Book Reviews

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BOOK REVIEWS


Robert H. Thonhoff has written numerous works on Texas. The Texas Connection, his latest effort, is an unabashed attempt to broaden the perspective of those historians from the Northeast who have often minimized if not ignored completely Spain's contribution to the English colonists' success in the American Revolution.

The book has four parts. First the author presents "The Texas Setting," a brief discussion of Texas in the Empire. Chapter Two, "The Spanish Participation," focuses on the noted commander and administrator Bernardo de Gálvez and his successful military victories at Manchac, Baton Rouge, Mobile, and Pensacola. The exploits brought Gálvez fame, strengthened Spain's claims and triumph when peace was achieved in 1783, enabled shipment of military supplies to American colonists via the Mississippi River, and engaged British soldiers who might have been used elsewhere. In Chapter Three, "The Texas Contribution," Thonhoff thoroughly documents that the first Texas cattle drives began in 1779 as a result of Gálvez's need for a food supply. Over nine thousand Texas cattle were trailed to Louisiana for further distribution. Thus fed, the Spanish provided the victories and accomplishments outlined in Chapter Two. The final brief chapter, "Some Ramifications," largely reiterates the major points indicated in the Introduction and throughout the text.

Although historians of colonial Spanish America have long been aware of Spain's contribution to the American colonists during the Revolution, the importance of Texas beef for Gálvez's successes has never been so painstakingly and thoroughly argued. Indeed it is precisely Thonhoff's discussion of this topic that provides the book's major contribution to scholarly literature. Thonhoff has relied upon the Bexar Archives for his material in full recognition that additional research in Mexico and Spain might provide additional material. Certainly, however, further material would amplify but not significantly alter the major point about "The Texas Connection."

Readers are advised to concentrate on Chapter Three as it provides the freshest material. While American historians will profit from the book's unusual and useful perspective, specialists of Spanish American history will benefit less. Indeed, the opening pages contain a number of factual errors, e.g. the number of viceroyalties in the late 1770s (p.4), the career of Miguel de Gálvez (p.19), that could dissuade them from ever reaching the heart of the book. Nonetheless, this book should find
a receptive and appreciative audience among readers seeking an enthusiastically written account of the importance of Texas during an early time in her history.

Mark A. Burkholder  
University of Missouri - St. Louis


Angelina Belle Peyton Eberly, born in Tennessee (date unknown), came to Matagorda, Texas, in June, 1822. In October, 1825, she and her first husband, Jonathan Peyton, opened a hotel at San Felipe de Austin. After San Felipe was burned, Angelina (her husband had died in 1834) and her two children moved to Columbia. Following her marriage to Captain Jacob Eberly in 1836, the family moved to Bastrop and then to Austin in 1839. Later she lived in Galveston and died in Indianola in 1860. During the period of Anglo-American settlement and the Republic Angelina Eberly as proprietress saw and talked with many persons whose names are now famous: Manuel Mier y Terán, Jesse Burnam, Mary Austin Holley, Sam Houston, Mirabeau B. Lamar, William B. Travis, R. M. “Three Legged Willie” Williamson, and others.

It is as the “Heroine of the Texas Archives War” in Austin that Mrs. Eberly has earned a place in Texas history. Unfortunately, in this reviewer’s opinion, the account of the 1842 event is the weakest part of Professor King’s work. The author certainly should have examined at the records in the General Land Office, they _were_ the archives of Texas in 1842. A wealth of material, including a valuable map dealing with the Archives event, can all be found in the General Land Office. Many of the basic early works that mention the episode are not cited: H. Yoakum, _History of Texas_, Vol. II (1855), J. M. Morphis, _History of Texas_ (1874), Anson Jones, _Memoranda and Official Correspondence Relating to the Republic of Texas, Its History and Annexation_ (1859), William M. Gouge, _The Fiscal History of Texas_ (1852), H. S. Thrall, _A Pictorial History of Texas_ (1879), Bella French Swisher, _The American Sketch Book_, Vol. VI (1881), and D. W. C. Baker, _A Texas Scrap-Book_ (1875).

Only in Baker’s _A Texas Scrap-Book_—published more than thirty years after the event—is Mrs. Eberly mentioned. Baker writes: “As to who touched off the guns, it is not definitely settled, but it is generally conceded that it was done by Mrs. Eberly, a worthy and respected lady...”
We read on the flyleaf of *The Lady Cannoneer* that, "while the book's narrative flows along like a Gothic novel, it is amply annotated and any literary license taken by the author is firmly rooted in documented historical research." The historian may have many questions as to what is fact and what is fiction. Many errors in spelling and incorrect citations should have been corrected by the author or publisher. A few examples: p. 18, "Stephen Austin and Joe Hawkins were crying up Texas"; p. 35, cites *Texas Historical Association Quarterly* incorrectly; p. 37 cites Rupert Richardson's work as *Texas: The Lone Star Land*, instead of *Texas: The Lone Star State*; p. 77 has footnote 29 left out; p. 82 has another incorrect citation to the *Texas Historical Quarterly*; p. 124 cites the Austin *American*, March 26, 1839, but the paper was not established until 1914; p. 139, Rudolph Leopold Biesel should be Biesele; p. 150 statues should be statutes; p. 167, William C. Birkley should be Binkley.

Opposite the title page is a drawing of Mrs. Eberly "firing cannon down Congress Avenue" while on page 123 we read "she did pepper the Land Office Building." The Land Office was located on Hickory (now 8th Street) at the time, so why would Mrs. Eberly fire a cannon down Congress Avenue?

Dorman H. Winfrey
Texas State Library
Austin, Texas

*Trails to Texas: Southern Roots of Western Cattle Ranching*. By Terry G. Jordan. (University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, Nebraska 68588), 1981. Bibliography, Index, Maps, Photographs. p. 220. $15.95.

In a thoughtful monograph, cultural geographer Terry Jordan probes into the origins of Texas cattle ranching on the Great Plains. After identifying six theories, he concludes that none, including the ideas of Walter Prescott Webb, adequately explain the cattle kingdom's development.

Believing that the Hispanic impact and South Texas influences have been exaggerated, Jordan looks eastward. There he finds Anglo-American influences in South Carolina. He observes herding, use of dogs, horsemanship and other stock farm techniques. As a result Jordan presents a three-part interpretation: (1) that open range herding developed in South Carolina and migrated to Texas via two principal routes, (2) that this system took hold in East Texas, and (3) that the Carolina herding combined with the Hispanic to produce a hybrid management system on the Great Plains.
Focusing on 1820-1850, three East Texas regions are analyzed. The most important lay along the coast from present day Jefferson to Jackson counties. There Southern migration brought traces of Anglo, black, French and Spanish influences, called ethnic creolization.

From impressive research Jordan reveals the Southern impact on the Northeast Texas prairie ranches. Yet, if some settlers depended upon livestock principally for income, many were farmers with secondary interest in cattle. While this latter issue remained unanswered, it seemed unconvincing to isolate East Texas ranching from the larger farmer movement.

The third area, the East Texas Piney Woods, is an admitted misnomer. From the 1750's through 1810, the Spanish predominated, but thereafter cattle raising reflected predominant Southern stock farming characteristics.

The migrations are noted from East Texas to the Great Plains with brief interesting examples, yet without adequately explaining why. Logically Northeast Texas migrated to the Panhandle and Cross Timbers. The Great Plains was the scene of a blending of Southern and Hispanic systems, with western ranching "the product of ethnic creolization." (p. 157).

Jordan has made an important contribution to Texana by ably advocating the Southern blend of contributions to Texas livestock management. Additionally, he had made an important analysis of East Texas history.

Irvin M. May, Jr.
Texas A&M University

Ten More Texans in Gray. Edited by W. C. Nunn (Hill Junior College Press, P.O. Box 619, Hillsboro, TX 76645), 1980. Illustrations, Bibliography, Index. p. 216.

During the Civil War, Confederate troops from Texas achieved fame as fearless and adept soldiers. In fact certain groups which displayed outstanding military prowess gained national recognition. Best known, Hood's Texas Brigade, named after General John B. Hood, was a part of the Army of Northern Virginia, fighting in the Second Battle of Manassas and the Atlanta campaigns. Of equal stature were Ben McCulloch's Brigade in Missouri battles, Benjamin F. Terry's Texas Rangers on Tennessee and Kentucky fronts, especially at Shiloh, and Lawrence Sullivan Ross's Cavalry Brigade with the Army of Tennessee. Moreover, several Texans became high-ranking Confederate generals—Albert Sidney Johnston, Samuel Bell Maxey, and Thomas Green. In addition thirty-two Texans were brigadier generals and ninety-seven were colonels.
In *Ten More Texans in Gray*, the companion tome to *Ten Texans in Gray*, W. C. Nunn, Emeritus Professor of History at Texas Christian University, has again compiled essays which briefly but adequately describe ten renowned Texas Confederates. Choosing men who experienced success as well as failure, he has included in this book John S. "Rip" Ford, Thomas Green, Albert Sidney Johnston, Samuel Bell Maxey, Ben McCulloch, Oran Milo Roberts, Lawrence Sullivan "Sul" Ross, Henry Hopkins Sibley, Benjamin Franklin Terry, and James Webb Throckmorton. Although four of these figures already have extensive biographies, six do not; therefore, these essays are especially significant by providing new information about Texas military leaders.

Overall, this book is a worthwhile addition to Texas Civil War historiography. Even though ten different authors contributed to this work, the essays are generally even in scope and writing style. The accounts by Kathleen Williams, J. Elden Spencer, Richard Warren, Judith Ann Benner, and Robert E. Smith are, however, slightly better than the rest. And Nunn has not only competently edited these works of his former graduate students but also included a useful, informative, yet brief preface of Confederate Texas History and an extensive bibliography. Undoubtedly, *Ten More Texans in Gray* will be appealing to anyone who has a special interest in the Civil War.

Janet Schmelzer
Texas Tech University


A survivor of two years of grim war, Sam Foster reminisces on Christmas Day, 1864, in his diary: "If we had counted noses then, and again today the missing would outnumber the present." (p. 158) Echoing the common soldier's combat lament heard since Thucydides, he continues his Christmas soliloquy:

Then we were anxious to get into a fight with the Yanks; and even feared that the war would end and we never get to see one. Now we have seen too many of them, as is evidenced by our numbers present today—then we were called feather bed soldiers—now we are war veterans; but Yankee bullets will kill one as quick as the other. (p. 158)

In one brief utterance, Samuel Foster capsulized Johnny Reb and the dream of the Confederacy.

Editor Norman D. Brown, associate professor of history at UT Austin, has published the reminiscences of an honest-to-goodness Texas
Johnny Reb. Professor Brown wisely has allowed to leave unscathed Sam Foster's idiosyncrasies in spelling and syntax, permitting the reader to get about an elbow's length from the whizzing minnie balls buzzing over Captain Foster's battlegrounds.

Sam Foster was the captain of the Twenty-fourth Texas Cavalry (dismounted) of Pat Cleburne's division in William J. Hardee's corps during the Civil War. He witnessed his first action at Arkansas Post (where he and the entire garrison, under severe bombardment, surrendered) and, as a Confederate prisoner of war, was transported to St. Louis; later exchanged at City Point, Virginia, Foster was sent by rail to General Braxton Bragg's Army of Tennessee. Promoted to captain, Foster was present at the bloody battles of Chickamauga and Chattanooga, where he was shot in the leg. Returning to the trenches, Captain Foster saw front line duty during the Atlanta campaign of May-September 1864 and witnessed fierce fighting at Pickett's Mill and Franklin, Tennessee. After Hood's debacle at Franklin, the demoralized Confederate army arrived at Nashville where Captain Foster was wounded again. With Sherman's "march to the sea" history, Foster accompanied the retreating army to Mississippi where news of Appamattox tolled the death knell of the Confederacy. Following his parole on May 2, the veteran returned to Texas where he was reunited at Hallattsville with his family and resumed his law practice. He served in the Eleventh Legislature, and in 1880 he moved to Laredo, where six years later he was appointed United States commissioner at Laredo for the United States District Court for the Southern District of Texas, an office he held for thirty-three years until his death on January 8, 1919.

Sam Foster's war reminiscences are a treasure chest of Civil War memorabilia, detailing the daily camp life of the Confederate soldier, the preparation and shock of battle, the horrors of the amputating table and the delirium of the battlefield wounded, the scarcity of provisions (especially shoes) and the occasional lighter moments of uniform washing and the liberation of poultry and hogs.

In a calm, almost dispassionate voice, Captain Foster narrates the intensity of the Atlanta campaign which culminated in the ghastly carnage at Pickett's Mill and Franklin. Dated May 28, 1864, the diary entry recounts vividly the slaughter at Pickett's Mill:

Men lying in all sorts and shapes and just as they had fallen, and it seems like they have nearly all been shot in the head, and a great number of them have their skulls busted open and their brains running out. (p. 88)

Although wounded himself three times during his Texas Brigade career, Captain Foster had a special dread (and sarcasm) for the army surgeons:
The Doctors establishment... is a place... where they have ambulances ready to go to the breastworks and bring out the wounded, and it is also a place where they have their carving tables fixed up to cut a man in any shape on short notice. (p. 95)

Captain Foster's venom, however, is saved for John B. Hood and the commander's decision to order a frontal assault on entrenched Union breastworks. Hood is a "murderer," the Oakville diarist rages, much worse even than President Davis, who had relieved the camp's favorite, General Joe Johnson, prior to the defense of Atlanta, and had thus brought down upon his head the wrath of the army which "...at all hours of the afternoon can be heard Hurrah for Joe Johnson and God D--- Jeff Davis." (pp. 106-7)

With Lee's surrender the following April, Captain Foster ponders the wild rumours flying through the Confederate camp (one fantasy involved France declaring war on the United States after the Confederacy had returned to the Union); then, when peace is secured, the diarist reflects upon the altered impressions of the weary veterans, including the dismay over Lincoln's assassination, the "reasoning out" of slavery and the overwhelming desire to return home. En route to Texas, Captain Foster's sword becomes a plowshare as he indicates his willingness to "see our white children will have to study hard, and apply themselves closely, else they will have to ride behind and let the negro hold the reins." (p. 178)

Sam Foster was a brave, resourceful and heroic Texan who served his flags—the Stars and Bars, the Lone Star, and his country's—faithfully and lovingly all his 89 years.

Professor Brown is to be commended for his copious explanatory footnotes which are a treasure trove for the Civil War historian (armchair or tenured), and for publishing a Texas Johnny Reb's reminiscences of the view from the trenches, around the campfire and on the march.

Professor Robert C. Davis
Richland College


This book of cemetery inscriptions of Trinity County is a nice addition to the growing number of cemetery records which have been printed in recent years. It is most important that cemetery records be copied and preserved because the ravages of time and vandals are rapidly destroying many of these records.

Inscriptions from sixty cemeteries are listed in alphabetical order by cemetery and a map is included showing the location of each. A
surname index is included which makes this book a quick reference when looking for the name of an individual believed to be buried in Trinity County.

This volume should be in every research library and anyone looking for records on Trinity County will be delighted.

Carolyn Ericson
Nacogdoches, Texas

*Community on the American Frontier: Separate But Not Alone.*


Robert Hine has contributed a very worthwhile study of the search for community on the American frontier. An environment where people were “always settling, never settled” (p. 249) might seem to be an inappropriate focal point for studying community, but Hine rightly notes that the vast wilderness of America offered innumerable opportunities to launch communities, and out of this wealth of experiments, much can be learned about the anatomy of community and Americans' relation to it.

For the most part individualism rather than community dominated the history of the frontier, but, as Hine demonstrates, usually both forces were present and at times the force of community was superior. Especially was community in ascendance in the earliest Puritan settlements, the early Spanish/Mexican ranches of the Southwest, the religious and ethnic communes of the nineteenth century, and even, for brief spells, in the wagon trains, mining camps, and new-born villages of the prairie and plains. But always the openness of the frontier, the vastness of opportunity it afforded, the infectious spirit of individualism, and the scramble for wealth and progress broke down the reign of true community and replaced the cooperative neighbors of “Our Town” (Gemeinschaft) with the “mutual strangers” (p. 249) of an associated, competitive society (Gesellschaft).

Ranging widely, Hine only has time to cite a few examples from East Texas. He commends the high-minded search for community by Victor Considerant and his Reunion settlers as well as that by the Sanctified Sisters at Belton.

Hine has a rich knowledge of the relevant frontier literature, but perhaps he tried too hard to impress that fact on his readers. His exorbitant “name-dropping” of authorities detracts from an otherwise highly attractive narrative and sound piece of scholarship, enriched by a wealth of fascinating photographs.

Edward Hake Phillips
Austin College

Although this publication emphasizes the educational activities and leaders of the area, every aspect of family and community life is covered. Old newspaper clippings, class diplomas, recital programs, honor awards, etc., have been reproduced on high-quality slick paper, to provide a scrapbook flavor. The historian will glean information covering a span from the 1800s to 1980, especially through photos and biographical sketches. The folklorist will chuckle over the many human interest stories that reveal the practices and personalities of the day. Even the genealogist might find the "missing link."

Kate Bell, Editor-in-Chief, and her twenty-three helpers, designed this memorial to the Diamond Jubilee Homecoming of October 24 and 25, 1980, and dedicated it to those men who sacrificed their lives in combat in defense of our country. Within its pages can be discovered the "businesses that bloomed and died," the lawyers, physicians, preachers, teachers, judges and farmers who searched for the American Dream and left their mark. The durable cloth binding will preserve its contents, so dear to the heart of those who live within its covers, and to those who shall inherit the future of Groveton.

Ava Bush
Grapeland, Texas


E. Hudson Long is a gentle sort of man, good to be with whether the occasion be academic or social. He came to the English department at Baylor University in 1949 and has been an intellectual force at Baylor and in Texas ever since. He has presided over the Texas Folklore Society, the College Conference of Teachers of English, and the American Studies Association of Texas and was one of the three editors of the Norton classic, The American Tradition in Literature. Hudson has aided and influenced a long generation of scholars, and it was fitting that those closest to him should present a festschrift in his honor.

American Bypaths: Essays in Honor of E. Hudson Long is a collection of nine scholarly articles on subjects in American literature. The authors are all Hudson's students and colleagues, and their writing reflects their mutual and inspired love for their subjects.
The essays range fairly widely along the American literary bypaths. O. M. Brock tells of an episode in Samuel Johnson's life that becomes an influence on Hawthorne's philosophy. Johnson as a young man refused to relieve his sick father in his book stall. This act of filial disobedience was a pain of conscience until in his old age he returned to the scene of his disobedience and stood, mocked by bystanders, for an hour bareheaded in the rain. Hawthorne understood this sense of guilt and symbolic expiation and used the theme in his writing.

Frank Leavell's essay on Jesse Stuart and his literary association is a most readable and anecdotal treatment of an individualistic writer moving through the established literary world of the twenties and thirties: Robert Penn Warren, Thomas Wolfe, Edgar Lee Masters, Robert Frost. Wilson Hudson's essay on Adams Dobie, and Webb and the use of regional material is an engaging description of three major Southwestern authors who, like Jesse Stuart, spun their lore out of their own soil. James M. Day, the El Paso historian, reminds Texans that they aren't always the heroes of the piece. In fact, in much fictional literature with New Mexico roots, the lately-come Texan is a crass intruder into that state's part of the Llano Estacado.

All of the essays are very readable, as well as being academically informative: J. R. LeMaster writes about Saul Bellow, Gary Mayer on semantics in Elmer Gantry and The Man Who Knew Cooleedge, Robert Regan on Twain and The Innocents Abroad, and Craig Turner on Thornton Wilder. Andy Moore's study of the role of Luster in The Sound and the Fury provides insight into a significant but little studied minor character in Faulkner's classic.

Hudson Long retired in 1976 but the intellectual stimulation and encouragement that he provided is still producing quality academic studies.

Francis Edward Abernethy
Stephen F. Austin State University
The setting is the Mexican Border. The time period to which almost all the book is devoted was 1911 to 1930. Although the author was in charge of inspection activities at one of the most active crossing points on the U.S.-Mexico border (San Ysidro, California) from 1930 to 1953, only a few pages are devoted to this experience. The principal topics of discussion are Mexicans, Chinese, liquor, Prohibition, smuggling, gunfights, hardship, sorrow, and success.

The book lacks the specificity and precision that might be expected of a historian. The establishment of the agency for which the author worked for about forty years is not pinpointed in time. The hiring of the first immigration officer to work outdoors to prevent the smuggling and illegal entry of aliens is described only in the caption to one photograph and even then with some lack of agreement with professional accounts.

Great detail in some places and complete omission of major events in others are puzzling. Pancho Villa’s facial features are described in detail, but his raid on Columbus, New Mexico is not mentioned. Slight, and not exactly complimentary, mention is made of U.S. Army troops on the Mexican border after 1918, but there is no mention at all of the National Guard, the Pershing Expedition, or the Zimmermann message in 1916 and 1917.

The absence of footnotes, reference notes and bibliography may indicate that the author did not mean this to be a historical document. He told it as he remembered it, and warmth and feeling take the place of dates and places. The reader is almost sure to learn about character, dedication to duty, frustration, and conversely, the self-fulfillment of a job well done.

The book will be interesting to all readers, nostalgic to those who lived in the Southwest during Prohibition, and of particular interest to law enforcement personnel or their relatives. One former Border Patrol executive could not put it down until he had finished reading it. He commented, “That book should be required reading for every new Border Patrol Agent.”

William T. Toney, Jr.
Stephen F. Austin State University
(Former Chief Patrol Inspector,
U.S. Border Patrol)

Someone Like You. By Stella Gipson Polk. (Eakin Press, P.O. Drawer
AG, Burnet, Texas 78611), 1981. Photographs. p. 102. $7.95.

Someone Like You is one of the most enjoyable, entertaining, and educational books reflecting the way of life of a typical Texas hill country family from the pre-depression years of the early 1920's to the
present. Comparable to her folklorist brother, Fred Gipson, Stella captures the heart and soul of the everyday life of the early ranchers nestled between the San Saba River and the Llano River. The honest, straight-forward, strong, and charming style of writing reflects the character of the author and her beloved husband Pascal (Jack) Polk, for whom the narrative consistently reminisces.

One of the most valuable traits of this historical narrative is that Stella reveals for the reader the big picture not by generalizations, but by constantly recalling the interrelationships of specific events and details. For example, “I've had a good life,' you'd say . . . 'I've been so cold I couldn’t stretch my fingers; so hot I'd put cigarette papers across my lips to hold off the sun and wind and dirt, but I'm still an old-time cowboy and I've loved it.” . . . “No cowboy would be caught dead at a rodeo without his Stetson.” . . . “But John threw a hissie and told me we were trying to steal his steers. How awful. What did you do about it? I blacked his damned eye. Oh, Jack, I'm so ashamed. I thought we were to civilized to fight.” . . . “Then the government initiated . . . one of the greatest boons to ranchers.” . . . “And through it all we learned that bitter lesson—everytime we mastered nature we gained a bit more knowledge but lost something in spirit.”

Because Stella's writing reawakens that “lost spirit,” her book will always remain a treasure in the best collections of Texas hill country history. Her remembrances bring to light for the present and the future a way of living that has past without a foreseeable hope of rebirth.

Duncan Muckelroy
San Jose Mission State Historic Site
San Antonio

The University of Texas: A Pictorial Account of Its First Century. By Margaret C. Berry. (The University of Texas Press, P.O. Box 7819, Austin, TX 78712), 1980. Photographs, Index, Appendix. p. 425. $25.00.

If the Old Chinese proverb, "one picture is worth 10,000 words," is a truism, then this University of Texas pictorial account is an invaluable treatise. To commemorate the centennial of the University, administrators commissioned Margaret C. Berry, a director of the University Writings Collection, to assemble pictures that would depict all aspects of collegiate life. Thus, with a fantastic assemblage of photographs and succinct explanatory accounts, she produced this handsome tome.

Berry divided institutional activities into eleven categories and illustrated them beautifully. For instance, "University Environs" pic-
tures, besides many unique buildings, such attractions as Barton Springs, Wooldridge Park, Tom Miller Dam, and Scholz Garten. "The Campus" and "Building Development" sections show the continued growth of the university in style and architecture. The categories on "Regents" and "Faculty" display hundreds of individual photographs with brief comments recognizing competence and expertise, while the "Student" and "Ex-student" sections demonstrate the wide range of collegiate life and acknowledge the contributions by some of the 30,000 alumni such as Janie Briscoe, Sam Rayburn, Allen Shivers, John Connally, Farrah Fawcett, and Earl Campbell. Two other areas—"Libraries and Special Collections" and "Athletics," which have achieved great national recognition—are also selectively well done. And, finally "Artifacts" of the campus and "Unforgettable Incidents" seem to be "catch-all" sections.

Margaret Berry has captured the visual life of an outstanding university and has made the reader cognizant of its contributions to both the state and nation. Even though this work will be "nostalgic" for many readers, it represents much more; for as University of Texas President Peter T. Flawn so aptly noted: "Behind the nostalgia is the evolution, recorded in images, of a great institution (p. xxiii).

Ben Procter
Texas Christian University


I'm not sure how much one needs to know about saddles—in our fashionable modern world of western chic. It's almost enough to have a shirt with rhinestone buttons, Jordache jeans, ostrich hide boots, and a betassled Stetson style hat. That will get you down the street, at least. However, if the western mystique gets the officianado off the parking lot and into the cow lot he'd do well to learn his saddlery. And Russel Beatie has put it all together in Saddles. If you don't understand the words, he has included detailed labeled drawings by Nancy Kay Niles and Judy Osborn. Plus many pictures, ancient and modern.

Saddles is an encyclopedic study of a cultural artifact that gave men a little more control of his environment and a little better chance of survival in an accelerating world where mobility and control were deciding factors.

Saddles naturally begins with the horse, his coming to Asia from the American continent and his spread throughout the Old World. The earliest known use of a domesticated horse—an onager, in this case—
was in the fourth millennium in Asia Minor. By 2000 BC Mesopotamians were riding horses bareback but with very modern-looking bridles. Assyrians were using riding cloths in the eighth century BC, and the cavalry of Sennacherib rode cinched quilted pads. In spite of Xenophon’s ridicule of the Persians because they were so effete as to use riding cloths, the craft of saddlery continued to elaborate and complicate. The toe-ring, first used by Indians in the second century BC eventually evolved into a stirrup. At a much later date all sorts of pommels and cantles were developed to suit the needs of the medieval mounted knights. Saddle horns, very necessary for a working cowboy, didn’t come into being until the eighteenth century.

The saddle that became the home of the Texas cowboy was an offspring of the Spanish saddle. It began as a single-piece wooden frame, or tree, that had a fork (with a horn after the 1820s) and a raked cantle. Stirrup leathers were usually strapped through the tree, and the stirrups were carved out of solid pieces of oak. There were no fenders or skirts or side jockeys. It was an elemental saddle, but it was the beginning of the cowboy business.

Beatie goes from fundamentals to superficials as he describes all the modern embellishments—the embossings, paddings, variations on forks and cantles, stirrups, and conchas. He has chapters on side saddles, English saddles, cavalry saddles, historically famous saddles, and an appendix on early saddle makers. Saddles contains all one needs to understand the relation of horse, rider, and accoutrements—pictures, glossary, and illustrations of classic saddles that will make any horseman’s heart burn with real lust.

And wouldn’t Xenophon have been appalled had he seen the saddle Tom Mix was sitting on when he and Tony rode off into the sunset! The silver on it would have ransomed Athens.

Francis Edward Abernethy
Stephen F. Austin State University