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Book Notes

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BOOK NOTES

What follows is the editor's musings on several publications that have arrived:

The New Handbook of Texas (Texas State Historical Association, 2/306 Sid Richardson Hall, University Station, Austin, 78712), was released in the summer of 1996, and is the publishing event of the year in Texas. I remember the release of what is still known as "the supplement," or Volume 3 of the old *Handbook*, directed by L. Tuffly Ellis and edited by Eldon Branda, in the 1970s. Work began on the "new" *Handbook* soon afterward, with Ellis as editor and Tom Cutrer as managing editor. Ellis was replaced by Jim Pohl temporarily and Ron Tyler permanently, and Cutrer by Doug Barnett, but the vision remained constant: capitalize on the fame and usefulness of the original *Handbook* and do an even better job. I remember a number of Executive Council meetings where Ambassador Ed Clark and Frank Smith – the two "angels" of the project – reported on fund raising. And the agonizing: would it ever be published? The answer is not only "yes," but "bravo!" Now in six volumes, with thousands of additional entries, revisions of older ones, and wonderful illustrations, the "New Handbook" is a marvel and handy help for anyone wanting to check anything that deals with Texas. And this time, the project continues through computers to update and revise constantly. Congratulations to all concerned.

Texas War Horses (published by the author in Tyler, Texas: 1995), by F. Lee Lawrence is an expanded version of his presidential address to the Texas State Historical Association on March 9, 1979, and the result of much pleading from friends that he make it available in print. Lee's long-time interest in horses in general and specifically in "war horses" is unbridled, pun intended – his, more than another work since J. Frank Dobie's *Mustangs*, reminds us of the value of such animals in all of man's interaction with nature and with each other in Texas and the Southwest. The horses remain the focus of the book. *Texas War Horses* is arranged into these divisions: The Anglos Confront a Horse Culture; Indian Horse Warriors; Speed and Stamina; From Mustangs to Thoroughbreds; Stallions, Mares, and Geldings; Rangers Rode All Kinds; Early U.S. Cavalry Horses in Texas; Texas Cavalry in the Confederacy; The Postwar Frontier; Texas Horses by the Thousands in the Boer War; and A Vanished Breed – End of an Era. Each is an interesting essay, with the participation of Texas horses in the Boer War providing the most unusual information. You can't buy this one in stores because it is a private printing, but it is to be hoped that eventually it will be reprinted for public distribution.

Allan J. Lichtman's *The Keys To The White House: A Surefire Guide to Predicting the Next President* (Madison Books, 4720 Boston Way, Lanham, Maryland 20706, 1996, \$22.95) is an explanation of how to handicap presidential elections. The first two chapters are an explanation of the "keys," or thirteen questions regarding the incumbent party, which are subjective questions and do not involve quantification in any way. Failure on as many as six of the thirteen dooms the incumbent party. Subsequent chapters provide

evidence of the successful application of the keys retroactive to 1860, and, the one you want to know about the most: "How To Bet In '96." You ought to have to read it yourself, but here is Lichtman's conclusion from page 182: President Bill Clinton had flunked four keys at the beginning of the election year, but "Barring an economic reversal, a humiliation abroad, or dramatic Whitewater developments, he will almost certainly be reelected...." This will appear after the election, so we can judge after November if the keys worked this time.

Moses Austin and Stephen F. Austin (Hendrick-Long Pub. Co., Box 25123, Dallas, TX 75225), by Betsy Warren, is a "two-fer" for juvenile readers. Better said, it is a history of the founding of Anglo Texas through the lives of the Austins. Warren credits David Gracy, biographer of Moses Austin, and draws equally heavily on Eugene C. Barker for information on Stephen F. Austin. The history is good; old timers who know the story will note transitions that omit much, but there is certainly enough here for juveniles. The illustrations, also by Warren, complement the text well.

Jean L. Epperson's *Historical Vignettes of Galveston Bay* (Dogwood Press, Rt.2, Box 3270, Woodville, TX 75979) is a tribute to the bay and human interaction in its vicinity. The book opens with a history of the bay; Part II is a series of "Stories From Around The Bay" about ships, adventures, and especially citizens who lived or had some experience associated with the area. Illustrations are used throughout.

The growing literature on historic sites got better with the publication of *Civil War Battlefields And Landmarks, With Official National Park Service Maps for Each Site* (Random House, New York, NY 10022, \$25), edited by Frank E. Vandiver. Michael Golay and Elizabeth Miles Montgomery wrote most of the coverage of the battle sites, and contributing editor Susan Bernstein wrote one chapter. Using Pea Ridge as an example of content, there is an essay on the battle, illustrations such as modern photos and period paintings, the official park map, and sidebars on the military park and on Native Americans in the Civil War. Vandiver's introduction and coverage of twenty battle sites are presented. A Reference Section includes theater maps, essays on soldiers and generals, strategy, statistics, a chronology, and a bibliography. Good for planning a trip to any sites covered or for a sketch of each battle.