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## Book Reviews

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### *Book Reviews*

*The Governor's Hounds: The Texas State Police, 1870-1873* by Barry A. Crouch & Donaly E. Brice. (University of Texas Press, P.O. Box 7819, Austin, Texas 78713-7819). 2011. Contents. Acknowledgments. Introduction. Essay on Sources. Appendix. Index. Pp. xiv + 312. 10 photographs, 3 maps. \$60.00. Hardcover.

This long-awaited study of the Texas State Police was delayed for years due to the untimely death of Dr. Crouch who, although he had made significant headway in the research and writing, left much undone for his co-author Donaly E. Brice to complete. Fortunately Mr. Brice continued the work and now -- for the first time -- there is a solid and comprehensive study of the constabulary that operated between the end of the Federal occupation of Texas and the creation of the Frontier Battalion. Both the State Police and the Texas Rangers worked for the common good of reducing lawlessness and the suppression of crime, so with the same purposes why did the former exist for only three years while the latter has continued to exist, although under different names, as a highly efficient and popular state police force? This study in part answers that question.

For decades most historians have looked at Governor E.J. Davis' State Police force as an inefficient political tool of the administration. The authors begin their study by analyzing why the force received such denigration. Three major themes characterized the literature: many members of the force were desperadoes and criminals; the purpose was to destroy democracy by interfering with elections and encourage the legal murder of enemies by the police; a large number of the police were black Americans. Such efforts to prove these themes did not provide an accurate portrayal of the force, but the authors have studied in depth the contemporary documents recording its history. In addition contemporary newspapers—both favoring the administration and castigating the administration—were reviewed, as well as various important secondary sources.

Previous works have incorrectly described how Governor Davis declared martial law in numerous counties. In fact there were only four: Hill, Walker, Limestone and Freestone. In each case sufficient evidence is provided that the declaration was indeed an effort to protect lives and property, not levy undue taxes on the populace of those counties or impose a

tyrannical regime on anti-Unionists.

The force was a unique organization, which enables one to consider Davis a visionary in an era of intense prejudice. In contrast to the military and all other bodies of constabulary, this organization was composed of whites, blacks and browns who worked together. Skin color obviously did not enter into the selection of candidates for policemen, although the racial equality factor only existed at the level of the privates.

The study is a comprehensive history of the State Police; it examines the reasons why Governor Davis proposed its creation; why he chose James Davidson as his adjutant general, why it became an unpopular force, and how it eventually ended. One of the authors' intentions was to present a "necessary correction of past accounts." They have attained their objective, but that does not mean that there is no room for further research. Certain questions yet remain to be fully explored.

As the state's top official Governor Davis had to protect the health of Texans. In April 1871 it was necessary to quarantine Brazos Santiago, Cameron County, but Davis appointed a person in charge who had no medical credentials. There were certainly highly regarded doctors in the state, but why did this obvious blunder take place? Was it strictly a political move? The so-called "Rio Grande Expedition" led by Captain McNelly, which resulted in no action and accomplished nothing, proved to be a waste of time and money; this was yet another decision of questionable worth. Was it to a political move to give ranchers a placebo of security against border raiding parties? Of the four initial police captains, E.M. Alexander, J.J. Helm, L.H. McNelly and M.P. Hunnicutt, two of them proved to be an embarrassment to the administration. Only McNelly proved to be an effective officer, and he had fought for the Confederacy, so it remains a surprise why Davis chose him as a captain.

How did the governor make such poor decisions in selecting men who were placed in positions of power and trust? The authors gloss over these aspects of the State Police without a thorough discussion. Perhaps the most embarrassing decision was selecting James Davidson as Adjutant General and Chief of Police. In 1872 he embezzled thousands from the state treasury and fled the country. Had there been no hints at Davidson's character which Governor Davis simply ignored? The man who held such a high office absconded with sufficient "travel money" to create a new life for himself in New Zealand where he lived out his days. A thorough discussion of these decisions by Governor Davis would have greatly enhanced this

study. These are certainly subjects for a historian to thoroughly discuss in a future monograph. Such would become a solid companion piece to *The Governor's Hounds*.

Chuck Parsons  
Luling, TX

*Turmoil on the Rio Grande, The Territorial History of the Mesilla Valley, 1846 - 1865* by William S. Kiser. (Texas A & M University Press, College Station). 2011. Contents. Illustrations. Maps. Acknowledgments. Introduction. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pg. 284. \$35.00 Cloth.

Upon receipt of this work, my first thoughts were "interesting topic." Indeed it is. Looking at the front cover, I found that William "Billy" Kiser would present the history of the Mesilla Valley, site of Las Cruces, home of New Mexico State University, from the time that Stephen Watts Kearney arrived in Santa Fe, abandoned by the Mexican governor, to the close of the Civil War. He does just that, and quite well. Looking at the back cover, I found that Mr. Kiser was a first year graduate student at the University of Arizona as this book went to press. It is my understanding Mr. Kiser began researching the topic while an undergraduate at New Mexico State and had the manuscript ready before he entered graduate school at Arizona—quite an accomplishment in today's academic world.

When most Texans think of New Mexico, most think of Santa Fe and Taos, or perhaps Albuquerque and Los Alamos, with good reason. Most histories of antebellum New Mexico focus on those two cities, featuring names like Kearney, Carson and Bent. It was where the action was. Twentieth Century histories focus on Albuquerque and Los Alamos for many of the same reasons. The Mesilla Valley is not an area that comes to mind for most of us, even those who grew up in the state. It frequently gets lost in the more widely known history of El Paso at the southern end of the valley. Mr. Kiser's book goes a long way towards changing that.

After the Introduction, the book is divided into ten chapters dealing with topics such as "Doniphan at Brazito," "The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo," "The International Boundary Surveys," "Enter James Gadsden," "Fort Fillmore and the Apaches," "Separatist Movements in Mesilla," "Mesilla: Capital of the Arizona Territory," "The Confederate Invasion," "The Confederate Territory of Arizona," and "Martial Law in the Mesilla Val-

ley,” and finally a brief Conclusion. Within these the author focuses on the questions of the international boundary between the United States and Mexico and the history of the secession movement in southern New Mexico, including the establishment and collapse of the Confederate Territory of Arizona. Using both secondary and primary sources, the author does a good job of presenting a story that is not that well known. Although I found the chapters dealing with American acquisition of the territory familiar, the chapter dealing with defining the international boundary and the events leading up to the Gadsden Purchase very informative.

Our own Charles Grear has addressed the question of why Texans fought in New Mexico.<sup>1</sup> And while this book doesn't necessarily answer the question of why Anglo southern New Mexicans wanted to become part of the Confederacy, it makes a good companion piece to the works on the western campaign, shedding some light on why, at least in southern New Mexico, there was little opposition to the occupation by the Confederacy.

When I finished the book, I put it down, and truthfully was disappointed that the author had not pressed on. And that is the mark of a good book. I left it wanting more. Mr. Kiser has a bright future ahead of him if this work is any indication.

George M. Cooper  
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<sup>1</sup>Grear, Charles D. “The Impact of Local Attachments, Why Texans Fought in New Mexico During the Civil War,” *New Mexico Historical Review*, Vol. 85 (Fall, 2010,) pp. 409 – 429.

*Lincoln and the Border States, Preserving the Union* by William C. Harris. (University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, KS, 660450. 2011. Contents. Illustrations. Acknowledgments. Introduction. Notes. Index. Pg. 397. Hardcover. \$34.95.

If the Civil War was ultimately a conflict over slavery, then it is incongruous that four of the slave states – Missouri, Kentucky, Maryland, and Delaware – remained loyal to the Union. In *Lincoln and the Border States: Preserving the Union*, William C. Harris argues that this was more than a historical fluke. According to Harris, President Abraham Lincoln recognized from the war's start the border states' economic, strategic, and sym-

bolic importance and devoted considerable time and energy to keeping them in the Union fold. In doing so, Lincoln not only helped reunite the country, but also advanced the cause of emancipation. To Harris, Lincoln's efforts in the border states shed light on both his leadership skills and on the complicated, overlapping, and dynamic relationships among federal, state, civil, and military officials in the region.

Harris rightly gives Lincoln the leading role in the border states drama without denigrating the important contributions made by governors, federal and state legislators, newspaper editors, military officers, and cabinet members in influencing public opinion and formulating Union policy. Lincoln may have been the star, but Harris emphasizes that he was bound by political, constitutional, and legal constraints. Moreover, he was well aware of these limitations and repeatedly sought to maintain his freedom of action without acting in a completely arbitrary manner that would alienate the border state populations whose support he needed to prosecute the war. This was especially true with regard to emancipation. Although Lincoln saw slavery as morally wrong and longed for its end, he knew he could not resort to the same unilateral tactics in the border states that he did toward those states that had seceded from the union. In particular, applying the Emancipation Proclamation to the border states would violate the constitutional protections slavery enjoyed there and antagonize conservative unionists who saw the conflict primarily as one to reunite the country. On the other hand, Lincoln's conscience, abolitionist pressure, military necessity, and his mistaken belief that border state emancipation would weaken and undermine the Confederacy dissuaded him from steering clear of the issue altogether. As a result, Lincoln tried repeatedly and with mixed success throughout the war to persuade the border states to emancipate their slaves on their own accord. Harris argues that Lincoln's border state Whig background enabled him to understand the issues involved and calibrate his policies in such a way as to achieve his goals.

*Lincoln and the Border States* is pure political history, with all the strengths and weaknesses such an approach entails. Sorting through and detailing the innumerable factions, their changing agendas and leadership, and their various machinations in each border state sometimes makes for a complicated story, but one necessary to explain the obstacles Lincoln had to overcome. Fortunately, Harris organizes his chapters logically and clearly, and provides plenty of evidence to support his thesis. He does not, however, include a conclusion to sum up, reiterate, and expand upon his

thesis for the reader. Harris' biggest contribution to Civil War historiography, though, is his recognition that the battle for the border states did not end after Union troops cleared the region of regular Confederate forces or even with the Emancipation Proclamation's promulgation, but was instead a prolonged effort that lasted the entire conflict. As such, Harris presents a needed and comprehensive look at the political struggle for this vital region.

Steve Taaffe

Stephen F. Austin State University

*Captain J.A. Brooks, Texas Ranger* by Paul N. Spellman. (University of North Texas Press, 1155 Union Circle #311336, Denton, TX 76203-5017), 2007. Contents. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. Index. P. 288. \$24.95.

Spellman's portrayal of Captain J.A. Brooks was quite an eye opener for me. He takes the reader through Brook's life to give an accurate and informative picture of this remarkable and sometimes controversial man who had the distinction of serving during a very transformative and difficult time in the rich history of the Texas Rangers.

In his early life Brooks probably had no ambition to become a Texas Ranger; he seemed quite content as a young man to carve out a career as a successful rancher. He worked at various jobs that seemed to mold him as a man whose word was good and gave a day's work for a day's pay.

Early on Spellman introduces the reader to Brooks' lifetime love affair with bourbon whiskey; I realized very early in the work that this "relationship" with whiskey shaped much of his later life. But Brooks seemed to be able to function very effectively under the influence, and thus his alcohol problem never seemed to hinder him. I was also able to better understand the problems the Rangers faced in that era, a time in which their role within Texas' law enforcement apparatus greatly began to change. The Rangers went from a primarily protection force against the Indian threat to becoming a criminal enforcement and investigative component. Rangers enforced laws designed to stop fence cutting, cattle and horse thefts, and feuds over land and power, as well as Texas' peculiar anti-prize fighting statutes. They oversaw elections, and kept the peace between union and anti-union factions—usually to the detriment of any potential labor

organizer.

The state legislature continually had the Rangers in their sights during the period of Brooks' tenure. Lawmakers reduced their ranks, and seemed to take great delight in limiting Ranger powers. Brooks survived such purges, probably due to his strong will and a stubborn streak. He was accurate and precise in his written reports while remaining very brief. Spellman points out that Brooks excelled in one of the skills most highly sought after in the Rangers; he was one of the most accurate shots in any Company, a skill he retained even after a devastating injury left him with little use in one of his hands.

Brooks' dedication to the Rangers surely exceeded his devotion to family. Spellman recounts his long periods of absence from his family, and portrays a man with little concern or a need for family time. He maintained a good relationship with his son, but had a strained bond with his daughter. Spellman offers very little attention to Brooks' wife, perhaps an actual reflection of their marriage.

Spellman's research is very evident in this work. His compilation of a large number of names throughout the book tended to be a distraction for me by the sheer weight of volume, although I am sure the use of the names added meaning to the story and were important. Spellman covers Brooks' life in a very complete fashion.

After a career as a Ranger, Brooks went on to be a county judge, as well as serve in the state legislature, where he introduced and secured passage of a bill that created a new county. The new county honored Brooks through naming the county after him, and placed the county seat at Falfurrias. Brooks went on to serve as county judge of the new county before his retirement five years before his death. He also owned some ranch land in the area, but his career was devoted to public service.

Spellman's work is valuable, and has opened my eyes to a remarkable man. The book will certainly enhance the reader's understanding of these crucial years for the Texas Rangers.

Winston B. Sosebee  
Midland, TX

*Militant Citizenship: Rhetorical Strategies of the National Woman's Party, 1913-1920* by Belinda A. Stillion Southard. (Texas A&M University Press, College Station), 2011. Contents. Acknowledgments. Introduc-

tion. Afterword. List of Abbreviations. Notes. Bibliography. Index. P. 303. \$45.00, Hardcover.

From its inception in early 1913 until the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920 for women's suffrage, the National Woman's Party (NWP) relentlessly pursued a militant campaign to secure full citizenship rights for U.S. women. In *Militant Citizenship: Rhetorical Strategies of the National Woman's Party, 1913-1920*, Belinda A. Stillion Southard, an adjunct professor at Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon, argues that through political mimesis, a strategy of empowerment through which marginalized groups negotiate and secure power and rights, the NWP helped position the organization as a leading force in the ratification of the amendment.

Divided into five chapters, the book first offers a historical overview of women's roles, the early suffrage movement, and the Progressive Era activism of women's groups. Chapter Two introduces the use of ritual as political mimesis through the mimicking of Woodrow Wilson's first inaugural parade in an effort to agitate the president and nationalize the suffrage movement. In Chapter Three the author discusses the use of third party strategies by the NWP to position suffragists "within the spaces of electoral politics in order to threaten the election or reelection of Democratic congressmen" (p. 90).

The last part of the book addresses the final stages of the suffrage campaign from 1917 to 1919. In chapter Four Southard locates NWP strategies within the rise of Wilson's "rhetorical presidency," as he began to appeal directly to the American people for military mobilization and national unity. Specifically, the NWP parodied the president through "silent sentinels of protest" who picketed outside the White House. Further, they utilized Wilson's own wartime language, which justified U.S. entrance into World War I as a means to liberate oppressed citizens, by extending its application to include women. Finally, in Chapter Five the author links women's suffrage to Wilson's international campaign for world democracy. Before the president left for Europe to secure a "peace without victory," suffragists initiated "Watch Fires of Freedom" by burning his speeches and an effigy of Wilson to expose the hypocrisy of his rhetoric. Once Wilson endorsed votes for women, the NWP shifted its energies to Congress and then to the states for ratification. Texas, which had a NWP chapter chartered in Houston, became the ninth state to approve the Nineteenth Amendment.

*Militant Citizenship* is a well-researched, thorough account of the political and rhetorical strategies utilized by the National Women's Party to achieve women's suffrage. Originally written as a doctoral dissertation, the book reads like one as well, at times using complex and abstruse language when a direct style would be more effective. While the militant campaign of the NWP did push the suffrage campaign further down the road, it did not represent women as a whole and nor was it the only factor in final victory. Nevertheless, Southard accomplishes her purpose by showing how the NWP developed sophisticated methods of political mimesis to effect social and political change for "one-half the people." Those interested in the history of the suffrage movement in general and the NWP, the more militant wing, in particular, would benefit from reading this volume.

Mary L. Scheer  
Lamar University

*Beyond the Latino World War II Hero: The Social and Political Legacy of a Generation* edited by Maggie Rivas-Rodríguez and Emilio Zamora. (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 2009.) Contents. Forward. Acknowledgments. Introduction. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pg. 241. Hardcover, \$50.00.

For over a decade the U.S. Latino & Latina World War II Oral History Project at the University of Texas at Austin has generated a wealth of interviews about the wartime experiences of Mexican American veterans and their families. At a time when Latinos throughout the nation have loudly protested their lack of inclusion in public recollections of World War II, this project at the University of Texas has been a corrective force. As of 2009, the publication date of this book, the U.S. Latino & Latina World War II Oral History Project had conducted over 600 interviews, held three major conferences, and continues to expand its production of invaluable data. *Beyond the Latino World War II Hero: The Social and Political Legacy of a Generation* edited by Maggie Rivas-Rodríguez, the founder and project director, and Emilio Zamora, both of the University of Texas, is the second published collection from this endeavor. And it is outstanding.

In nine chapters several authors use the project's oral interviews to examine the wartime experience of Mexican Americans in ways that go

beyond traditional military history approaches and over topics mostly ignored by previous scholars. Richard Griswold Del Castillo analyzes how the war shaped for many Mexican American veterans a "double consciousness" of having sacrificing for one's country while still suffering discrimination (pg. 20). Rivas-Rodríguez offers a rich cultural investigation of Spanish language radio among Mexican American servicemen and their families, while Silvia Álvarez Curbelo discusses the fascinating experiences of Puerto Rican servicemen. Rea Ann Trotter looks at spirituality for Latino soldiers and their families and contributes an outstanding discussion of how Mexican American mothers often made *mandas* and *promesas*—forms of penance involving intense prayer at specific holy sites—to deliver their sons safely from battle (pg. 134). Brenda Sendejo constructs a stimulating cross-generational study of mothers, daughters, and the growth of feminist principles out of wartime experiences.

The hot-button issue of immigration is the subject of two essays in *Beyond the Latino World War II Hero*. Dionicio Valdés analyzes migrant laborers' role in the war as well as how they represented a crucial component of hemispheric diplomacy. Though desperately needed in the United States, they were still treated as disposable racial "others." One interviewee remarked that the work hours of German prisoners-of-war on a nearby farm were better protected than that of his migrant family working nearby sugar beet fields. Emilio Zamora crafts a fascinating account of how the U.S. armed forces included over 15,000 volunteer and drafted Mexican nationals. This phenomenon is a forgotten aspect of World War II that, Zamora claims, demonstrates Mexican nationals' "support of the Allied cause and the desire to obtain U.S. citizenship." He also notes their consistent opposition to racial discrimination while in the service (pg. 107).

Two essays that evocatively address the war's effect on families are Joanne Rao Sánchez's examination of women during the war and Ricardo Ainslie and Daphny Domínguez's study of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). While several essays directly incorporate women's experiences, the Sánchez essay notably traces how the wartime experiences of over twenty Latinas exerted a very positive influence in their lives. The Ainslie and Domínguez essay is a brief, but haunting, exploration of the mental toll of war on Latino servicemen and how they and their families coped. The stories of soldiers' lifelong experience with night terrors, acute anxiety, domestic violence, substance abuse, and what these things did to their loved ones is a tragic but important contribution to the story of war. The higher

incidents of PTSD among minority soldiers and especially Latinos of this period, who also endured various acts of discrimination large and small, marks this story of sacrifice as all the more important to remember. And this is exactly what Maggie Rivas-Rodríguez and Emilio Zamora's *Beyond the Latino World War II Hero: The Social and Political Legacy of a Generation* does. The sacrifices of these everyday heroes are honored through this massive, invaluable project and in this readable, engaging collection.

Carlos Kevin Blanton  
Texas A&M University

*Prairie Fire, A Great Plains History* by Julie Courtwright. University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, KS 66045. 2011. Contents. Acknowledgments. Introduction. Conclusion. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pg 25. Hardcover, \$29.95.

Fire is a neutral phenomenon, author Julie Courtwright points out. At once, it can be beneficial and destructive, attractive and scary, beautiful and awful, awe-inspiring and shocking, benign and terrible. In this engaging history, Courtwright seeks to present a balance in such contra descriptions and sketches of fire on the Great Plains, but clearly her research suggests that in the historical record negative reports predominate, are more graphic, and in the end were easier to hunt down in newspapers, letters, memoirs, books, journals, diaries, weather reports, and other available sources in both Canada and the United States.

Fire on the Plains is as old as human occupation of the nation's central heartland, perhaps older. The territory's first humans, so the author maintains, set fires, some by accident, most by design—for hunting, signaling, or military purposes. Indeed, fire on the Great Plains was and remains an essential key to preservation of the huge area's grassland environment. And, thus, here is one of the book's significant lessons: ranchers and farmers must continue the ages-long practice of burning the Plains. Prescribed burning at regular intervals in the Flint Hills of Kansas, for example, has both preserved and promoted the region's lush, tall grass prairies. By contrast, in many places on the Plains, as in western Texas, where fire use often has been curtailed, such woody species as juniper and mesquite have thrived and over the years cut rangeland carrying capacity. In other words,

a timely fire in the spring eliminates woody plants and dead stems and speeds the “green up” of Plains grasses, thus aiding wildlife herbivores and livestock.

More than any other plant species on the Great Plains, grass benefits from prairie fires. The two seem mutually dependent. Fire on the Plains moves with the wind, shifting directions as the wind turns, roaring in high winds, slowing as the wind dies, and often destroying every living thing—weeds, trees, shrubs—and sometimes non-living things—fences, barns, homes—in its path. But not the grass, although, of course, dead, brown grass stems in fact speed the fire. As the author points out, studies have shown that in grazing both bison and cattle prefer prairies that have been recently burned to areas whose grasses, having escaped fire, remain long and brown.

This is a fine book. Its lessons about fire use and fire suppression are carefully documented. Its themes of human naiveté vis-à-vis prairie fire versus human experience with such fires are skillfully drawn. Its arguments that prairie fire, much like horse-mounted Indians and huge, brown bison, serves as a symbol of the nineteenth-century Great Plains and represents something of an identifying characteristic of the region are thoughtfully presented.

The book's faults, such as they are, seem minor. The author's heavy use of mini-narratives and anecdotes and the repetitive descriptions of fire as “an awesome sight” or a “terrible” beauty become a bit tiring. Her definition of what constitutes the Texas Panhandle is far more generous than what most Texans would accept (the Spur Ranch, for example, is not in the Panhandle). And, her use of Daniel Alexrod's argument that the Llano Estacado of Texas was once forested with pine and spruce is questionable, for more recent archaeological studies suggest that former pollen counts used to support the older thesis are in error. In other words, because fire kept juniper, mesquite, pine, spruce, and other woody plants from gaining a foothold on high tableland the only “forested” areas of the Llano were along its once-mighty rivers.

Nonetheless, the story offered here is detailed, informative, and full of insight. It is largely nineteenth century environmental history. It traces how humans on the Plains fired the prairies on a regular basis for their own benefit through how humans, especially Euro-American settlers, moved to suppress fires in the nineteenth century to how humans in recent times are once again using fire to benefit Great Plains grasslands. Courtwright's

arguments for the use of prescribed burns, if often subtle, are powerful. In short, one can learn a lot from this scientific, learned, but accessible and passionately presented study.

Paul H. Carlson  
Texas Tech University, emeritus

*Those Girls, Single Women in Sixties and Seventies Popular Culture* by Katherine J. Lehman. (University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, KS 66045). 2011. Contents. Acknowledgments. Introduction. Epilogue. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pg 297. Hardcover, \$29.95.

For urban, white, single women who turned on the television or went to a movie in the 1960s and 1970s several characters represented their lives. Women such as Mary Richards in *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* and Wonder Woman seemed to acknowledge real single women's existence and possibilities for success. Using film and television scripts, advertisements, and Hollywood magazines, communications professor Katherine Lehman argues, "that the single woman was a pivotal figure in postwar popular culture who helped viewers negotiate sweeping changes in gender roles and sexual mores"(1). Hollywood walked a narrow path between the reality of single women as a consumer group and the pressure, from censorship rules and other sources, to keep single female characters de-sexualized and non-threatening to traditional gender roles.

Lehman begins with an examination of Hollywood portrayals of single women in the late 1950s and early 1960s. During this time, strict censorship rules curtailed any appearance of women's sexual licentiousness, and films, like *Where the Boys Are*, punished women's sexual transgressions with rape or assault. The plots were usually formulaic: headstrong career woman meets man and gives up her ambitions for marriage. Lehman demonstrates how changes did occur in depictions of single women; several movies, like *Pillow Talk* and *The Best of Everything* gave women alternatives to early marriage and provided the catalyst for changing single women's portrayals in Hollywood.

Single women in late 1960s film and television represented a further step away from traditional images of single females. Ann Marie in *That Girl*

put off marriage until the fifth and final season. Darker portrayals of single women, as in *Valley of the Dolls*, implied that women could become independent and successful on their own. These films and television programs also showed the threats of urban life to single white women, although they often downplayed the many pleasures of single life and the reality of racial and class tensions.

The 1970s represented still another shift in Hollywood depictions of single women. Heroines, such as Mary Richards, entered male-dominated workplaces and argued against discrimination, though those efforts were often blunted by the nature of sitcoms. Into the mid-1970s, however, producers still hesitated to give heroines full sexual liberation. The introduction of single women as superheroes and crime fighters constituted another evolution in Hollywood in the mid- to late 1970s. Television shows like *Police Woman* and *Charlie's Angels* directly challenged perceptions of women as weak.

1970s media still did not allow for fully realistic interpretations of single life. As Lehman argues, films like *Looking for Mr. Goodbar* reflected widespread fears of feminism and punished characters for pursuing sex in a masculine manner. Furthermore, as the ending of some movies showed, films reinforced the idea of women "asking for it" when attacked or raped. Through the end of the decade and reflecting the nation-wide backlash to feminism, films showed single women as desperate for sex and overly liberated, despite the fact that unmarried women continued to grow as a consumer group and wielded greater professional power. Hollywood in the 1960s and 1970s never reflected all of the complexities and realities of single life.

Lehman does a superb job of showing how urban women related to media, pulling their own meaning from Hollywood portrayals, but she ignores non-urban single women. The author does not raise the question of how a single female in the suburbs or rural America related to characters that did not mirror her own life. As a result, scholars of suburban and rural culture may find themselves disappointed by the urban-centered arguments in this work. Despite this flaw, however, there is a great deal to praise. Lehman does a very good job of weaving together what went on in- and behind-the-scenes in the making of movies and television shows as well as what was really happening in urban America. The result is an engaging and enjoyable cultural history for both lay and academic readers.

This well-documented work contributes to the growing scholarship on the changing definitions of gender in American culture.

Meredith L. May  
Texas Christian University

*The Politics of The President's Wife* by Mary Anne Borrelli. (Texas A&M University Press, College Station), 2011. Contents. Illustrations. Tables. Acknowledgements. Introduction. Conclusion. Notes. Selected Bibliography. Index. Pg. 241. \$42.95. Hardcover.

Jacqueline Kennedy once said, "The one thing I do not want to be called is First Lady. It sounds like a saddle horse." Noted far more often for her fashion statements rather than humorous commentary, Jackie was, is, and will likely remain the most referenced and recognized First Lady in the history of the United States. But her candid remark raises the question, "What is the role of the First Lady?" Never has there been a position in the United States government that holds such potential power without so much as a job description for its occupant. The Constitution never mentions the position or prescribes it any role; nevertheless, the job has changed over two centuries as presidential spouses have exhibited a range of personas—from begrudgingly playing the "ceremonial" wife (Bess Truman) to taking on more political duties and public tasks as an "activist" First Lady (Eleanor Roosevelt). Consequently, MaryAnne Borrelli's meticulously researched and thorough analysis of the ever evolving role of the First Ladyship offers readers a commendable work that effortlessly marries the study of history with the practice of political science.

Borelli examines the modern First Ladies, beginning with Lou Henry Hoover through the present presidential wife, Michelle Obama. Ironically, the aforementioned First Ladies constitute elite university trained bookends of exceptional women who have held this unelected but exceedingly public office. Hoover earned a degree in geology from Stanford University while Michelle took degrees in sociology and law from Princeton and Yale, respectively. While historical in scope, Borrelli utilizes a thematic presentation, typical for political science scholars, as the fastidious chapters detail a wide array of women based on their enthusiastic or incredibly adverse approaches to and success as the nation's hostess, including a fascinating

discussion of symbolic representation, communication to and with the country, and the doubled-edged sword of gender and policy. She notes the political tightrope act—most recently vocalized by former First Lady, New York Senator, and Secretary of State Hilary Rodham Clinton—nearly all First Ladies have struggled with as they negotiate the, arguably, most powerful position held by any American woman while maintaining a “feminine ideal of deference” (8). While most Americans expect the First Lady in any era to adopt some sort of agenda, the same populace often rejects assertive action by the same woman, highlighting the fine line between First Ladies as advocates but not activists. She is free and encouraged to pursue projects but not policy. Nearly every First Lady, as Borrelli contends, has learned how to carefully negotiate the choppy waters of the nation’s capitol (and beyond) through a myriad of obstacles—public demands alongside frequent desires for privacy; individual perceptions versus media perspectives; and personal preference against historical precedents. While the First Lady now depends on a full staff to attend to all of the duties as the president’s wife, she must be careful not to appear too strategic lest the conventionally feminine East Wing be interpreted as challenging the traditionally masculine West Wing. Such a complex and often contradictory set of expectations in the wake of relatively limited resources would challenge any individual, particularly considering that First Ladies are “not hired, appointed, or nominated” to the post. As a result of her marriage, for better or for worse, she has now been “designated” (20).

And yet, as Borrelli deftly asserts, the women who have taken on this position have succeeded because of and in spite of the convoluted merger of politics and gender. She concludes that First Ladies have been, and will continue to be, assessed, evaluated, and scrutinized by both the public and politicians. While a First Lady will never be an official member of the federal government, she will always represent the country at home and abroad; thus, a study of them, as individuals and as a collective body, is also a reflection of us as a people. Mrs. Kennedy may not have wanted to be called one, but she seems to prove that once in the saddle, you are always a First Lady.

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## CUSTER'S LAST STAND: THE BATTLE OF LITTLE BIGHORN

by Josh Flores

*Flores examines the Battle of Little Bighorn and its outcome giving weight to the Indian neglected narrative, and examines how it has been presented in film.*

One of the most fascinating events in American history is the Battle of Little Bighorn (1878), also referred to as "Custer's Last Stand" within white culture, and among Native Americans often "Indian Victory Day." The battle initially represented the dramatic destruction of George A. Custer, famed Civil War hero and Indian fighter.

Over decades many historians, chroniclers, and commentators have scrutinized the events surrounding Little Bighorn but bias, even among historians, has ensured that the accounts of Indian survivors were too often dismissed as unreliable.

In the Battle of Little Bighorn on 25 July 1876 Custer's forces (between 600 and 700) met an Indian force, mostly Sioux and Cheyenne, under the joint leadership of Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse, numbering in warrior strength about 2,000. Custer's force was significantly outnumbered.

Controversy about the battle continues today. There were no white survivors, and Indian witness and participant accounts were mishandled or simply ignored. Further controversy surrounding the fight centered on whether or not Custer had deliberately disobeyed orders from his commanding officer, General Alfred Terry.

Hollywood has had a long love affair with Custer and Little Bighorn, from 1909 onwards. In *They Died with their Boots On* (with Errol Flynn in 1941) Custer is shown as the last soldier killed, giving rise to the myth of the "Last Stand." The fighting between the Indians and the remaining sol-

diers of the Seventh Cavalry continued at Little Bighorn and did not end with the death of Custer and his men.

Another film, *Little Big Man* (1970), offers insights into the history between Custer and the Plains Indians. This film highlights Custer's brash, abrasive and reckless characteristics but is not a truly accurate depiction of the events in Custer's life and career. Released in 1970, a politically sensitive time, the main character, (played by Richard Mulligan) serves as "a metaphor for American barbarism in the Indian wars and for identical American barbarism in Vietnam."

One film does show some understanding of Custer, the Battle, and the state of US/Indian relations between 1868, the Treaty of Laramie, and 1878. This film is *Son of the Morning Star* (1991); based on Evan Connel's book of the same name. Utilizing impartiality, it examines the relationship between Custer and the Plains Indians, as well as that between Custer and his superiors. It deals responsibly with Custer's tactical decisions, illustrates his well-known tendency to push his men to the limits, corrects misperceptions about the battle, and shows how it came about that Custer, by dividing his force into three flanks, engaged Indian warriors with roughly only one third of an already undersized army.

When reinforcements arrived after the battle, they discovered the bodies of Custer and approximately 260 men, many mutilated. The condition of Custer's body - whether mutilated or not- became the subject of conflicting reports.

As for the results of the Battle of Little Bighorn: Custer became an enduring but mystifying legend, but the battle also signaled the beginning of an end to the Indian way of life as continued white martial strength forced Native Americans to exchange freedom for life on reservations. For Indians, the Battle of Little Bighorn proved to be a pyrrhic victory.

*For Mr. Flores's complete article, Custer & Hollywood: an Enduring Romance, see Clío's Eye Archives at [clioseye.sfasu.edu](http://clioseye.sfasu.edu).*

#### **Recommended Films**

One excellent documentary by PBS, *American Experience: Custer's Last Stand* (2012), received critical acclaim.