
Few historians will be surprised by Herman Belz's thesis that Republicans shifted from grudging support of emancipation as a military necessity in 1861 to a determination to protect freedmen's basic civil and political rights by 1866. Civil War and legal specialists, however, will want to read this careful explanation of exactly how and why Republican Congressmen considered many legal and Constitutional theories before passing the civil rights laws and Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments in response to shifting military and political developments of the period. This is the best, if not the definitive, study of this narrowly defined topic.

Robert G. Sherer
Wiley College


Beyond the heavy industry and the freeways, claims author Richard Phelan, there is a wild Texas yet, a Texas where the beer cans are few and the litter is little, where the wilderness is almost intact. Most of us look toward it from speeding autos, down on it from streaking air ships, or in air-conditioned comfort we view books such as this and feel romantic about it. We wish we knew more about it, marvel at our forefathers who ate it raw, and are often glad we don't have it so tough. Phelan wrote this book to satisfy at least the first part.

I particularly like the preface, perhaps because it agrees with some of my own intuitive reactions to Texas. "No other state has so many..." land forms, climates, etc. This is the stuff we were raised on, confirm with our communications to outsiders and to ourselves, and pass on to the young when it becomes our turn. As one who has made the drive to Amarillo or to the Big Bend from Nacogdoches several times, the changes are apparent even if measured in gas stops and rest areas. These changes structure Phelan's chapters: the Trans-Pecos, the Edward Plateau, the Llano Uplift, the Stakes Plain, the Prairies and Cross Timbers, the East Texas Forest, the Gulf Coast, and the Rio Grande Plain. The material in each is well presented in language easy to follow and to understand. Here even travelling salesmen will learn about natural and human Texas. And I must especially commend the attention given to East Texas. Many so-called "Texas" books assume that Louisiana extends to the Brazos; this one gives us our due.

A word must be said for Bones' photographs. Having seen his Texas Heartland it was natural to expect a great deal. He makes good again. Whether the photograph is the patterns on the underside of a weathered tree or the panorama of the Chisos Mountains, his work is masterful. It is a good book, and will make a fine gift, if you can stand to let it go.

Archie P. McDonald
Stephen F. Austin State University

BOOK NOTES


"This book is not a dreary, chronological history of a town; rather it is a collection of pictoral and verbal snapshots of Nacogdoches—views of Nacogdoches from many..."
different perspectives." Editor Baker thus defines the scope and *raison d'etre* of his organization's Bicentennial gift to their (our) town. This is such a fine project, a more lasting monument, really, than marble or bronze, for I know my fellow citizens well enough to envision them valuing—cherishing, even—this volume for decades. The Jaycees learned a lot about publishing from this effort, especially about proof-reading and index-making and getting recalcitrant contributors to own up to previously agreed upon deadlines, but their efforts have borne fine fruit. The contributors were or are residents of the community, and not a few have been associated with Stephen F. Austin State University as well: in addition to Baker, the contributors include Karle Wilson Baker, Texas' first lady of letters, Eddie Miller, James M. McReynolds, Charles Langford, F.E. Abernethy, Bill Stewart, A.P. McDonald, Martha Anne Turner, James Deaton, Diane Prince, Willie Earl Woods Tindall, H. Lawrence Zillmer, Bob Murphy, Lois Foster Blount, Lucile Fain, Ben Covin, C.F. Sheley, Robert S. Maxwell, A.L. Johnson, Linda Devereaux, George Rice, Carolyn Ericson, Charles Deaton, Tucker Randall Spradley, Joe Ericson, Melinda Ann Crain Ivy, J.L. Jackson, Joe Borders, Cleon Compton, and John F. Anderson (whew!). Topics range from early explorers to the 1976 Bicentennial celebration.

Among the things which makes this publication so valuable are the illustrations, the pictures of the past. The books are available from any Nacogdoches Jaycee, as well as at many local outlets and may be ordered from Baker at 2816 Dogwood, Nacogdoches, 75961.


"We cannot write the definitive book. Everything changes." Thus Eldon S. Branda, editor of the Texas State Historical Association's _The Handbook of Texas: A Supplement._ Volume III, succinctly explains why this important work was so long in the making. Like an anxiously awaited Hollywood piece, it was years in the process and stars a cast of thousands. At least in this case, the wait is rewarded with a work as valuable as the two previous volumes it joins, and since it _supplements_ them it increases their value as well.

The idea for the project came, as so many have, from Walter P. Webb. Under his early sponsorship (and the later performance of Bailey Carroll), the association published _The Handbook of Texas_ in two volumes in 1952. The publication became world famous, literally, and remains the only work of its kind for a state of the American union. Even before it was published Carroll and others became aware that it would need correcting, updating, revising. Barbara Cummings started it, but in 1967 Eldon Branda was appointed to edit the supplementary volume. In time it came to be a work of its own, of course, but the contact with the first two is maintained. For instance, the intended three hundred page work has expanded to nearly 1200 pages, and each reference in the first two volumes appears at least by title in this one, thus making it an index to the first two volumes without repeating the entries save to correct errors or to include new material. When the first volumes appeared, Texas had as yet produced no president; this volume gets to discuss two. In the quarter decade since the first appearance of the _Handbook_ men have visited the moon, invented pull top beer cans, the Astrodome (even the Astros), and only the Good Lord and Eldon Branda know what else. And thanks to both of them and to the Texas State Historical Association, Volume III is now on my desk beside its papa and mama.

"You're gonna love this book." F.E. Abernethy, who wrote a splendid Foreword for the Loughmillers' essay in pictures and words of the Thicket, thus inscribed my copy and he didn't lie. It is a book to love, especially if you grew up in or around the area and the people it features. A modern and fairly civilized fellow in most respects, I am thrilled when I see again in such places as this book that my roots are not in concrete and finger lickin' good Burgerland, but in the pines and bays and dogwoods (and poison ivy and vines) of that area north of Beaumont so often visited in the past. I guess you might say Ab is my Alex Haley because he is so often associated with the literary efforts which stimulate my memories. I might quarrel with him as to the boundaries of the Thicket, because I have seen it in the low areas of Newton County, at least enough of it to satisfy my hungrys for the wild. I mean I'll put the Bon Wier mosquitoes and ticks up against anybody's.

I love the people who are here so gently visited by the interviewers and allowed to tell their life stories in an unbothered way. These craggy faced, hard working, biscuit eaters and gravy soppers are MY PEOPLE, bless 'em, and I am glad that the world beyond Beaumont and Woodville and Livingston can get to know them from such a handsome, well-designed book. The price is right and the work is well done.


"Bill Brett said it better than I ever could," noted William A. Owens and adds, quoting Brett, "And there wasn't a lie in the whole speech, nor dang little truth." Owens claims that no one but Brett could really tell this story of life in the Big Thicket at the turn of the century. True or not, it is the story and more importantly the telling of it, that is important.

Brett learned the tale from the one who lived it, he claims, but the telling is pure Brett. It concerns a young man who leaves West Texas because of the drought and comes to the Thicket. Here he is injured in an oil-field accident, goes broke, and then steals a small herd of steers. But misfortune is not quite through with him, and he becomes gravely ill. Kindly black folk nurse him, and he repays them by sharing the profits from his illegally obtained herd. As I said, Brett, in the vernacular of the Thicket, tells it better, and I know'd it was a good book when I saw his name on it.


If you live in East Texas your attitude toward trees is well formed. Born here or moved in, they are to us what wind is to Lubbock—ever present. Most East Texans don't really understand the ecstasy the prairie folk find in them, and since unlike Brooklyn we have a few more than one, some of us are not very romantic about them; that is, chain saws do sell well here. And we are divided on what to do with them. Some look at a stand of hardwood and see something in the way of a good pulp patch; others look at symmetrical rows of pines and see dollar signs; and a few just look at trees and feel the power of the Creator. But whatever our emotions, we do need to know what kind of tree we are seeing. Robert Vines' handbook can help. A tree, he says, is a plant that has a woody trunk at least four inches in diameter four feet above the ground, with a definite branched crown and a height of not less than twelve feet. They grow in East Texas more abundantly than elsewhere in the state, and are said to grow in one of three
zones: Pineywoods, Post Oak Savannah, and Upper Gulf Coast Prairie. Trees do grow elsewhere, of course, but not as well as they do here. You won’t believe how many of them he has catalogued. There are fifty-nine families considered here, which translates into several hundred different kinds of trees. Each is described and illustrated with words and drawings which tell about flowering and fruiting, the look of the leaves, twigs, bark and wood, and general remarks about range and usefulness is provided. Woodman, gardener or bibliophile, you will find something to help and interest you here.


This collection of songs began, William A. Owens says, with the sounds he remembers from his growing-up years in the Pin Hook community, Lamar County, Texas. Collecting became serious in college, when he began a study of Texas play-party songs which resulted in the 1936 publication, *Swing and Turn: Texas Play-Party Games.* Owens was among the early collectors to use sound equipment. first on his own and then as official researcher for the University of Texas library of Texas folk music. *Texas Folk Songs* first appeared in 1950, and is expanded here to include 135 songs divided into nine chapters. Topics include British popular ballads, Anglo-American ballads, Anglo-American love songs, Anglo-American comic songs, songs and games for children, play-party songs and games, Anglo-American spirituals, Afro-American spirituals, and Afro-American secular songs. Each piece has some introduction, which varies in length considerably, plus the verses and musical transcription. It is best enjoyed at the piano or with a guitar.


This book’s title is more than a pun: it is not just, as it might appear, a collection of ethnic food of Texas but a history cookbook with recipes of current use, and it really does refer to the use of the frying pan to “melt” butter. The recipes are a result of many efforts by the Texan Institute of Cultures of San Antonio, the lasting legacy of Hemisfair, to provide Texans with a representative cookbook of what they are eating. Not all ethnic groups are represented, but twenty-seven are, varying from Afro-Americans (collard greens, for example) to Filipinos (sweet potato fritter) to the Wendish (beer soup and fresh fig pie). Each section is prefaced with a brief introduction to the group and its cuisine, and then six to ten recipes are presented. You can gain weight from the calories that are taken in just from the reading. An interesting section is that which converts measurements from the folk to the microwave era; thus a “pinch” or “dash” is said to be “less than 1/8 teaspoon.” which is then said to be 5 milliliters. True internationalism at last.


The *Biographical Dictionary of the Confederacy* is a unique work which will prove to be an invaluable resource for any student of the Confederacy.

In a major introductory essay, author Jon Wakelyn describes the collective leadership of the South from 1850 to 1877. His quantification of key indicators should prove useful to anyone seeking to analyze or compare the lives and careers of Confederate leaders.

Then, in an A-Z format, there are 650 biographical descriptions of the civil and military leaders of the Confederacy. Among the different occupations included: generals, naval officers, and ordinance and supply personnel; all members of the Confederate Congress; the Cabinet and other high administrative officers; the leading appellate
justices; major businessmen, educators; and clerics. The biographical sketches, averaging 500-600 words, provide factual information on each figure's background, activities during the Civil War, and his or her postwar career. Bibliographical information is also provided.

Appendices and a general index follow the biographical sketches. The appendices provide groupings of information about geographical mobility, principal occupations, religious affiliations, education, and prewar and postwar party affiliations.

The Biographical Dictionary of the Confederacy was written by Jon L. Wakelyn, Associate Professor of History and Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences at the Catholic University of America. Professor Wakelyn is a specialist in Southern history, the Civil War, and the Reconstruction era. Among his other publications are The Politics of a Literary Man (Greenwood Press), 1973, and a forthcoming volume on the antebellum South.

Frank E. Vandiver, Provost, and Harris Masterson, Jr., Professor of History at Rice University, served as Advisory Editor. Professor Vandiver is one of the leading scholars of the Civil War and American military history.

Rural Oklahoma. Edited by Donald E. Green. Oklahoma City (Oklahoma Historical Society), 1977. Index. p. 158. $9.50, cloth; $7.00, paper.

As always, we are interested in the research and writing concerning our sister states, and a book received recently is particularly deserving of that interest. Rural Oklahoma, volume five in the series of state studies sponsored by the Oklahoma Historical Society, was edited by Donald E. Green. Green is Associate Professor of History at Central State University, Edmond, Oklahoma, and the author of several books and articles, including the prize-winning Land of the Underground Rain (1973). He has assembled here the work of some of the most important scholars working in the field of Oklahoma history, including N. James Wilson, Garry L. Nall, Howard L. Meridith, Charles Townsend, David D. Webb, William Savage, Jr., Carl N. Tyson, Joyce Gregg, and especially Bobby H. Johnson, whose entry, “Pilgrims on the Prairie: Rural Life in Oklahoma Territory,” makes for good reading.


The history of Washington County is the history of Texas. Interwoven into the very fabric of county history are the lives of men and events that initiated and shaped the destiny of the Lone Star State. From Washington-on-the-Brazos, a motley group of Texans drafted a constitution and went on to forge a nation.

In the meantime the settlement of Independence gave birth to Baylor University, the state's oldest institution of higher learning. Author Wilfred O. Dietrich has chronicled the blazing story of Washington County from its auspicious beginning to the present. This revised edition contains considerable additions and amplification of the original history published in 1950. Included are chapters on the settlement of the county, its political development, the history of the county seat of Brenham and country communities, economic development, and a new chapter on the religious history of the county. Also among new material is a roster of Masonic Lodges in Washington County during the early days of the Texas Republic.