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Book Notes

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BOOK NOTES

By Archie P. McDonald

Another section of the Journal presents book reviews signed by the scholar and specialists who prepared them. **Book Notes** is prepared by the editor as a way to give notice of additional to more publications than can be covered in the Review section. Notices reflect the personal opinions and reactions of the editor only.

Publicity for the William P. Clements Lecture on recent Texas politics which I presented February 22, 2006, on the campus of Texas A&M University, brought a telephone call from Jack Crichton, Republican candidate for governor of Texas in 1964. Mr. Crichton sent a copy of his account of that race, and other aspects of Texas politics titled *The Republican-Democrat Political Campaigns in Texas in 1964* (Author House, 2004). Crichton took a degree in engineering from Texas A&M and became active in the University's association of former students. He was asked to bear the Republican standard against Governor John B. Connally, who was seeking reelection. Crichton relates his activities in Dallas on the day Lee Harvey Oswald assassinated President John F. Kennedy and wounded Governor Connally. Crichton believes that Connally's wounding and recovery made him invulnerable to any challenge. Several chapters relate Crichton's experiences in the Republican primary, the party's state and national conventions, and campaigning with Barry Goldwater and George H.W. Bush, Republican nominees for president and U.S. senator. All three lost, but Crichton believes that they played a pivotal role in moving Texas from a Democratic one-party state to what he calls a two-party state. Actually, Texas is once again one-party; all statewide officers and a majority of the legislative and judicial branches are Republicans.

Hellcats: The 12th Armored Division In World War II (State House Press, McMurry University Box 637, Abilene, TX 79697, \$16.95), by John C. Ferguson, is just what the title promises. Ferguson begins his story with the organization and activation of the division, shifts to their primary state-side training at Camp Barkeley near Abilene, then follows it across the Atlantic aboard troop transports to holding facilities in England before they crossed the English Channel to join the struggle against Germany. The 12th joined the 7th Army in southern France. It fared poorly in its initial engagements with the German army but in the process became a battle-hardened unit that captured thousands of enemy soldiers and occupied significant portions of southern Germany in the final days of the war. Ferguson's narrative is enlivened with scores of illustrations and sidebars. These include photos and biographical sketches of all the 12th's commanders, but the preponderance depict GIs doing what GIs did during World War II training and deployment. The volume concludes with several appendices, including a list of 870 soldiers of the 12th who lost their lives.

Comes now the annual edition of *Best Editorial Cartoons Of The Year, 2006 Edition*, edited by Charles Brooks for Pelican Publishing Company

(1000 Burmaster Street, Gretna, LA 70053, \$14.95). We have been noting these collections for nearly two decades; the creativity of political satirists never ceases to amaze me. This edition begins with award-winning cartoons for 2005, then is spread across such topics as the Bush Administration, Iraq/Terrorism, Natural Disasters, Media/Entertainment, Congress, The Economy, Government, Health/Education, Sports, Space/Air Travel, Foreign Affairs, Politics, Society, Canada ... and Other Issues. These observations: first, one might wonder at placement with categories, since President George W. Bush and Hurricane Katrina fit so many of them; second, Bush and Katrina made the most news and thus were featured in the most editorial cartoons in 2005 third, only one cartoon was even half way positive for the president – many migrated beyond criticism all the way to disdain, even more so, if memory serves, than for our philandering president from Arkansas in 1999; and finally, even if you categorize some cartoons as Health or Society, really they all are about politics. This is a good way to see what concerned folks in 2005, so the historical value of this collection will survive long after its charm as current commentary has faded.

Before Pepsi and 7-UP, the world was divided into two groups: Coca-Cola favorers and those who preferred Dr Pepper. “Coke” was the pride of Georgia, Dr Pepper of Texas, because Sam Houston Prim’s first bottling plant for his elixir was located in the Central Texas community of Dublin. Coke is a bit older, though Dr Pepper has been available for more than a century. We were assured that Coke refreshed us but a Dr Pepper at “10, 2, and 4,” meaning 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 and 4:00 p.m., assured us of health, wealth, and regularity. It does taste like prune juice, so perhaps one of three was the surest bet. Dr Pepper began in Texas but is now global. The old plant, yet functional, now serves as a living museum, so it was inevitable that someone – in the event Karen Wright, Dublin civic leader, founder of the Dublin Citizen, and director of Old Doc’s Soda Shop and Dr Pepper Museum – would write a history of the impact of Dr Pepper upon our world. State House Press (McMurry Station, Box 637, Abilene, TX 79697-0637, \$16.95) published *The Road To Dr Pepper, Texas: The Story of Dublin Dr Pepper*, and the Texas A&M University Press Consortium distributes it for them. The narrative is good, the pictures great, but Fort Sumter is in South Carolina, not North Carolina, though that will not matter to Dr Pepper aficionados. For them, the contents of the bottle is all that counts.

In a recent issue of the *Journal* we reviewed Sarah Ragland Jackson’s biography *Texas Woman of Letters, Karle Wilson Baker* (Texas A&M University Press, 2005). Jackson has now edited *The Birds of Tanglewood*, a collection of essays written by Baker and illustrated by her daughter, Charlotte Baker Montgomery, who herself became a Peabody Award winning author of juvenile literature. Texas A&M University Press, 4354 TAMU, College Station, TX 77843-4354, \$16.95, also published this collection. Jackson had access to Baker’s surviving papers while researching her biography. These essays illustrate Baker’s writing ability and also provide an excellent path to understanding her understanding of and affection for the natural world that

surrounded her small-city residences, first Tanglewood and then West Windows, her homes in Nacogdoches. The Yale Review published some of the essays, but P.L. Turner and the Southwest Press republished them in a volume in 1930, so this is at least the third printing for some of this material. But the reading audience is new and the text never grows old for those who appreciate birds and birders. Jackson's introduction and explanation of Montgomery's illustrations are exactly what one would expect of this excellent scholar.

"Our State Fair is the Best State Fair..." begins the title song of "State Fair," an early Broadway musical written by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II. Arthur Grace thinks all state fairs are wonderful, and evidence of his wonder is presented in *State Fair* (University of Texas Press, Box 7819, Austin, TX 78713-7819, \$34.95). Grace presented 119 photographs that capture scenes at nearly a dozen such events, mostly in Colorado, Kansas, Minnesota, Indiana, and Florida. Nine come from the State Fair of Texas. If people are involved, mostly they are the wholesome, middle-America types one expects to find around midways and ag exhibition barns. Not much about Texas here.

On the other hand, *Pride of Place: A Contemporary Anthology of Texas Nature Writing*, edited by David Taylor (University of North Texas Press, Box 311336, Denton, TX 76203-1336, \$16.95), is ALL about Texas, especially what these writers regard as the REAL Texas, the natural one. Taylor begins with Roy Bedichek's "Still Water," from *Adventures with a Texas Naturalist*, in acknowledgement of Bedichek's grampa role of the genre. One would expect to find John Graves and Pete Gunter included, and they are – along with Carol Cullare, Barbara "Barney" Nelson, Joe Nick Patoski, Gary Clark, Marian Haddad, Wyman Meinzer, Ray Gonzales, Naomi Shihab Nye, Gerald Thurman, and Stephen Harrigan. Taylor also contributes a chapter. Only one photo for each essay this time; the words provide the pictures.

Gary B. Borders, *A Hanging In Nacogdoches: Murder, Race, Politics, and Polemics in Texas's Oldest Town, 1870-1916* (University of Texas Press, P.O. Box 7819, Austin, TX 78713, \$19.95), tells its tale in the title. UT Press editors quoted this reporter on the back blurb thusly: "The contribution of *A Hanging In Nacogdoches* is not limited to that city, East Texas, or even the state.... The purpose of the author's presentation is to show life – race relations, politics, the economy – in a typical ... Southern town that the transition from the nineteenth to the twentieth century. Borders argues, and demonstrates, that Nacogdoches was, indeed, typical for its time and place. I have no idea when superfluties the ellipses represent, but I stand by the statement. It turns out that Gary is an excellent historian as well as newspaperman.

Mary Margaret McAllen Amberson, *A Brave Boy & A Good Soldier: John C.C. Hill & The Texas Expedition to Mier* (Texas State Historical Association, 1 University Station D0901, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX 78712-0332, \$24.95), tells the story of a youngster captured along with the rest of William Fisher's Mier Expedition command in Mexico in 1842. Because of his callow years, Hill won the affection of all Mexican offi-

cials, including Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna. Hill's association with Mexico continued for the remainder of his life. My jacket blurb on this one says "John C.C. Hill went away to war in Mexico in 1842, accompanied by his father and brother on the Mier Expedition." No one could have imagined the rest of Hill's story; first a prisoner, adopted by General Pedro de Ampudia and no less a personage than President Santa Anna himself, and then Hill adopted Mexico as his new home. His story reminds us that the twists and turns of history are not only unpredictable, sometimes they are just plain hard to believe, even when true!" I don't know why I used the exclamation point, but reconfirm that the story is a good one. It shows a social side to the Mexican president inheritors of the Alamo tradition struggle to comprehend.

Glenn Droomgoole, director of State House Press, likes unconventional books; unconventional as topic and physical size. Take Joe W. Specht's *The Women There Don't Treat You Mean: Abilene in Song* (State House Press, McMurry University, Box 67, Abilene, TX 79697, \$14.95), for example, which is about six inches square. The topic is obvious: this is a review of every song in which the word "Abilene" is mentioned, and there are far more than I imagined, though I must confess I never heard of most of them or the artists who wrote/performed them. I do recall George Hamilton IV and Gary P. Nunn, but I've yet to make the acquaintance of the rockers and rappers and folkers and others included. Apparently most songwriters use "Abilene" in the lyrics because it rhymes so easily with other words. Most never with the city, and may have had Abilene, Kansas, in mind anyway, but, says Specht, most people think the place involved is Abilene, Texas. Good illustrations, interesting text, lotsa footnotes. This one is on the square.

Zachary Scott: Hollywood's Sophisticated Cad, by Ronald L. Davis (University Press of Mississippi, 3825 Ridgewood Rd, Jackson, MS 39211-6492, \$30), is a biography of a Texas-born stage and movie actor who never quite reached complete stardom in an industry and a time when "movie star" represented the apex of popular culture. Zack Scott – his real name – grew up in Austin privileged, even in the Depression days. Both parents came from wealthy backgrounds and Scott's father became a prominent surgeon and tuberculosis specialist. Scott studied theatre in England and New York, toiled in bit parts and summer stock, and eventually became a headliner in Broadway productions and at least second lead in major productions in Hollywood. The role of "sophisticated cad," which he played in "Mildred Pierce" opposite Joan Crawford, stuck with him with in similar parts thereafter. I remember seeing Scott in numerous films, mostly because I remember his baritone voice. Even Scott's voice had a sneer in it.

World War II continues to attract writers as its participants dwindle. One of them, James M. Davis, contributed *In Hostile Skies: An American B-24 Pilot In World War II* (University of North Texas Press, P.O. Box 311336, Denton, TX 76203-1336, \$27.95). With editor David L. Snead, Davis wrote about his own experiences flying missions in Operations Cobra and Market Garden as part of the Eighth Air Force based in England, when he personally

carried the war to over twenty cities in Germany in 1944. Davis served in the Air Corps during WWII and in the Air Forces Reserves until 1961, and as of this writing continues to live in retirement in Midland.

In *The Ghosts of Iwo Jima* (Texas A&M University Press, 4354 TAMU, College Station, TX 77843-4354, \$29.95), Robert S. Burrell questions the judgment of American leaders in their decision to conquer Japanese forces on Iwo Jima in February 1945. Capturing the island cost the lives of over 28,000 American service personnel, mostly U.S. Marines. Burrell claims the U.S. fighter aircraft stationed on the island were not productive or necessary for the conquest of Japan. The author does *not* disparage the Marines in any way, and says that Joe Rosenthal's photo of Marines raising Old Glory at Mount Suribachi produced respect, even reverence, for the Corps not present previously. Rosenthal's picture, I believe, is the most recognized image from the war.

James J. Kimble's *Mobilizing The Home Front: War Bonds and Domestic Propaganda* (Texas A&M University Press, 4354 TAMU, College Station, TX 77843-4354, \$35), takes a scholarly look at the government's eight war-time bond drives that raised over \$185 billion to help finance the war, encourage patriotism, keep down inflation by reducing available funds for discretionary spending, the use of popular culture personalities to encourage bond sales, and especially the "propaganda" impact of the campaigns and the bonds themselves. Let us remember that is not automatically a pejorative term. It IS what government wants you to believe, but what the government wants you to believe may be true. Well, maybe it usually isn't, but it *could* be if we had better governors.

Recent politics also spawns new publications. *Three's A Crowd: The Dynamic of Third Parties, Ross Perot, and Republican Resurgence*, by Ronald B. Rapoport and Walter J. Stone (The University of Michigan Press, 839 Greene St. Ann Arbor, MI 48104-3209, \$29.95), is what its author's call the "Perot book," or a examination of what I would call the *insurgency* and its impact on the presidential election in 1992. Was it "the economy. stupid," as touted, or likely George H.W. Bush defecting to the nasal-voiced mighty midget whose millions muscled in traditional Republican support that allowed that skirt chaser from the Ozarks to interrupt the GOP's strangle hold on the White House? I like the narrative sections but am too old to care much for the quantitative tables. This is modern political science at its best, surely. What impresses me is the funny way third-party ideas usually end up as major-party programs, but not this time. Wonder why?

Money, Power & Elections: How Campaign Finance Reform Subverts American Democracy, by Rodney A. Smith (Louisiana State University Press, Box 25053, Baton Rouge, LA 70894-5053, \$29.95), takes us back to Watergate, big bucks, and Deep Throat's "follow the money" dictum. Money is the sinew of politics. The want of it drives incumbents mercilessly through terms of office because they must raise the money to attract the votes that elects them to office and the influence of the office raises money to attract the votes... So we reform, and that changes the way candidates seek the money to

attract... etc., but, somehow, the beat goes on. And on. This cycles, episodes usually provoked by scandal, and the latest reform fixes the former scandal's causes but not those of the next one. More charts, grafts, and such, testifying to scholarship and analysis.

The Rhetorical Presidency of George H.W. Bush, edited by Martin J. Medhurst (Texas A&M University Press, 4354 TAMU, College Station, TX 77843-4354, \$40), contains articles by Medhurst, Catherine L. Langford, William Forest Harlow, Rachel Martin Harlow, Roy Joseph, Holly G. McIntush, Martin Carcasson, Amy Tillton Jones, and Wynton C. Hall that analyze President Bush's public utterances regarding policy during his administration. Most of us, they say, remember only "Read my lips: No New Taxes!" "a kinder, gentler America," and "a thousand points of light," all part his acceptance of the Republican nomination at the party's convention in the summer of 1988. What I remember is Bush beginning sentences somewhere in their middles and assuming listeners had intuited the presumption, which often was not the case. Medhurst, *et. al.*, confirm that Bush could speak well, hold an audience's attention, be funny in a self-deprecating way, but that he failed to utilize those skills appropriately to retain support among votes for his philosophy of governing.

Michael J. Vaughn, *Cream Peas – Already Shelled: Traditional Cooking of East Texas and the Rural South* (Tidewater Publishing, Box 2130, Flint, TX 75762, \$19.95), was prepared for our specific region. Vaughn lives in Waco now but loves and honors our region's culture, particularly its foods and methods of preparing them. The introduction is of great interest, its recipes excellent. Unlike most books, however, this really isn't about the recipes so much as philosophy. It has plenty of "how to" advice, but the author's/compiler's views and attitudes are the real focus and interest.

Finally, *Flying Circus: Pacific War, 1943, As Seen Through A Bombsight*, by Jim Wright (Lyons Press, Box 480, Guilford, CT 06437, \$22.95), is a highly personal reminiscence of World War II training and combat by the distinguished former speaker of the United States House of Representatives. Wright grew up in Weatherford, not exactly East Texas, but many East Texans can identify with his patriotism and shared sacrifice to achieve FDR's "inevitable victory" over the Axis powers. The victory did not seem so inevitable when Wright and millions of other Americans volunteered or were drafted into military service at the beginning of the war, but they made it so. All of the book is enjoyable and worth reading, but I especially liked the Afterword where Wright examines the legacy of the war though such progressive legislation as the G.I. Bill, Medicare, the interstate highway system, and civil and voting rights acts. Those aren't normally "war book" topics but Wright appropriately connects them to his generation's hopes and goals. I believe the loss of civility in our Congress so discussed during the last decade really began with Newt Gingrich's pounding of Speaker Wright. Time Marches On, proclaimed a WWII movie short feature, and Wright, dignity and honor intact, remains a contributing citizen I am proud to know.

Finally, *Invisible Texans: Women and Minorities in Texas History* (McGraw-Hill, 1221 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020, \$43), edited by Donald Willett and Stephen Curley, is gleaned from lectures presented by scholars of Texas history for Texas A&M University-Galveston since 1989. Humanities Texas has been involved in funding these monthly lectures in Galveston since the beginning. Essays written by Armando Alonzo, Alwyn Barr, Randolph Campbell, John L. Davis, Ronald L. Davis, Arnolde DeLeon, Earl Elam, Dan Flores, Sylvia Grider, Arnold Krammer, Thomas Kreneck, Paul Lack, Paula Mitchell Marks, Richard Pennington, Merline Pitre, Rebecca Sharpless, Edward Simmen, and Robert Weddle are included. Each deals with a specialty of which that author is THE specialist. An introduction by T.R. Fehrenbach reminds us, "Texas is not only a state of heart and mind but of many hearts and minds..." This describes well what one finds in *Invisible Texans* – an eclectic examination of the great variety of Texans written by a group as diverse as are the rest of the Texans; well, maybe these are a little better educated than the average, but they do come in a rainbow of colors and creeds. It is the sum of it that we celebrate.