simply as Franklin Roosevelt’s “tree army.” This was understandable. East Texans witnessed the establishment of CCC camps for enlistees who, with much publicity, threw themselves into reforestation and timber conservation endeavors. The public image of young men planting trees wherever they went overlooked or minimized other significant activities and long-lasting contributions. Nowhere, perhaps, was this truer than in Texas where the CCC played an indispensable role in the creation of the state’s park system.

Crippled by lack of money and manpower, efforts to preserve the state’s most picturesque landscapes while providing Texans with recreational facilities were halting and ineffective prior to 1933. Then came President Roosevelt’s New Deal. Leaders of the parks movement and public officials in Texas immediately grasped the opportunity to use CCC men and federal monies to create a system of parks. By decade’s end, parks large and small were springing up in the forests, the plains, the desert, and along the coast from one end of the state to the other.

James Wright Steely’s *Parks For Texas* meticulously documents this enduring impact of the Roosevelt revolution. As the author makes clear, the most telling point was the rapidly changing political and financial relationship between state and federal government. Only through the agency of a national program did a state system of parks emerge. And Texans paid but a pittance for the facilities they have enjoyed for over a half century. The state expended $400,000, a tidy sum until compared to the federal government’s contribution of over $20 million. In this program as in so many other depression-era initiatives, Texans benefited from extraordinary political influence in Washington, D.C., at exactly that moment when power and responsibility flowed to the nation’s capital. While state officials contributed support, it was Vice President John Nance Garner, Reconstruction Finance Corporation chairman Jesse Jones, and a superlative congressional delegation wielding the privileges of seniority who pried open the doors of the federal treasury.

*Parks For Texas* is, in some respects, institutional history. Steely examines the inner workings of the State Parks Board as well as its interaction with a multitude of other agencies, both state and federal. Unfortunately, the general reader may get bogged down in the details of board meetings, personnel changes, property acquisitions, and the ever-changing location and mission of individual companies. This observation notwithstanding, this publication is well written, thoroughly researched, handsomely presented, and a valuable addition to the literature of Texas during the Great Depression.

L. Patrick Hughes
Austin Community College

This is the second volume in an ongoing series dedicated to tracing the history of the Texas Senate and providing biographical data on its members. It covers the twenty-eight years immediately following the Civil War. Those years saw the selection of members of thirteen legislatures (the ninth through the twenty-first) and the approval of hundreds of pieces of legislation that determined the legal framework of post-Civil War Texas. Thirty-eight illustrations—including photographs of many senators and Austin scenes—also are included.

Its dust jacket asserts that it "presents a narrative account of the issues fought, the legislation proposed, rejected, and accepted; and the actors who filled the stage" of this important period in development of Texas society and its government. The book's contents amply supports the jacket's claim.

Histories of legislatures and legislation, especially those of Texas, are rare, so this series produced by officers of the state's senate is an extremely valuable source for those interested in the history of the period and in the growth of both constitutional and statutory law in Texas. Its pages offer valuable insights into the impact of the Civil War and Reconstruction on nineteenth-century Texas. They also provide helpful clues concerning the operation of the legislative process in the Lone Star State. Particularly useful are its revelations concerning creation and regulation of corporations, especially railroads; sales and leasing of public lands; funding for and governance of public education, including higher education; retrenchment philosophy and its effect on state finances; segregation as the principal policy concerning race relations; and punishment of criminals and definition of crimes.

As was the case in the previous volume, footnotes are not provided, forcing curious readers to rely on an extensive bibliography to determine the source of much of the material presented. A lengthy appendix supplies footnoted lists of those persons who served as members of the thirteen senates covered.

Libraries and other research centers would be well advised to obtain copies of these volumes as they appear, for they are certain to become standard reference works.

Joe E. Ericson
Stephen F. Austin State University


If most American historians were questioned on their knowledge of Native American contributions in World War II they might come up with Navajo Code Talkers, the famed U.S. Marine radio operators in the Pacific
who drove the Japanese crazy with voice radio orders conveyed in a Navajo code within a code. Or they might remember the tragic story of Ira Hayes, the Pima enlisted man who was one of the Marines who raised the American flag on Mount Suribachi on the island of Iwo Jima and who literally drank himself to death ten years after the war.

But Native American contributions were indeed substantial, not only in terms of numbers of men and women who served in the armed forces (44,500, or more than ten percent of the total Indian population in the United States), but in a variety of other ways: increased agricultural output on Indian reservations; laborers in defense industries; oil, gas, and timber production from reservation lands, etc. The author is clearly sympathetic to Native Americans. She has mined a significant number of federal and state archives and a wide variety of obscure printed sources, few of which have been utilized previously by historians, to document in detail how the Native American community supported the war effort. Their contributions were of a much larger magnitude than this reviewer was previously aware.

In addition, Franco, utilizing FBI records, documents attempts in the 1930s by German sympathizers in the United States to obtain Native American support for Nazi Germany. This conspiracy, which obviously failed, should be pursued by the author in German documents to determine the extent of this operation.

As in most historical monographs which cover the breadth of pre-World War to postwar, the author has raised more questions than she has answered. One would hope that she would continue to pursue this important arena of research.

Louis R. Sadler
New Mexico State University


In January 1943, Lieutenant Robert Martindale, a B-24 co-pilot with the 90th Bomb Group, was shot down along with the rest of his crew over the Bismarck Sea, off the coast of New Guinea. After spending almost ten months dodging the Japanese and making their way from island to island with the help of Pacific islanders, the surviving crew members were captured. Lieutenant Martindale, a native of Brownsville, Texas, then spent the remainder of the war as an American POW, most of that time being interned in the infamous Omori camp, built on a man-made island off the coast of Tokyo.

Martindale served as a barracks commander and work camp officer, which gave him a chance to view the Japanese camp personnel and the plight of Allied prisoners from a unique perspective. During his internment Martindale witnessed numerous acts of mistreatment of Allied prisoners, especially B-29 crew members, and experienced several beatings himself. Most of the ill treatment of the POWs came at the expense of Sergeant
Mutsuhiro Watanabe, a Japanese guard who was responsible for camp discipline. Watanabe was a psychotic who alternately gave favors to prisoners, then beat them unmercifully. He is mentioned throughout the book and it is obvious from Martindale's recollections that the sergeant left deep emotional scars in many of the POWs, including the author.

Although the writing style is a bit choppy in places and Martindale has left out his early life, including his experiences in learning to fly, this book nevertheless offers the reader a solid look at life for American and other Allied prisoners at the Omori camp. Martindale spent many years interviewing former POWs and former guards, as well as researching both American and Japanese war records. Thus The 13th Mission is accurate, insightful, honest, often humorous, and always full of the drama that comes when men of one nation imprison those of another.

Mark Choate
Austin, Texas


In Bloody River, Martin Blumenson told the story of 36th Division of the Fifth Army that attempted to cross the Rapido River in its attempt to capture the City of Rome. The 36th Division consisted almost completely of Texans and was originally a National Guard unit. The Division was led by Major General Fred L. Walker, an adopted Texan from Ohio. Blumenson wrote well and breathed life into the people he wrote about. Although he focused on the 36th Division and its attempt to cross the Rapido River, he tied its involvement into the larger picture of World War II.

Like many writers of history, Blumenson had difficulty in writing about the military campaigns. He attempted to describe the Battle of the Rapido as it occurred. This produced the "fog of war" confusion that inevitably follows. The reader has a hard time following the exact times and events of the battle.

Blumenson had thoughtful conclusions on who to blame for the failure of the Battle of the Rapido. Overall, the book was solidly written and enjoyable to read.

Timothy S. Nyberg
Nacogdoches, Texas


Inasmuch as revisionists set out to rewrite the history of the American West, it is fitting that seven other academics have undertaken to rewrite the
New Western Historians. This collection of critical essays offers an intensive survey of the New History’s strengths and weaknesses. It finds both and strives for balance between sunshine and darkness.

The “New Western History” came to widespread notice during a symposium in 1989 in Santa Fe. At its most extreme it rejected previous Western history as “Happy Face, Have a Nice Day History,” firmly centered on Anglo-American white males. It branded such history as imperialistic, racist, male supremacist, and anti-nature, not to mention genocidal. It viewed Western settlement in the bleakest terms. In particular, it tended to crucify Frederick Jackson Turner, most widely known of early Western historians.

The revisionist view was typified in Patricia Nelson Limerick’s The Legacy of Conquest. She has since backtracked a little, though she still sees the West in a generally negative light. Other leading New History exponents cited in the essays include William Cronon, Richard White, and Donald Wormser. Of these, White seems nearest to having what might be termed a balanced view of Western assets and liabilities.

One point on which the revisionists have been widely attacked is their inference that they were the first to discover the great truth: that there were losers as well as winners in the settling of the West. A couple of essays point out that the role of women and the tragic fate of native Americans had been noted for decades before the New History reared its head, not only by formal historians but in the popular culture of novels and Hollywood Westerns.

The book was obviously designed by academics for other academics, not for the general public. Its worthy message is sometimes obscured by the overuse of academic terminology unfamiliar to readers not schooled in academy-speak.

Elmer Kelton
San Angelo, Texas


Maps of Texas and the Southwest had its beginning in 1981 as a catalog for a cartography exhibit at the Amon Carter Museum. Maps of Texas was published in book form in 1984 but was soon sold out of print. The Texas State Historical Association has done historians a world of favor by putting Maps of Texas back on the bookstands. The book is a necessary ingredient in any Texas scholar’s library.

Maps of Texas is still basically an illustrated catalog of Texas maps. The maps are all small—six inches by nine inches, mas o menos—and one can read the details only with a magnifying glass. This can be infinitely frustrating to a reader unless he keeps in mind that these maps are merely copies of the larger, more readable maps in various archives in Texas. One finds the map he needs
in this book and then goes to the cited source for further assistance. One blessing of modernity is that large color copiers can provide the public with workable map reproductions that are almost as good as the original and not so delicate or valuable.

There is, however, much more to Maps of Texas than the map copies. Each map is accompanied by explanatory text describing the history and the significance of the map and telling where the original map is located. That information is a treasure in itself.

In addition to the scholarly notes for each map, Maps of Texas contains thirteen short introductory chapters that make a fairly complete background study of cartography in Texas. The first three chapters deal with the history of the map making generally. The next ten chapters are concerned with periods of Texas history and the maps generated during each period. James C. Martin and Robert S. Martin (no kin) provide the bases and beginning for any study of Texas cartography.

I love maps. I had a permanent classroom with three large maps—world, American, and Texas—that covered the entire front wall above the blackboard, and I would have been lost in a lecture without them. And I loved the Martins’ study of the history of Texas as it unfolded in its maps. I was intrigued by the conceptual evolution of the maps, from general to specific, from a vague geographical formlessness to recognizable boundaries and coastlines, from archaic river names to modern recognizable waterways. Not having the advantage of aerial photographs from outer space, mapmakers took a couple of centuries to arrive at the true shape of Texas and the Southwest.

And to arrive at the shape of Texas and the Southwest, it took a world of wanderers and explorers seeking a richness of gold and souls, of empresarios outlining territories for their settlers, of cattlemen marking trails to railheads, and railroads looking for the best routes through the wilderness. All of them made maps.

The early errors in geography are equally interesting, as we see California as an island and the Rio del Norte draining into the Pacific. We can better understand La Salle’s missing the mouth of the Mississippi and landing in Texas’ Matagorda Bay when we see maps of North America with the Mississippi emptying into a bay near Corpus Christi.

The cartography improves as Europeans slowly unravel the geographical mysteries of this New World. Politics becomes a part of cartography as Spanish Florida, which includes all of present southeastern United States, becomes French Louisiana and includes all of Texas. A nation could lay claim to a portion of land simply by drawing its own territorial lines on a map and giving the area its own name.

Creative Texas mapmaking ended with the end of the frontier. By 1900 the terra incognita was known and topogrified and divided into county lines. We knew what there was to know about the surface of Texas. Since then we have added roads and city limits and other man-made paraphernalia, but the geography
has been pretty well decided upon. *Maps of Texas and the Southwest* is the cartographic study of how we got to the understanding of our present shape.

F.E. Abernethy
Stephen F. Austin State University


Waterborne craft is to maritime history as nautical archeology is to history, or at least that appeared to be the paradigm Richard Francaviglia suggested in *From Sail to Steam: Four Centuries of Texas Maritime History 1500-1900*. The book, which should have been titled “The Nautical Archeology of the Texas Coast,” presented interesting descriptions of the major types of riverine and seagoing vessels that plied the rivers, bays, and coast of Texas from the pre-Columbian period until the eve of the twentieth century. The author believes that continual advances in maritime technology allowed lowland Texans to conquer nature’s barriers slowly. By the end of the nineteenth century steam powered ships converted this “tierra despoblado” into a commercial mecca.

In Francaviglia’s opinion the evolution of ship design from the crude dugout canoes of coastal Amerinds through the sail-powered, wooden-hulled ships of European origin to steam-powered, iron-hull propeller-driven steamships first championed by the Americans molded the maritime history of Texas. This bold new thesis will force students of Texas maritime history to question earlier beliefs that the shift from subsistence farming to commercial agriculture, the development of the railroad and deep water ports, and the discovery of oil led to the settlement and eventual development of the Texas coast.

Any general reader interested in the learning about the nautical archeology or maritime history of Texas will enjoy this book. The author’s clever descriptions of ship-board machinery will fascinate students of naval architecture. However, serious students of Texas history will find Francaviglia’s interpretation of the Texas Revolution, the Republic, early statehood, and the Civil War disappointing.

Donald E. Willett
Texas A&M University at Galveston


In an anecdote too delicious to require authentication, newly-elected President John F. Kennedy joked to Vice-President Lyndon B. Johnson that
now the government could dig a tunnel to the Vatican. The Texan responded that it was all right with him, as long as Brown and Root got the contract.

The much reported and often maligned relationship of LBJ and Herman and George Brown is one of many aspects of the business careers of perhaps the nation's best known construction designers addressed in this well researched and readable book. Indeed, according to the biographers, critics have obscured the brothers' innovations and accomplishments in the private sector by emphasizing their formidable political connections. Pratt and Castaneda regard the Browns as variants on the late nineteenth-century business leaders, distinctive only by their time and place—twentieth-century Texas—and their chosen field of industry.

While the authors note the controversies surrounding the firm, including an IRS judgment against the Browns for illegal campaign contributions, they clearly consider them captains of industry rather than robber barons, conservative moderates in business-driven Texas politics. Underscoring the friendship as well as the quid pro quo arrangement between the Browns and Johnson, the book augments the current favorable reappraisal of the late president.

Although the Browns left their mark in the construction of air bases from Spain to Guam and ships that sank the Axis foe, Texans will particularly relish reading of monuments to their native state: dams, airports, pipelines, endowments to education and the arts, and much of what we drive on, over, and under.

Garna L. Christian
University of Houston-Downtown


When some future historian delves into the ability of East Texas to breed entrepreneurs—oilman and philanthropist Sid Richardson and Dallas Cowboys founder Clint Murchison among them—Cass County native Marvin Leonard will be part of the study. Leonard pioneered many of the retailing concepts currently found in Wal-Mart Supercenters at his Leonard's store in downtown Fort Worth.

Husband and wife co-authors Victoria Buenger, visiting professor of management, and Walter L. Buenger, associate professor of history at Texas A&M, documented Leonard's genius with extensive interviews of the former store employees as well as former black and white customers.

Marvin Leonard opened his store in Fort Worth on December 14, 1918. First day's sales totaled $195.26 on $600 worth of inventory. By 1927, sales topped $1 million. Leonard bought carloads of unclaimed freight and sold for cash 35,000 pounds of prunes; 50,000 pounds of chicken feed at 2.5 cents a pound; 1,740 men's collars; several carloads of sugar and ribbon cane syrup; hundreds of pairs of women's shoes at $1.85; a carload of bananas; and two carloads of oak lumber.
After younger brother Obie became a full partner in 1921, merchandise expanded to include washing machines, sewing machines, auto accessories, garden tools, fancy dry goods, tobacco products, Christmas Toyland, an in-house candy factory, fur coats, pianos, and tractors.

When President Franklin D. Roosevelt closed the banks in 1933, Leonards redeemed payroll checks if customers accepted part cash and part Leonards paper script—which Leonards and other local merchants accepted for purchases. Leonards built its own subway in 1963 to transport customers from a free parking lot into its store.


Cissy Lale
Fort Worth, Texas