BOOK REVIEWS


Both books are well written, carefully researched and documented, and complement each other not only in their chronological sequence but also in the information about Tejano history. Texas & Northeastern Mexico, 1630-1690, edited by William C. Foster, sets the historical background during the seventeenth century for Gerald E. Poyo’s Tejano Journey, 1770-1850. Foster did an excellent job editing several major translations into an interesting scholarly work. The centerpiece of his book is Ned F. Brierley’s English translation of Juan Bautista Chapa’s “Histori del Nuevo Reino de León,” and is divided into forty-five, one-to-two page chapters. Chapa, a secretary employed by several governors of Nuevo León, gained first-hand experience traveling to the province of the Tejas.

Chapters 43 through 45 (pp. 143-154) include Chapa’s detailed observations of Governor Alonso De León’s last two expeditions into the East Texas region in 1689 and 1690. Along the way, De León named many geographic features—“party reached a very pleasant valley, which he named the Valley of Galve in honor of the Viceroy of New Spain, Count of Galve. A very large river passes near it, which they named Río de la Santísima Trinidad (the Trinity River)” (p. 148). In exploring the land of the Tejas Indians, he noted “many fields of corn, beans, pumpkins, and watermelon. They named this settlement San Francisco Javier” (p. 149).

Appendix A contains the English translation of Governor Alonso de León’s revised diary of his expedition from the province of Coahuila to the Bay of Espíritu Santo and to the province of the Tejas in 1690. The diary describes in readable fashion the number of leagues traveled each day, the flora, and the fauna. Appendix B lists in alphabetical order eighty-six Indian tribes and includes a brief geographical description of their location.

Poyo’s Tejano Journey contains seven essays that were presented by leading historians at a symposium held at St. Mary’s University in 1993. Each essay is illustrated by Jack Jackson and follows a topical historical sequence pertaining to the identity, accommodation, and change among the Tejano community. Even though Tejano history began with the Spanish colonial settlements of San Antonio de Bexar, La Bahía (Goliad), and Los Adaes, Texas’ eastern frontier played a pivotal role throughout the different historical periods.

During the Mexican War of Independence, the Republican Army of the North led by Gutiérrez de Lara and Augustus Magee captured Nacogdoches. Seven years later, in 1819, Texas Governor Antonio Martínez, “sent a force of
550 men under Colonel Ignacio Pérez to drive James Long's men out of Nacogdoches” (p. 29). At the end of the military phase of the Texas Revolution, racial tensions ran high between the new Anglo government and the Tejano population of Nacogdoches. Newly arrived Anglo immigrants viewed Mexicans and Indians as the enemy for not taking an active role in the Texas Revolution. The relationship between the two ethnic groups deteriorated, jeopardizing the Tejanos' political, social, and economic well-being. Their Spanish and Mexican land grants were taken away through fraudulent means and "bogus lawsuits" (p. 95). These confrontations led to a rebellion in Nacogdoches, which historian Paul D. Lack fully discusses in chapter six – “The Córdova Revolt.”

Foster's book is important for those interested in the colonial period and who want to read an eye-witness account of De León's journey and Chapa's "Historia." Moreover, De León's expedition in 1690 verified the location of the trade route from Mexico "across Texas to the Caddoan Indian village on the Red River" (pp. 23-24). Poyo's Tejano Journey is equally as important, and is written from the Tejano perspective. The seven historical essays offer an explanation for the adaptations Tejanos faced as they developed their own identity, within the context of the political, social, and economic changes, as citizens of Spain, Mexico, the Republic of Texas, and the United States.

J. Gilberto Quezada
San Antonio, Texas


Recognizing the need for an English study of the Mexican army during the first half of the nineteenth century (a number of Spanish language studies exist), DePalo has written one of considerable value. He approaches his subject on an institutional level and focuses on the army's senior leadership, "because they were directly responsible for the army's institutional progress or lack thereof throughout the interval under consideration" (p.x). This approach is fruitful, especially considering that so much of Mexico's history has been determined by men in uniform and their passion for self-aggrandizement.

In DePalo's narrative we meet almost every general who altered the course of events in Mexico during this thirty-year period, 1822-1852. He gives important background information on them but also ties their activities to the larger political scene, allowing us to follow the rapid rise and fall and rise again of these dominant personalities from the era of Mexican independence through the war with the United States.

Starting with a solid chapter on the military as it had evolved in Mexico during the eighteenth century, DePalo moves into the struggle for independence and the first major test for the new republic's military establishment: the
revolt in Texas. Between his coverage of the Texas campaign and the Mexican War, DePalo treats the "Decade of Centralism, 1834-1845" – concluding that the army was as ill-prepared for this second test of its effectiveness as for the first. Among the reasons were "ideological rivalry, regional segregation, national penury, domestic instability and external crises" (p. 90). Through the author's recounting of these events, it becomes easier to understand why Mexico was unable to regain Texas after the setback at San Jacinto in 1836.

Chapters 5 and 6 deal with the Mexican War, the first considering the northern campaign and the second addressing that in "eastern" (central) Mexico. Then comes a chapter on the army's reorganization and reform in the postwar period, capped off by a brief conclusion noting how the "liberal reform program was derailed by chronic indebtedness and economic deterioration" (p. 161).

DePalo has drawn his account from a wide variety of archival and printed primary sources, the bulk of them in Spanish and not generally available. In spite of his impressive research, some bloopers and omissions occur. Colonel Jose Juan Sánchez, upon whose account of the Texas war DePalo often relies, is called Carlos (the editor-kinsman who later placed the colonel's memoirs into print). General Manuel de Mier y Terán receives almost no attention, even though he was the most prominent military figure concerning Texas from 1828 until his death in 1832. Specialists will take issue with the way DePalo handles Mexican troop movements during the Texas campaign and his description of it in general, which is taken mostly from secondary sources and contains errors, e.g., Bowie was not the "newly elected commander" of the Alamo, Ramírez y Sesma did not shell the Alamo prior to Santa Anna's arrival, etc. (pp. 56-59).

One wonders, of course, how any authoritative history of the Mexican army could be pulled together without the writer spending years in the Archive of the Mexican War Department (or Defensa Nacional), access to which is extremely difficult. Still William DePalo has made a notable attempt, and he does cite a number of documents from this vital collection. His book will be useful to readers seeking a broad overview of Mexican military affairs between 1822-1852.

Jack Jackson
Austin, Texas


Since 1836, hundreds of books have been published about the Alamo and the 189 or more men who fell in the old mission by the San Antonio River.

Most of the books have focused on a handful of defenders, principally William Barret Travis, Davy Crockett, and Jim Bowie. Unfortunately, few of the defenders left behind enough correspondence and family records to document their lives before the Alamo siege.
While it only scratches the surface with forty-nine defender profiles and family stories, Ron Jackson's *Alamo Legacy* is a good start at telling us more about the other men who died with Travis, Crockett, and Bowie.

In recent years, several researchers and would-be historians have created genealogical trauma by trying to prove that some of the Alamo defenders on the traditional lists were there by error. However, early Texas records are so incomplete, illegible, and inconclusive that history may never know exactly who died at the Alamo.

To his credit, Jackson doesn't dip into the controversy. In the style of the newspaperman he is, he tells each soldier's story in a clear, enjoyable, and objective fashion without casting doubt on the legitimacy of a family's link to the Alamo.

"The history of people should not be confined merely to documents, eyewitness accounts, court records, land grants and death certificates," observes Jackson. "If that's our definition of history, we as a people need to look in the mirror."

Ron Jackson has provided a valuable contribution to the Alamo story. We hope he will continue his search for additional remembrances by Alamo descendants.

Bob Bowman
Lufkin, Texas


This book, a welcome addition to Mexican War literature, may be grouped in the category of "new" military history. It attempts to link the army to the society that produced it and consequently is more of a social history than a history of the war. The book is topical in arrangement and subject matter, as opposed to being a blow-by-blow account of the various military campaigns. Thus we find chapters on the organization of the U.S. Army, the weapons used by American troops complete with a loading procedure for the flintlock musket, daily life and cuisine of the typical "grunt," the many ways that death overtook unsuspecting recruits – described in gory detail – and the soldiers' impressions of Mexico, the exotic "Land of the Montezumas."

If the author has a central thesis, it is that President James K. Polk took a "hands on" approach to the war to circumvent the resistance and incompetence of the Army establishment as it existed in 1846. Winders tells how Polk used the patronage system whenever possible to bolster the officer corps with faithful and zealous Democrats. Yet, for him the war became a "paradox" because American victories on the battlefield were being won by Whig generals even though the conflict was "largely perceived as a Democratic endeavor" (p. 32).
Polk disliked both of his top generals, Winfield Scott and Zachary Taylor, and their popularity as war heroes bode ill for the Jacksonians who had led the nation into its first foreign war. Not even the immense territory wrested from Mexico by "Mr. Polk's Army" was sufficient to guarantee the ascendancy of the Democratic Party. It went down in defeat in the presidential election in 1848 to none other than "Old Rough and Ready," Zachary Taylor, the general whom Polk had been anxious to rid himself of as early as autumn of 1846.

Politics figure prominently in Winders' book, but we also learn about the significant role volunteer units played in winning the war and how their outlook differed from the regulars. The staggering cost in lives is another theme well developed: one in every ten men failed to survive their military service, and a man was seven times more likely to succumb to disease than fall in combat. The shock that idealistic recruits experienced on the bloody battlefields and in make-shift hospitals stayed with them long after the war. Lastly, Winders explores the still-popular notion that the conflict was an "unjust" war and suggests how the victorious Whigs/Republicans in later years saddled Polk and the Southern Democrats with the blame for starting it—even though the war accomplished the ideals of Manifest Destiny held by most Americans of the era regardless of their political leanings.

*Mr. Polk's Army* is a highly readable account, based on an impressive array of primary sources.

Jack Jackson

Austin, Texas


Undertaking a new study of a legendary topic, as the author of this volume is clearly aware, is full of potential pitfalls. He has skirted many of the more obvious dangers. Nowhere does the book succumb to the blinding effects of hero worship. His documentation is made clear; clashes in source materials are noted; the uneven and slow development of the ranger tradition is a major if underdeveloped theme. Wilkins has dug deeply into muster rolls, pay vouchers, claims records, and similar government records to authenticate and often correct memoirs flavored by legend-embellished hindsight. Many of those traditionally omitted from Texas Ranger lore—Tejano members in particular—are included to a degree that supersedes previous accounts. In this way and also in his fair-minded treatment of Mexican soldiers at war in Texas, Wilkins avoids repeating the egregious bias of Walter Prescott Webb.

These strengths notwithstanding, the book has several weaknesses of organization, structure, and style. The story of the rangers is often eroded by lengthy descriptions of basic Texas military history, an understandable narrative problem but one that simply has not been managed deftly by the author. The result is that the rangers themselves are often absent from center
stage and that the compelling nature of the story has been compromised. While he uses multiple sources, Wilkins has trouble weaving them together in a clear manner. His tendency is to give the account as seen by first one source, then another, and if possible by a third, and then move ahead. There is something to be said for allowing the reader to draw conclusions, but the narrative does not really flow as it should. Another distracting tendency is the author’s decision to cover many episodes in a brief manner rather than to choose the most illustrative and significant events for fuller development.

The basic thesis of the book is sound and traditional. Wilkins emphasizes the importance of ranger captains in accounting for successes and demonstrates that it was not until near the end of the Texas Republic that the rangers gained the experience, weapons, confidence, and continuity to achieve anything like “professional” stature. This volume also makes it clear that Texas continued to suffer from many weaknesses of defense as well as military disorganization and impoverishment.

Readers interested in East Texas subjects will find some greater coverage of the region, but Wilkins has little to add and is confused on some aspects of the story. There are a few mentions of the role of mounted volunteers in the Cordova and Cherokee struggles of the late 1830s. Otherwise, the traditional focus on the western and Comanche frontier is continued here. The origins of those who served in ranger units, a difficult research issue, remains unclear. In sum, this book demonstrates significant effort and presents some good information without filling the need for a fresh study of Texas Ranger origins.

Paul D. Lack
McMurry University


*Terry Texas Ranger Trilogy* offers outstanding historical and personal accounts of this southern cavalry unit during the Civil War. These recollections by Giles and Blackburn, and the diary of Dodd, allow the reader special insight into the daily life and tribulations of the most famous Southern volunteer cavalry force of the war. With carefully written text, the excitement, passion, and pain of war reaches the reader with the same conviction that the soldiers experienced.

Giles, Blackburn, and Dodd allow the audience to venture along in their service and defense of their homeland. From battle life to poor weather, and being hanged as a spy, readers view war at the human level of volunteers and their recollections.

Through these individual writers, we gain a deep understanding into the attitude, dedication, and code of service of Texans at war. With an impressive historical overview of the *Terry Texas Ranger Trilogy* by Thomas W. Cutrer, the three experiences become a coherent whole.
Giles, Blackburn, and Dodd deliver a penetrating insight into the courageous character of Texans. *Terry Texas Ranger Trilogy* is a must-read for anyone interested in the Civil War and Texas.

Albert R. Rambo  
Blinn College Brazos County Campus


In a readable, journalistic style, Mike Cox, who was a freelance writer before joining the Texas Department of Public Safety as its media relations chief, has focused on little-known tales about the Texas Rangers. While inserting such previously published articles as "Zane Grey and the Texas Rangers" and "Rx For Keeping the Peace: Laxatives and a .45," Cox has included a number of interesting Ranger tales "that need telling." Readers will appreciate such nineteenth-century Ranger escapades as "Samuel Walker’s Last Fight" and "The Killing of ‘Caige’ Grimes" as well as later tales titled "Tom Mix: Famous Ranger Who Wasn’t," "I [Frank Hamer] Asked for B. M. Gault," and "Lone Wolf [Gonzauillas] Versus the Phantom Killer."

Cox has added to Ranger history and folklore with this collection of essays. Those who appreciate information about this world-famous law enforcement organization and its recruits will delight in this work, especially since Cox has added authenticity to his stories by interviewing a number of onlookers and participants.

Ben Procter  
Texas Christian University


Over a number of years W.T. Block collected research material upon which "Schooner Sail to Starboard:" *Confederate Blockade-Running on the Louisiana-Texas Coast Lines* is based. Civil War buffs and anyone interested in activities along the coasts of Texas and Louisiana west of the Atchafalaya Bay during the Civil War will enjoy this book. East Texans in particular will note the importance of blockade-running at such familiar places as Galveston and Sabine Pass in Texas and Lake Charles in Louisiana. There are other works on Confederate blockade-running but none of them concentrates solely on the Louisiana-Texas coastal areas as does "Schooner Sail to Starboard."

W.T. Block is well-known for his Southeast Texas historical publications, including a wealth of articles and ten books. This new publication on block-
ade-running increases Block's tremendous contribution to preserving the history of the region he calls home with sound research and meticulous attention to detail.

The ingenuity, skill, and bravery of Confederate captains and crewmen in eluding capture, and devotion to duty and bravery on the part of the West Gulf Blockading Squadron's officers and crewmen, are related in many fascinating stories. One account describes how the famous Confederate raider Alabama was able to sink the blockader U.S.S. Hatteras under cover of night twenty miles from Galveston. Another incident involved Bill Johnson, captain of the schooner Soledad Cos, which was caught by the South Carolina, a Galveston blockader. Hoping to save his schooner, Johnson pretended to be dying of yellow fever so a prize crew would not be sent aboard. Captain James Alden of the blockading vessel examined Johnson personally and saw through the ruse.

"Schooner to Starboard" is not merely a collection of interesting narratives. The importance of cotton in blockade-running because proceeds from its sale could be used to buy arms and munitions and other items in short supply in the Confederacy, kinds of vessels used by blockade-runners and blockaders, problems of the West Gulf Blockading Squadron owing to the geographic features of the coast lines, and diplomatic troubles of the United States with other nations arising from its attempt to enforce its blockade also are covered. Moreover, the author clearly and concisely evaluates the significance of blockade-running along the Louisiana-Texas coast lines. He concludes that blockade-running in these areas probably never had much impact on the supplying of Confederate armies east of the Mississippi River, but it was vital in providing arms and munitions and other goods needed to field Confederate armies west of the Mississippi River.

Marion Holt
Beaumont, Texas


This book is a collection of thirty-seven chapters, or more aptly termed brief synopses, of shipwrecks and lost treasure mostly along the Texas coast. The volume was first published in 1979, and has been revised slightly for the current edition. Most of the chapters represent short articles that have appeared in various magazines prior to 1979. The only changes to the current edition are minor notations made by the author at the ends of some chapters on the current condition of a wreck site.

The chapters of the book are grouped into six categories: Spanish and pirate treasure, buried on land and contained in sunken ships; shipwrecks from the Texas Republic and Civil war periods; and more recent wrecks largely used for private commerce in World War II. Each chapter describes what is known about a lost treasure or a sunken ship from various sources, many of which are
unreferenced documents, and unnamed individuals.

While the book provides interesting information about a topic that the public often finds fascinating – i.e., sunken treasure – it inappropriately encourages the exploitation of our historical heritage for private gain. The "Introduction" chapter of the volume devotes considerable space to inaccurately decrying the ineptness and unfairness of government bureaucrats that interfere with individual recovery of sunken treasure. What the author fails to convey is that state law protects our state's rich off-shore heritage for all citizens. A good recent example is the excavation of the La Salle shipwreck, La Belle, by the Texas Historical Commission. Over 700,000 artifacts, including the remains of the ship's hull, were recovered and are being preserved for display in museums across the state. When a shipwreck is excavated with proper scientific method and properly preserved, the artifacts and hull remains can benefit all Texans.

Jim Bruseth
Texas Historical Commission


A sequel to the well-regarded The Caddo Indians, Smith's new work follows the fate of the Caddos (Nadacos, Hainais, and Kadohadachos/Whitebeads) and their linguistic relatives the Wichitas (Taovayas, Tawakonis, Wacos, and Kichais) from Texas annexation to the dissolution of the Oklahoma reservations. In the face of Anglo advance these sedentary agriculturists were particularly vulnerable; they suffered government neglect and indecision, compounded by intertribal conflict, vigilantism, and natural disasters.

Through the 1840s Texan and U.S. policy wavered while the Indians occupied sites on both sides of the Red River. A reserve was founded for them on the Brazos in 1854, where they demonstrated industry and compliancy, but it could not protect them from the squeeze of white settlers and Northern Comanches, so they were removed to Indian Territory (Oklahoma) in 1859. Efforts to establish a reservation there were disrupted by the Civil War and the Caddos and Wichitas sought refuge for five brutal years in Kansas. Upon returning they met competition from other tribes and more government ineffectiveness, but still managed to develop a balanced reservation community, consolidating politically, modifying their housing and land use practices, attending school, and participating in Christian sects, the Ghost Dance, and peyotism. Nevertheless, under the Dawes Act tribal lands were allotted in severalty and the "surplus" opened to white boomers.

Many of the key episodes and personalities in this story are already familiar through diverse, often more richly textured, secondary sources. The story is complicated, however, and Smith's work is beneficial as a concise,
linear exposition. As such, it is central to a maturing contemporary literature on these still-vital tribes.

Daniel J. Gelo
University of Texas at San Antonio


Of the dozens of white women and children taken captive by Comanches on the western frontier, Cynthia Ann Parker remains the most celebrated. Taken in 1836 from Fort Parker near present-day Groesbeck, nine-year-old Cynthia Ann assimilated into Comanche society, married a war chief, and bore three children, all of whom were reared as Comanches. Unable to believe that anyone would choose to remain with the Indians, the Parker family was relentless in their efforts to rescue her. A force of Texas Rangers led by future governor Sul Ross "recaptured" her in an encounter with the Comanches on the Pease River in 1860. Unable to make the transition back to her Anglo beginnings, Parker spent the last years before her death in 1870 mourning for her husband who was presumed killed by the Rangers during her capture and her daughter who died after they returned to white society.

Fort Worth archivist Margaret Hacker retells this tragic story in *Cynthia Ann Parker: The Life and Legend*, No. 92 in the Southwestern Studies series. Since Parker never told her own story, her experiences with the Comanches are based on speculation. Uncovering no new sources, Hacker relies on secondary materials and the account written by Rachel Plummer, an adult kidnapped at the same time as Cynthia Ann. The author's thesis that Cynthia Ann Parker was a captive of two societies is well supported in this concise volume, but readers will find no new information regarding the Parker story.

Tommy Stringer
Navarro College


What was it like to be a slave? Only those who experienced slavery could answer this question, and until the late 1930s little effort was made to collect their testimony. Then, in 1937-1938, the Federal Writers' Project, a part of the Works Progress Administration, conducted interviews with more than 2,000 former bondsmen. Manuscript transcripts of these interviews, generally called the Slave Narratives, were placed in the Library of Congress and remained largely unused until the 1970s when Greenwood Press began publication of
the entire collection under the title, *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*. The series eventually grew to forty-one volumes organized according to the state in which an interview was conducted.

*Till Freedom Cried Out* provides the narratives of thirty-two ex-slaves who experienced the Peculiar Institution in Texas and later moved to Oklahoma. Their interviews are available in the Greenwood Press collection, but since they were conducted in Oklahoma are likely to be overlooked by those interested in slavery in Texas. Moreover, this book presents these Oklahoma narratives in a highly readable format with an informative preface and introduction.

Historians have questioned the reliability of the Slave Narratives on several grounds, including the fact that most of the interviewers were white. Critics suggest that, given the state of race relations in the 1930s, blacks would have been far less than candid in discussing how they felt about their masters, the circumstances of their lives as slaves, etc. The editors show their awareness of this issue by providing a commentary on each narrative that identifies the interviewer by race and when possible gives pertinent data on the owner from the Census of 1860. This is information worth knowing, but readers should not assume—and the editors are not suggesting that they should—that the race of the interviewer or the circumstances of a slave’s life determine the reliability of any narrative. Indeed, this book’s title is a good case in point. L.B. Barner’s words to his first interviewer, a white—“I was 9 years old when freedom cried out,”—demonstrate anything but an effort to hide his feelings about slavery. The Slave Narratives are just as reliable as most other historical sources and should be used with the same caution and care. The Bakers and Texas A&M University Press deserve praise in Texas for making these likely-to-be-overlooked narratives from Oklahoma available in such a useful and attractive edition.

Randolph B. Campbell
University of North Texas


*Juneteenth Texas* is a deceptive book. It is not actually about Juneteenth, although one essay explores the history of this Texas emancipation day celebration. I am not even sure that it is, strictly speaking, a collection of folklore. It is, however, an intriguing collection of essays on a wide ranging set of topics about African American life in Texas. The variety of material and scholarly approach present in this volume is evident in the selection of contributors. While the three editors and seven of the eighteen contributors are folklorists, the others include poets, writers, a historian, an art historian, a jurist, a literary scholar, and a musical archivist. This range of talent and interests produce an impressive array of essays.
In all collections of essays there is the question of focus and unevenness of quality. For the most part this volume avoids these pitfalls. The focus is clear – each essay addresses the topic of African American life in Texas. And, while some essays are stronger than others, each adds significantly to the quality of the volume. The editors do a good job in establishing a context for the essays included in the volume. While their overview of black history in Texas adds little to the field, their discussion of the history of the study of black folklore is very interesting, as are the brief but informative descriptions of African-American Museum of Dallas and the Texas African-American Photography Collection and Archive that are included in the appendix.

Half of the essays in this book examine some aspect of black music; there are also several biographical sketches and several memoirs. Of the latter, the most compelling are Jesse Truvillon’s poignant memories of his father’s music and his discovery of that music, and James Thomas Jackson’s brief but rich glimpse into his youth in Houston’s Fourth Ward in the 1930s. Of the more scholarly selections, Houston poet Lorenzo Thomas’ two essays are among the best. His first piece describes the development of Zydeco music and the culture that surrounds it in Houston’s Fifth ward; the second is an informative account of the work of Texas’ pioneering black folklorist J. Mason Brewer which relates Brewer’s work to that of others who have studied black folklore. Linked to Thomas’ second essay is Alvia J. Wardlaw’s study which connects the work of Texas’ preeminent African American artist, John Biggers, to Brewer and black folklore. Each selection in this volume is strengthened by the addition of a fine set of photographs that relate well to the topic of the essay.

The weakest aspect of Juneteenth Texas is the unevenness of the documentation and bibliographical material. Some essays are well documented and provide a valuable bibliography of both printed and non-printed sources; others provide few footnotes and little information about sources. Reflecting this unevenness, the list or resource institutions in the appendix omits obvious collections such as the Heartman Collection and the African American Art collection at Texas Southern University. On the whole, though, the editors have put together a valuable volume which will be treasured by all of those who are interested in the rich fabric of African American life in Texas.

Cary D. Wintz
Texas Southern University


Still one of the most neglected aspects of Texas history is the role played by African Americans. Required is a solid, deeply-researched, and wide-ranging account of the cultural heritage of black Texans. Unfortunately, Bricks Without Straw fails to fulfill that eminent need. It is a throwback and similar
to older versions of black history wherein the biographical and factual approach is emphasized and a narrative thread is often ignored that would tie the story together. What makes this effort so disappointing is that much of the work done on Texas African Americans in the past two decades is largely ignored. In fact, major studies on black politicians, Reconstruction, and the Freedmen’s Bureau are entirely missing.

Only one other book compares to the current one under review and that is Alwyn Barr’s *Black Texans*, recently reissued in an updated and paperback version by the University of Oklahoma Press. Barr, a professional historian, has written a pithy account of how blacks interacted with Texas history. *Bricks Without Straw* invites comparison because it attempts a more detailed and lengthy discussion of the Texas black experience. Although it demonstrates a great deal of work, some research, and numerous “folksy” presentations, it is difficult to glean a clear picture of the precise contributions, achievements, and role of Texas African Americans in the long history of the Lone Star State.

In spite of these limitations, this book has certain attributes that should find a wide popular audience. Although the overall history of Texas blacks is somewhat slighted, there are numerous biographical and personal essays that many will find appealing. *Bricks Without Straw* is divided into three sections; first is a chronological account of African Americans in Texas from 1528 to the present; next, a series of disparate essays on various topics; and, finally, a section on legislators and short biographical sketches of prominent members of the Texas black community. Of minimal use to professional scholars because much of the information is known, for those who want a handy reference unencumbered by notes, *Bricks Without Straw* should be ideal.

Barry A. Crouch
Gallaudet University


*Black Texas Women: A Sourcebook; Documents, Biography, Timeline* grew out of Ruthe Winegarten’s work on the exhibit *Texas Women – A Celebration of History*, which was developed by the Foundation for Women’s Resources. Winegarten had served as director of research and curator for this exhibit. It toured the state for two years early in the 1980s and is now on permanent exhibit at Texas Woman’s University, which also houses the archives created by this Texas Women’s History Project.

This volume complements Winegarten’s publication in 1995 of *Black Texas Women: 150 Years of Trial and Triumph*, making available in print much of the source material she continued to amass on black women following
completion of the exhibit. The *Black Texas Women* books represent for her “fifteen years of trial and triumph,” she writes in the preface to the current volume. “My soul became obsessed with collecting and organizing this rare information,” documenting everything from a “tiny fact” in a book or an article to a “major treasure” like a whole book by Josie Hall.

The over 250 fascinating documents are organized into eight chapters: “Free Women of Color,” “Slavery,” “Reconstruction and Beyond,” “Education,” “The Arts,” “Churches, Clubs and Community Building,” “Earning a Living,” and “Politics and Protest.” Edited and with descriptive, contextual commentary and background, each is a specific and vivid witness to a minority vying as an individual for identity in a universally challenging world. Fifty short biographies honor significant black women. The timeline, so laboriously created, covers forty-four pages. The action photo of Carlette Guidry-White, UT Austin track star named SWC Athlete of the Year for 1990-1991, encapsulates the changed status for black women in Texas.

Also published in 1996 is the first University of Texas Press edition of *I Am Annie Mae Hunt: An Extraordinary Woman in Her Own Words* by Hunt and Winegarten. It is profusely illustrated. Originally published in 1983, it was heralded nationwide and showcased in dramatic and musical productions in the 1980s.

Ouida Whitaker Dean
Nacogdoches, TX


The feminist dialectic made ponderous reading at times, but Edwards adds another perspective to studies of Reconstruction by use of official and private correspondence and newspapers. She claimed that “gender, in combination with race and class, shaped the political terrain not just in Granville County [NC] but across the South during Reconstruction” (p. i). The author chose the area because its tobacco industry offered a contrast to the cotton culture. She began with an incident in 1864 in which the wife of a conscripted white overseer forced into prostitution accused two slaves of rape when they refused to pay her. While one slave was hanged, another escaped, but was returned to Granville County in 1866. The Freedmen’s Bureau intervened but the accused rapist perished when the jail burned. Democratic officials publicized the case and gained the support of poor whites.

Additional chapters cover marriage, labor, gender in elite and poor African-American and common white households, civil rights, and the Knights of Labor. Marriage replaced slavery as the cornerstone of society, made black men responsible for their children, and led to property ownership and political power. Wages made workers dependent and elites feared an
uprising because of the poverty. Trophy homes were symbols for elite women while poor and common black and white women were victims of inequality. The Knights of Labor threatened the political power of Democrats by uniting poor blacks and whites, but Democrats used another rape case to discredit the Knights and retain political power.

This book should create interest for local historians to investigate how gender issues shaped the politics of Reconstruction in other areas.

Linda S. Hudson
University of North Texas


"King of the Wildcatters" is an extraordinary book on the life of Tom Slick and his uncanny ability to find oil. Some people in this business are successful because they are knowledgeable, some because they have intuition or "hunches," some because they are lucky. Tom Slick was all of these, and discovered, explored, drilled, and sold his holdings in many oil fields, acquiring wealth and a reputation. He worked alone, or with very few people. He was willing to give a local farmer a fair price, and was honest and fair. A feeling of his personality emerges as the reader realizes he was extremely quiet and private, which probably helped him considerably in this kind of business. His reputation preceded him and if he was seen in an area, the word spread quickly and oil people flocked in.

Beginning in 1912 and through the end of Slick's life in August 1930, he was instrumental in finding the large fields in Oklahoma (especially the Cushing, Siminole, and Oklahoma City fields), Kansas, and Texas, and had towns, oil pools, and oil sand named for him. He was the first to become interested in and practice self-regulation to prevent glutting the market and was able to convince others to do likewise. He accepted proration, standardization of larger lease sizes, and well spacing as conservation and reduction of waste became more important to all involved in the industry.

One of the most interesting things about this book was the discussion of his will and the argument between Oklahoma and Pennsylvania over his residency. On one calculation, Oklahoma could have paid off its state debt if they could establish Oklahoma as Slick's official residency. Probably more insight into his personal life comes from this chapter.

The author is not only able to bring Tom Slick to life, but to interest the reader in the development of the early oil fields. This book was exciting to read!

Linda Cross
Tyler Junior College
Just As We Were: A Narrow Slice of Texas Womanhood, Prudence Mackintosh (University of Texas Press, P.O. Box 7819, Austin, TX 78713-7819) 1996. Contents. Acknowledgments. P.160. $19.95. Hardcover.

As many readers of Texas Monthly are aware, Prudence Mackintosh has a way of capturing on the printed page events that are long past but most satisfying to remember. It is a little dissembling for essayist Mackintosh to describe herself as a mother, housewife, and part-time writer. She does it, I suspect, to better identify with that “narrow slice of Texas womanhood” to whom she introduces her readers in Just As We Were, “The Soul of East Texas.”

In it she says, in a nutshell, that the diverse experiences she faced while growing up in Texarkana and finishing high there provided her with the emotional tools to make her question the homogenized lifestyle shared by too many women in the 1960s and 1970s.

Mackintosh made all the sorority, Junior League, marriage-and-children stops, but either she saw at the time or realized soon thereafter that each of those forays down life’s road provided its own potholes.

If there is a problem with the book, it is that many of the early essays, particularly the one about Dallas’ exclusive girls school - “Why Hockaday Girls Are Different” (1978) - and the National Woman’s Conference - “The Good Old Girls” (1978) needed some type of epilogue. Is Hockaday still as important nineteen years later? What happened not only to that Travis County Commissioner Ann Richards but to the other women Mackintosh writes of who made a difference in Houston in 1978?

That lack of follow-up, in fact, makes the last two essays, apparently written for Just As We Were among the most memorable. When Mackintosh writes of grown boys made slightly uncomfortable to learn their mother still finds laughter with her college girlfriends, she is at her best. Who cannot relate to the sorrow of an adult child as parents grow old - and the role of parent and child is reversed.

Any middle class woman from forty to sixty, or any man seeking to understand one, will find in Prudence Mackintosh a soul mate. I think even those who do not fit her narrow slice will find enjoyment in these pages.

Gail K Beil
Marshall, Texas


Erickson, creator of Hank the Cowdog, has taken dozens of stories told to him by McWhorter, a fiddling cowboy and horseman from the Panhandle, and woven them into a two-part book. The first part consists of stories about McWhorter’s fiddling career, but primarily about his time with Bob Wills’ band during the latter days of Wills’ career during the late 1950s and early
1960s. The second part is entirely about horses and cowboying on the JA Ranch and others less well-known.

This is a revised and augmented version of *Cowboy Fiddler*, a book published in 1992 by Texas Tech Press but now out of print. The author made a conscious decision to simply stay out of the way of the story teller as much as possible. Therefore, mainly all he did was to group the stories within the two parts of the volume, then further group them under subjects that became chapter titles. This has advantages but it certainly leaves the reader wishing for more details, more context, and more transitions. This publication will be most attractive to those who love to read about cowboy life or to those who collect Bob Wills memorabilia. The book is enhanced by a good index and several black-and-white photographs, mostly of McWhorter.

E. Dale Odom
University of North Texas


Call them back houses, service buildings, servants quarters, secondary or support structures – they are alley houses, says Ellen Beasley, and they give Galveston its distinctive and sometimes disreputable character.

Beasley has an eye for neglected architecture and an ear for good stories. Domestic and social history come alive with first-hand accounts scattered throughout the book of resourceful people who by necessity or choice have made their homes along the alleys. An address that says "rear," we learn from these accounts, often results in both social stigma and rich community life.

One alley house looks much like another, and even this beautiful book cannot disguise the sameness. Beasley shows us how these structures evolve from slave quarters, to servant quarters, to marginal businesses, to inexpensive rental property. She is at her best recounting anecdotes about specific places, such as the notorious brothels in Fat Alley and Tin Can Alley. The book is a visual treat full of black-and-white photographs featuring people as well as structures, bird's eye drawings, and block plans. Meticulously researched, it complements the *Galveston Architecture Guidebook*, which she co-authored.

Stephen Curley
Texas A&M University, Galveston


On April 1, 1975, George Parr, the "second duke of Duval County," killed
himself rather than go to prison. After being dominated for almost a century by boss rule, by blatant thievery and political corruption, the South Texas county of Duval was free from a vicious system that had robbed its citizens of their basic rights and economic freedom. The Duke was dead.

Author John E. Clark, who was "second banana" to U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Texas William S. Sessions in prosecuting Parr, has related to the reader a fascinating story of political domination which rested upon payoffs, threats, and corruption. He explains, step by step, how the evidence appeared before a grand jury in San Antonio, how federal government officials focused upon Parr and his cohorts for income tax evasion, and how federal attorneys forced, or persuaded, witnesses to cooperate. They then uncovered a "Special Fund" and a "Reserve Fund" that supplied the Parr machine with "ready cash" and thousands of dollars upon request. They also discovered a "phantom store" in Benavides that had no goods and supplies but that sent bills to the Duval County government for payment. And after several years of intensive investigation Sessions and Clark successfully prosecuted George Parr, his nephew Archie, and the major culprits involved in the Duval County duchy.

_The Fall of the Duke of Duval_ is a worthwhile addition to Texana. Clark tells a good story; he explains the legal aspects of the case to the reader with clarity and he details a fascinating tale of how George Parr, as well as his father, had perpetuated a corrupt hold in Duval County. Despite the lack of endnotes, which would aid anyone interested in further investigation of this subject, Clark has written an exciting story of justice long overdue.

Ben Procter
Texas Christian University


Former Texas Governor Ann Richards, in the foreword to _The Mystique of Entertaining: Texas Tuxedos to Tacos_, writes that the uninitiated may never understand Texas mystique, the elusive state of mind fostered by "our remarkable individualism." Though primarily a cookbook, _Texas Tuxedos and Tacos_ celebrates individualism, along with ingenuity and derring-do. It affords, therefore, beyond the culinary arts, insight into Texas culture. What people eat, how they prepare their food, and how it is served are significant keys to understanding a culture — and, by extension, Texas mystique.

Austin's Gourmet Gals & Guys collected their menus, recipes, and stories of catering for presidents, potentates, politicians, university dignitaries, ranchers, women of distinction, debutantes, brides, and grooms for this volume. Their extravaganzas — which Texas weather often turned into escapades — are gathered into such chapters as "Political Feats and Feasts," "Austin's White House," "Cows, Cowboys, & Cowpies," "The Russians Are Coming," "Our Royal Touch," etc. The chapters are prefaced with behind-the-scene stories, giving a
twenty-year anecdotal history of Austin culture. When the Prince of Wales came to Austin for a benefit hosted by Lady Bird Johnson, the caterers attempted to equal the sumptuous meals the Prince may have enjoyed in exotic places. At the last moment, they added cheese and spinach enchiladas. Imagine their consternation when the Prince merely glanced at their delectables and chose one enchilada. As the party readied to leave for a Willie Nelson concert, the Prince surprised guests and caterers alike when he requested another enchilada.

You don’t have to be a food aficionado to enjoy this book. The format appears an exercise in originality, appropriate to the creativity of the authors. Another plus is that they write engagingly. When the last page is turned, even a novice hostess is likely to be stimulated to prepare and serve a dinner for some VIP coming down the pike. Texas hospitality is the essence of the Texas mystique.

Ernestine Sewell Linck
Commerce, Texas


He was a psychiatrist’s worst nightmare. On August 1, 1966, he became a minister of death and a harbinger of a new era in public safety. From the observation platform atop the Tower Building at the University of Texas at Austin, Charles J. Whitman introduced America to mass murder, to domestic terrorism without a cause, and to a declining sense of safety in public open spaces. Whitman was a unique mass murderer, willing to sacrifice himself and as many others as possible.

After killing his mother and his wife, Whitman took a footlocker full of guns to the Tower, secured his fortress by killing and wounding several persons inside the reception area, and for ninety-six minutes roamed the compass points around the Tower’s deck, shooting randomly.

A Sniper in the Tower is a case study of Whitman’s assault, in which dozens of persons were bludgeoned, stabbed, and shot to death and dozens more wounded. LaVergne sketches the disparate experiences of the major participants in the massacre with the skills of an imaginative fiction writer, a perceptive journalist, and an objective historian. The reader senses the bizarre implausibility of the events, with a composite perspective of every major actor, including Charles Whitman. This was not fiction.

The book scrolls through issues of: What He Did, How He Did It, and Why He Did It: troubled childhood, unhealthy obsessions, self-loathing, and even physiological factors. LaVergne suggests that Whitman might have just decided he wanted to do it.

The book is a balanced, worthwhile analysis of a seminal event with occasional lapses into hokey hyperbole which do not lessen the substance of
the author's contribution. LaVergne penned an effective appraisal of each piece of what remains an incomplete jigsaw puzzle of horror and heroism.

The massacre is part of America's psychological growth, as we relinquished our societal naiveté. Whitman proved the mass murderer can have the face of the All American Boy. The book is a valuable, well-documented account; it won't induce peaceful sleep or urban serenity.

James G. Dickson
Stephen F. Austin State University


The rich traditions of Southwest Conference athletics ended with the final out of the baseball season in 1996. Many Texas sports fans lament the passing of SWC football, but the Southwest Conference also has long been one of the most powerful baseball leagues in the nation. Indeed, a large number of SWC footballers also played baseball for their respective schools: Bobby Layne hurled two no-hitters in 1946 and was a four-time All-Southwest Conference pitcher for the University of Texas. Quarterback James Street, who also was destined to twirl a pair of no-hitters for the Longhorns, chose to play football at UT because Darrell Royal agreed to let him don a baseball uniform as well.

The University of Texas, boasting one of the strongest programs in the history of college baseball, claimed four national titles and, in eighty-one years of Southwest Conference play, won or shared sixty-four SWC championships. Perennial Longhorn success generated hard-fought rivalries on SWC diamonds as well as in the grandstands - the 1955 brawl at Austin's Clark Field between several thousand 'Horns and Aggies remains the most notorious melee. Texas A&M's program also has begun to achieve national prominence, and through the years other SWC schools enjoyed great teams and players.

In *Southwest Conference Baseball's Greatest Hits*, journalist Neal Farmer has chronicled eight decades of SWC diamond history. Farmer interviewed many former players and coaches and has preserved hundreds of anecdotes and a wealth of statistics. Farmer's format includes a lengthy chapter on each SWC school's program, special chapters on the most memorable ballparks and individuals (and "The Wild Bunch," the Longhorn's incomparably rowdy rooters), and a statistical section. The book offers a keen sense of nostalgia, game stories, hilarious anecdotes, prodigious statistics - no baseball fan could want more for his bookshelf.

Bill O'Neal
Carthage, Texas