Book Reviews

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Using various sources from Spanish and American historians, reports of expeditions and explorations made by government officials and adventurers, Eugene Porter has given us a well-researched and readable account, of interest to both historian and layman. The drawings of José Cisneros at the beginning of each chapter, as well as the author’s titles, such as “The Bower of Eden” and “The Northern Mystery” add a romantic flourish to this short history of the village of San Elizario. 

The descriptions of Zebulon Montgomery Pike, a U. S. Army spy, that introduced this village to the Anglo-Americans in 1810, aroused in the readers of seventeen States a “desire for profit and a yearning for romantic adventure—two strands of which are interwoven throughout the whole history of this region”. Pike’s statistics and details on prices, goods traded, and events of the time provided valuable information about a place and time of significance in Spanish and American history. An intersection of two lines of communication, many Americans passed through San Elizario, some involved in trade with Mexico, others with the Mexican war, and still greater numbers who were ‘49ers or Argonauts in the rush for California gold. In diaries and letters to their families of these gold-seekers, fascinating details of life on this frontier are included: construction of houses, people’s manners and dress, agricultural methods, churches, and even descriptions of the women’s beauty—or lack of it in one writer’s opinion, which our author tells us was possibly “to convince his wife she need not fear his straying”!

Claiming that the true beginning of the Lone Star State is to be found here rather than in Eastern Texas the writer recounts some of the fables and myths that drew Spanish explorers to this region. Of the many legends, the majority of which were originally brought to Spain by the Moorish Arabs from the Eighth century on, the tale of the Seven Golden Cities were said to be found in New Mexico, according to Cabeza de Vaca and his companions, one of whom, Estevanico, was an Arabian Negro. Chapter II, The Northern Mystery, relates the adventures of these Spanish “conquistadores”, some of the French and the English, including Henry Hudson and Sir Francis Drake, the latter being the second man to circumnavigate the globe. Many of these famous men were searching for the mythical strait which would connect the western coast of North America with the waters of the interior called the North West Passage by the English and the Stradits of Anía by the Spanish. El Paso, near San Elizario, was one of the “five pueblos” often mentioned in the reports of these explorers, tales of great interest to historians and adventure readers.

In his research of the material on the founding of the present San Elizario, the author states that none of it can be trusted as it is filled with misquotations, errors, and confusion. In Chapter III The Secret Years, a number of accounts are touched upon with some critical analysis and comments on accepted historical data. A document of 1780 from the Juarez archives is first cited and published by the writer as a conclusion to this section.

The final chapter A Century of History, which might be called “the silent years” giving available information of events up to and including the Salt War of December 1877, close the account of this village which “slipped back into the stream of historical anonymity”. An Appendix A which concerns the stories of Saint Elizario and San Isidro, venerated by the villagers, and Appendix B which is the Spanish Juarez document make an interesting and suitable end to this well-written and rigorously researched history of a little known, but important period of Spanish-American-Mexican history.

Viva L. Rainey
Centenary College

The biography of Manuel Chaves "has not been a simple task" writes Marc Simmons. This is unquestionably true. The author has accomplished a painstaking and demanding research project. He has written a highly readable account laced with informative illustrations of the life of a fascinating frontiersman of the Southwest. He has succeeded in drawing a vivid picture of the times in which Chaves lived and the heretofore almost neglected role Chaves played against the background of nineteenth century New Mexican history. To be sure, the reader is disappointed the portrait of Chaves is not completely drawn and his thinking is so superficially sketched. There are chronological gaps in the study and assumptions put forward by the author that are not based on research material. Further, while his life was a most fascinating one, Chaves remains an enigma of sorts even after the reader has finished the book. For instance, the continued increase in Chaves' economic status, in spite of financial setbacks, is never clearly spelled out. Nor are the underlying reasons for his steadfast loyalty to his new Country—the United States. In this sense we never become intimately familiar with the subject. However, as the author points out, these failures are understandable given the paucity of existing source material, much of which was fragmented and often incomplete, Dr. Simmons was able to draw from. In the final analysis, these are trivial drawbacks in the face of an impressive addition to the history of our early Southwest.

Chaves lived during an era of great turbulence and change. Born under Spanish colonial rule, raised under the government of recently-independent Mexico, and living most of his adult life under United States territorial administrations in the New Mexico territory, Chaves' life was linked to almost every major historical event which occurred in the territory. He participated in the Santa Fe trail trade, played a role in fending off a Texas invasion of New Mexico, gave his loyalty to the United States in the Mexican and Civil wars, and was involved in numerous Indian skirmishes where he earned the label El Leandro, the Little Lion. His exploits, narrated in an easily readable style, deserve the admiring recognition received here.

Richard B. Chardkoff
Northeast Louisiana University


The Republic period of Texas history, already given a great deal of attention by writers of Texana, is featured in this collection of documents compiled and edited by a long time student of the era. Although a few of the forty-six documents featured were written in early statehood, twelve were written during the Revolution and the rest during the Republic.

For the most part, the author has chosen her selections well. Some are very well-known; for example, she includes Travis' Alamo appeal of February 24, 1836. But others have not been printed, and some of these are quite interesting and revealing, particularly a pre-Revolutionary letter of Travis which appears as Document No. 1. Almost one half of the documents are letters involving the Irion family. Since Dr. R. A. Irion served as Houston's Secretary of State and was close friend of the President, these letters are often either to or from Houston and are filled with useful information.

For those not thoroughly familiar with the period and for some who are, the author's annotations will be the strong point of the book. These are drawn for the most part from secondary sources, particularly the Handbook of Texas, and are apparently based on the
assumption that the reader knows little about the principals involved in the accompanying document. Although the assumption may not be valid in all instances, the rather thorough explanations make the collection useful and interesting for the casual reader.

One is left with the feeling that the author is something of a romantic. Certainly the documents are selected and the annotations are written in that tradition. She isn't as critical of Travis as some historians might be. If she doesn't accept without tinge of doubt some of the legends of the Alamo, she leaves the impression that she would like to do so. Her presentation of Houston is filled with awe, and his political and personal enemies don't fare too well.

But the Republic was a romantic period in the history of the state and perhaps a bit of romanticism is in order. In any event, Texas Epic is a useful and interesting volume to be added to the growing collection of Texana.

Adrian Anderson
Lamar University


The published work of a German traveler who visited Texas in 1818-19, J. V. Hecke, may have influenced the migration of some of his countrymen to that land in the decade of the twenties. Others arrived over a period of several years just prior to the Texas Revolution, the most notable name listed being that of Robert Justus Kleberg, Sr., a doctor juris from Göttingen.

German settlers participated in the Texas Revolution, a history of which was published (1843) in Leipzig. "The idea of battling against political tyranny and for religious freedom," according to Benjamin, appealed to the "revolutionary feelings" of those Germans whose efforts toward unification and constitutional government had failed.

Idyllic descriptions of Texas in other publications reached Germany in an era of idealism, and partially explain the founding of the Adelsverein by a group of German noblemen who would encourage migration to the New World. Specifically, they hoped "to afford the German poor a field for rewarded labor, to open to German industry new markets and to give to [the] German sea-trade a "wider expansion."" The possibility of a German colony within the Republic of Texas excited the imagination of the likes of Prince Solms-Braunfels. He became commissioner general of the Verein in Texas and his reports indicate motives that were "in part commercial and in part humanitarian.

Fiscal problems and inept leadership resulted in harrowing experiences for those colonists who arrived 1844-46. Baron von Meusebach, successor to Solms, must be credited for his leadership in establishing better relations with the Indians. Not until the arrival of professionals, artisans, merchants, and other substantial burgher types following the Revolution of 1848, however, did the communities in Comal and Gillespie counties begin to flourish. Industries and talents, strange to the American frontier experience, thrived in the towns as did the cotton culture in the countryside. German settlers favored free as opposed to slave labor, and only a few became slaveholders.

German cultural patterns prevailed in schools, singing societies, churches, and newspapers in San Antonio as well as nearby towns. American-born settlers resented the German tendency to remain aloof and their antipathy to slavery. German fraternal organizations brought forth strong denunciations from proponents of the Know-Nothing movement. Hill country Germans supported Democratic nominees Buchanan and Breckenridge in 1856 and 1860, although most of them opposed secession. A majority went with Texas into the Confederacy, although others headed for Mexico. During Reconstruction, German-Texans joined the Republican Party en masse.
This volume deserves to be recognized as the ground breaking study on German immigration in Texas, but the reader may be misled by the dust jacket blurb that the work "was researched at a time when many of the original leaders and participants were still alive." Nowhere does Benjamin indicate that he interviewed these persons; in fact, there is no indication that this Yale Ph. D. ever visited Texas. A more personal association with the subject matter can be found in Moritz Tiling, History of the German Element in Texas, 1820-1850 (Houston, 1913). A more thoroughly researched and better written volume covering essentially the same subject matter is Terry G. Jordan's German Seed in Texas Soil (Austin, 1966). R. L. Biesele's History of the German Settlements in Texas (Austin, 1930) is, likewise, a more complete study.

The volume under review appeared first in the German American Annals, VII (1909) and was reprinted in the following year in book form by D. Appleton & Co. It is regrettable that the publisher of the second reprint did not see fit to correct spellings of proper names, among the deficiencies noted by a reviewer in 1911.

One statement made by that reviewer no longer holds true: "With all its imperfections, the book is the only recent work in English on the subject." (Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association, XV (October, 1911), p. 171.) Donald E. Everett

Trinity University


These two books are good examples of their breed: the purely descriptive, episodic county history. It would be unfair to apply to them the rigorous criteria for judging scholarly historical monographs. With that understanding, these are not at all bad county histories.

The History of Nueces County, a group effort by the local historical society, is the better book. It covers the entire period from Indian civilization to the present day, and makes use of a wide variety of substantial secondary sources. The writing is above average for a county history, and anyone who is interested in details of the background of Corpus Christi or Nueces County can find material on quite a number of topics: Indians, the Civil War and Reconstruction, and every major part of the economy and culture.

Taylor's A History of Clay County is inappropriately titled, since it deals almost entirely with the early years between 1870 and 1900. Only a few passing references give any indication of what has occurred in the county during the twentieth century. The author's style is no more pedestrian than one expects in a local antiquarian work, but there are some grammatical and spelling errors which ought to have been caught in editing. As far as content goes, a reader can learn some rather interesting details about the early settlement of the north Texas frontier. If the book had been called Some Incidents of Life in Clay County in the Late Nineteenth Century, one could say that it well lived up to its promise.

Recognizing that county histories such as these are not expected to be works of thorough scholarly analysis, it is still a shame that the many opportunities for deeper explanation rather than surface description are passed up. The Nueces book, for instance, has frequent lists of county officeholders. Why not take a few paragraphs to sketch a collective picture of these men over the decades? What are their geographical and educational backgrounds, their occupations, their relative wealth, their ethnic origins? What trends appear over the years: more Mexican-American officials, more urban
residents elected, or what? The same could be done for the long list of Baptist ministers. A mere catalog of names is useless, but a little descriptive analysis would be of use to historians in many fields. The Clay County volume mentions that some voting precincts have been going Republican in recent years. Which ones? What kind of people live there compared to the rest of the county? Why are these people becoming less Democratic than the general population? Nothing elaborate would be required to probe these matters, and there are dozens of such points in every county history which would raise these works above the level of the episodic and antiquarian and render them truly valuable to the historical profession.

James H. Broussard
Southwest Texas State University


Wilbur Devereux Jones’ latest work is an attempt to examine Anglo-American diplomacy in the middle of the nineteenth century by focusing upon the manner in which British foreign secretaries and prime ministers came to view the United States in terms of its collective personality. The British interpretation of that personality, maintains Jones, is the key to Britain’s policy toward her former subjects and can be seen best, and sometimes only, in the private correspondence of leading British statesmen of the period. Thus he has made extensive use of that correspondence, to the virtual exclusion of its trans-Atlantic counterpart.

Britain’s two outstanding foreign secretaries of the period differed in their assessment of the U.S. character. Lord Aberdeen, whom Jones admires greatly and to whom he awards the honors for the superior diplomacy of the period, was successful because he never lost faith in the basic trustworthiness of the United States and adopted a “pacificistic realism” toward her. Lord Palmerston, on the other hand, saw the United States as aggressive and expansive, and feared that a conciliatory gesture in her direction would be detrimental to Britain’s diplomatic image in Europe. However, Palmerston eventually came to accept Aberdeen’s realism and acknowledged the U.S. influence over Mexico.

Britain’s American policy is presented against a backdrop of concern for Europe and especially France. Here Aberdeen’s mastery is demonstrated as he worked to separate France and the United States diplomatically in order to enhance British security and forge an Anglo-French association.

It is in precisely this manner that the author interprets Aberdeen’s diplomacy in the Texas question during the 1840s. However, readers will be disappointed to discover that Texas is all but excluded from the book, the author explaining that other writers have covered the topic and that he has treated it in an earlier work. Thus, the reader encounters Texas in only two paragraphs separated by almost 200 pages, and in the last sentence of the very last of over 700 notes.

The numerous citations do not slow the pace of the narrative, however, nor is the author in bondage to his notes. When the documentary evidence stops short of providing conclusive judgment, Jones surmises, but with caution, good logic, and in an interesting fashion.

Because throughout the book Jones has used “America” in the British sense, i.e., as synonymous with the United States, it is sometimes disconcerting to read that “Britain had long since abandoned all of Mexico to America, if she wanted it” or that “America chose to heat up the Central American issue . . . .” (p. 131).
Overall, though, the work is sound. With the exception of Texas, Jones lays out the major diplomatic issues—the Maine and Oregon boundaries, the Mosquito controversy, and the Mexican coup—in intricate detail and with diligent, painstaking care. The result is a book which those interested in Anglo-American diplomacy can read for profit.

H. Dale Abadie  
University of Mississippi


National unity is important during wartime. However, no nation can truly remain a democracy unless it allows dissent toward government policies. America is no exception to this rule. Almost every conflict the United States has entered-excepting World War II-has produced active anti-war movements. The opposition groups have held political, moral and religious reasons for disliking our various military struggles. Until recent years, however, little interest was shown toward the opponents of America’s several wars. The situation changed in the 1960s mainly because of the Vietnam experience. Historians like Samuel Elliot Morison and Fredrick Merk began to examine critics of past conflicts to gain perspective on the current trauma in Indo-china. John H. Schroeder, as assistant professor of history at the University of Wisconsin, recently contributed to this field of study with his book, Mr. Polk’s War.

The author’s purpose is to present a detailed, in-depth account of anti-war movements during the conflict with Mexico. Happily his monograph, the first thorough examination of the subject, achieves its goal. All of the war critics, from partisan Whig to radical abolitionist, come to life from the numerous primary and secondary sources.

Schroeder feels, as do many other historians, that President Polk deliberately incited the hostilities with Mexico by impossible demands and acts of aggression. His beliefs coincide with those of Mr. Polk’s contemporary critics.

Various types of dissidents emerge from the study.

There was the opposition Whig party whose attack on the administration's policies was based on both pragmatism and principle. To escape the epithet of “traitor”, which destroyed the Federalists in 1812, Whigs voted for bills supporting the army in the field. However, they strongly attacked the Democrats for allegedly starting the war and then for mismanaging it. The Whigs also had ethical reasons for criticism. Conservatives felt an expansionist war and the resulting large army and centralized government would pervert the Republic. Radical abolitionist Whigs believed the struggle with Mexico was merely an attempt to add new slave territories.

The ruling Democrats themselves had dissensions. The pattern is interestingly similar to the troubles this same party suffered during the Viet Nam War. Radical Northerners, the Van Burenite wing, were against the Mexican War morally because of the slavery issue and politically since they were opposed to Southern domination of the party.

Professor Schroeder also deals with religious and intellectual leaders who were anti-war. Men like Theodore Parker, Henry Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson disagreed with the administration's policies. On the whole, the author presents most clerical and literary dissent flourished in the northeast. Southern and western preachers mainly supported the war as justified.

One major conclusion Schroeder reaches is that although anti-war opposition was widespread, especially by 1847, it never was able to organize and effectively challenge the
Polk government. When disillusionment about the conflict appeared, it was more the result of the administration's mismanagement than a sudden realization by Americans that the entire enterprise was immoral.

Yet, some of the solutions proposed by the ineffective peace movement are fascinating in light of the recent Viet Nam controversy. The demand for troop withdrawal from Mexico, as well as a Congressional cut-off of funds and manpower, were suggested means of ending the war.

*Mr. Polk's War*, while not a volume that would be eagerly seized by the average reader, is a work that is both useful and enjoyable for a history student. The book's benefits are two-fold. It delves deeply into an area only superficially handled before and also helps one acquire a proper perspective of war dissent throughout American history.

Daniel P. Friz
Gilmer, Texas


The Spanish-American War occurred at a time when Americans were questioning some of the assumptions upon which their society rested. *The Mirror of War* examines the efforts to reconcile the prevailing social consensus with a new situation, the growing need to concentrate more authority in the central government and to extend that authority into foreign and domestic affairs. In six penetrating and well written essays, Professor Linderman convincingly argues that, "The forces creating war were less the first proclamations of twentieth-century capitalism than twilight expressions of a disappearing nineteenth-century social structure (8)."

The first two essays, "William McKinley and the Decision for War" and "Redfield Proctor: Character, Conversion, and the Commitment to War", consider the question of why war was declared upon Spain. The President viewed a war with Spain as the only way to preserve what he considered to be the basic values of American society. Senator Proctor's speech is pictured as the event, more significant even than the sinking of the *Maine*, that united public opinion in support of a war, for humanitarian reasons, to assist the Cubans.

The next two essays, "The War and the Small-Town Community" and "The War of Personal Encounter," offer some insights into how Americans viewed the war. The small-town considered the local National Guard unit as "its military unit, an extension first of itself rather than the nation (71)." While acting as an extension of their individual communities, the soldiers hoped that in some mystical way the war would test and rejuvenate them and their society. Both essays help to explain some of the problems encountered by the national government when it attempted to mold the citizen-soldiers of the National Guard into a well disciplined military force.

The two concluding essays, "The Image of Enemy and Ally" and "The Popular Press and the War," deal with public opinion before and during the war. The author deftly follows the mental gymnastics that reversed, by the time the fighting ended, the images of Cubans and Spaniards held at the beginning of the war. The final essay investigates those factors in American society that allowed the yellow press to exert the influence that it did in the months before the outbreak of hostilities.

Professor Linderman demonstrates that many Americans believed that a war with Spain was the only way to preserve the social consensus that had arisen out of the past. To support his conclusions, the author has thoroughly researched and documented his study. The inclusion of a bibliography would have been helpful, although a careful sifting of the
notes yields a variety of source materials. There is something of value in Linderman's study for both the professional historian and the general reader. The length of the book is deceptive, the author's concise analysis of his selected topics wastes neither time nor space. It is a splendid little book.

Tommy Young
Texas Tech University


A study of the buffalo has appeared that should be the definitive historical work on the subject for years to come. It did not seem possible that much more needed to be said about the Plains' most famous four-legged creature, following such fine studies as those by Allen, Hornaday, Branch, Grinnell, Seton, Gard, Roe, and others, but David Dary has put it all together in a most attractive book.

Dary begins his study with the pre-historic bison and traces the development of the modern animal. In a later chapter he examines efforts to develop new species, such as the cattalo, which hold some promise for the future. From frontier literature Dary cites many references to the Eastern wood buffalo, the Western mountain buffalo (which may have been the same sub-species — Dary is not clear on the point), and the prairie and plains buffalo, by far the most numerous of the three. Dary gives considerable attention to the numbers of the buffalo and provides many descriptions of seemingly endless herds. Understandably he is ambivalent regarding the bison population at the time of the white man's arrival, but he seems to favor Seton's figure, 75,000,000. He is in no way ambivalent regarding the present population of the creature. He spent over three years making his own careful survey of the known herds and came up with the figure of 30,100 for 1972. The contrast between 75,000,000 and 30,100 accounts for much of the current interest in the buffalo, and Dary chronicles the slaughter and near extinction as carefully and excitingly as anyone has done. He notes that contrary to popular belief the Indians did make a dent in the vast herds, but only after the white man's horse and his trading goods provided the incentive. The white man's appetite for buffalo meat, especially the tongue, and his "sporting" enthusiasm for hunting the beast were responsible for a sizable portion of the ensuing slaughter, but the demand for robes and particularly for hides gave chief impetus to the unbridled decimation. Dary does not stop with the slaughter. He goes on to chronicle in a very interesting way the rebuilding of the buffalo population from a low of 800 in 1895 to its present healthy figure. Far from being in danger of extinction, the buffalo now is sufficiently numerous and prolific to permit a sizable "harvest" each year which supplies numerous gourmet emporiums and even buffaloburger stands. Dary takes up a number of interesting topics regarding the buffalo: bison "rutting" and "family" life, the rare appearances of white or pied buffalo, bull battling for leadership of a herd, domesticating buffalo for plowing and transportation, collecting and exhibiting bison heads and stuffed specimens, and the role of the buffalo as a symbol in American pop culture. Appended are intriguing recipes for buffalo servings and a beckoning list of locations, many of them in Texas and Oklahoma, where Dary's "shaggies" can still be found.

Edward Phillips
Austin College


For twenty years following the Civil War Texas cowboys drove thousands of cattle over established trails—Goodnight-Loving, Chisholm, and Western—to rail terminals on
the Great Plains. The Long Drive was therefore a unique institution, a vital technique in
the growth of the Cattle Kingdom. On the open range skilled drovers sought the safest and
most economical methods of conducting their somewhat lonely, often dangerous jobs. In
so doing they became enveloped in romantic myths and legends; hence, fiction and history
have at times been difficult to separate. Consequently Sue Flanagan, the director of the
Sam Houston Memorial Museum in Huntsville, has depicted with words and photographs
what these men saw and experienced along the way—although “a century later.”

In regard to organization and historical content, Trailing the Longhorns is rather
unimaginative. But Flanagan has an extraordinary talent of photography which elevates
this work out of the commonplace. In taking numerous pictures while inspecting the three
major cattle trails from Texas, she has captured the flavor of the Long Drive, of the
cowboy’s arduous existence. For instance, the reader can proceed visually along the
Chisholm Trail beginning with springtime on the South Texas prairies, thence to the
limestone hills northwest of Fort Worth, across the meandering Red and Washita rivers, to
the rolling countryside south of Abilene. In fact, Flanagan has graphically illustrated the
history of the cattle frontier, whether showing a lone fencepost supporting barbed wire, a
sunset near Camp Supply in Indian Territory, or buffalo grazing near the Cimarron River.
Even though no new research appears in Trailing the Longhorns, the author has once
more demonstrated the validity and value of recording history pictorially.

Ben Procter
Texas Christian University

Money on the Hoof—Sometimes. By Edith Wharton Taylor. Fort Collins, Colorado (Old
$8.95.

The origin of the cattle herds and trail drives, the fight to eradicate the Texas “tick”
Fever, the Fort Worth Livestock Exchange, the meat processing plants in Fort Worth,
and the cattlemen who pioneered the opening of the cattle market in Fort Worth are some
of the topics treated during the 1850-1970 time span covered in this 115 page book. The
adventurous reader who digs into this rather short volume will notice the resulting
confusion from the author failing to provide a thesis, as she bucks about discussing all of
the above topics mentioned, jumping from one to another with little continuity. Yet
despite the tangents, the main topic appears to be the cattle market and meat processing
plants in Fort Worth from the late 1800s to the World War II era.

The adventurous reader who hurdles the first barrier of determining just what exactly
the author is writing about is likely to never complete the volume after wrestling with the
author’s writing style. Short choppy sentences (p. 38) act as roadblocks to the narrative
throughout the book. The paucity of compound sentences, connecting phrases, and other
literary devices make the words grate on the tongue of the reader and contribute to the
already disjointed organization of the book. To add insult to injury, the author’s research
sources are weak and largely depend on articles from The Cattleman. A cursory look at
standard historical indexes such as American History and Life list a number of articles on
the Texas “tick” Fever, cattle markets in Texas, etc. that are never mentioned in this
volume. In addition, a wealth of information is available in the form of Texas State
documents on various cattle related subjects and especially the legislative history of the
Texas “tick” Fever, cattle programs, and the cattlemen’s associations—also not
mentioned by the author. However, the Old Army Press did its usual masterful job on the
physical attractiveness of the book with the inclusion of more than 25 photographs, high
quality paper, and readable typeset.

Except for the five cattlemen that the author interviewed concerning their early years
with the cattle market, most readers will find this book to be one of those that never should
have been published. The flavor of the cattle market, its bawdy breed of men who chased longhorns for a living, and the smell of ammonia compound rising from the tick eradication vats simply do not come across in this book. Instead, one finds a volume with sterile treatment, less than adequate research, disjointed organization, and no index. And, if the reader is to believe that publisher's blurb that Ben K. Green's introduction to this book (less than one page) means a stamp of approval and guide to good reading, one is forced the question Ben's good judgement.

Charles R. McClure
Rutgers University


Harold Hutton is a rancher in the northern portion of Nebraska on the Niobrara River, the area which includes the counties of Boyd, Brown, Holt, Keya Paha, and Rock, or as many know it, "Doc Middleton Country." Thus, the author lives, and has for many years, where James M. Riley, alias Doc Middleton, made his reputation in the late 1870s. In addition, he spent twenty years researching this book, a volume which the publisher describes as the "definitive biography" of the subject. The author having researched diligently and as throughly as possible, no doubt knows more about his subject than anyone living today, and probably more than anyone during Middleton's lifetime, except the outlaw himself. He was elusive, for obvious reasons, and refused several offers to write his own story, even after he had paid his debt to society and was in need of the money his autobiography promised.

A challenging subject for any biographer, James M. Riley was born in Texas in early 1851 in "obscurity... reared in hardship and poverty... /and/ died in adverse circumstances" (p. 221) in Wyoming in 1913. He led a very eventful life during which he killed, rustled, engaged in gunfights and fist-fights. He was married three times, spent time in the penitentiary and several jails, performed in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, and was a respected businessman. Because of Middleton's adventures and reputation as an outlaw, author Hutton believes that "the story of the West would not be complete without him, and a place in history, at least a small niche, belongs to him" (p. 221), and this is what Hutton has attempted to provide.

However, this biography leaves much to be desired. Besides the occasional errors in historical accuracy—such as his reference to Nebraska as "unorganized territory" (p. 88) in 1879 when in fact it was organized in 1854 and became a state in 1867—there are other deficiencies. Hutton views his subject with total subjectivity. Whenever conflicting accounts of Middleton's activities exist, he inevitably defends the one which is most favorable to the outlaw; and when no account of certain alleged events can be found, he assumes the best. In addition, it is hard to determine whether or not this is a biography or simply an edited account of the life and legend of the outlaw. Numerous chapters contain much more in the form of edited quotes than in the author's own writing. All of this, coupled with the overly dramatic style of the volume, makes the book a disappointing one.

Billy D. Ledbetter
Cooke County College


Using the Biblical symbol of Jericho — The Promised Land — artists Hubert Shuptrine and James Dickey have in words and watercolor undertaken to present "two
deep views" of the South. Both men are Southerners; but each beheld his land in his own way: Dickey in vignettes which he calls "flickers" and Shuptrine through visual images, not intended to be renditions of reality but the feelings of a beholder.

The format of Jericho is effective. Pages of poetry in prose form are followed by pages of paintings, not correlated, but each complimenting the other. Large type and the use of only half of the page in print give an openness which corresponds to the spaciousness depicted in most of the paintings. Shuptrine sees the land and its waterways as space not dominated by its inhabitants. They are integral parts, not masters. A few of his paintings are "close-ups" but most are landscapes with the distant horizon giving a feeling of the unconfined. The detail of some of the paintings is exquisite, for example, the fisherman of Wassaw Sound, "Seiner Man" and the facial expressions of "Chico" and "Old Hombre".

In addition to the introduction, the epilogue, and a helpful catalogue of paintings and drawings, the volume is divided into three sections: The Land and the Water, Among the People, and The Traditions Web.

Poet Dickey asks the reader to suspend his own reality and become a spirit, unfettered by time and space, to observe Jericho. His vehicle is appropriate, for the imagination is a wonderful tool; but one feels that he imposes too many instructions on his "beholders". Asking his spirit readers to fly with him, the writer in The Land and the Water spirals along the South's waterways through west Texas and back east to Atlanta, touching briefly on oyster shells in St. Augustine's fortress and on to the open land west of San Antonio where "you could bury your shadow in the purples there."

Among the people Dickey finds humor, pathos, ignorance, the joy of living, and music — in the churches, on the front porches, and along the roadsides. The vignettes are colorful, eclectic. One which is particularly thought provoking describes the mountain woman quilter: "Every way that Jericho has dressed her for sixty years is going into the colors of sleep. From every dress, a piece of material." The whole becomes its parts again to form another whole.

Southern heritage, once defiant, then apologetic, now treasured remembrances, meshes in the webbing of traditions. The troops that followed J. E. Johnston to Kennesaw Mountain would follow him again, for "they were Defending" to the death for their heritage. Passed down by oral tradition, the stories and the story tellers of the South live on. "Now there was this old boy..." introduces many a creative tale. "We take our time to make the lies a lot more interesting than the truth," observes Dickey.

It is the infinite network of ochre dirt roads, not the gleaming interstate highways, that the artists travel. They miss most of the sophistication of the South's modern cities while seeking the nostalgia of the rural scene. However, the tone, especially of the paintings, is somber. The Land and the Water section in particular is brown and gray. The South may be Jericho, but even the Promised Land needs to have blue skies at times.

The mobility of modern society contributes to the melting pot condition of the South today where much of the Old South flavor is gone. Jericho seems to be an attempt to recapture that sense of sectionalism which is eroding away. The book is a "show book" — too large to hold and read — a table volume to be admired. The tone is sentimental nostalgia. The artists have concentrated on what is behind rather than what lies ahead. They have, however, retained the spirit which seems to have been their intent, that is, the South as a "particular segment of the world" seen through eyes that love her and those beholders who are willing to say with the Lord in Joshua 5:15, "The place whereon thou standest is holy."

Paris-born and trained Theodore Gentilz (1820-1906) was hired at twenty-three to serve as a surveyor, artist, and promotion agent for Henri Castro's Texas colony. By 1848 he had finished his contribution to Castro's endeavor and had established a permanent home in San Antonio. In a career that was both rewarding and productive he established himself as one of Texas's most important primitive artists. Gentilz depicted—with considerable charm and exactly the right tempo—the homes, public buildings, street scenes, occupations, customs, and entertainments of a culturally diverse population. Spanish and Mexican themes were especially favored by the artist, almost to the exclusion of the influence exerted by his French compatriots.

The authors avoid excessive claims for Gentilz's work and admit his provincial status. His subject range was South Texas and Northern Mexico, with a heavy emphasis on San Antonio scenes. All pictures in the book, in fact, are from San Antonio collections. Each view has been placed in its proper historical setting. In those few instances where this has not been possible, the authors have openly resorted to highly educated guesswork. No two persons are better qualified than Kendall and Perry to do this. In short, this is more an historical than artistic document, and particularly significant in the visual history of a unique American city.

The book contains thirty color and a like number of black-and-white pictures. The former are reproduced with admirable fidelity to the original tonal values. Designer Jo Alys Downs has given the volume an unusually handsome format, featuring spacious margins, an appealing two-color title page, and an equally attractive green cloth binding. The Garamond typeface subtly emphasizes the historical nature of the material as well as the ethnic background of one who made an important contribution to Texan culture.

Al Lowman
Institute of Texan Cultures


In her Preface to her study of Perry, Ms. Hairston says his life was "the stuff books are made of." The tale she tells corroborates that estimate, but it is a pity she did not make a good book of that stuff.

One can readily fault the book for the abominable proofing. Three errors appear on each of two pages in the bibliography, and they are frequent enough in the text to prove a constant annoyance. But more important, the organization is defective. Instead of discussing the works chronologically as she discusses the life, Ms. Hairston devotes three chapters each to the life and to the works. But she breaks her pattern by constantly referring to and quoting published and unpublished works in the chapters on his life. And in the chapters on the works, a sense of chronology is lost, because she treats the unpublished fiction, the published fiction, and the journalistic work in three separate chapters. This diffusion diminishes the impact.

The work contains the fruits of a tremendous amount of research in the Perry papers, and it makes discernible a life so full of torment that one is amazed that no more of it is evident in Perry's work. The estimate that Perry was potentially much greater than his work reveals seems sound. To those of us who matured in the socially oriented 1930s, Perry was one who sold out to the Saturday Evening Post and its ilk and was more guilty than Fitzgerald was in Hemingway's eyes, for Fitzgerald did continue to write stories with
substance. The book makes one feel a little more kindly toward Perry, but one also feels that if he had had real mettle, he would not have yielded so readily to the pressures of editors.

In sum, the book and Perry seem alike in one respect. Neither measures up to the potential of the material at their disposal.

Ernest B. Speak
Sul Ross State University


Mr. Lackey, in describing Texas from a mountaintop in the Big Bend country in 121 pages, has attempted to paint a word mural. Several sketches emerge, but there remain large areas of blank canvas.

The author covers area history very briefly, and then moves into the mid-twentieth century. He recounts stories of some of the illustrious residents and visitors to the Big Bend. He is at his best in his descriptions of the land. He is also very effective describing the decay of the ranching industry, cattle, sheep and goats, and in his forecast of agricultural problems which have developed since publication. He also traces the path from the placid fifties through the turbulent sixties and then peers uneasily into the seventies. His uneasiness has since proved well founded.

The work is technically marred by some poor editing. The author's viewpoint rambles at times to the point of distraction. Black and white photographs, while excellent in content and composition, make one wish for the color found in the accompanying text.

Overall, Mr. Lackey shows a great deal of promise that, with additional maturity and tighter editing, could produce a work to complete the mural so bravely begun.

Howard L. Sandefer
Beaumont, Texas


Considering the nature of this first major biography of John B. Connally, it seemed desirable to let a little "simmer" time pass after the first reading before attempting to write a review. But even that didn't take all the puzzle out of it. The book was published just prior to the major Watergate revelations and the ultimate accusations against the Governor in the milk fund scandal, so it is easy to read the knowledge of those subsequent events into the authors' treatment of Connally although they probably did not know of them.

When you begin Crawford and Keever's Connally the impression is inescapable that it is to be lauditory. But the more you read this is less obvious, and by the time you are through (and have seen a few newspaper accounts of his present court troubles) you are convinced that it is a hatchet job, because the Governor's portrait really has the warts on it. What this probably means is this is a balanced account of the public career of John B. Connally up to his Nixon cabinet position, but we will all have to season a bit more before we will know for sure. The authors bring their subject from his beginnings at Floresville through the apprenticeship with LBJ to the governorship, the national cabinet and to the very threshold of national power in his own right. They point out his intelligence, good looks, his articulate gift (trained in the University of Texas Curtain Club and campus politics) and his instinct for politics in general, albeit in a conservative drift. They also paint him as unsympathetic to the poor, labor and Mexican-Americans, and reveal coarse language, opportunism, and callousness.
The research on this volume has been intense, including a good deal of interviews with friends and enemies. Organizationally, the book suffers from the location of the Kennedy assassination after a complete examination of his governorship, rather than in its correct chronology; this appears a bit odd since everything else is chronologically presented. The generous inclusion of photographs of Connally and his political contemporaries is a major addition.

Archie P. McDonald
Stephen F. Austin State University


*The Improbable Rise of Redneck Rock* is one of the latest and best in the current flurry of studies of pop culture. The book is about musical miscegenation, and it shows what happened when rednecks spent too much time hanging around the quarters. In this case the result was a woods colt dropped in the vicinity of Austin — Threadgills, the Armadillo, Dripping Springs—that since has cantered all over Texas and is extending his territory to wherever the grass is green and the grazing is good.

This kind of music was bound to happen. Most Texans, both rural and urban, have honky-tonkin’ in their blood, and that includes a core feeling for all the old-time country-and-western singers like Ernest Tubb, Eddie Arnold, and the great Hanks, Williams and Snow. And when that dear old country boy Elvis Presley started slipping around with the beat and the sound of black rhythm-and-blues and boogie, the mixing was on its way. *Redneck Rock* presents the more recent history, the last eight or ten years, when a number of young musicians blended their feeling for rock music with their heritage of country sounds and came up with redneck rock.

Jan Reid’s book is the story of the development of this form of music, especially about the people who brought it into life in the Austin area. Reid pictures Austin as Texas’ own Nashville, as in fact stealing thunder from Nashville and L.A. and the west coast. The seed-forms were planted at Kenneth Threadgill’s and at the Austin-scene-transplanted-to-Denton in Stan Alexander’s North Texas folk music club. From these places and from the sounds of all the honky-tongs and barrel houses in Texas sprang the kind of music that Michael Murphey, Jerry Jeff Walker, and Rusty Wier would eventually sing, and the grand old man of it all, Willie Nelson, would come back to Texas to be with.

This exciting and “improbable” (I don’t think so.) rise of redneck rock is very recent history, say five to ten years old. One of the problems Reid, or anybody writing about the contemporary scene, has is that he is too close to the picture in time to see it with historical perspective. He knows this and limits his scope to picturing and interpreting within the framework of the time he wrote it. Reid does well. He has a good eye and he writes with the understanding of a man who has been there. He also has a very personal and readable style.

*Redneck Rock* is well organized with an Introduction providing all the necessary background for the Austin Scene and its music. The body is nine chapters on that many of the big country rockers: Walker, Fromholz, Stevenson, Ramsey, Bridger, Wier, Friedman, Murphey, and Nelson. Reid concludes with a behind-the-scene description of Willie Nelson’s 1973 Dripping Springs Reunion, where they tried to get it all together.

And now let’s hear it for the photographer! Melinda Wickman not only covers each subject and each chapter artistically and perceptively but is a sweet thing if every I saw one — which all goes to show that the best folks are focused in on that good-time redneck rock.

Francis Edward Abernethy
Stephen F. Austin State University
The following books are NOTED:


If any single individual can personify a group then Colonel Harold B. Simpson is Hood's Texas Brigade, certainly in the literary sense. Simpson years ago staked out the Texas Brigade, known familiarly by its first real commander's name, although it endured a number of men at the post, as his special mission. Labors at Hill Junior College (both in the classroom and at the Confederate Research Center) and at Texas Christian University have not deterred him from this first commitment. First came *Hood's Texas Brigade in Poetry and Song* and the *Hood's Texas Brigade: Lee's Grenadier Guard*. Now we have the present work, only volume three of proposed four. This is the first major work I know about of a unit's history after the war. It carries the men who survived the worst of the war into a lasting union, they should pardon the expression, with themselves and their descendents by blood and by spirit in a lasting tribute to the deeds of the Civil War. Simpson, more than any living man, has kept this spirit alive in the modern times. This volume, like its predecessors, is printed in an easy to read type and is written in a pleasant style. If you have the first two, you have to get this one. (APM)

Ericson, Carolyn Reeves, (transcriber) *1847 Census Nacogdoches County*, Nacogdoches, Texas (By Author), 1974. P. 19 and index.

Ericson, Carolyn Reeves, (transcriber) *1854 School Census of Nacogdoches County*.

Those who know Ms. Ericson or who know her work, especially the extremely useful *Nacogdoches—Gateway to Texas*, will realize the value of these latest endeavors. She has established herself as the "local authority" on such matters, and as such her transcribing from basic documents can be completely trusted. Both of these works were published by Ms. Ericson and are available from her in care of the Stone Fort Museum, Stephen F. Austin University, Nacogdoches. They contain much biographical information of interest to genealogists, historians, or antiquarians. Both are well indexed to increase the ease of usage. (APM)


Around Nacogdoches you hear a lot about Father Antonio Margil de Jesus, the head of the mission effort that first placed the Spanish presence on the banks of the Lanana and Banita Creeks. There are many legends about the good Father, including the miracles of drawing water from a rock and taming a wildcat, both previously done by Moses and St. Francis of Assisi. This is not to say that they were not done by him also, for he was an extraordinary man. His mission work was not limited to Nacogdoches or East Texas; indeed, he is really best known for his labors in lower Mexico and Central America. But we claim him for helping to get things started around here, for his beautiful nature, his godliness, and his devotion to Christian duty. Oberste has written about Margil with feeling and identification, and the story is inspiring. (APM)


According to the author, there's a ghost town or two in every county of East Texas. And they have been subject of some interest to him for a while because a number of years ago he published *This Was East Texas*, a book about East Texas ghost towns. The book at hand contains that and quite a few additional ghosts towns that have come to his attention since then, and is a considerable improvement. The illustrations and general format are just more of what you would expect a book to be. It is divided into collections of lumber
towns; courthouses and capitol; iron, oil, and rail towns; riverports; settlements of faith; teacher towns; and a listing of other towns covered in a few lines. Like the Ramos book, also noted in this issue, this is a book about the forgotten or nearly forgotten. Ramos looked at individuals, Bowman has looked at groups. (APM)


I first knew Ralph Ramos in the 1950s, knew him primarily as the father of one of the girls in French High School with whom I attended classes, and as a face on the TV screen as he delivered the evening news. I lost track of him through the years as I moved about, but about three years ago my relatives who still live in Beaumont started to save some interesting clippings from the Enterprise which he had written about some of the early but still living residents of East Texas. They were good features, had strong human interest, and were usually accompanied by a photograph of some older whose wrinkled countenance served as his credentials for supplying the meat of the story. Now Ramos has collected a goodly number of these features for this volume. It is a fine job, and Ramos' own story, the first item, is among the best.

Ramos believes that he is preforming a historical service by photographing and interviewing the super-annuated survivors of East Texas and Western Louisiana history. He is aware of the dangers of oral history, but accepts this as a calculated hazard. The result is a "fun" book, one that will particularly interest those who knew these fine old people, but it can be a source for those who only study their time, their life-style, or their folklore. Here are stories of work, hunting, fishing, fighting, living. Read them for enjoyment. All in all, I would say that Rita's dad has compiled a fine book. (APM)


This study traces the patterns of origin, emigration, settlement and growth of America's "grand-families," the families whose surnames predominate our society. The author employs the use of maps and tables to compare the frequency of the families in 1776 with the nation today and provides an index of 450 names. He concludes that the fifty or so surnames which predominate America are basically the same ones which prevailed at the beginning of the nation. (Mrs. Betty Davis)

Mason, Herbert Molloy, Jr., Missions of Texas. Birmingham (Oxmoor House), 1974. P. 102, Appendix, biblio., and index. $2.95.

The road leading to the missions of Texas began in Spain nearly five hundred years ago. The missions represented a great religious and political ideal launched by a great nation that fell into decline. Each mission played a distinct and important part in the over-all development. As Texas emerged into a republic, the Spanish missions were the most impressive in the Southwest. Thirty-six missions were built in Texas alone, influenced by a mixed culture: Iberian, Holy Roman Catholic, Mexican, and American Indian. All Texans should be very thankful to the people who realize the value of these beautiful temples of our Lord and are restoring them for the future. (Mrs. Bobby J. Walker)


Does "fireproof" mean that an article can't burn? Does "cash on hand" include funds in checking or savings accounts? Such questions as these, plus many more, have been involved in litigation in our nation's courts. This may not surprise you if you believe that the mood and attitude or our nation is such that people today can and do sue for any excuse imaginable. What will surprise you in reading this book is how easily you may be
the victim of a lawsuit, or how many times you have probably had legal grounds to sue. Hammett has complied a series of over 100 cases and court decisions written by Will Bernard and printed in a number of Texas newspapers as a public service of the Texas Bar Association. Hammett has organized these one page summaries, written in understandable layman's language, and has added one of the most concise and informative explanatory backgrounds of the development of our system of law I have ever read. (Anthony C. Martin)


*Karankaway Country* is the second edition of Roy Bedichek's book, first published in 1950. This timeless, prosaic work, set in the Texas Gulf Coast region where the Karankaway Indians once roamed, is of man and his environment, and the inevitable conflict between these and progress. Mr. Bedichek's love and respect for man and nature is evident throughout the book, as he describes the processes by which both in the coastal area of Texas were systematically destroyed to a point where salvation was a possibility only for the flora and fauna. The reader cannot help but feel a sense of guilt concerning current ecological problems, especially in view of the fact that early warning of serious problems were sounded twenty-five years ago. (Mrs. Mildred Venitucci)


Oren Arnold's book offers a nostalgic look into the process of growing up in a small east Texas town shortly after the turn of the century. Being a native of Rusk County, and "reared" in adjoining Gregg County, I can attest to his descriptions of the people, their colloquialisms, customs and attitudes, which in general have not changed considerably during the past fifty years. Only the machinery of their environment has become more sophisticated. (Mrs. Mildred Venitucci)