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## Book Notes

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### *Book Notes Fall 2012*

BY ARCHIE P. McDONALD

This column takes notes of publications for various reasons, and a more complete book review section may be found elsewhere in the *Journal*. Contents here reflect highly personal reactions to each item included.

A case in point is not a new book; it is a volume for which I successfully bid in the silent auction at the Association's Fall meeting in 2011 titled *Times To Remember*, by Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy (Doubleday & Company, Garden City, New York, 1974, \$6). Likely the book cost little more than that in 1974, but I am reporting my bid cost, a bargain in either era. Let me start by admitting that I have tried to read and collect everything I could about JFK and I was surprised to learn I had missed this one. *Times to Remember* is Mrs. Kennedy's autobiography and *homage* to her father (John F. "Honey Fitz" Fitzgerald), husband (Joseph P. Kennedy), and remarkable lives of her nine children (including President John F. Kennedy and Senators Robert F. Kennedy and Edward Moore "Ted" Kennedy), and her twenty-eight grandchildren. *Times* advocates education, public service, acceptance of sacrifice, and devotion to faith. And it favors everything Irish. Not a bad combination. Sometimes my democratic (small "d"—some folks say I am Cap D, too, but I'm non-partisan here) nature rebelled at the nearly unconscious display of wealth—references to "the help," for example—but hey, you can't help being rich if you are rich. At least the Kennedys really did know the meaning of *noblesse oblige*.

A much different work is *Gangster Tour Of Texas* (Texas A&M University Press, 4354 TAMU, College Station, TX 77843-4345, \$29.95), by T. Lindsay Baker. Lindsay takes the low road on Texas' sordid past, particularly from 1930 to 1950. Sixteen chapters chronicle the escapades of such colorful, if criminal, Texans as Bonnie Parker/Clyde Barrow, Becky Rogers, the Santa Claus Robbers, the murderer of Frank Nand Singh, and even Dr. John Brinkley (goat glan specialist), and Bascom Giles (former Texas veterans land commissioner who took the fall in a scarlet scandal in the

1950s). More, Lindsay takes you to the crime scenes—or at least gives you directions on how to reach them and tells you what you will find. Coverage encompasses all of Texas, but a map indicates greater criminal activity in North Texas and along what became the I-35 corridor. The narrative is reminiscent of *True Crime Magazine* style, never Joe Friday, “just the facts” stuff. The Association’s symposium on Bonnie and Clyde, based on Jeff Guinn’s biography of that dynamic duo titled *Go Down Together* in 2009 convinced me there is a considerable audience for gangsters, Texas style.

T. Lindsay has been an active fellow, although the work that produced *Blades In The Sky: Windmilling through the Eyes of B.H. “Tex” Burdick* (Texas Tech University Press, Box 41037, Lubbock, TX 79409-1037, \$20), with foreword by Elmer Kelton, occurred before 1992, the original publication date of a study that established Lindsay as our leading historian of wind mills. Next came lighthouses and other material culture that attracted his attention. Illustrations abound, as is the case with Lindsay’s books. Folks who remember these essential tools that once watered Texas from the force of the wind will enjoy this visit to the past.

Although intended for youngsters about middle school age, Pamela Riney-Kehreberg’s *Always Plenty To Do: Growing Up On A Farm In The Long Ago* (Texas Tech University Press, Box 41037, Lubbock, TX 79409-1037, \$21.95), could benefit some oldsters by reminding us of the way things were. The author focuses on the activities and amenities of rural youths on America’s central plains at the beginning of the twentieth century, but really, life remained pretty much the same when I was a boy growing up in the 1940s along Texas’ Gulf Coast with many rural experiences. Chapters cover roles of farm children through what would have been high school years under such categories as “Living On A Farm” (making food, clothes, homes, and medicine from “scratch”); “Working on A Farm” (weeding, milking, and threshing); “Going To School” (reading, reciting, and spelling bees); and “Playing On A Farm” (children making fun for themselves)—to which I add—without money, technology, or electronics. Among other things, readers can learn how to cut an apple in half without penetrating the skin except in one tiny place. I’m going to try this when I get home.

Let’s get cooking now with Kaleta Doolin, who includes plenty of recipes in *Frito Pie: Stories, Recipes and More* (Texas A&M University Press, 4354 TAMU, College Station, TX 77843-4345, \$22). All feature the Fri-

to as a major ingredient, developed as a marketing strategy to sell more product by company founder Charles Elmer Doolin with brother Earl and their parents as partners. Fry cook Gustavo Olguin developed (invented?) the Frito, a combination of masa and salt fried in corn oil, then sold the concept, a hand-operated ricer, and nineteen accounts to the Doolins in 1932. When Doolin died in 1959, the company operated coast-to-coast and had over 3,500 employees. Two years later Frito merged with The Lay Company of Atlanta, Georgia, a potato chip producer, and their combination became part of PepsiCo in 1965. So much for business development. Doolin's book is mostly a biography of a hardheaded business dreamer, the family that developed a major American enterprise, and a product that became a cultural phenomenon. And there is irony: the king of snack food ate vegetarian and pursued health and even cures for ill-health though a natural, even raw food, diet. Best of all is the abundance of illustrations of Fritos packaging and advertising—and the recipes. You must give a try to the Frito fruitcake.

*The Big Thicket Guidebook: Exploring the Backroads and History of Southeast Texas*, by Lorraine G. Bonney, edited and with contributions by Maxine Johnson and Pete A.Y. Gunter (University of North Texas Press, 1155 Union Circle #311336, Denton, TX 76203-5017, \$29.95), brings together the considerable skills, talents, and wisdom about the Thicket of three experts. I don't know Bonney, but the other two are old friends whom I know are experts on this subject. Chapters on Eastern Texas history, generally, and of such specific towns as Jasper, Kountz, Saratoga, and Woodville, are followed by directions for two score or more tours of Thicket areas. This is a big book, so don't expect to read it in one sitting. Instead, plan on keeping it handy for reference and direction as you wander the back roads of southeast Texas.

*Going Back To Galveston: Nature, Funk, & Fantasy in a Favorite Place*, by Jimmie Killingsworth with photos by Geoff Winningham (Texas A&M University Press, 4354 TAMU, College Station, TX 77843-4354, \$24.95), testifies once again that there is no end to our fascination with Galveston. While growing up in Beaumont we called it "going to the beach," and while this could have been done more conveniently by visiting McFaddin beach, located just west of Port Arthur, usually the "going" meant traveling on down Bolivar Peninsula and eventually a ferry ride to "the island" to see

the porpoise play or just to cruise the seawall. Killingsworth and Winningham have that same fascination and it shows in their words and pictures of this Texas playground. I especially liked Killingsworth's statement that Galveston had never become his habitat but it had become a habit. Most of us share that "habit."

Jim Kimmel's *Exploring the Brazos River From Beginning To End* (Texas A&M University Press, 4354 TAMU, College Station, TX 77843-4354, \$24.95) means we never have to say goodbye to a river after all. Kimmel follows the mighty and meandering Brazos from its sources in West Texas as it twists to the Gulf of Mexico, taking fantastic photographs along the way. The photos show the river, what is in it, and what it flows by. The three-column format is discouraging to the reader who likes to turn a page when reaching the end of a column, but the photos are worth the extra effort.

*Pioneer Jewish Texans*, by Natalie Ornish (Texas A&M University Press, 4354 TAMU, College Station, TX 77843-4354, \$30), foreword by Sara Alpern, first appear in 1989 and is available again in a special Texas A&M University Press Edition. Ornish approaches her topic both chronologically and topically, with chapters on "Adventurers," "Soldiers (Texas independence)," "Colonizers," "Statesmen," "Ranchers," "Wildcatters," "Humanitarians," "Merchants," "Educators," "Artists," "Doctors and other Healers," and "Lawyers." Because of a previous interest, I was pleased to see my friend Adolphus Sterne mentioned twenty-eight times. Sometimes the old books are the most fun to see again.

*Sustaining Southern Identity: Douglas Southall Freeman and Memory in the Modern South* (LSU Press, 3990 West Lakeshore, Baton Rouge, LA 70808, \$42.50), by Keith D. Dickson, is at once a biography of Freeman and an analysis of Freeman's role in defining the South's post-Civil War justification of its Confederate experience. When I entered graduate school at the old Rice Institute in 1958, Freeman, then dead only five years, remained the dean—one might even say deity—of "southern" historians. Here, "southern" means Civil War, as if they were the same. And that was so because, according to Dickson, Freeman's *R.E. Lee* and *Lee's Lieutenants* had made it so. Freeman's work justified and glorified the Confederate experience, easing an earlier national judgment of equating secession and treason and incorporating Confederate defense of home state's rights into

the national assessment of its own purpose and righteousness. Then, according to Dickson, WWII and civil rights changed the nation's evaluation of the South and its memory-justified image of itself—but not Freeman, who continued as a segregationist and advocate of status quo and opposed to big government and anything left of center. Since 1958, I have altered many attitudes of such things; as an example, when I say “our side,” I no longer mean the same one. Thoughtful read; do so when you have time to think about what Keith Dickson has written.

Try *Daisy Petals and Mushroom Clouds: LBJ, Barry Goldwater, and the Ad That Changed American Politics*, by Robert Mann (LSU Press, 3990 West Lakeshore Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70808, \$22.50), if you are old enough, for nostalgia. The subject is the presidential election in 1964 with the focus on one brief television spot prepared by the advertising firm DDB, or its owners Ned Doyle, Maxwell Dane, and especially William Bernbach, the creative soul who conceived the spot. It featured a young girl plucking petals from a flower (a daffodil, not a daisy as it is so often remembered), and counting them 1...2...3 as she does so. Then the audience hears a voice counting 3...2...1 in a missile launch sequence and the reflection of a nuclear explosion fills the girl's eye. Then a voice says, “Vote for President Johnson on November third. The stakes are too high for you to stay home.” Never mentioned Goldwater; didn't have to do so. Goldwater had advertised his willingness to use nuclear weapons so well in books and speeches that everyone understood immediately. Johnson's campaign ran the spot only once, but Goldwater and his defenders gave its message “legs” by complaining so long that it was unfair. Unfair? No. The spot called attention to a legitimate issue in the campaign, and Mann says it fundamentally changed national politics to the negativism that persists and grows each year. It was at least a symptom of that virulent malady.

*Glider Infantryman: Behind Enemy Lines in World War II*, by Don Rich and Kevin Brooks (Texas A&M University Press, 4354 TAMU, College Station, TX 77843-4354, \$35), provides the fascinating tale of an American boy cast into the toughest fighting in the European Theatre during World War II. Although Rich's story is told in the first person, Brooks apparently wrote the text based on conversations with him, with additional information provided by archives and Army records. Rich grew up in rural Iowa and took much of that simple lifestyle with him into the 101st Airborne

Division. He served in the unit's glider division, as opposed to paratrooper division—which I did not know existed until reading his story. I also learned that the Army fined soldiers for infractions. I knew some were busted in rank or served stints in the guardhouse, but monetary fines—say \$72 for fraternization with Germany females—is new to me. Also new was the chaos Rich/Brooks describe among Army personnel when combat ceased. Rich served in every campaign from Normandy to Bastogne to Berchtesgaden and came out an experienced private because his company commander, Captain H.R. Evans, repeatedly turned down recommendations for his promotion to sergeant so his “experience” could help train replacements in the ranks. Rich came home at war's end, grateful to be there, to lead an ordinary life after extraordinary wartime experiences. The writing is choppy but the story is compelling.

Finally, reading *Texas, My Texas: Musings of the Rambling Boy*, by Lonny Taylor (TCU Press, Box 298300, Fort Worth, TX 76129, \$22.95), is like visiting with an old friend. We met when Lonny worked as curator at Miss Ima Hogg's and the University of Texas' farm restoration at Round Top, kept in touch when Lonny moved to Dallas and then on to the Smithsonian in Washington, although visits came “fewer and far between,” surely a Texas-ism all will understand. Since, Lonny has retired and returned to live in Fort Davis. *Texas, My Texas* is a compilation of fifty-three of Lonny's columns published in Alpine's *Desert-Mountain Times*, and since that paper closed, in Marfa's *Big Bend Sentinel*. As one would expect, “Texas, Lonny's Texas” contains not one article on East Texas; about as close as we come is an account of Noah Smithwick's activities in colonial San Felipe. No matter, this is “Texas, Our Texas,” and we East Texans can enjoy these accounts of activities of cowboys, ranches, Germans in central Texas, and Lonny's multifaceted and fascinating family. The writing is superb, the stories interesting, and the good, old-time story telling brings back memories. On top of that, I learned things on subjects about which I thought I knew a great deal already.