BOOK REVIEWS

Fragile Empires, The Texas Correspondence of Samuel Swartwout and James Morgan, 1836-1856. Edited by Feris A. Bass and B.R. Brunson. (Shoal Creek Publishers, Inc., P.O. Box 9737, Austin, Texas 78766), 1978. Photographs, Bibliography, Index. p. 384. $27.50.

This book is a compilation of the edited letters of Samuel Swartwout and James Morgan from the years 1836-1856. Most of the original letters are deposited in the Rosenberg Library, Galveston, Texas; some are in the Barker Texas History Center Archives at the University of Texas, Austin, Texas. Swartwout, a wealthy New York investor, was one of the organizers of the New Washington Association, a scheme to buy and promote a land development in which the city of New Washington (hopefully to be the capital of the new Republic of Texas) would be located. Swartwout was closely identified with many national political figures, including Andrew Jackson and Martin Van Buren, and was a Jackson appointee as Collector of Customs at the Port of New York. As such, his private correspondence reflects interesting and intimate details of national personalities and intrigues in regards to Texas.

Morgan came to Texas to seek his fortune, but failed in the merchantile business. It was through mutual friends that he became employed by Swartwout's New Washington Association. Morgan was as familiar with key Texas figures and politics as Swartwout was on the national level.

The correspondence reveals Swartwout's financial aid to Texas in her Revolution with Mexico in the hopes that it would promote and protect his investment in lands purchased through the New Washington Association. His efforts to receive payment for this aid to Texas would be fruitless. He constantly refers to this debt throughout the entire correspondence. The letters touch on more than unpaid debts. They reveal intimate detail of major Texas political issues of that time, including the relationship between the new Republic and the United States, Great Britain, France and Mexico, and Mexico's continuing hostile attitude towards Texas independence. Further, the correspondence reveals not only the deplorable Texas financial condition, but the financial problems of the United States and the correspondents. In addition, their interesting insights into political intrigues involving Texas' Annexation both times appears as a continuous effort in the correspondence. The reader will find Swartwout's uncanny predictions of political outcomes of special interest. It is interesting to watch the business relationship of Morgan and
Swartwout develop into a personal friendship, and even affection and deep concern for each, over the years.

While the book is very difficult to read because of the nature of the correspondence, it is a book that will be valued by genealogists as well as students of the Republic of Texas and Middle American History. One of the problems is maintaining a continuity due to length of time in receiving answers to previous letters. Through no fault of the editors, the correspondents had an aggravating habit of abbreviation. In spite of the tedious nature of the correspondence, history students should find suspenseful interest in the letters, both from a personal and historical prospective. Footnoting is repetitious.

Linda Cross
Tyler, Texas


The tragic story of the Mier Expedition and the hardships suffered by the survivors who were forced to march to Mexico City and then imprisoned in Castle Perote are well known to all students of Texas history. The Joseph D. McCutchan diary and the account of Thomas W. Bell constitute the most complete accounts of the Mier expedition by participants from the beginning of the Sommervell expedition in 1842 to the return of the prisoners to Texas in 1844. The McCutchan diary has long been known to scholars, but only now has it been published. The original manuscript resides in the Rosenberg Library in Galveston, and the history of how the diary has survived is in itself a fascinating story.

Joseph D. McCutchan, a native of Tennessee, arrived in Texas in 1841. At the age of nineteen he enrolled in Alexander Sommervell’s expedition to the Rio Grande. When Sommervell decided to return, a large portion of his force refused and selected William S. Fisher to be their commander to invade Mexico at Mier. The effort proved a fiasco and of those who were captured, nineteen were executed after the famous drawing of the "black beans." The survivors were herded to Mexico City and later encarcerated in Castle Perote. After enduring incredible suffering, humiliation, and hardships of every variety, the prisoners were finally returned to Texas in 1844. In Mexico McCutchan was able to maintain a diary of the horrors of the
experience and upon his return to Texas, he completed the early
parts of his story from memory.

Joseph Milton Nance, an imminently Texas scholar, has done a
superb job of editing this most valuable primary work. To
preserve as much as possible the flavor of the document, he
maintained "the sentence structure, capitalization, and spelling
of the author but . . . [has] used some discretion in interpreting the
punctuation in order to improved the readability of the
document." Nance has written a biographical sketch of
McCutchan and details the history of the diary and his frequent
difficulties in deciphering faded and water stained passages.

The editor has provided an exhaustive bibliography, an
excellent index, and a signature of sketches and photographs.
Unfortunately, there is no likeness of McCutchan, apparently
because none exists. Nance's copious explanatory footnotes
throughout the text greatly enhance the value of this volume. Not
only is this a most valuable primary source, but Nance's editing is
of the highest order. In fact, it could well serve as a text for those
who are preparing to edit a primary document. In short, Nance's
work is a classic.

Martin Hardwick Hall
University of Texas
at Arlington

Samuel H. Walker's Account of the Mier Expedition. Edited by
Marilyn M. Sibley. (Texas State Historical Association, Sid
Richardson Hall 2.306, University Station, Austin, Texas
110. $10.00.

Samuel Hamilton Walker arrived in Texas in 1842, and for
the next five years he led an extremely active and violent life in a
turbulent environment. He joined a military expedition sent to
retaliate against the Mexicans for their repeated raids into Texas.
When the main body of this force returned to Texas, Walker
remained with a group which continued to fight the Mexicans.
This band of adventurers was captured attempting to take the
Mexican town of Mier. The aggressive Texans escaped, but were
recaptured after an arduous and futile trek in search of freedom.
As punishment for their attempted escape, one in ten of the
Texans were executed. The victims were determined by having
the prisoners draw beans out of a mug, the unfortunates being
those who drew black beans. Walker survived this fatal gamble,
and he and his comrades were taken to Mexico City for
imprisonment under forced labor. Walker subsequently escaped
and found his way back to Texas. He retained his bitterness
toward many of those involved in the affair, Texans as well as Mexicans.

Walker’s adventurous spirit led him to join the Texas Rangers, where he distinguished himself by fighting Indians on the frontier. He made recommendations to Samuel Colt on adapting his new revolver to serve the needs of mobile warfare on the dangerous frontier. This led to the perfection of the model known as the Walker Colt. Walker did not live to enjoy his fame, for the vengeful Texan was killed fighting his former captors in 1847 during the Mexican War.

This book presents the journal kept by this soldier of fortune concerning the punitive expedition of 1842 and his imprisonment in Mexico. In this Walker describes brutal fighting, tortuous captivity, and constant encounters with the deaths of his comrades. He also provides revealing, sometimes scathing, commentary on the actions of his officers, Mexicans, and Texan politicians. Walker’s account is well preserved in this work. The journal is placed in its historical context with a concise and informative introductory section, then is edited sufficiently for organization and readability without detracting from the flavor of the original. Notes provides relevant biographical and historical information to illuminate points mentioned by Walker. A map of his journey and several contemporary illustrations enhance the appeal of this chronicle. This book will be welcomed by general readers and scholars as a portrayal of another fascinating segment of Texas history.

Michael Everman
Oklahoma State University


The military history buff will enjoy this book for several reasons, as will the reader who just enjoys a good book about the taming of the West. William Woods Averell tells his own story and takes himself from the cradle to the middle of the Civil War, by way of West Point (Class of 1855) and service in the far western territories of New Mexico and Arizona.

Born in New York state on November 5, 1832, Averell lived a rich and full life, robust, adventurous, and military, until 1864, when Gen. Phil Sheridan removed Averell from his command of cavalry soldiers. Returning to civilian life, Averell was successful in business and industry, living until February 3, 1900.
Averell’s background is given in his “Introduction,” where he tells about his family ties. His West Point career is told in Chapter 1. His work in the cavalry, coupled with service on the plains, in New Mexico, and against the Navajo and other assorted Indians, are well covered in Chapters 2 through 14. His return from the far West is told appropriately enough in Chapter 15, entitled “Homeward,” wherein he is invalided home. The Civil War is dealt with in Chapters 16 through 24, the most interesting of these being those entitled “Bull Run,” “Military Necessity,” and “Conduct of the War.”

As an officer involved in front-line duty, Averell was in a unique position to be “in” on the entire course of the War. And being of a “pack rat” disposition, he saved all his notes, letters, orders, daybooks, journals, diaries, and newspaper clippings, on which he drew to refresh his memory when he wrote this memoir. Hence, his description and interpretation of political choices and military expediency are most interesting, even though his thoroughly un-Lincolnesque bias shines throughout. In fact, that Averell was a Democrat is the most obvious thing in this latter part of the book.

Averell bears down hard on the Lincoln Administration’s policy, as he calls it, of appointing politicians and political figures to run the War, rather than letting the military men trained in that duty take care of the fighting. In his final chapter, “Conduct of the War,” Averell is particularly vituperous against the politicians and their helpers, the newspapers. He really gets hostile when he describes the summary dismissal of Gen. McClellan as commander of the Army of the Potomac, and then gets positively rabid when the story of his own removal from command is told. The bias really turns to bitterness, which although quite obvious does not mar the man’s reminiscences for the reader.

That Averell was a good trooper and fine officer is obvious not only from his own writing but is substantiated from the “Editors’ Epilogue” as well. The editors have gone to quite a bit of trouble to substantiate Averell’s claims and observations and have come to the conclusion that Averell and his cavalry were indeed a source of terror to the Confederacy. The reason the editors give for Averell’s removal is simply that his use of tactics was outdated and that a new class of soldier was needed. Averell was too cautious and gentlemanly to be a good soldier by the end of the Civil War.

After the War, Averell went into business and also the diplomatic corps. He was “a knowing, farsighted person who, because of a weakness or trait in his character, lacked or chose not to be motivated by the ‘root hog or die’ philosophy that
prevailed” in that era known as the Gilded Age. (pp. 419-20)

William Woods Averell was a man, and he lived by his ways and upbringing. His memoir is interesting reading, factual, and well done. And it is enjoyable.

H.C. Arbuckle, III
Corpus Christi, Texas


This book is for those individuals who will be happy only when every facet of the War Between the States is known. It examines aspects of life in Texas from economics to soldier poetry.

The title is somewhat misleading, and it is only in the subtitle that the true scope of the work is indicated. The treatment does not chronicle events outside Texas, so the exploits of Hood’s Brigade are not related. Indeed, battles appear only peripherally. The major emphasis is on Texas; what was done in defense fortifications, the effect on the economy, the composition of both Confederate and Union navies, maps and illustrations, and profiles and anecdotes about Texas and Texans.

One aspect not covered was the conflict between Unionists and Confederates among the citizens. Texans seem somewhat ashamed of the Unionist sentiment, although the most prominent exponent was Sam Houston.

Research is obviously extensive. Details of construction of fortifications are given and the listing of vessels of both navies appears to be complete. A Confederate bias is shown by listing commanding officers for those vessels while omitting Union commanders.

As previously mentioned, Texas is the subject, and it is never better illustrated than in the Profiles and Anecdotes section, which is very well done. The selections include the iconoclastic humor of “Constitution of the Sea Coast Guards”, period poetry in the sentimental vein and “The Wartime Journal of Major John E.T. Milsaps”. Here, the homefront is seen through the eyes of a ten year old boy, and the picture is vivid.

This book is not for the general reader, but it contains much valuable information for those interested Texas during the War Between the States.

H.L. Sandefer
Virginia Beach, Virginia

On August 26, 1864, William H. Howe, a soldier, went to his death. Dying was nothing extraordinary in 1864, but the death of William H. Howe was unique. Howe died on the gallows after Lincoln had refused to stop his execution for the crimes of desertion and murder. According to Robert I. Alotta, the execution was the culmination of a process which began when Secretary of War Edwin Stanton decided an example was necessary to “stop the evil” of desertion from the union ranks.

The Civil War was not supported unanimously in the North. Even in the early stages problems arose in meeting enlistment quotas. But one of those who volunteered was William H. Howe. Howe served with valor, if without distinction, until the battle of Fredericksburg. There, poor leadership led to a bloodbath without purpose. But William H. Howe remained with his unit, even as those in more preferred positions fled. Then he suffered through the winter and developed crippling dysentery. Finally, he had enough. Like so many of his comrades, Howe went home.

For some months Howe remained on his farm. Most of his neighbors knew that he was there, and he made no attempt to hide. Then came Stanton’s decision to reduce desertion. Those who attempted to arrest Howe attacked at night. One was killed so Howe faced charges of murder as well as desertion. Twice the courts martial found Howe guilty. Howe was the first, the symbol, the victim of Stanton’s need to have an example. At least such is the view of Robert I. Alotta.

Possibly so. But Alotta might be misreading the evidence. He gained the inspiration for this work from the case of Eddie Slovik, the man executed for desertion during World War II. On the surface the two cases are similar. But Alotta uses evidence of dubious value. Excluding the testimony at the trials, Howe left no record of his thoughts. Alotta uses diaries and reports of men who had similar experiences to Howe—similar, but not necessarily the same. To be solid, this work needs more evidence concerning Howe’s life and feelings.

Stop the Evil is interesting to read, but it has flaws. It uses questionable evidence. Also, the attempt to fit what is available into a preconceived pattern weakens the worth of the work. The study has merit as an attempt to fill a void, but it is not definitive.

J. Herschel Barnhill
Oklahoma State University

During the waning decades of the nineteenth century, the area along the Niobrara river in northern Nebraska became notorious for its "Court of Last Resort." Activity by horse and cattle thieves in the rugged river region caused the organization of numerous vigilante committees. Harold Hutton recounts the clash between vigilante and thief, using such sources as newspaper accounts, court records, letters to state officials, published histories, folk tales, and an interview with a ninety-eight-year-old former vigilante. Hutton attempts to deal objectively with various episodes of vigilante justice which occurred from 1883 to 1906, and then he lets the reader decide whether the existence of the vigilante committees was justified.

Hutton details the summary justice dealt out to thieves (imagined and real) on the untamed frontier of Nebraska's northern country. The Niobrara region was remote and inaccessible, a disadvantage for lawmen and an advantage for the lawless. During the height of vigilante activity along the Niobrara, fifteen lives were lost, several persons dissappeared without explanation, and many suspected thieves fled the country. Because settlers populated the area before adequate law enforcement arrived, honest homesteaders often left the region in fear of both vigilante and thief, resulting in a slowing of immigration. Hutton also tells about noted outlaws Doc Middleton and Kid Wade, about local political intrigue, and about the Populist Party's rise in northern Nebraska.

The author presents his regional study of vigilante committees in an objective and readable style, using timely endnotes to show his documentation. Numerous illustrations greatly enhance the work, as do appropriate maps, appendixes, and an index. This volume contributes to the literature on vigilante justice, as well as to the social and political history of the region. Readers interested in these topics and students of the American West in general will find this study worthwhile.

Timothy A. Zwink
Northwestern Oklahoma State University
The Capture of John Wesley Hardin. By Chuck Parsons. (Creative Publishing Company, Box 9292, College Station, Texas 77840), 1978. Photographs, Notes, Bibliography, Acknowledgements, Index. p. 121. $9.95.

At the age of twenty-four, John Wesley Hardin had been credited with at least twenty killings, and some said that he had sent maybe fifty men to their graves. He was probably the most feared man in Texas and certainly the one most wanted by the law. Hardin's career as a gunfighter did not end in a blaze of glory, however. He was arrested on a train in Pensacola, Florida, on August 22, 1877; his apprehension was so effectively carried out that he was unable even to draw his pistol.

Although the capture of Hardin did not contain the drama from which legends are made, it is an interesting story. Drawing on newspaper reports, Hardin's personal papers, and secondary sources, as well as Hardin's autobiography, Chuck Parsons has written an authoritative account of the events which culminated in the capture of Hardin and his return to Texas.

In the spring of 1877 detective Jack Duncan discovered that Hardin was living in Pollard, Alabama, under the name of John H. Swain and requested that Texas Ranger John B. Armstrong journey to Pollard and arrest him. Armstrong consequently received acclaim for subduing Hardin. However, Parsons has found that William Henry Hutchinson, the Sheriff of Escambia County, Alabama, deserves the praise for that deed. Hutchinson was the one who confronted Hardin on the train and disarmed him with his deputy's help.

Hardin was transported back to Texas, where he was convicted of the second degree murder of Charles M. Webb in 1874. Sentenced to twenty-five years in prison, he was pardoned in 1984. In August of 1895, he died in a saloon in El Paso, shot in the back. He suffered a tragic, but not heroic, end. Nonetheless, he had been the deadliest gunman in Texas, if not the West, and his activities and those of the lawmen who brought him to bay merit attention. Parsons' book examines both.

Thomas Burnell Colbert
Oklahoma State University


In the early days of American colonization in Texas,
empresario Stephen F. Austin hired ten men to protect his settlements from marauding Indians. This group of frontiersmen was to range throughout the settlements intercepting the attacks of hostile tribes. After Texas secured its freedom from Mexico these "Rangers" were made a permanent defensive force. The Texas Rangers are one of the most enduring legacies of the American West. The Ranger has become the personification of the cool-headed, slow-to-anger, frontier lawman and a paragon of law and order. It is this image of the Texas Rangers that Julian Samora, Joe Bernal, and Albert Pena seek to correct in Gunpowder Justice: A Reassessment of the Texas Rangers.

Instead of the impartial protector of the defenseless, Samora, Bernal, and Pena see the Rangers as instruments of the Anglo power structure that has controlled Texas for one hundred years. According to the authors, the Rangers were never hesitant to step outside the law to intimidate the Mexican or Indian minorities in Texas. The Rangers have been the pawns of Texas governors and instruments of economic and political oppression.

The revision of a standard historical interpretation is an accepted and sometimes needed scholarly endeavor. Hopefully the revision will expose flaws in research or any bias which might tint the account. The end product of this reassessment should be a more accurate, objective picture of the subject. Unfortunately the authors of Gunpowder Justice have simply replaced a favorable distortion of the Texas Rangers with one decidedly unfavorable. The account is by no means comprehensive or objective. The text is based on very selective secondary sources. Gunpowder Justice is a social and political indictment of the Texas Rangers. One of the stated purposes of the book is a scholarly examination of the myth and the reality of the Rangers. If the need for a scholarly reassessment of this group existed before Gunpowder Justice was published, then that need still remains.

Larry D. Roberts
South Dakota State University

And the Passing of the Old West. By J. Evetts Haley. (Jenkins Publishing Company, P.O. Box 2085, Austin, Texas 78768), 1978. Bibliography, Vitae of Contributing Authors, Illustrations, Index. p. 239.

J. Evetts Haley, the man, and his contributions to Texas history and literature, provide the central theme for this attractive bibliography. While the book could have been improved with tighter organization, Chandler Robinson advocates that Haley's
“unmatched ability makes him an ideal author to perpetuate the Old West.” (p. 33)

Consider first the literature. With a list of Haley’s 373 writings from 1920 through 1976, J. Evetts Haley and the Passing of the Old West supersedes Robinson’s earlier bibliography. This new work contains chronological listings of books and pamphlets, published and unpublished speeches, book reviews, miscellaneous publications, unpublished manuscripts, ephemera and even a special section: trivia. Then follows a chronological listing of Haley’s writings. But as any reader knows, the test of an author’s merit lies not in the number of publications, but in a rare ability to research and write about difficult subjects.

Readers will gain insight into Haley’s thought, interesting prose and diverse talents. His son, Evetts, notes key elements in his father’s personality, the people who influenced his father’s thought, and concludes that Haley was a “superb wordsmith.” (p. 14). Melvin Bradford adds a portrait of Haley the scholar. Savoie Lottinville and others conclude that Haley’s Charles Goodnight was “the best Plains Biography ever written.” (p. 69). Twelve other authors make keen observations or commemorate various aspects of Haley’s diverse career. Joe Frantz brings the reader back to Robinson’s theme with a Webb and a Dobie story and Haley’s genuine attachment to the Old West.

The significance of this book is multifold. Its principal value will attract the book lover, be that person a collector or reader of Texana. Political conservatives will have their heart deeply warmed as Haley becomes partly exonerated in print. Graduate students of historiography will have their curiosity aroused. Lastly, this bibliography will be a good jumping off place for a deeper indepth study of J. Evetts Haley.

Irvin May
Texas A&M University

Mexico and the United States in the Oil Controversy, 1917-1942.
By Lorenzo Meyer. (University of Texas Press, Box 7819, Austin, Texas 78712), 1977. Appendix, Notes, Sources, Index. p. 367. $19.95.

Lorenzo Meyer has written a fine book dealing with the most important question of this century in United States-Mexican relations—the status of the Mexican holdings of US-based oil companies following the Mexican Revolution of 1910-1917. He points out the centrality of the oil dispute to policies of post-Revolutionary governments in Mexico. So important was the future of foreign oil holdings that it came to be seen in Mexico City as “... the touchstone for a new style of relations between
Mexico and the rest of the world." (230) The dispute exerted such tremendous leverage upon vital aspects of domestic policy in Mexico that "... the concept of property as defined in the Constitution of 1917, and to a great extent the whole program of economic and political reform, hinged on its solution." (xiii)

This book is a translation of Meyer's second Mexican edition published by El Colegio de Mexico in 1972 (first ed., 1968). The author drew primarily upon documents found in the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Mexico and in the National Archives in Washington, D.C. The second Mexican edition resulted when important new documents became available to the author in both US and Mexican archives in 1970. Much of the new material concerned the crucial years of the mid- and late 1930s, dealing directly with the unprecedented expropriation of most foreign oil companies in 1938.

Much of Meyer's work confirms the standard interpretation of this subject, adding new details and a sharper focus. In several areas, however, he alters our previous understanding of the oil dispute. In his treatment of the position of the Mexican government during the years 1917-1920 Meyer shows that President Carranza's personal commitment to the new constitution's anti-foreign provisions regarding property rights was stronger than previously realized and played a major role in the Mexican stance. Also, Meyer reveals that the attitude of the Roosevelt administration in the post - 1938 period as seen in US State Department documents was by no means as pacific and conciliatory as previously suggested, making all the more remarkable the Mexican accomplishment in surviving the crisis.

Meyer admits that his sympathies lie with Mexico during the long dispute but he manages a creditably impartial scholarly analysis of this knotty and emotional issue. This book is thoroughly researched and Muriel Vasconcellos has provided an excellent translation. It is a worthy addition to the publications of El Colegio de Mexico, and the University of Texas Press is to be commended for making it available to an English-speaking public. Unfortunately, the UT Press chose to publish the book in a format which detracts from its readability. The work features small type and closely-spaced lines more suited to a small paperback than to an expensive hardbound book.

Readers interested in Mexico and our relations with that nation will overcome this hindrance, though, and will find Meyer's book well worth the effort.

D.S. Chandler
Miami University
Oxford, Ohio

At the present time there is active involvement for the preservation and restoration of historic buildings throughout the United States. The landscapes and gardens which at one time surrounded these buildings are also important historically. To truly reflect another period in time, these landscapes and gardens of historic sites must be carefully researched and developed. Historic buildings are greatly enhanced when their authentic landscape design is restored. In Landscapes and Gardens for Historic Buildings the Favvertis provide outstanding guidance in all matters of landscape and garden design for authentic period settings. The American Association for State and Local History is to be congratulated for recognizing the need for this type book and making it available to restorers and preservationists.

The book is directed primarily to historic house museums and other buildings of historical significance, but the information will be of equal value to private homeowners, horticulturists, and anyone interested in creating period settings. It contains a brief history and chronology of landscape design in the United States from the Colonial days to the Twentieth Century, and explains the importance of accurate and extensive research on the property. The Favrettis then tell how to develop a landscape plan based on that research, how to find and identify authentic plants for the period, and how to maintain and care for the restored landscape.

Throughout the book one hundred eleven period drawings, prints, and photographs illustrate landscape and garden plans, including ornamentation, statuary, fencing, and walkways. The Favrettis provide a list of more than 2100 plants and flowers plus the dates they came into popular use; thereby making their handbook a very useful tool and easy to apply.

Rudy J. Favretti is a Professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Connecticut, and a practicing landscape architect. He has served as a landscape consultant on more than 100 historic sites including Old Sturbridge Village, Mystic Seaport, and Monticello. Joy P. Favretti is a botanist and researcher who has collaborated with her husband on several recently published works.

In spite of the recent renewed emphasis on preservation in America, the restoration of original landscapes and gardens is often overlooked; therefore, it is becoming increasingly
important to treat what remains to be done with the historic integrity and care it deserves.

Sarah Jackson
Nacogdoches, Texas


William Seale's *Recreating the Historic House Interior* may well be one of the most important historiographic works of recent years. Although the avowed purpose is to serve as a textbook for those faced with the problem of recreating an historic interior, the volume is a model for anyone interested in the tactics of historical research—particularly on the local level—and should be considered as a text for both undergraduate and graduate historiography courses. Both as a discussion of historic method and as an example of good writing by an historian, it is a model which could be profitably examined by students and faculty alike.

As a guide to the techniques and perils of restoring the historic interior, the book is completely reliable. Following a discussion of research techniques, Seale explores the ramifications and problems of restoration, furnishing plans, furniture, transient objects, lighting and textiles, and concludes with a useful essay that brings the different themes together, and sets the stage for a sound interpretive program. Perhaps the most valuable part of the book is the collection of photographs of interiors—both historic and recreated— appended to the text. Accompanied by brief commentaries, these photographs are invaluable resources for anyone preparing to deal with the historic interior. Texas readers will be pleased to find a number of interiors from Texas included in the book.

The bibliography is particularly useful, for it includes references both to the current literature and to works which have fallen from fashion, but still contain much useful information. Furthermore, Seale is aware that museums are faced with the problem of the Twentieth Century interior, and he suggests sources which are of particular value when exploring this period.

In sum, this is a book of great value to the historical community, and one which is required reading for preservationists, and recommended reading for every other historian.

Patrick H. Butler III
North Texas State University
Historical Collection

Periodically, a number of scholars simultaneously focus their attention on a critical period of history and force a major reassessment of historical forces. Such a reassessment is occurring in the historiography of the Farmers' Alliance and the Populist movements in the late nineteenth century United States. Significant studies such as Robert C. McMath, Jr., Populist Vanguard: A History of the Southern Farmers' Alliance (1975); James M. Youngdale, Populism: A Psychohistorical Perspective (1975); Lawrence Goodwyn, Democratic Promise: The Populist Moment in America (1976); and Michael Schwartz, Radical Protest and Social Structure: The Southern Farmers' Alliance and Cotton Tenancy, 1880-1890 (1976) have contributed to this development. The authors have challenged standard interpretations of the Alliance and the Populist movements and have pointed out the key role of the South in developing the Alliance, the innovative efforts of the Alliance in developing economic and political self-help, and the devastating backlash of their opponents.

Not the least of these studies is Schwartz' Radical Protest and Social Structure. Schwartz is a sociologist who brings the methodology of sociology and social structure to bear on an historical force, the Southern Farmers' Alliance, in this superb book where he "attempts to present a set of fresh historical and sociological facts" (x). The result has to be considered must reading by anyone concerned with southern history. Schwartz persuasively argues that the SFA "was particularly resourceful and creative in its attempts to dismantle the Southern tenant farming system" (ix). He shows that the SFA's ultimate failure was not inevitable; class antagonisms, both within and without the Alliance, paved the way.

Schwartz' study is a singular contribution for both his description of the tenancy system and his analysis of the underpinnings of the Alliance. He thoroughly dissects "the one-crop cotton tenancy system," with a clear explanation of the basic tenancy relationships, the tenancy system, the dynamics of change in southern farm tenancy, and farmer immiseration and the reemergence of the planter aristocracy. He delineates, in 36 concise pages, the organizational history of the SFA. To many, as to Schwartz, the most important portion of the book evaluates "theoretical considerations." Using occasional examples from the Alliance, he discusses the parameters of organizational
behavior, the determinants of organized protest, and the life of protest organizations. Finally, he analyzes "the process of Alliance protest" by depicting local economic action, the Alliance Exchange, the Jute Boycott, actions of the SFA in Richmond County, North Carolina, and the shift to politics.

In a short review, it is impossible to convey the handling of intricate class relationships, the dialectics described, or the overall impact of the work. It is thought-provoking, based on up-to-date methodology, informative, and interesting to read. If I have any criticism, it is that the discussion of theoretical considerations too quickly dismisses the views of others, almost as if he were setting up paper targets to knock down. But this is a minor criticism, and the book is a major contribution to the understanding of a protest organization that had a good chance to succeed. In fact, the intermediate successes of the Alliance probably led to their ultimate failure. A successful action, like the cooperatives, generated the opposition of a wide ranging group of bankers and wholesalers who united with the planters and merchants to defeat the tenants.

Some historians will criticize the faulty original research, on occasion, in historical sources, but overall this is a challenging study.

Bruce A. Glasrud
California State University
Hayward


This is a small, but well condensed history of the Galveston District of the United States Army Corps of Engineers, covering the various civil and military projects within the district from 1887 to the 1970s.

Mrs. Alperin, a Galveston housewife with a considerable background in writing and research, spent four years scrutinizing myriads of archival material at the Corps headquarters in Galveston and area libraries. The end product is a well written and readable volume with well placed photographs and illustrations.

The Galveston district was established in 1880, primarily to plan and supervise improvement of waterways along the Texas Gulf coast from the Sabine River to the Rio Grande. At one time
the district also was responsible for inland waterways in Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma and New Mexico.

Among the more important projects of the district were the deepening of Galveston harbor, design and construction of the Galveston seawall, and the dredging of Buffalo Bayou to make Houston an inland deepwater port.

Mrs. Alperin also explores the military mission of the Corps, including the building of coastal fortifications and airfields. She also takes a look at the changing times and how more in depth studies must be undertaken due to the delicate ecology of the coastal region.

This book is especially recommended for East Texans in view of future water and recreational projects. Lake Nacogdoches and making the Sabine River navigable for barge traffic as far inland as Longview involves Corps personnel, although not necessarily under the supervision of the Galveston district office. One should, however, familiarize themselves with the Corps and its history, and how this unique government agency functions.

The work is further enhanced by a good bibliography and index.

Maury Darst
Galveston College


In 1938 the University of Oklahoma Press published Morris L. Wardell’s A Political History of the Cherokee Nation, 1838-1907 as Volume 17 of its Civilization of the American Indian Series. Now, some forty years later, that same press has reissued the book with a new “bibliographical foreword” by Rennard Strickland. As noted in his Preface, Wardell sought to trace the political history of the “Cherokee Nation from the thirties of the past century to the termination of tribal government” in 1906. In so doing, he has delineated the political life of an independent nation within the confines of a “young, vigorous, and rapidly expanding United States.”

The volume can be divided into two general periods, both characterized by political conflict and compromise. The first, encompassing the years 1835 to 1866, was dominated by the remarkable chief, John Ross. During these years Ross and his
The second period, 1866 to 1907, saw the Cherokee state threatened by forces beyond its control. Indeed, the political independence that Ross had helped to forge for his people was slowly subverted by the intrusion of land-hungry railroad promoters and settlers. Washington, too, weakened the tribal government by a series of court decisions, congressional acts, and executive policy changes. The dissolution of the Cherokee nation as an independent political entity came shortly after the turn of the century, when the federal government, bent on organizing an Indian Territory, coerced the Cherokees into accepting the severalty principle and dissolving their representative government. Not surprisingly, Wardell places ultimate blame for the Cherokees' loss of sovereignty upon the United States.

As the title suggests, this book deals with politics and little else. Because the political issues affecting the Cherokees were both complex and interrelated, Wardell, at times, tends to repeat himself. Additionally, his narrow focus and apparent indecision on an organizational format make some chapters (12 and 16 in particular) seem agonizingly long. Despite its flaws, the study remains the definitive political history of the Cherokee nation and, as such, deserves to be read.

Gerald D. Saxon  
Texas County Records Inventory Project  
Denton, Texas


Another book in that distinguished series, Music in American Life, Git Along, Little Dogies makes a significant contribution to our knowledge of one segment of American music. Subtitled Songs and Songmakers of the American West, the book tells the stories behind a number of songs and gives short biographies of several who made contributions, from Owen Wister to the author himself.

White was once the "Lonesome Cowboy" of the 20 Mule Team "Death Valley Days" radio program. He went West, to
Arizona, after finishing college in Maryland. There he met Romaine Lowdermilk (author of "The Big Corral") and was initiated into cowboy music. After spending years in a business quite apart from singing, he returned to his early interest and put together these stories of the origins of such old favorites as "Home on the Range," "Strawberry Roan," and "Zebra Dun."

It is evident that White went to considerable effort to collect information. He pays high tribute to John A. Lomax for his collections of range land songs, but he does not hesitate to correct Lomax's errors. He does give Lomax credit for acknowledging the contributions of D.J. "Kid" O'Malley, author of, among others, "When the Works all Done This Fall." But, says White, Dobie refused to believe O'Malley could have written the songs, believing they must have been done much earlier.

White raises the question of whether "The Big Corral" should be considered a folk song now that he has revealed the authorship after it was listed as "authentic" by such authorities as Charles Haywood when it was anonymous. He should read Mody Boatright's "Folklore in a Literate Society" for his answer.

Finally, readers familiar with the series might ask if this book duplicates Glenn Ohrlin's The Hell-Bound Train. There is some overlapping, but Ohrlin simply presents the songs with brief introductory notes; White tells more detailed stories of the songs and their makers, and the lists of songs are not identical.

Ernest B. Speck
Sul Ross State University

*The Wind.* By Dorothy Scarborough. (University of Texas Press, Box 7819, Austin, Texas 78712), 1979. p. 337. $10.95.

The only substantive difference between the original edition of *The Wind* in 1925 and the present one is Sylvia Grider's perceptive, well-written "Foreword," which gives perspective for what is to follow, a simple story set in the neighborhood of Sweetwater, Texas, at the time of the great drought of 1886-87, its theme the effects of wind, sand, and drought on the mind and emotions of Letty Hightower, a young Virginia woman new to the Texas frontier.

The first edition of *The Wind* got to Texas at an inauspicious time, for 1925 was a drought year. Scarborough's realistic portrayal of West Texas in drought riled people already edgy because of the very conditions the book described. The present edition will raise no such rumpus, for more of its readers will be oriented to smog and noise than to wind and dust. Moreover, its
inclusion in the Barker Texas History Center Series and publication by the University of Texas Press will direct it toward a more calmly critical body of readers.

_The Wind_ deserves a chance with this generation of readers, though they may finish it feeling that Scarborough was better prepared to write about the wind than about its effects on a woman’s mind and emotions. As a novel it is a gentle zephyr that will leave no wrinkle on the sands of time, but as Texana it is a landmark standing out on the horizon of Texas literature because it deals with a previously neglected topic, the role of women on a developing agricultural frontier.

The University of Texas Press is to be commended for putting _The Wind_ back on book shop selves and for choosing Sylvia Grider to write the “Foreword.” She is a sound scholar better prepared to write about wind, sand, and drought than Ms Scarborough.

Sid Cox, retired
Texas A&M University

_This is Texas_. By Mabelle Purcell and Stuart Purcell. (Futura Press, Austin, Texas), 1977. Photographs. p. 241. $10.00.

The title of this book is misleading. The text is not an overview of the history of Texas, nor of any of its principal parts. Rather, it is more of a hodgepodge of seventy-eight mostly unrelated and unorganized personal chronicles. The book is a family Bicentennial project arranged in the format of a scrapbook.

The forward is written by Dorman H. Winfrey. It is an articulate and commendable statement for the value of local history. It is also a good example of the political astuteness of our state librarian, since Dr. Winfrey’s forward does not forcefully praise the historical value of this particular book.

The following selections should give the reader a good understanding of the nature of this text. The first article is entitled “A Texan Attacks Five Grizzlies and Lives” by S.M. Purcell, relates an incident in the life of Stuart Purcell’s father while he was on a bear hunt at Wyoming in 1902. The fourth article is entitled “Anahuac-Birthplace of the Texas Revolution,” by Mabelle Purcell. The fifteenth article is entitled “Pat and Kenneth Cain - With Rocks in Their Heads,” by Anna Trim. It is the personal history of the author’s parents, who are two contemporary rockhounds in Alpine, Texas. The nineteenth article is entitled “Custer’s Last Stand,” by S.M. Purcell. The twenty-third article is entitled “James Dick, Concert Pianist”. This article and an accompanying photograph of James Dick
(dressed in a tuxedo and seated with a concentrating demeanor at a piano) were contributed by the James Dick Foundation. The twenty-ninth article is entitled "The French Legation Carriage House," by S.M. Purcell. The fifty-eighth article is entitled "Cactus Pryor - He's So Funny He Hurts," by Jo Ann King. This selection includes a photo of Cactus and Wally Prior courtesy of the Austin Citizen. Although this article has been updated "slightly", it was originally written in 1974 and was published in the Texas Star (a Sunday newspaper supplement).

Many of the sources are questionable, at best. Considerable information has been compiled from conversations and newspaper articles that were never intended to be documentary. Most of the photographs are not dated, and the captions are often misleading as to the date of the photo. In addition, most of the one-hundred plus photographs contain little of historical value.

In conclusion, it should be noted that this publication does contribute to the history of Texas and "its peoples". However, this contribution is very restricted and limited in most respects.

Duncan G. Muckelroy
Stonewall, Texas

Twilight on the River. By Ilanon Moon. (Shoal Creek Publishers, Inc., P.O. Box 9737, Austin, Texas 78766), 1977. P. 223. $10.00.

Irrational French patriotism has always been an enigma, for no people have been more consistently critical of their government than the French. The Royal period in Louisiana colonial history is a prime example of that contention. The seemingly insensitive barter of Louisiana to Spain, in 1762, was an ego-crushing experience for the loyal citizens. The futile hope that France would reconsider, followed by the abortive effort to end Spanish suzerainty through local initiative, was symbolic of both misplaced loyalty and French idealistic irrationality. The vigor of Colonial Louisiana lay not in the French system but in the evolving Americanization of its people.

Ms. Moon chose to cover this period within the framework of historical fiction, but the romantic plot proves to be the unfortunate weakness of the work. The story line is slow in developing and is suddenly terminated without an ending, leaving one to wonder if there will be a Volume II.

The major setting of the story is the outpost of Natchitoches, established in western Louisiana as a sign of French presence and legal control. The citizens of that community were more American than they cared to admit, but looked on their Spanish
neighbors at nearby Los Adaes with Gallic disdain as well as hostility. Considering the situation, one interesting revelation which comes through is the amount of illicit but profitable intercourse between the two outposts.

Into this setting comes Gaston de la Mignet, second son of the Duc de la Mignet, unhappily exiled to Natchitoches direct from the glitter of Versailles. Though Gaston clings to his French heritage he is won over to the new vitality he finds in Louisiana, and after an engagement to a girl representing Old France he falls in love with a frontier daughter. The love story which evolves includes tragic commitments, the traditional hot-blooded Spaniard, hot-blooded Frenchman and not-blooded-but-pure Americanized girl, and is altogether too predictable.

The major interest of the novel will not be fixed on the diaphanous plot, but rather on the accurate portrayal of historic events enmeshing Louisiana. Especially good is that portion of the work pertaining to the traumatic transference of Louisiana to Spain and the abortive effort to avoid that contract. The accuracy of events, entwined with effective historical recreations of meetings and conversations involving real characters, creates a historic presence as commanding as this reviewer has ever encountered. Even a Louisiana historian will have little about which to complain, though some of the real characters develop differently than commonly believed.

One of the few noteworthy flaws in Ms. Moon's work is her failure to understand the historic reference to the Isle of Orleans. This was a common term used from the earliest moments of European intrusion. In 1699 the leMoyne brothers (Iberville and Bienville) had found that it was easier to get into the Mississippi River by sailing through a backdoor network; entering what is now Lake Pontchartrain, moving up the Amite River, and through Bayou Manchac. This route placed them in the Mississippi River just below what is now Baton Rouge. From there the voyagers could descend the River to the outlets, and from there sail directly back to their ancorage at Ship Island. Having circumnavigated the entire area it was logical to designate that land as an island, and it was named the Isle d'Orleans. The term remained a convenient designation to effectively delineate the land on which New Orleans would be located. Thus it came as a surprise when Chavin de Lanfreriète, a leading citizen of New Orleans and an Advisor for the Superior Council, denounced Louis XV for being so ignorant as to think New Orleans was on an island (p. 142).

Written from a strictly contemporary viewpoint, the work constitutes a solidly researched slice of history underlaid with a
love paean dedicated to French patriotism and incipient American democracy. Those of us who enjoy history will appreciate this little volume and recommend it to our friends.

Floyd M. Clay
New Orleans, Louisiana


This small volume succinctly states the concerns of many in higher education who believe that the American college experience is declining in quality.

Dr. Ashworth has been candid in his description of a troubled academe acknowledging that colleges must correct the abuses of “dishonesty in packaging and labeling, the production of shoddy results, planned obsolesce, and living off government subsidies in the pursuit of the profit motive . . . .” However, as we look for documentation to support these observations and the theme that higher education is in decline, we find only the author’s feelings and personal philosophy. Little evidence is presented, and such general statements as “The integrity of our colleges and universities is under question” are made as self-evident truths.

One of the major criticisms of higher education raised by Dr. Ashworth is the willingness on the part of colleges and universities, as they pursue federal grants and dollars, to allow federal bureaucrats to intrude into the internal operation of the colleges.

While most administrators in higher education, as well as leaders of business and industry, chafe under increasing bureaucratic intrusion, it seems unfair to blame the pursuit of the dollar as the single cause. Private and public institutional autonomy is being eroded by federal law and the interpretation of courts with the bases for intrusion being constitutional guarantees rather than the receipt of federal money. It is doubtful that there would be less intrusion if colleges and universities refused all federal assistance.

Dr. Ashworth’s solution to the problem of poor quality caused by “non-traditional” approaches to education, e.g., off campus courses, is to return to the “traditional university” model. This appears to be less than satisfactory at a time when there are increasing numbers of “non traditional” students - older students, part time students and minority students. “We can't go home again.” Nostalgia for the “good ole days” may be shared
by all in higher education, but it probably is not the best solution to the problem.

*American Higher Education in Decline* is a thought provoking book worthy of being read by those who are interested in post secondary education. It certainly should help to fulfill the author's stated intent "to stimulate the dialogue that will bring about a rethinking of some of the processes of higher learning."

John T. Lewis, III
West Georgia College


Superb photographs, some in vivid color, showing fine collections of "first phase" Southwestern Indian jewelry help make this book extremely helpful to both novice collectors and those knowledgeable in Indian Arts. The rare silver pieces, photographed on backgrounds of early Navajo and Hopi weavings, show the various stages of development in techniques of construction and decoration of the Navajo and Pueblo Indians.

A brief history of the Southwestern Indians helps explain why their jewelry achieved a national cultural impact and thus has been adopted as the only distinctive American jewelry. The Navajos overcame defeat by U.S. soldiers and suffering from five years of confinement. Their return to their homeland marks the beginning of the first phase of Southwest Indian jewelry, as chronicled by the author.

Mr. Frank recognizes factors contributing to world recognition of the Navajo and Pueblo jewelry making. He stresses the Indians' appreciation of beauty and their ability to learn jewelry making skills from Spanish, Mexican and Plains Indian neighbors. Of interest to beginning collectors would be his description of the jewelry's "... uniqueness, diversity, vividness, reasonable price, and ... basic aesthetic quality." The use of turquoise with silver, begun in the 1890s by the Zuni tribe, is credited with ensuring the popularity of Indian jewelry.

Most of the book is devoted to photographs of outstanding and famous collections, public and private. The carefully worded captions provide a vast amount of information about techniques, as well as making clear the technical terminology. Although prices are not given, methods of dating early pieces would be excellent resource material for appraisers and collectors. In fact, the greatest significance of this book would have to be its use of
the actual early jewelry which is so rarely found or recorded.

Sammie Russell
Nacogdoches, Texas


This handsomely and generously illustrated volume tells a remarkable story: How, almost literally from scratch and in the face of numerous handicaps, an estimable Department of Art has developed at what was first Texas State University for Negroes and then Texas Southern University. The principal personae in the story are the painter John Biggers, a native North Carolinian and a graduate of Hampton Institute and Pennsylvania State College who came to the university in Houston in 1949 as its art department's first head, and the sculptor and ceramicist Carroll Simms, an Arkansas-born product of Hampton and Cranbrook Academy, who joined Biggers a year later. From the outset Biggers and Simms tried to involve their few reluctant students in modes of expression which would be directly and intimately related to the circumstances of their lives as black Americans. The best results of Biggers' and Simms' efforts are displayed in approximately 125 photographs (mostly in color) of students' paintings, pottery, sculpture, and textiles. As might be expected from people seeking to express both a social and a personal reality, Biggers' students have excelled in murals; in fact doing a mural on a wall of the art department has long been part of the degree requirements in painting. If most of the mural work shown in the present volume (including Biggers' own) is reminiscent of the kind of social realism and paens to "the people" that were popular in the 1930s, it still conveys a strong sense of collective black identity—and often exhibits a great deal of talent. To a considerable extent Simms' students have worked under the influence of African themes and motifs, which have also increasingly affected the personal creations of Biggers and Simms. But whereas Biggers has been mainly a formal realist, Simms has produced a succession of stunning sculptural abstractions, mainly in bronze.

John Edward Weems' text is straightforward and informative, generally free of the sentimentalism that might have characterized an account of Biggers' and Simms' long struggle to impart to a generation of culturally disadvantaged young men and women both an artistic consciousness and the means of
expressing that consciousness. The struggle still goes on, as was evidenced in 1976 when some of TSU’s finest student murals were destroyed so that the university’s new computer could be shown off behind a big glass window. Yet despite such philistinism and despite chronic underfunding and a variety of other difficulties, art at Texas Southern University has survived and even come to flourish.

Charles C. Alexander
Ohio University


Dallas Yesterday is a collection of newspaper articles on the history of Dallas written between 1966-1972 by the late Dallas Morning News columnist, Sam Acheson, and edited by Lee Milazzo, Southern Methodist University archivist and Dallas Morning News book critic. The Jno. E. Owens Memorial Foundation, established in 1953 in memory of Owens, a prominent Dallas banker, sponsored publication of the book along with Owens’ daughter, Mrs. Bruce Street, and her husband.

Dallas Yesterday is divided into eight chapters which cover topics as diverse as “Civic Leaders and Local Landmarks,” “Pioneer Churchmen,” “Expanding Communication and Transportation,” and “A Nostalgic Potpourri.” Each chapter consists of short pieces loosely related to the chapter subject. Acheson relied on published county histories, files of the Dallas Morning News, and his own knowledge of the city to construct his columns on the history of Dallas. As a result the pieces often reflect the bias and “boosterism” commonly found in nineteenth century newspaper stories and local histories. Thus we learn that in 1846 citizens of Dallas county formed a company of minutemen for protection against “raiding redskins” and “stood ready with horse, ammunition, and provisions to join in hot pursuit and chastisement of such lawless infiltrators.” Native Americans may demand equal time. Also, the book is filled with accounts of the civic contributions of numerous famous and rich Dallasites but offers no insight into the various human and environmental costs of rapid economic and urban growth.

As might be expected in a book of this type the pieces vary greatly in interest and quality and at times reflect the poor writing often caused by deadline pressures. Dallas Yesterday compiles a great deal of little known information, but its value to the serious researcher is marred by the uncritical use of sources and the absence of footnotes.
For all its faults the book has a certain charm. Acheson possessed an eye for interesting detail, a love for his city, and a pleasing wit which illuminates *Dallas Yesterday*. Even when dealing with the recent past, Acheson’s approach remains that of a nineteenth century gentleman, proud of his city and secure in the belief that it must grow bigger and better with each decade. Anyone interested in Dallas will profit from reading this book. Those who enjoy nostalgia and the innocence of the last century will find the work delightful.

Robert E. Zeigler
San Antonio College

*The Military Presence on the Gulf Coast.* Edited by William S. Coker. (Gulf Coast History and Humanities Conference, University of West Florida, Pensacola, Florida 32504), 1978. Illustrations, Maps, Index. p. 178. $6.95 soft cover, $10.95, hard cover.

This collection of essays, first delivered as papers at the seventh Gulf Coast History and Humanities Conference, is so varied in nature and content that few generalizations can be applied. These articles are of consequence, however, to anyone interested in the gulf coast region and its history, especially its military history.

The collection of eleven articles is divided into three major sections: The foreign military, the United States military and military education, with the first section being the strongest and the last the weakest. Although some of the articles are merely talks, to which any data seems incidental, others contain genuine research, useful information and meaningful insights.

The first section contains three articles—one each on the French, the British and the Spanish—covering military activity and organization prior to United States possession. All of these show careful research and writing. The second section is less uniform, ranging from a strong article by Robert F. Futrell on training and testing at Eglin Field during the Second World War to an article by Fran McKee on the naval air station at Pensacola. The later article details only little information, and sounds for all the world like the text of an old training/morale film. The final section, dealing with military education, finds the authors attempting to convince their audiences of the virtues of current military educational programs. Virtues are, no doubt, there, but the articles read like introductions to proposals seeking federal grant money, and leave the reader with an impression that the data is both highly selective and slanted.
Despite some obvious shortcomings, always the case in collections of this kind, the majority of the articles are both useful and interesting, and make the work deserving of consideration by those interested in the military experience in the gulf coast region.

Carl L. Davis
Stephen F. Austin
State University

BOOKNOTES

Texas A&M University Press continues its fine work, especially in publishing materials on the Big Thicket. Geyata Ajilvsgi’s *Wild Flowers of the Big Thicket, East Texas and Western Louisiana*, and *The Natural World of the Texas Big Thicket*, photographs by Blair Pittman with an Introduction by William A. Owens, are recent examples. Both may be ordered from the Press at Drawer C, College Station, Texas 77843. *Wild Flowers* sells for $17.50 or $9.95 in paper, and *Natural World* has a $22.50 price tag. The former should appeal mostly to scientists. It contains a beautiful color photo section, but is mostly composed of word description of the hundreds of wild flowers which bloom in the Thicket. Each item contains latin species identification, and a description of the leaves, inflorescence, and fruit of the plants. Ajilvsgi is a vascular plant field taxonomist and free lance nature photographer who has combined her professional talents to produce an interesting volume on the botany of the Thicket. Probably more of our readers will identify with the beauty of Pittman’s photos and Owens’ introduction in the *Natural World*. Most of the photos measure eight by twelve inches, are perfectly lighted and focused, and capture the Thicket exquisitely. It’s a little like looking out a glass window, however. Heat or misquitoes or swampy smells can not be produced in a book, and the real thing sometimes look artificial unless one knows the Thicket well enough to appreciate the pictures.

The A&M Press also produced two other books, quite different from the above, but both interesting in their own way. *The Texas Gulf Coast, Intrepretations by Nine Artists* ($29.95), included works of Al Barnes, Herb Booth, John P. Cowan, Michael Frary, John Guerin, Harold Phenix, E.M. “Buck” Schiwetz, Everett Spruce, and Dan Wingren. It also has an Introduction by Leon Hale and a Foreword by Ann Holmes. It features forty-five or so reproduction of the artists’ works, with a statement about his intrepretation. The Introduction is pure Hale.

Bill Brett’s *There Ain’t No Such Animal and Other East Texas Tales* ($8.50) is also pure Brett. This master story teller