Book Reviews

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During his lifetime, Henry Wallace was a geneticist, editor of Wallace's Farmer, Secretary of Agriculture, Vice-President, Secretary of Commerce and unsuccessful presidential candidate on the Progressive Party ticket of 1948. In a well-balanced account of Wallace's career since 1940, the Schapsmeiers have critically, yet with understanding, analyzed the later years of Henry Agard Wallace. Prophet in Politics contends that the deeply religious Wallace thought that his political career was a divine calling. Greatly influenced by Christ's Sermon on the Mount, Wallace believed in brotherhood, social justice and universal peace. Opposed to war, nonetheless, he vigorously supported World War II as Vice-President by heading the Board of Economic Warfare and being the nation's leading ideologist for the war. Later in his career, Wallace broke with the Progressives by supporting United States military action in Korea. Favoring peace, Wallace believed that war was necessary against evil aggressors if democracy was to survive.

Desiring the United States to be a moral leader for the free world, Wallace saw World War II's main objective as the preservation of freedom. Hoping for a warproof world, he also supported aid to Latin American nations and advocated nuclear power for peaceful purposes. In the early years of the Truman administration, he misinterpreted Soviet intentions, became critical of cold war diplomacy and failed to understand the totalitarian nature of Communism. As presidential candidate in 1948, he believed himself to be a prophet of peace, but most voters mistook him as an apologist for Russia. In accord with his faith and beliefs, Wallace supported United States action in Korea and vigorously protested Russian sponsored revolts in the 1960's.

Wallace emerges from Prophet in Politics as a reformer who sought to change society through democratic means. Essentially a moralist with abiding faith in democracy, he concentrated his efforts on long-range goals rather than immediate objectives. Never an accomplished politician, he violently disagreed with Jesse Jones and southern conservatives. He failed to build a strong political machine. Thus, he was only a one-term Vice-President under Franklin Roosevelt. As Secretary of Commerce, Wallace supported small businessmen, sought to eliminate unemployment among minority groups and further civil rights. The Schapsmeiers believe that had Wallace remained quiet on foreign relations, he could have remained Secretary through 1952. However, criticism of American cold war diplomacy caused Truman to request Wallace's resignation in 1946.

Following his defeat as a Progressive presidential candidate in 1948, Wallace began his retirement from public life. He was subjected to an ordeal of slander during the Red Scare of the 1950's. These charges proved groundless. His remaining years were spent on his farm as he experimented with varieties of corn, gladiolus and strawberries.

Was Wallace's political career a triumph or tragedy? The Schapsmeiers leave this question to be answered by the reader. Excellent style and sound research are evident
in the volume. The authors conclude that the liberal, controversial Wallace, whose sense of duty to God and mankind remained constant, served America best as the conscience of a nation during the turbulent era after World War II. *Prophet in Politics* is a worthy sequel to *Henry A. Wallace of Iowa: The Agrarian Years, 1910-1940*. These two volumes constitute the best study of Wallace and make a significant contribution to recent American history.

Irvin May, Jr.  
Texas A & M University

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Like a Hollywood press release claiming "Years in the making . . ." Colonel Simpson's major regimental history of Hood's Texas Brigade has loomed on the horizon of Texas military letters. Now, to continue the metaphor, it is available, and the result is not disappointing. When Colonel Simpson undertook this major project (along with the directorship of the Confederate Research Center at Hillsboro College) he accepted a challenge somewhat surprising for his background. Simpson is, as becomes obvious to any who listen to him for a few minutes, a Yankee. But if you listen closely, you also learn that he has a more consuming interest in this subject than did Hood himself. His interest has long since passed to compulsion to write, and from him has come a flood of articles and lectures on the activities of Hood's Brigade. There is a projected four-volume history of the brigade, of which the initial volume, *Hood's Texas Brigade in Poetry and Song*, appeared in 1968. Now comes installment number two in the series, and probably its most important segment.

Physically, the book is challenging. It is graced by a most attractive cover design, a reproduction of John Elder's "Battle of the Crater." The book is about three fingers thick, but that shouldn't frighten any potential readers away. The print is comfortably large, and the author has provided generous footnoting to take care of the obscure items that interest only the true buff and the suspicious. What is left is pretty good narrative. Simpson does not hesitate to point out faults of the brigade, such as theft of private property, nor does he shy from commending their courage under fire. About the only complaint is that he never really focuses on Hood, but then the subject is the brigade and not its one-time commander, so this is quibbling. No Texas history or Civil War history library in Texas can be complete without this book.

Archie P. McDonald  
Stephen F. Austin University

With the increased attention being paid to land, both as an investment and as part of the ecological legacy which must be guarded for the future, it would seem only logical that land and land companies should come under the close scrutiny of historians. When such a study can add the allure of West Texas, the result is a work such as The Texas Land and Development Company, A Panhandle Promotion, 1912-1956, B.R. Brunson's volume of the M.K. Brown Range Life Series.

Chartered in 1912 by a group of international investors led by James S. Pearson, foremost entrepreneur of the Southwest, Texas Land was intended to be something more than the usual "quick-profit" land company. Its owners planned to develop parcels within the vast 60,000 odd acre holdings into complete farm units and then sell them at relatively higher prices. This would guarantee both substantial profit and satisfied customers. However, World War I intervened before the company could move very far toward development, and in 1919 a complete reorganization was necessitated to stave off complete bankruptcy. With less development planned, the company prepared for sales which would be prevented from developing by the Great Depression. Deprived of profits from land sales, the Texas Land Company had to rely on tenant farmers to tide it over, and it was not until the mid-'40's that the great bulk of the land could be sold. Then, from 1946 until early 1956 the many debts accrued over the years could be paid off and the profits at long last materialized.

Brunson writes in his preface that "... there were indications that a scholarly and worthwhile history of the company was possible ..." (p 1), and one must admit that his study of the Texas Land and Development Company is indeed both scholarly and worthwhile. The author has balanced his researches between a close study of company files and personal interviews with the persons closely involved with the functioning of the Plainview company. However, any book with such a localized nature must have more to commend it than just scholarship if it is to find widespread acceptance. Unfortunately, Brunson has failed to add those touches which would make his book the interesting study it could be. In spite of the fact that the bulk of his non-data information comes from personal interviews, the text reads like a summary of the company ledgers. There is little of the levity, sorrow, bitterness and life which one knows must have been closely allied to the activities of the company.

Internally there are few errors. The section on the reorganization, chapter five, could have been more smoothly put; as it is, one needs an economist along when trying to fathom the many avenues explored in the chapter.

One can only regret that Brunson's admittedly multitudinous researches have resulted in so dry a text. Indeed, it would seem that Brunson forgot that The Texas Land and Development Company was part of the M.K. Brown Range Life Series, for nowhere in it can be found any evidence of life.

Christopher P. Vasko
Swanton, Ohio
That geology and politics in Texas were not necessarily strange bedfellows during the final half of the nineteenth century is the central theme of this well-documented volume by Walter Keene Ferguson. Ferguson considers his work as "an institutional approach to the study of Texas politics in relation to science and conservation during a critical period of the state's development — the first half-century of statehood."

Laboring under "the myth that (the) semi-arid public lands west of the ninety-eighth meridian could develop into agrarian commonwealths similar to those in the Middle West," (p. 99) the Texas Legislature, even in periods of financial stress due to drought and recession, sponsored four geological surveys between 1858 and 1909 which operated for more than one-third of the last half of the nineteenth century and well into the first decade of the twentieth.

During the Populist period in the 1880's when the agrarian reformers captured the state legislature and sought to check economic exploitation by the railroads, land speculators, and other monied interests, the geological survey became intricately entangled in politics as an instrument of land reform and public assistance. The connection between the geological survey and partisan politics was finally severed in 1909 when the Bureau of Economic Geology was founded as an integral part of the University of Texas' academic program.

This book is thoroughly documented as evidenced by the twenty-eight page bibliography that includes as sources original manuscripts, state and national government publications, newspapers, and a host of books and articles. A geological map of Texas and eight appendices are also included. Although academically qualified to competently discuss both history and geology, Ferguson's synthesis intermittently suffers the problem faced by the early proponents of the state geological surveys — the problem of reconciling the purely technical aspects of geology with the more practical ones of politics. Not wishing to overemphasize the scientific at the expense of the historical, the author does not always explain the technicalities of his geological sections in a manner sufficient to sustain the understanding and consequent interest of the non-geologist. The book is therefore of mixed value to the general reader.

Wilbert Love Jr.
Grapeland, Texas


Stephen F. Austin's Legacies is a short but concise book in which the author has compiled the works of several experts into a readable history of Austin's life and the legacy he left to Texans.
Long feels that Austin and his old three hundred families earned a place in history beside the original Pilgrims in developing a new land. The author's idea was conceived in 1918 when he saw a letter signed by Stephen F. Austin in 1832 in which he had laid out a plot of land where he had hoped to build his home. He never realized his dream and the property is today the city of Austin.

Long used this idea as a springboard for introducing Peter T. Flawn's work on the surface geology of the immediate area of present day Austin and surrounding terrain. Next, a genealogical study on the Austin ancestors is introduced. This was the work of Fannie E. Ratchford, but due to her untimely death, it was not completed. This study carries the history of the Austin clan down to Stephen's departure for school at Bacon Academy and gives much information on Moses Austin's business misfortunes which eventually led him to come to Texas. Miss Ratchford's work was picked up by Sam A. Subler whose doctoral dissertation dealt with Stephen Austin as a person. Subler's account begins with Austin's coming to Texas in 1822 and continues through his death in 1836.

After an appraisal of the preceding author's work written by J.P. Bryan, great-great-grandson of Austin's sister, Long then includes a facsimile of Austin's letter, previously mentioned, and the transcription of the letter follows. Long discusses additional legacies left for future Texans by Austin, all of which were accomplished in the short span of fifteen years.

Long's book is well presented. His introductions show keen imagination; his illustrations and pictures are timely. However, he should have included a table of contents. The book makes little, if any, use of documentation of the material but it does carry through the author's original purpose for compiling it.

Forrest L. Mays
Greenville, Texas


Mr. Tippette's novel deals with exactly what the title proclaims, the story of a bank robber, as seen through the eyes of the bandit himself. The theme of the book is the attempt by the central character, Wilson Young, to determine exactly what lead him into such a way of life, and his subsequent attempt, and failure, to extricate himself from the bandit life. In the process the author brings in a great deal of the color of the Texas-Mexico border country in the mid-nineteenth century.
This book in many ways is quite similar to the many other books of Western fiction as well as to the many Western series found on television. In fact, Mr. Tippette has written for television. Many of the old cliches or stereotypes of the Western saga are included in the book. The central figure of the book, Young, is, of course, a crack shot. Not only does he hardly ever miss, but nearly all of his shots inflict mortal wounds on his various adversaries. There is the inevitable overemphasis on the fast draw, which is to be found in most books of this type. The Code of the West, which supposedly even existed among outlaws, is upheld by Wilson as he gives up his own chance to escape from the outlaw life to avenge the death of his partner at the hands of the law, and dies in the process. All of which serves very nicely to end the story, while at the same time, proving true once again the old adage that crime does not pay.

Mr. Tippette does seem to have come up with a more realistic picture of what the real desperadoes of the Old West must have been like. The frustration which must often have been the lot of outlaws, is pictured when Young and his gang lose their stolen loot while trying to ford a river. The desperate nature of the outlaws and the harshness of their life is brought out in their stay in Mexico between holdups. The constant wariness and fear of pursuit also rings true. The demise of the gang was one which befell many an outlaw band.

As for Young's desire to free himself from the outlaw life and return to a lawful existence, the theme of the book, it did not seem to deter him in the least from committing various unlawful acts throughout the course of the book, as well as killing a dozen or so people. By the end of the book I found myself no longer particularly caring what happened to him.

Charles Thomas Stokes
Nacogdoches, Texas


N.R.A., the “Big Apple,” Harlow, the Scottsboro Boys, the Hindenburg, and Anschluss are names that bring back the bittersweet memories of an unforgettable era in American history – the 'thirties. Cabell Phillips, in his chronicle From the Crash to the Blitz 1929-1939, has given a vivid portrayal of American life in its many facets during this colorful, yet chaotic ten-year period. A long career as a newspaper reporter has well enabled Phillips to go beyond the veneer of observable facts and to dig deeply into the everchanging stream of human involvement during the Depression.
Phillips' lively narrative, accompanied by more than 850 photographs and illustrations, is based mainly upon the Democratic political structure of the New Deal and the charismatic personality of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Roosevelt is portrayed not only as the savior-president who brought relief from the economic situation which gripped the nation, but also as the menacing President who tried to "purge" the Democratic party and attempted to "pack" the conservative Supreme Court. A more personal understanding is given to the President through Phillips' description of his interactions with such men as Raymond Moley, General Hugh Johnson, Harry Hopkins and other New Dealers. With it, the aura of mysticism around the Roosevelt cult subsides, and FDR is seen as a very human man with insatiable drives and ambition.

From the Crash to the Blitz 1929-1939 places emphasis on the political importance of the period; however, its descriptive almanac includes much of every-day life. Although fortunes were lost and bread lines became a familiar sight, life continued and people made the best of the situation. Radio, movies, sports, chain letters, and dance marathons enabled Americans to briefly forget the realistic world of empty stomachs and pockets. Cabell Phillips has provided an entertaining depiction of the era from crash to blitz. At the same time his book should not be over-looked for its historical significance, because it offers a keen insight into this period.

Pat Davis
Fort Worth, Texas


Ralph A. Wooster in The People in Power attempts an intensive study on those people who made up the governmental structure of the Lower South in the pre-Civil War decade. The result is an intensive statistical study of those who served in the legislatures, governorships and courts in Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, South Carolina and Texas during the period from 1850-1860. Additionally, he discusses the county as the basic unit of local government and does a group study of the individuals who held positions of political leadership during this decade. In each of the areas of government discussed in his work, the author examines the economic and social characteristics of the officeholders.

The People in Power provides engaging quantitative information on those in power during this period in the Lower South. Exemplary of this information is the fact that few office holders served more than one term in office during this period. In compiling the information and synthesizing it, Professor Wooster presents a wealth of information not readily available to the reader in any one other source.

Professor Wooster might have given more attention to the human element and to the impact made by the men serving in the government during this time. The absence of this weakens the impact of the material.

Lance C. Anthony
Columbus, Georgia

Theodore Sorensen has attempted to define and predict the future of the "legacy" left by the Kennedy brothers. Considering the legends and mysticism (almost worshipful belief) already surrounding JFK and RFK, it is hardly surprising that Sorensen fails to accomplish all that he sets out to do; which is nothing less than the illustration of the philosophical evolution of John and Robert Kennedy, their impact on American politics, and prognostication on the future of their legacy.

Sorensen is well qualified to write on the Kennedys. As JFK's adviser, speech writer and friend, he had the necessary background to describe John Kennedy, and by association with JFK, he was automatically thrown into contact with Robert Kennedy. After the former's assassination, Sorensen became an aid to RFK and was on the campaign team that aided him in his bid for the 1968 presidential nomination. A drawback of such close association is the prejudicing effect it has on Sorensen's analysis.

The reader should bear in mind that The Kennedy Legacy is a personal narrative and written as a call for the "fulfillment" of their legacy - the peaceful but revolutionary changing of the American political processes and the social and economic discrepancies evident in the United States. The book has no footnotes, no bibliography and is presumably based on Mr. Sorensen's personal association with the Kennedy's and the problems with which they dealt.

Perhaps the greatest single flaw in The Kennedy Legacy is Mr. Sorensen's succumbing to mysticism. He speaks of "the legacy" as if the reader automatically knows what constitutes this legacy. He finally defines this legacy almost three-quarters of the way through his book. Even then, he does so in only the vaguest of terms. An earlier and more precise statement of what the Kennedy legacy is would greatly improve the over-all coherency of the book.

Mr. Sorensen has presented an interesting and informative book. It is, in part, a call to carry on what he feels the Kennedy brothers started and stand for. In addition, Mr. Sorensen has outlined the slow change that marked the lives of both John and Robert Kennedy. Written for the general reading audience, this book is of great value to the serious scholar as an insight into the impact the Kennedy brothers had on American society.

John Hitz
Dallas, Texas