BOOK REVIEWS


San Antonio’s Bexareños developed a unique point of view says Raúl A. Ramos, that provides a new transnational model for Texas history. Even as Texas emerged as an independent Republic and later as a U.S. state, San Antonio’s Tejano elite continued to look at both their Mexican and post-Mexican Texas roots in identity formation.

Ramos first examines the formation of Bexareño identity locally during the insurgency against Spain. This conflict, in conjunction with the large population of indigenous in Texas, helped the Tejanos of San Antonio define their position as both borderland elite and cultural brokers. Later Anglo settlers perpetuated this pattern by relying on Tejano elite families to serve as liaison on both local and national levels. With the rise of the Republic and the later annexation, Bexareños transitioned from Tejano power brokers to suspect Mexicans through the regulation of Bexareño cultural practices and growing restrictions on Tejanos in politics.

Compared to similar works in the field of borderlands identity, the work lacks the theoretical or historical complexity readers have come to expect. Ramos’ focus on societal elite ignores almost completely issues of labor and the lower classes (or even of real racial complexity), as found in Mario T. García’s work on El Paso or the broad cultural analysis of William Deverell’s work on identity in Los Angeles. Most unfortunately, the author fails on his promise to link moments of identity formation in Mexico with the creation of Tejano identity. Capping his narrative at 1861, Ramos misses the opportunity to prove his hypothesis through the two most important moments in Mexican identity formation – The French Intervention (1862-1867) and the Revolution (1910-1920).

Nevertheless, the work serves as an interesting and readable contribution to the discussion of identity formation in borderlands and Texas history from a Tejano point of view.

Jason H. Dormady
Stephen F. Austin State University

Hecho en Tejas: An Anthology of Texas Mexican Literature is an extraordinary collection of letters, poetry, border ballads, music lyrics, fictional narratives, and other literary forms. Dagoberto Gilb, author of The Magic of Blood and The Last Known Residence of Mickey Acuna, has assembled the work of various Tejanos. The entries, which are organized by decade, reveal the humor, heartbreak, and imagination of Tejano writers. In addition, the writings transcend state boundaries by exposing and discussing gender issues and identity and cultural conflicts that were and are present in Mexican-American and Mexican communities throughout the Southwest.

Focusing primarily on twentieth-century prose, Hecho en Tejas shows the richness of the Tejano literary culture. Gilb begins with an account from Spanish explorer Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca and then provides a glimpse into the literary history of Tejano communities through anthology entries. Included in the compilation are the proclamation from nineteenth-century rebel Juan N. Cortina, lyrics from renowned vocalist and National Heritage Award recipient Lydia Mendoza, Grammy winner Little Joe, and rapper Chingo Bling, poetry by Josefina Niggli, Angela de Hoyos, and Randy Garibay, and scholarly excerpts from America Paredes' With His Pistol in His Hand and Jose Angel Gutierrez's The Making of a Chicano Militant: Lessons from Cristal. To assist the reader, Gilb includes brief author profiles to accompany their works.

Although Hecho en Tejas is a celebration of the Tejano literary tradition and history, the works included contain universal themes that would be enjoyed and cherished by all.

Ana Luisa Martinez-Catsam
The University of Texas of the Permian Basin


Fort Bend County in Texas may create an image in the reader’s mind of the home county to Sugar Land, Texas, infamous because of its history
with Imperial Sugar, also known as Sugar Land Industries, and now known for its mansions and mini-estates. Congressmen and recognized leaders of capitalism reside in Sugar Land, making it a suburb of affluence and sophistication for the wealthy. Yet within the boundaries of this prosperous community lies San Isidro Cemetery where Latino employees of the Imperial Sugar factories have been laid to rest for many years.

The cemetery is named for Saint Isidro de la Labrador, the patron of the laborer, an apt moniker for such a final resting place. High walls surrounding the cemetery guard and protect the sanctity of a burial ground which exists in the middle of all that glitters in Sugar Land. The author likens the atmosphere to a "veil." Hernandez has compiled a collection of narratives about these mexicanos, stories really, of their life and work and how they are woven into the fabric of the region. Through diligent research, Hernandez has provided a portrait of laborers the general public seldom encounters. "A Man who works with his hands is a laborer. A Man who works with hands and his heart is a craftsman. A Man who works with his hands, his heart, and his soul is an artist," is carved on one of the estuaries in the cemetery (p. 19).

Hernandez recounts experiences of these hard working laborers, weaving her narrative from archival documents as well as personal oral histories. From the 1880s through the contemporary period, the character of individuals and life long events are compiled in this pleasant study of social class divisions and story of a place. Each life ends in a quiet and peaceful place known as San Isidro cemetery.

Leslie Daniel
Nacogdoches, Texas


This is a story of a killing that resulted in one of the earliest judicially sanctioned hangings during the Republic of Texas, but it is much more than that. Hardin, with a compelling narrative writing style, paints a rich portrait of both the Texas revolution and the rise of the Republic's early capital, built in the muck and mayhem that was Houston in the late 1830s.

David James Jones managed to be one of only twenty-eight men to escape the massacre at Goliad. He later caught up with General Sam
Houston's army in time for the decisive Battle of San Jacinto, and then, like many of that army's soldiers, ended up in Houston without much to his name—save two land certificates, both of which he promptly sold. He had the poor fortune, at a time when killings were common and justice rare, to stab to death a prominent recent emigrant to town. Francis Moore, the one-armed self-righteous editor of the influential Telegraph and Texas Register, had just been elected mayor of Houston. Moore successfully pushed for Jones' hanging, along with another miscreant, as an object lesson to the sizable criminal element in Houston.

Hardin deftly weaves Jones' story into the fabric of the Republic's early years. This well-researched account draws upon many sources to give the reader a strong sense of what it was like to live in Houston during those early days. The rats, rain, and ruffians certainly gave the Republic's early leaders plenty of reason to move the capital to Austin as soon as possible.

Gary B. Borders
Longview, Texas


The authors describe this work as a "popular history rather than a work of academic scholarship" relying upon "traditional narratives" considered reliable. To qualify, those profiled engaged in at least two gunfights or robberies in which significant gunfights occurred.

This is an acceptable purpose, intending to update the previous format perfected by Bill O'Neal in his Encyclopedia of Western Gunfighters (1979). Indeed, the authors use O'Neal's work heavily, as well as other noted historians and entries from The New Handbook of Texas.

It is thus surprising that the noted East Texas outlaw Cullen Baker receives a half page, but the Kansas murderess Kate Bender nearly three times the coverage, although she never journeyed to Texas. Nor does Wild Bunch member Laura Bullion belong as she was merely the lover of various Texas outlaws. Neither Bender nor Bullion fulfill the requirement. Bill Conner of Sabine County is included, but other than his gang shooting up Texas Rangers, did he participate in a second gunfight? Why include characters who, by the authors' stated purpose, do not belong?
There are serious errors which an average editor should have caught: Jesse Evans was born in Missouri, not Illinois; Kitty Leroy of Dakota Territory was hardly a "Texas impresario;" John Ringo did not participate in the Sutton-Taylor Feud; Wes Hardin killed Charles Cougar in Abilene, Kansas, not Abilene, Texas. Besides these embarrassing errors there are internal contradictions: East Texas outlaw Bill Longley was born on October 6 (p. 23), and October 16 (p. 160); Wild Bill is Hickok (p. 18) but Hickock (p. 74). Most embarrassing: John Coffee Hays was not at Round Rock in 1878 when Rangers battled the Sam Bass gang. 200 Outlaws contains errors too numerous to mention.

The authors' research seems to have been conducted hurriedly and is shallow. It exemplifies the inherent nature of attempting to document a subject of such vast scope without having spent years of serious research. Since this book will be readily available and will appeal to the younger reader with an interest in history, it is unfortunate that so many errors appear. The editor is described as a "distinguished historian" who guided the authors' "literary efforts." He failed both significantly.

Chuck Parsons
Luling, Texas


Two new books from Pelican Press have addressed similar subject matter. 100 Oklahoma Outlaws, Gangsters, and Lawmen, 1839-1939 presents "the entire story of Oklahoma outlawry from the earliest days of Indian Territory to the death of the last criminally active member of the Barker gang in 1939." Co-authors Dan Anderson and Laurence Yadon point out that their book is "a work of popular history rather than of serious scholarship" and that "we have often relied upon familiar, predictable sources and traditional versions of events" [p. 7].

The authors retell many familiar tales, covering outlaws from Rufus Buck to Bonnie and Clyde, and lawmen from Heck Thomas to Bill
Tilghman. Added to the cast of characters are those who simply passed through Oklahoma, such as Al Capone, Tom Horn, and Wild Bill Hickok. Hickok is mentioned as being “nearly forty years old” in 1861 [p. 226], the year in which he turned twenty-four. Included in this “Just Passing Through” section is a sketch of John Wesley Hardin, one of the book’s few connections to East Texas.

More Oklahoma Renegades is a follow-up to Ken Butler’s, Oklahoma Renegades: Their Deeds and Misdeeds (1997). A native of Oklahoma, Butler spent decades researching the region’s outlaws and lawmen. His second volume about Oklahoma’s renegades covers less familiar individuals, and the connections to East Texas include background mention of such communities as Tyler, Rusk, Hemphill, and Paris, where a federal court was located which dispatched officers in pursuit of Oklahoma criminals. Butler scoured government documents scores of newspapers, and has provided a rich collection of photographs and other illustrations.

Although 100 Oklahoma Outlaws may catch the eye of the casual reader, More Oklahoma Renegades is of far greater value and deeper interest.

Bill O’Neal
Carthage, Texas


In the past decade Civil War historians have paid increased attention to military campaigns in Texas and Louisiana. Through volumes on Galveston and Sabine Pass, Ed Cotham has carefully described Union efforts to gain footholds on the upper Texas coast, while Curt Anders, Thomas Ayres, William R. Brooksher, Gary D. Joiner, and Richard Lowe have examined Union efforts to move up the Red River toward Shreveport and East Texas. Now Stephen D. Dupree, a retired nuclear engineer, has provided an overall view of Union efforts in the area directed by Major General Nathaniel P. Banks.

Dupree shows that Banks, who succeeded Ben Butler as commander of the Department of the Gulf in November 1862, made five major efforts to “plant the Union flag in Texas:” the capture and loss of Galveston in autumn and early winter 1862-1863; the unsuccessful effort to move up
Sabine Pass in September 1863; the drive through the bayou country in October-November 1863, the occupation of Brownsville and south Texas in November 1863; and the Red River campaign of March-May 1864. Half of Dupree's volume is devoted to the last effort.

The author does an excellent job in describing the futile efforts of Nathaniel P. Banks to sustain a Federal presence in Texas. While sympathetic to Banks, whom he describes as a "compassionate man" (p. 180) who attempted to "minimize the brutalizing influence of war" (p. 180), Dupree concludes that he failed in a "spectacular manner" (p. 191).

This is a first rate piece of historical writing and research. While there is little new in the story of Banks' failures, the author brings the efforts together in an admirable manner.

Excellent maps prepared by Donald Frazier, photographs of the major participants, and a comprehensive bibliography enhance the text. Those wishing to understand the Civil War on the Texas coast and in western Louisiana can find no better place to begin than with Dupree's volume.

Ralph A. Wooster
Lamar University


Somewhere in early Texas history an observer remarked that Texas was "hell on dogs and women." The aphorism is certainly true of black women. The lives of Texas' black women were no doubt difficult during slavery, but it very well may have been worse during Reconstruction. It is easy in the early twenty-first century to forget how difficult life was in the past, but Bruce A. Glasrud and Merline Pitre have gathered a distinguished group of authors who have provided their readers with a significant and well-documented history of a group of people often neglected, and also reminds us of how black women persevered and overcame the many obstacles in their paths.

The essay collection begins with the period of slavery to 1865, followed chronologically up to a chapter entitled "Contemporary Black Texas Women: Political and Professional Leadership, 1973-2000." Such an organizational method allows the narrative to flow, although each individual
essay could stand alone as a scholarly achievement. Each entry includes extensive notes for further reading.

The personal stories give this book flesh and blood. There are tales of abuse, injustice in the courts, and "whippings," as well as some triumphs of the human spirit staying alive, building a family, forming churches and gaining civil rights.

This reader extends a "Bravo" to the editors and their contributors for so successfully fulfilling their aims as promised in the beginning of this collection. More than just a work which is important to black Texas women, many readers will find these personal accounts and their telling revelations broad and deep enough to appeal to any reader who studies Texas and its history.

Joan D. Hodges
Dallas, Texas


From Abram of Chilhowie and Ada-gal’kala to Lewie Za-wa-na-skie (Lewis Downing), _A Cherokee Encyclopedia_ covers a lot of ground in its small format. It emphasizes Cherokee people with the longest entry not surprisingly that of John Ross, the Cherokee chief who opposed Indian removal in the 1830s. Much can be learned from a close reading of the book, for here are biographies of leaders such as Wilma P. Mankiller; sports figures such as W. Lee O’Daniel Robbins, who spent at least two years in the major leagues with the Los Angeles Angels, and Osley Bird Saunooke, who in 1937 was the Super Heavyweight Wrestling Champion of the World; celebrities such as Will Rogers and movie star Carl Davis Mathews; and scholars such as Daniel F. Littlefield of the University of Arkansas. A few whites, such as James Mooney and Sam Houston, are included.

The entries are mainly brief and written in a lively manner. They cover topics and personalities dating from early in Cherokee history to the present time. When considered in total the entries suggest, again not surprisingly, that Cherokee people have made major contributions to American social and cultural life. They also demonstrate the hardships and difficulties associated with Cherokee removal to Indian Territory, with Cherokee
political differences and tribal divisions, and with current Cherokee Nation and economic issues.

The author, Robert J. Conley, is a professional writer and a member of the Keetoowah Band of Cherokees. His book serves as a handy reference tool, but it is also a joy to read.

Paul H. Carlson
Texas Tech University


In this work, Clifford Farrington examines the rise of biracial labor unions among waterfront workers in Galveston. Biracial unions—separate black and white labor organizations in the same industry—arose as a compromise between workers’ need for cooperation and the reality of racial division in the post-Civil War South.

Farrington’s narrative focuses on the white Screwmen’s Benevolent Association which emerged after the Civil War and tried futilely to maintain a monopoly on cotton screwing—an occupation that involved using specialized tools to pack cotton into the hulls of ships. In the 1880s, African Americans broke the SBA’s monopoly by taking cotton screwing jobs at lower wages than those commanded by the white union. The SBA, and eventually other waterfront unions, recognized the utility of cooperation across racial boundaries and forged an uneasy alliance with the newly formed black Cotton Jammers Association that withstood repeated efforts by employers to use race as a wedge to destroy biracialism and to lower wages. More threatening, however, were divisions between black workers who supported biracialism and those who distrusted white unions and thought African Americans would do better to take lower wages and gain work. By 1912, biracialism reached its height when Galveston’s screwmen agreed to divide work equally. Such an agreement stood out against Texas’ now legally entrenched segregation.

Curiously, Farrington barely mentions the historiographical debate over “whiteness” that has roiled recent American labor history. The debate about the utility of “whiteness studies,” which focuses on racial identity formation, is often overwrought, but any work on race and class should address the issue. Although Farrington offers little new interpretively,
echoing instead Eric Arnesen's conclusions about New Orleans dock-workers, his work is a fine addition to the growing number of studies on the interaction between black and white workers and to our understanding of Galveston's rich past.

Robert S. Shelton
Cleveland State University


First published in 1935, R.G. Carter's On the Border with Mackenzie remains the most complete first-hand account of Indian wars on the Texas frontier during the 1870s. A veteran of the Civil War and a graduate of West Point in 1870, Robert Goldwaithe Carter arrived in Texas in September 1870 to take up his first duty assignment with the Fourth Cavalry at Fort Concho. Over the next four years, Carter participated in virtually every major campaign against the Comanche and their Kiowa allies. For his distinguished gallantry in action against Quahada Comanche at the battle of Blanco Canyon in October 1871, Carter received the Medal of Honor.

Charles M. Robinson cautions in the foreword that Carter's account may contain "... flaws in detail, along with good, healthy doses of exaggeration and even fabrication," but the basic story rings true (p. ix). And what a story it is. Accompanying the recollections of harrowing battles, bloody massacres, and thundering stampedes are historically significant descriptions of Galveston and San Antonio in the 1870s, the basic layouts of frontier forts such as Concho, Griffin, Richardson, Clark, overland transportation systems of the period, and the abundant flora and fauna of late nineteenth century Texas. Carter also humanizes aspects of military life that often are lost amidst the dust of battle narratives – the daily grind of long campaigns, the quest to locate adequate food, water, and shelter, the importance of good horses, and the ambivalence that some soldiers felt about their Indian adversaries.

On the Border with Mackenzie is a fascinating book and an essential reference to any study dealing with the Texas Indian wars. With few exceptions, Carter portrays his comrades-in-arms as heroic defenders of American civilization who "won" West Texas from the Comanche. Such a
depiction, as Robinson points out, may explain why Carter’s work has not carried over into modern times. As part of the Texas State Historical Association’s Fred H. and Ella Mae Moore’s Texas History Reprint Series, the book will be accessible to future generations of readers interested in learning about duty, sacrifice, hardship, and valor through the experiences of a young officer in Ranald S. Mackenzie’s Fourth Cavalry.

Thomas A. Britten
University of Texas at Brownsville


For those who love a Texas-sized party, there is none bigger than Fiesta San Antonio. This ten-day, fun-filled rite of spring in the Alamo City attracts several million visitors each year to experience an array of parades, foods, and cultures. Laura Hernández-Ehrisman’s Inventing the Fiesta City offers a critical examination of Fiesta’s origins in San Antonio during the late nineteenth century with the commemoration of the Texas Revolution and its transformation into a modern-day secular celebration like others across the nation, but with a twist that reflects San Antonio’s uniquely Southern, Western, and Mexican identities.

Hernández-Ehrisman successfully conveys a distinction between an ambivalent and complex “inventing the fiesta city” from the fixed, binary racial lesson of inventing the Alamo City. She argues that Fiesta is not only the history of the dominant Anglo and German class that she calls the “heritage elite,” who invented the Battle of Flowers parade in 1891, but about women and Mexicanos “transgressing boundaries of home and segregated neighborhood” (p. 14). Relying upon published newspaper articles and secondary sources, the author brilliantly weaves otherwise separate histories into one.

Each chapter involves actors of overlapping eras adding new events and royalty that the founders did not intend. For example, the creation of NIOSA (Night in Old San Antonio) in 1948 represented the struggle of women in the San Antonio Conservation Society such as Emily Edwards, who was born in San Antonio and taught art at Hull House in Chicago before studying under Mexican muralist Diego Rivera, versus preservationists such as Clara Driscoll and Adina De Zavala, members of the
Daughters of the Republic of Texas. Meanwhile, Reynolds Andricks, a civil engineer and executive secretary of the Fiesta San Jacinto Association, founded the Fiesta Flambeau parade that same year with its new monarch, Miss Fiesta, as representative of a more democratic society. In the post-WWII era, pro-business government and middle-class organizations now share power formerly belonging to a few privileged families, though this distribution is far from complete.

Francis X. Galán
Our Lady of the Lake University


This book is about a young boy named Audie Murphy who grew up on a farm in Northeast Texas. Leon Audie Murphy was born on June 20, 1924, near the small town of Kingston, Texas, in Hunt County, northeast of Dallas. Audie was the sixth child born to the Murphy family. There was a total of twelve children born to the family and three of them died. Many thought that the Murphy family was lazy, but in reality they had no education and did what they could as sharecroppers.

In 1940, Audie's father left home and this is when Audie dropped out of school and picked cotton to help support his family. On December 7, 1941, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Audie's mother passed away the same year. So, in 1942, he had his eighteenth birthday and he joined the army.

Audie was assigned to the Third Division, Company B. His company landed in southern Sicily in July 1943. He killed his first enemy soldier in Sicily. The company then landed in Anzio, an Italian Resort town, on January 22, 1944.

During his time in the Army, Audie was awarded the Medal of Honor, the Silver Star with Oak Leaf Cluster, a Bronze Star, Purple Heart with Oak Leaf Cluster, Good Conduct medal, the Distinguished Service Cross, and a World War II Victory Medal. He came back home a hero.

In 1945, Audie was featured on the cover of Life Magazine. In 1955, he made a movie, "To Hell and Back," based on his autobiography. At the time, Audie was a contract actor with Universal Studios, but by the 1960s Universal chose not to renew his contract.
On May 28, 1971, Audie Murphy and several other men were passengers on a private plane. The plane crashed in fog and rain on the side of a mountain near Roanoke, Virginia. All aboard the plane were killed.

I really think that the book is kind of interesting. I enjoyed reading this book and would like to read more just like it.

Noah Rains
Fort Belvoir, Virginia


This study is a strong comment about the twentieth century's Great Generation, the one comprised of people who had to cope with and survive the Great Depression, the worst in United States history, then confront global militaristic totalitarianism and defeat Germany and Japan on a worldwide stage to save what was best in world civilization. Miracle's micro-study of World War II focuses on D.C. Caughran, Jr., a Northeast Texan born in 1921 in Forney, Texas, who grew up in tiny Chisholm, not far from the Forney area. Twenty years old when he received his draft notice in mid-1942, Caughran was destined for high— if unpleasant— adventure during World War II, first as a fighting man, then as a prisoner-of-war. Most importantly, Caughran wrote his parents often, and they preserved his letters, the major building block of Miracle's account of a soldier's war.

As he began his book, the author set young Caughran's "stage" with an overview of rural Northeast Texas prior to World War II by discussing the way of life in the area the young man called home. Next, Miracle devotes attention to the subject's early life. Caughran graduated from Rockwall High School and John Tarleton Junior College before transferring to the University of Texas, but the draft interrupted his education before he completed his studies.

The new soldier completed basic training at Camp Wolters, located near Mineral Wells, Texas. Because of his poor eyesight, Caughran's superiors refused to put him in a combat unit, instead assigning him to the Signal Corps, where he became a clerk. In the winter of 1944, the high command sent Caughran to England. Still in the Signal Corps, he participated in the allied invasion of Normandy and the liberation of France. His unit followed
the fighting men and set up rudimentary governments in liberated areas until the French could take over. Caughran's unit operated behind the fighting front when the Germans began the Battle of the Bulge. The unit was captured and Caughran spent the rest of the war in a German stalag.

Writing home when he could, Caughran assured his parents that he was treated well enough to survive. He mentioned several German guards, including one who shared his food with some of the American prisoners, risking certain punishment should his superiors learn of his humane acts. Despite the actions of kindly guards, Caughran commented on the poor quality of the "food" served to prisoners, some of it bulked up by sawdust, and on the harsh winter of 1944-1945 when many prisoners had no warm clothing and no blankets. Red Cross packages brought relief to some, but the benevolent agency could not reach every stalag. Through it all Caughran never commented on ill behavior of the guards; he witnessed no overt war crimes. Liberated in April 1945, Caughran recuperated in various camps in France before coming home later in the year.

Using Caughran's letters, Miracle presents a "common" soldier's wartime experience in one of the most defining conflicts in American history, one the Great Generation had to win to preserve Western Civilization.

James M. Smallwood
Oklahoma State University, Emeritus


On the eve of America's entry into World War II, a group of Young National Guardsmen began the process of completing their basic training at Camp Bowie in Brownwood, Texas. Because they were Guardsmen, many of them came from the same town, in this case, Jacksboro. After completing their training, they were sent to the Philippines, but because of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, were detoured to the island of Java. The ensuing Japanese conquest of Java was swift and these young men, along with survivors of the sinking of the USS Houston, became prisoners of war. They were sent to Burma and participated in the building of the famous Burma-Thailand railway.

This work chronicles the harsh conditions the prisoners endured, including infections, disease, beatings, and near-starvation. Crager choos-
es to mention only briefly the actual account of the building of the 260 mile railway, as this bit of history has received a great deal of attention by earlier historians. Instead, he offers the reader of stories of individuals, often gripping and always interesting, that reveal heroism and a strong will to survive by the young men from Jacksboro.

Crager’s research comes from the National Archives, as well as the oral interviews given by many of the survivors, although Crager himself did not conduct the interviews. Because of this, the book has a bit of an impersonal element to it and some of the stories seem, at times, redundant. Nevertheless, *Hell under the Rising Sun* offers another glimpse into the horrors and survival instincts experienced by POWs, especially at the hands of the Japanese, and reminds those of us who were born after World War II that these young men were a vital part of the aptly named Greatest Generation.

Mark Choate  
Austin, Texas


Anyone who has waited for a long overdue reassessment of the El Paso Salt War of 1877 need wait no more. Author Paul Cool revisits the storied border conflict that, despite appearing only a local dispute-turned-blood feud, symbolized the greater cultural clash for control of an immense land and the wealth it represented. Mining a rich vein of primary sources unavailable to – or neglected by – earlier investigators, Cool presents a balanced and convincing case for his thesis: both the causes and consequences of the Salt War were far more complex than portrayed in the past, and the story of the insurgency must be recounted not merely in military terms but in the context of competing social, political, and economic interests.

Free of the biases that have too often burdened previous chroniclers, Cool relies on the massive quarry of public documents at his disposal. He carefully reexamines the role of state Ranger forces dispatched by Texas Governor Richard Hubbard to quell the “revolt” and restore “order” to the upper Rio Grande. In so doing, while defending the reputation of Ranger Captain John B. Tays, Cool depicts Tays’s enlisted men as a disorderly
mob of misfits, mercenaries, man-killers, and near-do-wells, hardly the Hollywood image of the heroic Texas Rangers of lore and legend.

In the end, Cool explains why the bitter legacy of the Salt War remains today. In so doing he reminds the reader of the relevance of the troubled history of the crooked border that separates two peoples and two countries. He also recalls the truth that people of Mexican heritage—on both sides of the river—hold just claim that the land shadowed by the Guadalupe Mountains and the people's salt it yielded belonged to them, and would always belong to them.

Michael L. Collins
Midwestern State University


True to its title, this interesting and informative biography of Dolph Briscoe provides an equal mix of ranching history and political history spanning the 1930s through the 1970s. Born into a ranching family in Uvalde, Texas in 1923, Dolph Briscoe steadily accumulated ranch lands across south Texas and northern Mexico to become the state's largest landholder. Along the way, he served four terms in the state legislature (1949-1957) and as governor from 1973 to 1979. Over the course of the last eight years, Briscoe sat for a series of interviews with Don Carleton, director of the Center for American History at UT Austin. Carleton's transcriptions of their discussions provide the foundation for this book.

Briscoe got his start in ranching soon after his return from service in World War Two. As owner-operator of the 13,000 acre Dry Frio Ranch, he worked diligently battling screwworms, burning thorns off prickly pear, and experimenting with new agricultural methods to restore grass and pasturage. Following the death of his father in 1954, Briscoe inherited a virtual ranching empire encompassing some 190,000 acres. Six years later, he gained election as president of the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association where he played a key role in the implementation of a successful national screwworm eradication project.

While ranching is his lifelong vocation, Briscoe was keenly interested in politics and in 1948 won a seat in the state legislature. A moderate
Democrat and opponent of high taxes and unbridled government spending, Briscoe often sought the advice and tutelage of fellow Democrat and Uvalde resident John Nance Garner. During the 1950s and 60s, Briscoe's position as a prominent rancher and politician brought him into frequent contact with Lyndon B. Johnson, Sam Rayburn, and John Connally. After an unsuccessful run for the governorship in 1968, Briscoe came back to win a close contest in 1972 and re-election to a four year term in 1974.

In the final chapters of the book, he provides a candid appraisal of his six-year tenure as governor, his role in the 1972 presidential primaries, and an explanation for his unsuccessful bid for reelection to a third term in 1978.

This book is no self-congratulatory biography and succeeds as both a ranching history and political history of contemporary Texas. Briscoe's anecdotes regarding his association with several prominent 20th century Texans makes it particularly interesting reading.

Thomas A. Britten
University of Texas at Brownsville


Conviction, stamina, and the pocketbook of a Weatherford, Texas, lawyer father was on her side and the little country West Texas girl worked long and hard to be what she wanted to be. Nothing just "happened" for Mary Martin - she wanted something and she made it happen. This is an exciting, interesting, fact-filled account on how Martin dreamed her dreams and succeeded.

The author, Ronald Davis, with the friendship and help of Martin's dearest and oldest friend, has had the good fortune to get to know his subject well and adeptly told her story. He has given an insightful, intimate, and entertaining story of the stage and personal life of one of the greatest Broadway stars in history. Along with the flash and glamour are the heartaches, trials, and tribulations of a woman who knew what she wanted and convinced the most difficult critics she had what it took to succeed. Sacrifice of family, long sojourns away from them, hard work, ingenuity, and a great presence on stage landed her more opportunities than she ever dreamed and recognition as the best in her field.
Davis does a superb job of chronicling Martin’s hard times in climbing the ladder to success and equally difficult times in holding on to it. Step by step he focuses on how she finally broke through the hard shell of show biz and then methodically goes through ever major success on Broadway. Special attention is given to the early years and then some discussion on the making of her most famous productions, including *South Pacific*, *Peter Pan*, and *The Sound of Music*. Of great interest were the times she made a production work by sheer energy and ability to improvise, fill in for those who could not produce in a show, and making sure they traveled out of the major cities on to reach the people of America.

Martin’s juggling of family life and work, the problems and successes of her producer husband, Richard Halliday, and the estrangement from her son, Larry Hagman, were all discussed with compassion. Mary Martin personifies the energetic, talented, hardworking, stubborn, mouthy Texas woman! The reader will not only learn much about show biz and a star, but will be thoroughly entertained throughout the book. I couldn’t put it down!

Linda J. Cross
Tyler, Texas


Only Nevada allowed casino gambling, and no state had a lottery in 1963. By 2006, eleven states permitted casino gambling, and forty-one, plus the District of Columbia, had lotteries. All the Southern states except Alabama and Arkansas had joined “the gambling nation.” That Mississippi and Georgia, states of the Bible Belt, should emerge as examples to the rest of the nation — Mississippi its casinos, Georgia its lottery — intrigued the authors, both political scientists from Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee, and this excellent study is their explanation for this dramatic shift in Southern life. Their conclusions are based on case studies of seven Southern states — Mississippi, Georgia, Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, South Carolina, and Tennessee. Clearly written, adequately indexed, and amply endnoted, though lacking a bibliography, this is a book for scholars that a general audience may also appreciate.

It was state government, not the federal government, that initiated this “third wave” in gambling, the first occurring during the colonial era when
all the colonies had lotteries, the second in the latter nineteenth century when most of the Southern states revived the tradition. Searching for ways since the 1960s to fund services without resorting to higher taxes, state after state surrendered to temptation but not without a battle from morality's defenders who stoutly resisted the constitutional amendments needed to make gambling legal. In the resulting tug-of-war the gamblers generally outflanked the moralists on casinos by permitting local option, which seemed so fair and democratic, and on lotteries by allowing the people in statewide referenda to vote “yes” or “no” on the issue. This made it possible for politicians in conservative districts to denounce the “sin” while supporting the public’s right to vote. And if all else failed, sin became virtue by earmarking gambling proceeds for the state’s school children.

While some readers will be disappointed that Texas was not included, or that the Indian tribes were given short shrift, the authors are to be commended for opening the door to a fascinating field of study.

John W. Storey
Lamar University


In this second volume of speeches and essays – the first was *Moyers on America* – Bill Moyers continues his crusade against the current condition of journalism, the sale of a political candidate to the highest contributor, the distortion of history, and what he sees as the excesses of Right Wing politics and religion. Many of the twenty-five speeches included were delivered to organizations and universities honoring Moyers and his wife Judith.

Interspersed are eloquent eulogies to men and women who had a profound effect on the nation, including Congresswoman Barbara Jordan, CBS News chief Fred W. Friendly, Riverside Church pastor William Sloane Coffin, and First Lady Lady Bird Johnson, personal friends all.

Anyone familiar with *Bill Moyers Journal* on PBS, his many documentaries – which have won more than thirty Emmys – or his speeches know that at some point Moyers will make reference to Marshall, his hometown, and the colorful characters he met and wrote about when he began his journalism career on the local newspaper. That practice continues in this volume.
Moyers has been concerned about current coverage by the mainstream media of events that have a primary effect on the lives of ordinary citizens. Why report on the state of the economy, the truth about the buildup to a preemptive war against an oil-rich Middle Eastern nation, the attack on scientific research by the present administration when television and newspapers can get by with reporting the latest murder or celebrity outrage and the public is satisfied?

Moyers told the National Conference for Media Reform “By no stretch of the imagination can we say the dominant institutions of today’s media are guardians of democracy. Despite the profusion of new information ‘platforms’... the resources for solid journalistic work, both investigative and interpretative, are contracting rather than expanding.”

In September 2005, Bill and Judith Moyers were selected to receive the President’s Medal, Union Theologian Seminary’s highest recognition. In exchange they were asked only “that in response we speak what was on our minds.”

Moyers began his speech with a reference to Central Baptist Church in Marshall, “where I was baptized in the faith, [and] we believed in a free church in a free state. I still do.”

It was a commitment so strong it led him to become an ordained minister. A free church in a free state...

Such a revolutionary idea led to the creation of a Constitution and Bill of Rights “that made no mention of God, would be a haven for ‘the cause of the conscience.’”

Now, Moyers said, the right to be loyal to the Constitution with no requirement that a belief in God or subscription to the Christian religion is required, is at risk. Edward Gibbon wrote in The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire that while theologians could describe religion as descended from Heaven it was the responsibility of historians “or journalists” to look at religion without the halos. Militant Islam is not the only religion spouting hate and calling it God’s word. “The religious Right is using God as a battering ram on almost every issue: crime and punishment, foreign policy, health care, taxation, energy regulation and social services.”

Three years later that belligerent attitude came home to bite leading Democratic and Republican presidential candidates. Both Barack Obama and John McCain found it necessary to separate themselves from preachers whose strident statements caused more than embarrassment; they were recognized as unacceptable violations of common decency.

In his introduction, Moyers wrote, “We have fallen under the spell of money, faction and fear ... Hope no longer seems the operative dynamic in America.”
Devotees of Fox News, Rush Limbaugh, and other right-wing pundits will hate *Moyers on Democracy*. They may not read it, but they will hate it nonetheless. Folks who thrive on the latest undoings of Brittney Spears or Paris Hilton will find it boring. But anyone willing to look for the facts left untouched by most of the popular media and the inevitable conclusion of being cheated will find it riveting.

Gail K Beil
Marshall, Texas


The quickest way to arouse a public hue and cry to prevent the wanton destruction of historical architectural treasures scheduled for demolition is — to show them — what they are about to lose that will vanish forever from their civic landscape. And that is what Jim Parsons and David Bush most admiringly have done in this work. Parsons, a freelance researcher, writer, and photographer, and Bush, director of Programs and Information for the Greater Houston Preservation Alliance, teamed together to document in over 100 photographs the modernistic architectural treasures of the Houston area that were built in the first half of the twentieth century and which exhibit features of the Art Deco, Art Modern, and International Style.

In this case, one picture is worth a thousand words — and their photographs visually catalogue architectural gems according to the categories of commercial, theatrical, institutional, residential, and industrial, with accompanying informative captions as to the date of their construction, architect, and location. To see these buildings profiled so beautifully is to educate us as to their presence and elicit the desire to safe keep them forever. That is the intention that motivated Parsons and Bush to assemble this book, and concomitant Web site, which emerged from the “Endangered Deco” preservation project in the Texas Gulf Coast area.

After conducting extensive research in archives and libraries, Parsons and Bush hit the pavement to find extant modernistic architectural gems built in the 1920s through 1940s extant in surrounding towns and neighborhoods. Most have been razed, and others retrofitted to accommodate modernization, with only their outer facades remaining. The authors man-
aged to locate ninety-six still standing, and in doing so, have made a significant contribution toward documenting a slice of Texas architectural history. By expertly photographing the buildings, they highlight the distinctive architectural features of each. In the introduction, Bush provides a brief description of the differences among modernistic architectural styles. But the beautiful photographs of individual buildings and their details more effectively convey the subtle nuances between each. This makes Parsons and Bush's work approachable, useful, and enjoyable to a broad audience.

In this era of bland “big box” stores, it is important for citizens who wish to preserve and protect the distinctive architectural heritage and identity of their communities to know just where those treasures lie hidden and how to bring them to public awareness and attention. Parsons and Bush have paved the way by showing how we might similarly take a first step toward undertaking such an endeavor. Beauty once so publicly exposed is much harder to extinguish in secret.

Holle Humphries
Lubbock, Texas


Although a much clichéd phrase, a picture is worth a thousand words when one is perusing the photographs of this book. Larry Jene Fisher’s pictures of the people and their life ways of the Big Thicket of Texas are a cultural treasure. Fisher had the insight to realize that a unique cultural and ecological heritage was on the verge of disappearing and spent almost two decades of his life working to record and document how the “plain folks” of the Big Thicket went about making a living from the woods and swamps. Starting about 1939, Fisher took thousands of photographs over a twenty-year period.

Authors Thad Sitton and C.E. Hunt provide a historical overview of what it was like to live in the Big Thicket and an insightful biography of Fisher. The photographs are presented in subject groupings with titles such as “Town Life,” “Turpentining,” and “Southerners in the Big Woods,” just to mention a few. A cultural essay is provided for each group of photographs by Sitton.
Something unique about the history of the Big Thicket is that many of the people who lived there during the 1930s and 1940s still lived off the land in the much the same fashion as earlier generations. For example, old-time knowledge such as how to build a "mud-daub" chimney on a log house out of mud and moss was still practiced by Thicket inhabitants. Fisher's photographs of a "chimney daubing" and Sitton's accompanying essay describing the process and its significance as a community social event are insightful.

I think the authors selected a compelling and evocative set of photographs from Fisher's large collection and recommend this book to anyone interested in the history and culture of East Texas and the Big Thicket.

Rick L. Hammer
Hardin-Simmons University


In this impressive work, Evelyn Barker provides the reader with a glimpse into the life and work of one of Texas' premier photographers, Polly Smith (1907-1980). Sixty full-page images are included in the work. The dust jacket image of Pistol Hill, located just outside Kilgore, is such a gem that alone is reason to acquire this work for your library.

Before this publication, images of Polly Smith, the "Texas Centennial Exposition Photographer," were documented in permanent wall displays within the North and East Texas rooms at the Hall of State in Dallas and in the Steck Company's 1936 publication, This is Texas: A Photographic Tour of the Greatest State (1936).

Born in Ruston, Louisiana, Frances Sutah Smith (Polly Smith) moved frequently until her family arrived in Austin in 1921. She became fascinated with photography while attending Austin High School. Following a brief stay at the University of Texas, Smith moved to New York and studied photography at the Clarence H. White School. Upon returning to Texas, she began work as a professional photographer.

J. Frank Dobie was probably responsible for recommending Polly to the Texas Central Centennial Exposition. Her assignment, beginning in October 1935, was to "supply the...Exposition with photographs, 8 x 10 glossy, of subjects, they select and/or subjects of my own creation."
Polly’s images for the Centennial focused on agriculture, oil, ranching, timber, historic sites, and architecture. These photographs, taken with a 5 x 7 Home Portrait Graflex camera, were used heavily in Centennial promotional materials as well as trade magazines.

Following the Centennial Exposition, Smith freelanced in Houston before working for the Dallas Aviation School, Falstaff Brewing, the Matador Ranch, Delta Airlines, and American Airlines. She left photography in 1948 and moved to California with her family. Polly Smith died in Auburn, California, with no regrets. Before her death, she was quoted, “you know I’ve been happy all my life.”

This book should prove popular with readers who are interested in Texas photography and art.

John Crain
Dallas, Texas


Words are powerful and capable of imaginative description of people, places, events, and moods, as well as a sweeping array of other subjects; however, words as descriptors can be overshadowed by skillfully crafted photographs such as those made by Russell Lee.

Lee is most often recognized for the body of work he did as a Farm Security Administration photographer from 1936 to 1942; but he was much more than that, as is clearly demonstrated in Russell Lee Photographs. The book contains over 140 images from the Russell Lee Photograph Collection at the Center for American History in Austin, Texas.

The context for the images, 101 of which have never appeared in book print, is set in the Foreword by John Szarkowski, one of America’s leading photography curators and critics and a former director of the Museum of Modern Art. The introduction is by Lee’s friend and colleague, J.B. Colson, professor emeritus at the University of Texas, Austin. Images were selected and arranged by Linda Peterson, head of Photographic and Digital Archives at the Center for American History, into groups: Lee’s early works from New York and Woodstock; Spanish-speaking people of Texas; the physically and mentally impaired; political campaigns; commercial work; and scenes of life in small towns.
Anyone who has tried to manage flash photography or darkroom machinations will certainly recognize in Lee a master craftsman. However, it is not his technical skill alone which set him apart from most camera owners but his ability to recognize the significance in ordinary scenes and to capture them unobtrusively which makes his work extraordinary.

Lee documented priceless vignettes of poverty and plenty, service and servitude, inaction and interaction, people at work and people at play. Most of the images, including many from Texas, are from Lee’s post-FSA work; hence, the book contains no images of life in East Texas – to see the work he did in East Texas, you will have to look into his FSA work. Some images are from Lee’s pre-FSA work, and they provide insight into why Roy Stryker hired him as an FSA photographer.

R.G. Dean
Nacogdoches, Texas


Much like any war, the conflict in Vietnam generated its share of books about America’s involvement. Many are political evaluations of the fight to implement America’s policy of “Containment” to stop the spread of communism in a country on the other side of the globe. Written by “experts,” there seems to be more opinions of what went wrong, or right, than stars in the sky.

Others works are more personal, more revealing. They are, arguably, the best kind, first-hand accounts of life in the jungles and rice paddies of that Southeast Asian country, penned both by enlisted men and officers, common soldiers with no axe to grind, no political agenda, nothing to prove. Michael Lee Lanning’s *The Only War We Had: A Platoon Leader’s Journal of Vietnam*, is one such book, but Lanning fails to generate much emotion with his version of that war.

The first of a proposed trilogy covering the Vietnam War, *The Only War We Had* is based upon the personal journal Lanning kept while serving as a small combat unit leader. Originally published in 1987, this reprint from 2007 covers the period from April through October 1969. The format lists journal entries, after which Lanning elaborates, more than ten years later, on the day’s events. Perhaps it is the distance of intervening years, or
fading memory, but the effort lacks passion. In addition, memory blurs over time, especially regarding minute details. It may be argued that one never forgets important events in one’s life, but despite the descriptions of combat, there is detachment and a lack of “flow.” The result is a disjointed and artificial feeling to the whole.

Although an autobiography, entries beginning “I” leave the reader with the feeling that the focus and real star of the story is Lanning. It is a story of one man’s involvement in the Vietnam War, but there are better such books. Philip Caputo’s A Rumor of War, Ron Kovic’s Born on the Fourth of July, and others do a better job of conveying what it was like to live, day-to-day in what for many Americans was the hell of Vietnam.

It may be true, in Lanning’s words, “It was popular among many who fought to say that Vietnam ‘wasn’t much of a war, but it was the only war we had.’ I can only add that it was enough of a war for me,” but that saying evokes a “make-do” attitude, and The Only War We Had inspires one to look elsewhere for the “Vietnam experience.”

Dennis Bradford
Nacogdoches, Texas


Travel and the metaphor of the journey is basic to the earliest literature, tales, and stories of this or any other place on earth. Editor Kenneth L. Untiedt hits his stride in this volume with an excellent title that encompasses what the book is about, including fact and folklore – past, present, and future.

Untiedt notes that travel is affected by many things – economics, customs, personal beliefs. Texans, from the earliest times, seem to have wanderlust and there was and is plenty of space still to wander in, provided you can afford the gas. Untiedt continues, “Folklore itself travels, and changes as it does.” ... “Travel also causes us to cross barriers, invade territory.”

Sections entitled “Folk Travel in Texas” and “Back in the Day” deal with the past and make use of exemplary papers and/or articles new and old. Roads, bridges, wagon trains, farms and ranches, and literal journeys to and from places, language, and food are covered. “The Modern Era” is devoted to tales of railroads and highways and cars, and marks most clear-
ly the idea that life is a journey. “Still Movin’ On” includes airplanes, drag racers, Route 66, and modern thoughts. And with the price of gas, travel gives us pause and some of us start to re-explore the places close to home – never a bad idea. Scattered throughout are photos, illustrations, song lyrics, tales, stories, and reminiscences, but the richest treasures of all deal with visiting kinfolks – finding home again.

Joyce Gibson Roach
Keller, Texas


Reading through Don Collins’ Traces of Forgotten Places, a collection of drawings and brief reminiscences of travels throughout Texas in the past forty years or more, feels a bit like taking a Sunday drive in the countryside with a favorite uncle. That assumes the favorite uncle has artistic talent and can produce beautiful sketches of old houses, barns, railroad depots, gins, general stores, courthouses, and other historic buildings. An introduction by historian T. Lindsay Baker – who has spent years wandering in out-of-the-way locations – sets the tone for the reader’s armchair tour of mostly rural Texas sites, illustrated by outstanding drawings that originally graced the popular annual calendars printed by the Miller Blueprint Company of Austin. Each drawing is accompanied by a reminiscence by Collins, some relating his feelings about the subject, some explaining his reasons for choosing a particular scene to sketch, and some justifying his use of composite images, such as combining a drawing of a 1920s Ferguson tractor from Dime Box with one of an old house in Manor (pp. 28-29), or inserting two old pickup trucks from Oklahoma into a sketch of a tumble-down barn near La Grange (pp. 34-35), in what he calls “artist’s license.”

As a compilation of favorite images and artist notes, the book serves as a nice tour of interesting places. Collins’ skill in drawing intricate details provides a valuable record of a slice of Texas architectural history. That record would be strengthened with a bit more information and historical research. Only a handful of the images are dated, leaving the reader wondering when most of the images were captured. The issue of location also raises questions, and the reader is left to wonder if the sites are described vaguely on purpose to prevent people from trampling through private
property to see them, or if Collins simply did not keep accurate records regarding where he found many of the subjects. Similarly, had the author made some simple inquiries, the reader would know more about the history and, in some cases, eventual restoration of some of the buildings. Such statements as “I wish I knew more about it” when the accompanying drawing depicts a state historical marker (p. 146); “This little house is of no architectural significance” (p. 44); and again, “This is a house of absolutely no architectural significance” (p. 53), reveal a lack of understanding of basic historical research and a puzzling under appreciation for vernacular architecture, which is ironic, given the choice of subjects included in the book.

Overall, the images are beautifully rendered and the commentary is folksy and personal. In a number of cases, Collins poignantly relates cases of serendipitous timing in which he captured a bucolic rural scene shortly before the buildings depicted were destroyed by fire or demolished by landowners. It is a sad commentary on the state of preservation in many rural areas, but thankfully the drawings at least provide a record of what once existed.

Cynthia J. Beeman
Austin, Texas