BOOK REVIEWS


Willard B. Robinson is the foremost architectural historian of Texas. His Texas Public Buildings of the Nineteenth Century (1974) and Gone From Texas: Our Lost Architectural Heritage (1981), which tell and illustrate the story of the state's architecture during its earlier years, are now joined by The People's Architecture, an account of public buildings in Texas from the first settlements until modern times. This book, like its predecessors, is outstanding.

The People's Architecture tells its story in seven essentially chronological chapters that relate changing architectural styles to changes in the spirit and values of Texans as well as to the developmental stage of the community being served. Robinson also explains the impact of advances in construction technology and building materials. The reader is led from an examination of the Classical Revival style of the antebellum years to a look at the modern structures of post-World War II Texas with their emphasis on functional effectiveness and construction of smooth stone, steel, and glass. Along the way a good look is taken at such architectural delights as the Romanesque Revival courthouses of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Undoubtedly the modern buildings reward their communities with greater efficiency, but it seems that something has been lost when the county courthouse looks much like any other new building in town. Perhaps, to suggest an elaboration on Robinson's theme of architecture as metaphor, Texans' willingness to have courthouses that are less than the most imposing building in the community is an indication of the reduced importance of county government in our modern age of political centralization.

As would be expected, the book is beautifully illustrated with 360 paintings, drawings, and photographs. And yet the price is only $25. One other feature deserves special mention. Robinson has included a "Glossary of Architectural Terms" which is very helpful to readers who have only a limited knowledge of architectural history. In short, Willard Robinson and the Texas State Historical Association are to be congratulated for a book that is both attractive and informative.

Randolph B. Campbell
North Texas State University
La Salle and His Legacy: Frenchmen and Indians in the Lower Mississippi Valley. Edited by Patricia K. Galloway. (Univ. Press of Mississippi, 3825 Ridgewood Road, Jackson, MS 39211), 1983. Bibliography, List of Contributors, Index. P. 260. $20.00.

This book, commemorating the tricentennial of La Salle's 1682 journey down the Mississippi River, consists of papers by a number of specialists. Disciplines represented include anthropology, archeology, architecture, geography, and history. The scope does not embrace La Salle's voyage from France to the Gulf of Mexico (1684-1685) or his Texas sojourn.

With ample justification, the essays reflect that the early French endeavors in the southeastern United States, as La Salle himself, have been inadequately studied and superficially interpreted. New material is still emerging; e.g., the still-unpublished Minet journal mentioned by Galloway in her discussion of sources (p. 16-17). A challenge for future La Salle historians is presented by Carl Brasseaux in his treatise on La Salle's image in American historiography (p. 8).

While the essays generally contribute to knowledge of the French colonial undertakings, they are not devoid of questionable interpretations. Louis De Vorsey, Jr., for example, attributes La Salle's misplaced landing at Texas's Matagorda Bay in 1685 to "the greatest geographical hoax in the history of North American exploration," making it appear "that the mouth of the Mississippi River was on the western coast of the Gulf in Texas..." (p. 70). Such a conceptualization, however, did not originate with La Salle. While the possibility of a hoax cannot be entirely ruled out, De Vorsey's assertion can be accepted only with an anachronistic assumption as to the status of geographical knowledge of that period.

La Salle succeeded in linking the "Mississippi" known to the northern Indians with the Spaniards' Rio del Espiritu Santo. He did not immediately grasp all the geographical implications of his discovery.

Robert S. Weddle
Bonham, Texas


This tome has fifty-nine brief chapters by nearly as many specialists on history, archaeology, geography, economics, politics, law, demography, society, and culture of the states on both sides of the U.S.-Mexican border. As a guide for further study it is useful, though in the interval between inception of the idea and delayed publication of the
book a substantial portion has become outdated. This is to be regretted since the book emphasizes the dynamic quality of contemporary life on the border.

There is little traditional history and even that is handled very briefly, as if history were an obligatory backdrop for current events of varying importance. With its minimum of interpretation, reading this guide is about as interesting as perusing a mail order catalog. There is a long, incomplete bibliography and a partial listing of Borderlands theses and dissertations which gives the impression that UTEP is the epicenter of such study.

The editors are to be commended for their care in elimination of errors, in inclusion of maps, graphs, and tables, and in their standardization of format. They have tried to implement the impossible dream of providing guidance for study of what is paradoxically both the richest and poorest of areas.

Donald C. Cutter
St. Mary's University of San Antonio

Secession and the Union in Texas. By Walter L. Buenger. (University of Texas Press, P.O. Box 7819, Austin, TX 78712), 1984. Notes, Bibliography, Index. P. 255. $17.50.

Secession in Texas, like that in most of the Confederate states, was a complicated process. While the secession ordinance was approved by a margin of three to one in a popular referendum in February 1861, affection for the Union was both deeper and broader than the numbers indicated. This book, winner of the Mrs. Simon Baruch University Award, describes the sources of Unionism in Texas and the manner in which pro-secession forces gained control of public opinion and governmental power.

Buenger's first three chapters describe the economic, political, and social background of antebellum Texas, emphasizing the growing strength of lower-South immigrants in Texas public affairs. Chapters four through six deal with "other Texans"—the upper-South natives who concentrated their small farms along the northern tier of counties, German immigrants of the southwestern counties, Mexican-Texans of the south and southwest, and frontier families who depended on the United States Army for protection and markets. These "other Texans" generally held stronger attachments to the Union than other residents of the Lone Star state. The last three chapters of the book examine the arguments and procedures which the majority, pro-secession forces in Texas used to beat back most of the resistance to secession in early 1861.

Readers acquainted with secession in other states will blink at
the statement on the bookcover’s flyleaf which claims that “Texas was unique ... because of its ambivalence toward secession.” In fact, Texas closely resembled most of the Confederate states precisely because it was ambivalent. Nevertheless, Buenger wisely points out that only some Germans, Mexicans, and upper Southerners opposed secession absolutely. Most, sooner or later, sided with the majority. Based on wide research in primary and secondary sources and benefitting especially from unpublished dissertations, this book is the best work on Texas secession yet published.

Richard Lowe
North Texas State University


How do you explain the fact that you are God’s Chosen People fighting a Holy War and you lost? Charles Reagan Wilson perceptively pursues this question through the rituals and ceremonies of Southern history. The path leads from an 1865 defeat of a Holy Cause through two more Holy Wars during the second and third generations following the Civil War.

Wilson’s work clarifies the force of religious interpretations of current events. He calls his study an investigation of southern civil religion. Chapters treat the rituals, mythology, theology, and sermonic style developed to explain and defend the Lost Cause. There are also chapters on the mysticism of the Ku Klux Klan, J. William Jones, whom Wilson identifies as a prototype evangelist of the Lost Cause, and those schools and other training instruments which delivered the Lost Cause mystique to succeeding generations. Wilson’s final chapter tells of reconciliation with the North and vindication of the South by, among other things, election to the presidency of southerner Woodrow Wilson.

Southern civil religion, according to Wilson, gave evidence that Southern churches were culturally captive. But beyond that, the Southern culture was also captive to the Southern churches. With a pantheon of saints led by Robert E. Lee, Jefferson Davis, Stonewall Jackson, and Sam Davis to serve as models, Southerners were urged to honor their heritage by becoming the “remnant” which would mean the future salvation of a materialistic nation sorely in need of sacred Southern values.

Extensive notes and a thorough bibliography support Wilson’s theses.

Jerry Self
Tennessee Baptist Convention

As the subtitle of this massive study indicates, Norman D. Brown has dealt with Texas politics during the years between the end of World War I and the beginning of the Great Depression. The symbols of the title refer to the Ku Klux Klan, Mrs. Mariam Ferguson, and Prohibition, which were the principal political issues during the decade. The volume is well-edited with voluminous notes, interesting pictures, and a good index. The publisher, The Texas A&M University Press, has produced another handsome book.

Based on impressive research, Brown's account concentrated on the political process in the more narrow sense. He treated each election, both primary and general, and every session of the state legislature in some detail, never straying far from the vantage point of the Austin Capitol. In the early chapters the author described the election of Pat M. Neff as governor and the emergence of the Ku Klux Klan as a major political power in Texas. The subsequent frustrations of Neff, who sought to enact progressive legislation relating to the prison system, law enforcement, the state administrative machinery, and public education, were indicative of governor-legislature relationships throughout the decade. Indeed, the inertia of the Texas legislature was a constant theme running through the entire book.

The "return of the Fergusons" in 1924 provided one of the high points of the study. Former governor James E. Ferguson (impeached and removed from office in 1917) used the tactic of running his wife, Mariam, for governor against the Klan-backed candidate, Judge Felix Robertson. The primary was further complicated by the presence of Lynch Davidson and T. W. Davidson, both well-known, anti-Klan, anti-Ferguson politicians. In the confused first primary Robertson led and "Ma" Ferguson ran second, closely followed by Lynch and T. W. Davidson in order. In the run-off Robertson was no match for "Pa" Ferguson's invective as he stumped the state denouncing Robertson, the Klan, and Imperial Wizard Hiram Evans, who was regularly described as the "Grand Gizzard." After Ma's victory Pa Ferguson stood by her side at the inauguration and sat beside her as Mariam Ferguson discharged the duties of governor of Texas. The state had, as was widely repeated, "Two governors for the price of one."

Dan Moody succeeded Mrs. Ferguson after one term. Young, able, red-headed, and ambitious, Moody provided a sharp contrast to the Fergusons. Brown also contrasted the political atmosphere in Austin under the reform-minded Moody with Ma Ferguson's excessive use of pardons and Pa's questionable highway contract manipulations. Even
Moody, however, was not able to escape the effects of a recalcitrant legislature and the three-way split of the Texas Democratic Party in 1928 as a result of Alfred E. Smith’s campaign for the Presidency.

Despite the book’s length (more than 550 total pages) the reader is faced with a number of omissions. Prohibition and prohibition enforcement were major topics throughout the study but nowhere was there even a mention of the “open city” policies of Galveston where “fun in the sun” continued without regard to the Eighteenth Amendment. Also, the roles of such business and civic leaders as Joseph S. Cullinan, John Henry Kirby, and H. J. Lutcher Stark remained obscure without more than a single line on their backgrounds and significance.

These are merely minor reservations to a well-researched and informative book. All readers interested in Texas history and the political battles of the early twentieth century will need to read Hood, Bonnet, and Little Brown Jug. It probably will become the standard work on the period.

Robert S. Maxwell
Nacogdoches


Tony Champagne’s splendid study, Congressman Sam Rayburn, reveals not only a great deal about the former Speaker but also much about the people, the values, and the politics of the Fourth Congressional District of East Texas. Through sixty-two personal interviews, Champagne has uncovered a wealth of new information on Rayburn the man as well as Rayburn the member of Congress.

After sketching the unique features of Rayburn’s underpopulated, rural-oriented, tailor-made district, Champagne describes in detail the Congressman’s style, organization, and campaigns. A highly personal and homey quality characterized these and enabled Rayburn to maintain a secure, conservative home base while trimming sufficiently to the left in Washington to establish himself as a national leader. Champagne skillfully examines the tensions created by Rayburn’s need to reconcile his Washington and district roles, especially in regard to civil rights, Harry Truman, and issues touching oil. Instructive though they are, Rayburn’s successful methods cannot be copied by today’s Congressmen, for Rayburn’s world and district have been transformed by television, urbanism, and the Supreme Court. A new Sam Rayburn is not likely to appear, but, thanks to Tony Champagne, we can better understand and appreciate the one who did.

Edward Hake Phillips
Sherman, Texas

The political strength of Texas in Washington, D.C., during the mid-century was well known. Figures such as Rayburn, Johnson, Garner, Poage, Patman, Jones and others were responsible for the state's political sway for approximately thirty years, 1930-1960. The state's strength began to grow during the Depression with the leadership of Vice-President John Vance Garner and Majority Leader Sam Rayburn. Texans, Politics and the New Deal is a record of this development when it began in the Depression.

Two were chiefly responsible for the state's influence, John Vance Garner and Sam Rayburn. As vice president, Garner wielded some power of patronage, but more important, he could muster votes among his Democratic brethren due to his long years of service in Congress. So great was his influence, which Patenaude says occurred behind the scenes, that "Garner was to prove the most important Texan associated with the New Deal," (p. 33). Rayburn was Majority Leader for most of the New Deal years. He proved to be a "vote-getter," but also an up-front sponsor of legislation. He was identified with several key measures such as the Securities Exchange Act and Rural Electrification Act. Garner and Rayburn established the power base for Texas in the post-World War II era.

Politicians at the state level were also involved in the New Deal. "Ma" Ferguson, wife of Governor James Ferguson, took the governor's chair in January, 1933. She and her husband lobbied on behalf of relief, and by working with the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, they were instrumental in establishing the state Department of Public Welfare. But Texans also opposed the New Deal. Business and political interest formed the Constitutional Democrats of Texas and the Jeffersonian Democrats. In their opinion, continuation of New Deal politics would ruin the Constitution. Patenaude does not think these opponents harmed the New Deal and in fact were overshadowed by the pro-Roosevelt forces. However, the court-packing fight of 1937 cost FDR some support, especially Garner's.

The extent to which politics at the state level influenced affairs in Washington has never been clear. Sharp differences developed among Democrats in Texas after the war, and the roots of those differences probably went back to the 1930s. Patenaude's coverage of state politics is helpful and puts badly needed information into the "black-hole" of state politics in the 1930s. The chief criticism of the book should go to the publisher. The book was not typeset and printed, but rather a photocopy of the author's manuscript was made. This book deserves
better treatment.

D. Clayton Brown
Texas Christian University


This 1984 reprint of a work originally published in 1979 by the Greenwood Press analyzes Texas' "unbroken line of conservative government and legislatures since 1939." In convincing detail Green nails down some "facts" about establishment politics in Texas. He demonstrates, for example, that "the establishment" is "a loosely knit plutocracy comprised mostly of Anglo businessmen, oilmen, bankers, and lawyers." Since 1938 their objectives, he exhibits, have been to establish and maintain a regressive tax structure, low corporate taxes, strict anti-labor laws, political, social, and economic oppression of blacks and Mexican-Americans, and reluctant expansion of state services.

Green also identifies some of their strategies and techniques for maintaining hegemony over the state's government. The dual primary nominating system enables them to rally behind the front running conservative from the Democratic Party's first primary in order to crush the liberal survivor of the primary, or if two make their way into the second primary, they support the one perceived the most conservative on fiscal matters. Should a liberal or moderate emerge from the primaries the establishment can then rally behind the conservative nominated by the Republican in the general election party. As a consequence no liberal who was not an incumbent has ever won a major office in a runoff or general election.

Establishment strategy was generally successful; and, thus, Texas in 1957 "had a low per-capita income . . . an above average number of people not covered by the federal minimum wage . . . [no] income tax, minimum wage law, merit system, fair employment practices statutes, and interparty competition."

Looking forward from 1957 Green detects two notable changes in the nature of the Texas establishment: Establishment Democrats have encroached on the traditionally liberal precincts dominated by labor and ethnic groups; and many affluent Establishment Democrats have dropped out of the Democratic party and shifted their allegiance to the Republican party.

Although some of Green's rhetoric is hyperbolic, a few of his conclusions are overdrawn, and his liberal Democratic bias often shows through, this study of twentieth-century Texas politics deserves a careful
reading for its many useful insights into the state's unique political life.

Joe E. Ericson
Stephen F. Austin State University


With this effort, Professor Bornet has contributed a volume to the University Press of Kansas’ growing list in the American Presidency Series. And a worthwhile, scholarly effort it is. It details Johnson’s White House years in 416 pages packed with facts which are related with well-thought-out interpretations. In fourteen well-balanced chapters, Bornet leads the reader through the last stormy months of 1963 into the hopeful year of 1964. Then the course is charted through the Great Society programs and the Vietnam War. A concluding chapter on “History Will Judge” rounds out the volume.

One remarkable facet of this book is its even-handed interpretation. For too long, in this reviewer’s opinion, “Ole Lyndon” has been raked over the coals by authors and castigated for things beyond his control. This reviewer has in mind several “biographies” of the 1970s and early 1980s which were written by “scholars” but which strayed far afield so far as objective judgements were concerned.

Bornet finds much to praise in Johnson’s domestic record—his support of civil rights, his war on poverty (though Johnson always promised too much and raised expectations too high), his aid to education, and a host of other reforms. Conversely, Bornet relates the obvious regarding foreign affairs, that Vietnam ruined Johnson. However, the author points out that the United States’ role in Vietnam was long in the making, a role stretching back to the Truman years. In reality, Vietnam was not “Mr. Johnson’s War” but was, rather, a “mess” he inherited from his predecessors.

In summation, Bornet finds that Lyndon Johnson loomed large in American history. His presidency brought many changes, some his successors could reverse and some they could not. “This presidency,” says Bornet, “made a difference. The nation was transformed in civil rights; in ... every level of education; in action taken against poverty; in payments for medical care for aging citizens, the disabled, and the poor; and in a new conservation effort. . . .” (p. 329). Reading a little between the lines, perhaps, the reader comes to conclude that “History Will Judge” the tall Texan benevolently regarding domestic policy and will understand how he floundered over the question of Vietnam.

Bornet’s solid narrative is buttressed by extensive research. The book’s note section alone runs thirty-one pages. A bibliographic essay

David F. Prindle's first book, Petroleum Politics and the Texas Railroad Commission, was guaranteed status as a classic in Texas history when it was released in 1981. It is the first scholarly study of a regulatory agency of national importance. The current publication of this volume in paperback form makes it available for use in the college and university classroom, where it will be valuable supporting reading for courses in Texas history.

Prindle's study is based on thorough research, principally in the archives of the Texas Railroad Commission, related scholarly literature, industry journals, and Texas newspapers and periodicals. The author interviewed more than ninety oilmen and politicians to obtain their perspectives on the functioning of the Commission. All of this work is reported in a clear and interesting style.

Like all classics, however, this one will be revised and amended in time. Like all first books on important subjects, it is not the last word, in part because it is relatively brief. Some topics deserve further study and some conclusions will be modified. There is still the need for a more microscopic study of the process by which the oil industry "captured" the agency that regulates it within Texas. Election campaigns, the identity and interests of contributors, and the financial involvement of commissioners with the oil industry should be examined. The relatively simple division of antagonists in East Texas into major oil companies and independent oil men probably will not hold up to closer scrutiny; there seem to have been no united fronts in this crisis. It is also likely that the heroic role attributed to Ernest Thompson in resolving the long dispute in East Texas will be down-graded because production in the giant East Texas field was already declining by the time the Railroad Commission was able to make its orders stick.

These observations and perhaps others will be reflected in subsequent books that touch on the Railroad Commission. The process of supplementing and amending Petroleum Politics and the Texas Railroad Commission has just begun. As it continues, it should be remembered that David F. Prindle has made a major contribution to Texas history and that his book is likely to remain the best single study of the subject for many years to come.

Roger M. Olien
University of Texas - Permian Basin

This book is the third publication in the successful Montague History of Oil series. Like the earlier volumes on Texas and Oklahoma, it offers general readers an informed text and a rich visual record of oil field activity and social life in the booming oil towns. This volume takes up the story in 1901 with the opening of the Jennings field in Louisiana, continues through Caddo and Northern Louisiana, spills over into Arkansas, and moves back to Louisiana for an account of early offshore activity. Each of the nine chapters begins with a brief sketch of field and area development from the discovery well through development and settled production.

The principle themes are richly illustrated by more than two hundred photographs. They were drawn from scores of public and private collections in Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Arkansas. Some of them, such as the view of a family living in a walled-up tent, are rare records of common oilfield experience. Others, especially the four-page fold-out of the Anderson gas well in the Eldorado field, have considerable dramatic impact. For the most part, the visual material is both interesting and well reproduced, though some photos are too many generations removed from the original negatives; they tend to be fuzzy and grainy.

Not infrequently, the authors’ keen eyes have spotted details that are more important than most readers might realize; comments on machinery and technology and their effects on working routines are helpful as are their observations of the special problems posed by climate and terrain. Readers in East Texas will have a special interest in the chapters on Caddo and Rodessa. Collectors of regional and business history will want to buy this book.

Roger M. Olien
University of Texas - Permian Basin


According to a good share of the fiction—and even some of the nonfiction—that has come out on it in the last century, the art of cowboying took place at “trails end” by treeing some Kansas cowtown and bending an elbow at the local version of Miss Kitty’s Long Branch Saloon, a myth if ever there was one. In actuality it was done on a ranch, big or small, where the old-time cowhand worked from can see to can’t see at a job that at times could be as dull and boring as it
could be exciting and dangerous. And if ever there was a family unit in the history of this country that made a man feel like he belonged, it was—and still is—the Ranch, as photographed by Dudley Whitney and written of by Moira Johnston.

Subtitled “Portrait of a Surviving Dream,” the book is a definitive study in modern day ranching and just how it has managed to survive the age of technology and still hold on to an image that has grown with the ranch and become a symbol of recognition to the rest of the world—the American cowboy.

Divided into four parts, “The Journey,” “The Land,” “The Legacy,” and “The Life,” Moira Johnston does an admirable job of describing ranching today from the Cariboo country of British Columbia to California to Texas. In her travels she visited as many small spreads as she did big ones, each interview adding that much more history to ranch life and its roots. The result is a quick, enjoyable read through the cattle industry, from Richard King’s first wanderings into Texas in 1852 to modern times.

To make the text that much more enjoyable, the reader will find a delightful selection of more than 200 pictures by photographer Dudley Whitney to accompany it. Over half are color photos of some of the most breathtaking scenery this side of the Mississippi, and the black and whites are as admirable as anything the late Ansel Adams has ever done. In short, they work with the text.

Ranch is one of those books everyone should read. Those who have never “cowboyed” before will find a new insight into the workings of one of our oldest traditions. And those who are still working at it will find the book a pleasant reminiscence.

Jim Miller
Aurora, Colorado

The Modern Cowboy. By John R. Erickson. (Univ. of Nebraska Press, 901 N. 17th St., Lincoln, NE 68588), 1981. Photographs, Bibliography. P. 247. $15.95.

The Modern Cowboy is not just another cowboy book. It is a very informative and fascinating account of contemporary cowboying and cattle raising, with emphasis on the changes new technology has brought to the industry and to its man on horseback. John Erickson, a bonafide cowboy with a degree in literature, writes in the simple, graceful, conversational style of the cow country and clarifies for the layman such ranch chores as midwifing heifers in labor, de-horning and castrating calves, stringing electric fences, and repairing windmills. He includes a sympathetic yet realistic account of the home life of the modern cowboy, and he looks at the business side of ranching, now
beset by both political interference with the free market and the rapid spread of giant agribusiness.

Erickson adds a stimulating bibliographic essay on cowboy literature, and his wife, Kris, enhances the book with her fine photographs, which, while not as artistic as those of Bank Langmore or Erwin E. Smith, are very honest and skillfully support the text. Although Erickson's focus is on the cowboy of the Texas Panhandle, his material is largely transferable to East Texas, where cow pastures now far outnumber cotton fields.

Edward Hake Phillips
Sherman, Texas


The West is wild again. Or, if it isn't wild it is active enough to agitate an outpouring of new books on the subject. One seldom scans a collection of book reviews that he doesn't find a plethora of new publications on the Old West, many of them copiously illustrated and prohibitively expensive. The Library of Congress itself created a lavish six-month cowboy exhibit, with accompanying $50 catalog, bandanas, posters, and cowboy greeting cards. The latest book to come across my desk is from Academia. It is a scholarly tribute to the Old West, entitled The Code of the West by Bruce Rosenberg.

The Code of the West is an impressive volume. Rosenberg identifies eleven groups of legends that were spawned on the nineteenth-century frontier and studies them in the light of the American values that they represented. The tales of the 49ers and the Mormons and the outlaws were widely told in their own time and are still a part of America's legendry. They are survivors and Rosenberg tells us why. He boils the stories down to their essences, to their morals, and points out what many of us feel about these episodes but haven't intellectually interpreted.

Historical revisionists have had a field day with General George Custer and his last stand, and those who are interested in that day in history recognize that the battle was not an exercise in heroics. But the picture that remains in our folklore—the essence that we treasure—is still of Yellow Hair standing on the hill, flashing sabre in one hand, blazing pistol in the other, heroically defying an enemy that multitudinously outnumbers him. We know that Billy Bonney, Jesse James, Sam Bass, and Wyatt Earp were outlaws, but in the stories of their ultimate shootouts they become heroes standing elementally and alone, bravely facing death. These same anti-socials gain admiration in their legendary Robin Hood patterns of robbing the rich and giving to the
poor. These tales might not accurately record what some Americans did, but they reflect how Americans feel about what their heroes did.

Rosenberg makes a case with each of his legendary cycles, showing that the stories survived because they teach survival values. The mountain men were tough, resourceful, and knew the land and its ways. The prospectors were energetic gamblers searching for America's "inexhaustible" wealth. The pioneers of the Overland Trail and the Mormon handcart settlers overcame every kind of hardship and survived to create a new place in the western wild. Rosenberg tells the ringing deeds of the Pony Express riders and steamboat captains and trail drivers, and we are proud that these old souls are a part of our historical ancestry.

Rosenberg concludes with the legend of the Pacing White Stallion, made famous by the stories by Walter Prescott Webb and Frank Dobie. This story, as romantic and as unrealistic as it is in some of its manifestations, is one of western America's most significant legends. Its central character is the magnificent white horse but its central theme—American? western? universal?—is man's romantic yearning for unfettered freedom and independence, for being alone and untrammeled by social confusions and inconveniences, of reverting to a state of nature, in the wild.

Bruce Rosenberg deals with the codes and stories of the west but he places them in a large picture, the history and legends of western civilization. Sometimes he bogs the reader down in illustration and in folkloric allusion. Sometimes he is wordy and we get the feeling that he is going to belabor the obvious. But most of the time we are impressed by his knowledge and the framework of his studies, and we are enlightened with new heroes and new ways to look at them. Add to this that he writes in a literate and readable style and you have a book worth keeping.

Francis Edward Abernethy
Stephen F. Austin State University


For a state with a comparatively short history, Oklahoma offers a surprisingly fruitful field for research by historians, both amateur and professional. Although much of the research in Oklahoma history has focused on the territorial period, in recent years historians have begun
to examine Oklahoma's seventy-five years of statehood. However, the new emphasis on twentieth-century history has not eroded the popularity of pre-statehood studies. New works proliferate in all areas of Oklahoma history. Two of the newer works, examples of both the old and the new styles, are *Singing Cowboys and All That Jazz* and *Women in Oklahoma*.

In *Singing Cowboys*, William Savage surveys the diverse types of popular music which have come and gone through the years. He quickly scans Oklahoma's position as a musical crossroads, explores the state's contributions to jazz, country, rock, and other musical forms, and provides sketches of important groups and performers. Featured are artists such as the Oklahoma City Blue Devils, Count Basie, Woody Guthrie, and Bob Wills. Also included are popular composers Hoyt Axton, Jimmy Webb, and Roger Miller. The thesis of the work is simply that Oklahomans have made major contributions to American popular music, and Savage defends his position ably.

*Women in Oklahoma* is a collection, and as such it complies with the general rule regarding collections: it is inconsistent. Topics include woman's suffrage, women of the Osage, missionaries, black women in politics, and others. Length ranges from eleven to forty-five pages. Although the unifying theme is supposed to be "a century of change," the authors tend to concentrate on the territorial era and make only a token gesture toward treatment of statehood days. For instance, the essay on Osage women becomes excessively succinct in its coverage of the period after the 1920s. The essay on black women in politics deals solely with the years immediately after statehood and the years after the civil rights revolution. It ignores the intervening half century. The title of the book is misleading.

Neither of the works is destined for immortality. However, each has sufficient merit to justify the price.

J. Herschel Barnhill
Oklahoma Department of Libraries

*The Ballad of America: The History of the United States In Song and Story* by John Anthony Scott is generally a well done, concise, and interesting collection of Popular Music from the colonial period through the middle twentieth century. Scott has chosen a chronological approach for organizing the music which groups various songs under specific periods. A brief introductory chapter outlining the historical setting
prefaces each of these periods. Individual sections for the music of immigrants, slaves, and the working classes are included. The music itself is clearly printed and is presented in simple keys and ranges well within the abilities of most singers and other musicians. In addition, the majority of songs contain facile chord changes suitable for guitar or piano. Besides an extensive bibliography, the text contains a recording list complete with performers, title, and phonograph information. Although the last chapter, "Since The War" (containing only six songs), does not match the depth of previous sections, the work as a whole is worthy of commendation. In conclusion, by combining many "old favorites" with others too long forgotten, the author has created a unique collection which traces popular music and the people who sang it through the different eras of our national experience.

Charles G. Davis
Georgetown, Texas

Y’All Come—Country Music: Jack’s Branch To Nashville. By Arleigh Duff. (Eakin Press, P.O. Box 23066, Austin, TX 78735), 1983. Index. P. 194. $9.95.

Singer, songwriter, and disc-jockey Arleigh Duff sketches his life and times in this engaging autobiography, a folksy self-portrait replete with much humor and some pathos. From the Big Thicket culture of his boyhood came Duff’s inspiration for the enduring country music classic, “Y’All Come.” A few memorable years as a touring recording artist followed this hit, but the joys and trials of raising a large family pushed music into the background for him. Unfortunately, Duff merely whets the reader’s appetite for more information about such subjects as Jack Starnes and Starday Records, the important Ozark Jubilee show, and his own later recording career. Some proper names are misspelled, and there are minor factual gaffs in several of Duff’s asides. But beyond these peccadilloes, this is a useful recollection of pre-World War II East Texas life, and a welcome addition to the growing literature of country music.

Ronnie Pugh
Country Music Foundation
Nashville, Tennessee


Over the last two decades a virtual stream of print has poured down on the Big Thicket of Southeast Texas. Besides Sunday Supplement articles and political tracts, there have been books on almost every
conceivable aspect of the once mighty wilderness. Bibliophiles can thus meditate at length on Big Thicket ecology, bibliography, botany, outlaws, politics, conservation, oral history, folklore, watercolor representation, and much more. What can Howard Peacock's book do that previous books have not? The answer is that it covers the entire subject with brevity and greater charm than all the other books on the subject put together.

Peacock's approach is broadly historical. Beginning with a discussion of where and what the Big Thicket is, he explains the region's geology and ecology, its early Indian inhabitants, the arrival of the pioneers, the growth and overgrowth of its lumber industry, the oilfield boom of the early twentieth century and, finally, the conservationists struggle which resulted in the creation of the Big Thicket Preserve (1974). The style is conversational, and the details are well chosen and convey an accurate, personal picture. The reader feels as if he or she has been taken on a long woodland walk on a pleasant autumn afternoon. The author's photographs and the high quality of print and paper make this a natural candidate for the coffee table. But it could also serve as a course or supplementary reading text.

Pete A. Y. Gunter
North Texas State University

Sunbelt Cities. Politics and Growth Since World War II. Edited by Richard M. Bernard and Bradley R. Rice. (University of Texas Press, P. O. Box 7819, Austin, TX 78712), 1983. P. 346. $9.95 Paperback; $25.00 Hardback.

Sunbelt Cities is a collection of historical essays describing post-World War II growth and politics in twelve Sunbelt (that portion of the United States below the thirty-seventh parallel) metropolitan areas chosen for study on the basis of size, regional importance, and historical significance—Albuquerque, Atlanta, Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New Orleans, Oklahoma City, Phoenix, San Antonio, San Diego, and Tampa.

Each well-written essay analyzes the growth patterns and traces the political changes that have occurred in a particular city, and as a result, the book provides excellent background reading for students and scholars. Because of the influences of the federal government, economic forces, and community elites in these cities, the work should be of interest to social scientists, and not just historians. The individual essays are noteworthy; of greater significance is what the book says about the Sunbelt in general.

Ronald G. Claunch
Stephen F. Austin State University

Probably no event in twentieth-century history has had a greater impact on Texas and its citizens than has the Great Depression. The amazing thing is that so little has been written on the topic, especially in the period prior to the New Deal. Fortunately this book, which focuses on the years 1929-1933, is a major step in filling that historical void. Whisenhunt has produced a well-organized, well-researched work on how Texans reacted to the intense economic upheaval of the 1920s and 1930s.

In spite of the racial, religious, and economic diversity of Texans, they tended to look at the Depression in similar terms because they shared the fact that their thought was keenly influenced by the frontier experience, the agrarian myth, the fundamentalist mind, and belief in the conspiracy theory of history. Whisenhunt does an excellent job of showing how those forces influenced attitudes on such things as the stock market crash, the deepening depression, acceptance of the dire situation, and the search for a villain. The extent of the economic chaos is made clear by the fact that virtually all the state's citizens felt the impact of hard times in some way.

This book handles a number of topics in a most intriguing fashion. There is an excellent and very convincing account of why Texans were extremely slow to admit that hard times were upon them. In dealing with transients, one sees an aspect of the Depression that has been virtually ignored or forgotten in spite of the magnitude of the problem. Several chapters on the problem of the farmer and the search for relief reveal that Texans did not just try and wait out the crisis but actively sought a way out of their dilemma. The book closes with a very thought provoking examination of the "pragmatic" radicalism of Texans during that period of economic crisis.

Because of the size and diversity of Texas a state-wide study of any topic, but especially the Depression, is most difficult, but Whisenhunt has done an excellent job of providing a book of value to the scholar and of interest to the layman.

Keith D. McFarland
East Texas State University


Texas Christian University Professor Emeritus Troy C. Crenshaw has compiled a narrative of reminiscences, nostalgia, autobiography and
history which, while highly personal, has broad interest to Texans raised in the style of the early twentieth-century blacklands. The blacklands are rather narrowly defined as the rich black clay prairies beginning south of the Red River, between Red River and Grayson counties, and looping gently westward to trail off southeast of San Antonio. These are farmlands, a region of historically small but reasonably prosperous family farms.

The author has captured what he remembers as the essence of life’s experiences between roughly 1900 and 1926, when the small towns emerged into small cities, or disappeared, horses gave way to horseless carriages, and labor was hard and life both bitter and sweet, and somehow, perhaps richer and more fulfilling than the sugar-coated, media-event that sometimes reflects a more contemporary lifestyle.

Pieces of history intrude on the chronicles of a family growing up and dispersing over several generations. Indians, race relations, automobiles, teachers, circuses, Confederate veterans, movies, and world war impact strongly on the author’s consciousness in these years. Irrespective of one’s affiliation with the blacklands, the book’s appeal rests largely on the recall of what life was, or must have been like for most rural small town Texans, and for many Americans in the early twentieth century.

Henry C. Dethloff
Texas A&M University

*Old Homes of Houston County.* By Publications Development Company. (Publications Development Co. of Texas, P.O. Box 1075, Crockett, TX 75835), 1983. Glossary, Index, Photographs. P. 214. $35.00.

This pictorial publication is a popular “coffee-table book” locally and in far places where the residents have their roots in Houston County. Photographs and stories were submitted by interested people in the community.

The builders of most of the houses were the owners themselves since architects were rare. The typical early style house had a central dog-trot or open hallway with identical rooms on either side. It was often called “East Texas Country.” Two other styles appear—the Greek Revival and Victorian. Yet there are few examples of “pure” architectural style since features meeting individual needs were employed.

A number of the homes included in the book have been awarded historic medallions or markers. Tourists may enjoy two of these in the downtown area of Crockett, the Downes-Aldrich House, built in 1891-93, an outstanding example of Eastlake Victorian, and the Monroe-Crook House, built in 1854 and recognized as one of the finest early Greek Revival houses in Texas.
Personal accounts, scattered throughout the book's pages, give insight into family life and the economy of the time. A surprise ending is two pages on privies—"a necessity before plumbing."

A four-page glossary is a real help in explaining construction and decorative terms, furniture, and equipment mentioned.

Like the houses that endured, the book is well-bound and should withstand the years.

Ava Bush
Grapeland, Texas

Crockett Newspapers 1853-1896. By Bebe Beasley Ulrich. (Publications Development Co. of Texas, P.O. Box 1075, Crockett, TX 75835), 1984. Illustrations, Index. P. 263. $30.00.

This excellent volume has already been the source of historical and genealogical documentation for many of its readers. It also serves as a replacement for the nonexistent 1890 census.

Because there were three court house fires in Houston County, the author purposely included land transactions and court proceedings. It was also her intent to reveal the everyday way of life of the settlement. Some could not cope with reality in that day. A tragic account describes the victim of disappointed love, a twenty-two year old man who swallowed two bottles of morphine because the object of his affection refused to marry him. The letter he left to be read to the congregation at Shiloh Church, east of Grapeland, is given in its entirety.

Of special interest to journalists is the sharp contrast between the style of that day and this. For example: "Mrs. Smith, "fourth wife" of Mr. Smith died on Monday last" (Feb. 1852), and a couple is named who married in a buggy on the public highway. "An irate father in the case made this kind of ceremony necessary" (January 1986).

Items excerpted from five Crockett papers make interesting reading even for those without personal ties to the people.

Grapeland, Texas
Ava Bush


Only six months after publication of another exemplary work, Marshall and Harrison County are again in the book trade limelight with another look at their historical heritage.

The first, of course, was Randolph Campbell's critically acclaimed A Southern Community in Crisis: Harrison County, Texas, 1850-1880,
which appeared to generous praise from Dr. Bernard A. Weisberger and other historians of national stature.

In this, Carol Little has brought together in one volume of text and photographs the story behind every official marker in Harrison County. Included are twenty-six structures designated by the Texas Historical Commission as Texas landmarks, along with fifty-four others commemorating individuals and events in the county’s rich past.

This labor of love should serve as a model for every county in Texas. The book was produced privately in a numbered edition limited to 500 copies, of which roughly half had been sold within the first month of release.

Its appeal is to resident and visitor alike. True, the state now requires an interpretive plate on all landmark medallions, enough to satisfy the casual tourist. Those more seriously interested always have access to the official files in the commission offices in Austin.

But Mrs. Little has produced far more than a chamber of commerce handout or a bureaucratic file. Using a broad range of primary sources from port documents in Philadelphia and Galveston (in the case of immigrants) to nineteenth-century records in a New Orleans orphanage, she has supplemented the official records in Austin with solid historical research.

In recording the story of Harrison County’s markers, Mrs. Little in actuality has written a history of the county from a naval point of view. She records family genealogies as they relate to property ownership, describes the influences which governed construction styles and materials, and narrates, in fact, a “biography” of each featured structure. These range from an 1850s cottage to three-story mansions.

Of particular value are the photographs provided by her husband, Robert Little. With an eye for detailing, he has supplied a number of photographs of trim and other features often not found in “house” photography. Mrs. Little also used early photographs made available by family members to go along with her husband’s modern impressions.

Max S. Lale
Marshall, Texas


On July 29, 1806 along the Red River at what are now known as the Spanish Bluffs in Bowie County, Captain Don Francisco Vianna and his Spanish troops confronted and turned back an expedition com-
missioned by President Thomas Jefferson to probe the southwestern lands of the Louisiana Purchase.

Until now the journal accounts filed with Congress by Thomas Freeman, a surveyor and astronomer, and by Peter Custis, the first American-trained naturalist to work west of the Mississippi, have received little attention for the "failed" expedition.

Dan L. Flores places the accounts of the Red River venture in the full context of Jefferson's desire to gain information about the recently purchased territory and to clarify its boundaries. In his introduction and epilogue, Flores links the enterprise to a plan by Aaron Burr and Gen. James Wilkinson to wrest Texas and Mexico from Spanish control.

The intriguing notion developed by Flores that Jefferson's interest in the Southwest was part of an imperialistic scheme somewhat overshadows the revelations of the reports of Freeman and Custis on the landscape and Indian tribes encountered along Red River. Flores' careful footnoting clarifies the diaries and corrects misidentifications of the explorers. Mature research, articulate reporting, and outstanding photographs give valuable insights into an early expedition which ended abruptly in the northeastern corner of Texas.

Fred Tarpley
East Texas State University


Perhaps the best way to review **Jefferson: Riverport to the Southwest** is to report that Fred Tarpley is still welcome in Jefferson, Texas.

Commissioned to research and write the book, the East Texas State University professor has managed as a by-product of diligent investigation to blow some of the charming little town's most cherished folk tales.

Happily, enough of the tales stand up under his scrutiny to save his place at the table. Jefferson is one of the older communities in Texas. By virtue of its geographical location, it was an important influence on nineteenth-century history. Its gracious homes and attractive commercial buildings, many lovingly restored, are a tourist magnet.

But... Jay Gould never hurled anathema on the place because, beholden to river transportation, Jefferson refused him the subsidy he sought as a boon to his railroad. His alleged signature and "jaybird" colophon in the Excelsior Hotel register are fraudulent. His railroad did, in fact, serve the city with a connection to Marshall, and on a subsequent visit Gould was received cordially.
Take the matter of population. In 1946, when I joined the editorial staff of the Marshall News Messenger, published only 15 miles distant, I was informed most solemnly that at its zenith Jefferson boasted 30,000 inhabitants. Tarpley estimates 8,000 at most. Left unexplained by local boosters all these years is how the federal census figures could have been so wrong.

Misreading references to an earlier Jefferson postoffice, this one in southeast Texas, residents of the Marion County capital long claimed a founding in the 1830s, when in fact the town dates from the 1840s.

Yet these are cavils, which with some embarrassment I must confess. I failed too many decades ago in writing about Jefferson myself to check the facts, as Tarpley now his done.

Too many of the cherished tales are true to make any difference now: how Robert Potter was gunned down in the waters of Caddo Lake during the Regulator-Moderator War, how the notorious Diamond Bessie was murdered during a "picnic" across Cypress Bayou, how elimination of the Red River raft downstream brought a precipitous end to river transportation, which the work was supposed to enhance.

Despite its many adversities, Jefferson was able to survive its decline from a stellar place in the Texas heavens largely because it was relegated to backwater stagnation, thus preserving what so many visitors now find nostalgic and significant.

Thanks to Tarpley, Jefferson's place should be secure at last. His is an admirable piece of local historiography, and the Jefferson Carnegie Library group are congratulated for their wisdom and initiative. Texans will be grateful.

Max S. Lale
Marshall, Texas


In March, 1982, the Texas Committee for the Humanities sponsored a lecture series in conjunction with the National Endowment for the Humanities. To provide the keynote address the Committee invited Frank E. Vandiver, an eminent historian and biographer who is also president of Texas A&M University. In response, biographers Robert H. Abzug, Stephen B. Oates, Ronald Steele, and Jean Strouse reflected on Vandiver's paper, "Biography as an Agent of Humanism." This book is the result of their labors.

In his essay Vandiver has investigated all facets of biography. In
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comparing "biographers with portraitists" (p. 3), he has discussed the ingredients in, the tools necessary for, and techniques required for a successful canvas. He also warns scholars as to the pitfalls which have beset writers and which distinguish a good work. But above all Vandiver emphasizes that the "biographer's goal is to evoke from the past the essence of a subject, the character that quickened blood and bone;" consequently the "fundamental obligation is to understand—understand in all dimensions of the word" (p. 19).

In their responses to Vandiver the four biographers were favorably impressed and therefore pursued a personal tact. Robert Abzug, who wrote on Theodore Dwight Weld, emphasized the necessity of a good beginning because "in those first pages . . . the biographer either captures or loses the reader depending upon the chemistry of that pre-figuration" (p. 22). Ronald Steele, who received the Bancroft Prize in American History for Walter Lippman and the American Century, proposed that "biography is a creative work, an amalgam of the life of the subject and the mind of the biographer" (p. 27). Stephen Oates, whose works on Abraham Lincoln, John Brown, Nat Turner, and Martin Luther King, Jr., are well known, stated that the "best biography . . . remains a story-telling art whose mission . . . is to elicit from the coldness of fact 'the warmth of a life being lived'" (p. 20). And Jean Strouse, from her study of Alice James, "found psychoanalytic theory" to be "useful" as well as "a number of other fields" (p. 40).

Together with excellent essays by Steven Weiland, the executive director of the National Federation of State Humanities Councils, and James F. Veninga, the executive director of the Texas Committee for the Humanities, these scholars have fashioned an excellent monograph. The essays are well-written, the subject matter is analytical, and the presentation is thought-provoking. For writers and those who appreciate history The Biographer's Gift is appropriately named.

Ben Procter
Texas Christian University


Claude Barr Kennedy (1869-1963) was an East Texas lumber worker whose career spanned the bonanza era of the Texas lumber industry. In tracing his labors and wanderings Ada Morehead Holland has sketched a stark and compelling description of life in Piney Woods sawmill towns in the early twentieth century.

Kennedy held a variety of jobs, worked at many mills in Texas
and Louisiana, and lived in a succession of company houses, many little better than shacks. His wife, Liddie Evans, gave birth to thirteen children, half of whom died in infancy or childhood. Without running water or electricity during most of her days, Liddie endured a hard life made more difficult by Claude's habit of leaving a job at every setback or altercation. The children attended school only irregularly and most went to work at an early age. One son, Fred Wallace, worked at saw-mills, operated a farm, and later was employed by the United States Forest Service. Fred and his wife Effie also provided a home for Claude Kennedy during the last thirty years of his life.

In many respects Claude Barr Kennedy was atypical. Though a capable mechanic and engineer, he never put down roots nor rose to even minor management level in the industry. In this study of Mr. Claude, Ada Holland has given the reader a perceptive and informative picture of an interesting and independent man.

Robert S. Maxwell
Nacogdoches, Texas

Monte Cassino. By David Hapgood and David Richardson. (Congdon & Weed, Inc., 298 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10001), 1984. Photographs, Maps, Notes and Sources, Bibliography, Index. P. 269. $17.95 Cloth.

The destruction of the Benedictine Abbey of Monte Cassino in central Italy became one of the most controversial acts of World War II. On February 15, 1944, the American 15th Air Force destroyed this ancient religious house perched on a mountain overlooking the entrance to the Liri Valley—gateway to Rome. Hapgood and Richardson have produced a serious account of why it happened based on German, Italian, and Allied sources uncovered since the war.

The month previous, Texas' 36th Infantry Division had attempted to force entrance to the Liri and was badly mauled. In February, the 36th's remnants—transferred to the mountains on the Allied right flank—watched as several hundred bombers reduced Monte Cassino to rubble.

German authorities had given assurance that Monte Cassino would not be used as an observation point or artillery emplacement. Hapgood demonstrates conclusively that the kept their word. The Allies, however, due to the unusual political power of a New Zealand general who threatened to withdraw his forces from the European Theatre if the Abbey were not destroyed, caved in and bombed it.

Generals Sir Harold Alexander and Mark W. Clark bear the greatest onus for this blunder because not only had the Abbey not been
used for military purposes up to that time, but the Germans were able to fight better from the ruins than if the building had been allowed to stand. Major General Fred L. Walker, the 36th Division Commander, along with other military authorities, told Clark as much, and proof was evident when the Abbey did not fall until the following May because of a great flanking movement.

The Nazi Government gained an extraordinary propaganda victory from Allied intransigence, not only by opposing the bombing but also by removing the bulk of the art treasures contained inside the Benedictine Mother House. The account of this coup alone is worth the reader's purchase.

David Hapgood, the principal author of *The Murder of Napoleon*, and a former editor of *Focus* as well as writer and editor for *The New York Times*, is to be commended for thorough research and first-rate use of the language in his latest work, *Monte Cassino*, an absorbing and melancholy facet of World War II.

Robert L. Wagner
Austin, Texas
THE
BIG THICKET
OF TEXAS
America's Ecological Wonder

HOWARD PEACOCK

FOREWORD BY FRANCIS EDWARD ABERNETHY

"Howard Peacock has done it. He has written the book that the Big Thicket deserves."
— Christopher Cook, Beaumont Enterprise

"Peacock's intimate knowledge of the Thicket and his respect for its rare beauty make him a persuasive spokesman. . . . The book presents an exceptionally readable portrait of a little-known national treasure."
— ALA Booklist (starred review)

"What can Howard Peacock's book do that previous books have not? The answer is that it covers the entire subject with brevity and greater charm than all the other books on the subject put together."
— Pete A. Y. Gunter, East Texas Historical Journal

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