Book Reviews

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/ethj

Part of the United States History Commons

Tell us how this article helped you.

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/ethj/vol25/iss2/17

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by SFA ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in East Texas Historical Journal by an authorized editor of SFA ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact cdsscholarworks@sfasu.edu.
BOOK REVIEWS


Ancient Texans is part of an ambitious program of study, interpretation, and public education about prehistoric Lower Pecos River peoples undertaken by the Witte Museum of San Antonio, Texas. Released in conjunction with the opening of an exhibit on the rock art and lifeways of the Lower Pecos, it contributes to fulfilling efforts begun fifty years ago by the museum's founder, Mrs. Ellen Quillen. Unlike many texts prepared for museum exhibits, Ancient Texans stands alone as a research contribution.

Chapter One is a fictionalized account describing the daily life of aboriginals in the semiarid, rugged limestone canyons of southwestern Texas during the Archaic period (7500 B.C. to A.D. 1000). Each of the remaining six chapters is introduced by Shafer, then presents one or more articles by specialists discussing particular research topics. Three chapters deal with environment, culture history, and lifeways, and three focus upon art. The latter provide comparisons of the Lower Pecos with contemporary hunting and gathering cultures in Africa and Australia, and a discussion of aboriginal art in relation to shamanism and the supernatural. An epilogue describes the deteriorating state of the artistic and archeological legacy of the Lower Pecos region: reservoir inundation, natural weathering, and senseless vandalism. An appendix by Shafer recounts the history of archeological research in southwestern Texas from about 1930 to 1986.

Nonarcheologists will find Ancient Texans a vivid, well-written interpretation of the unwritten history of nameless peoples who fared well in a region many modern people perceive to be harsh, desolate, and uninviting. Outstanding photographs by Jim Zintgraff show the stark reality and unsurpassed beauty of the Lower Pecos. Detailed, accurate, and haunting paintings by artist George Strickland breathe life into forgotten peoples whose names we will never know.

Archeologists will find a synthesis of prehistoric lifeways seldom achieved in such graphic detail. Articles by eight contributors provide summations of material culture, rock art, and environmental reconstruction. There are puzzling failures to cite relevant excavated sites, bibliographic omissions inconsistent with text discussions, and in the appendix curious omission of fully one-third of the archeologists directly involved with research in the Lower Pecos.

Nevertheless, I find Ancient Texans an excellent contribution to Lower Pecos research, and recommend it as essential reading for the non-archeologist and archeologist alike.

Elton R. Prewitt
Austin, Texas

Bones for Barnum Brown is truly an adventure as the sub-title indicates; an adventure into museum collecting, and the followup in the museum laboratory during the days of the "old time" (1930s) collectors. It is a bit romanticized and glamorized, but perhaps in those days that was the way it was.

R.T. Bird's account of his adventures is pleasant and easy reading for both amateur and professional. James O. Farlow's introduction gives the history of dinosaur hunting as well as explanation of terms and a geological time chart which notes the formations where certain types of dinosaurs are found. Farlow's annotations in the back of the book are a welcome contribution which fill in the gaps in Bird's account, and presents current thinking on dinosaur taxonomy.

Although Brown participated in most of the expeditions, "R.T." became an expert at excavation and supplied many of the fossils for the American Museum of Natural History, while Brown spent time raising money for the dinosaur hunts. Harry Sinclair was a benefactor and the well-known brontosaurus trademark came from one of the Museum's finds.

The account and method of quarrying the tracks in the Paluxy River near Glen Rose, Texas, and Bird's interpretation of the tracks makes for absorbing reading. It is these tracks which Bird put together fourteen years after quarrying in an exhibition in the American Museum of Natural History.

This book is an excellent example of what can be done with an individual's "remembrances of things past," when good editing and good annotations are used.

Kathleen Gilmore
North Texas State University, Denton


This crisply factual volume analyzes Southern verbal and visual media. Ample ink is used. Yet it is a marvel of compression. Its complete absence of sexist language is thoroughly admirable.

Smith details how Southerners conducted themselves in awesome twentieth century changes. Media constantly battled myth. A people so conscious of home and roots grappled with form and forum. For example, Southerners enjoy sports. Regional athletic credentials historically are
impressive. Equally long is the illiteracy heritage. Many weak students have been star athletes. In such a rural realm, athletics were literally “the only game in town.” “Can’t pass, can’t play” rules now generate angry new battlegrounds for sports enthusiasts.

Armed with fifty pages of documentation, Smith dissects “mythic distinctiveness.” His segments on television (as national “leveller”) and chapters on myth are masterful. Perceptive concise quotations (especially on race and women) enhance every page.

Smith examines less skillfully the woeful misunderstanding of image by the Carter Administration. The area with most to gain from a Carter success suffered most from a perceived Carter failure. The president constructed no Southern base. An Alabama state government Democrat told a national magazine on 1980 election eve, “We haven’t heard one word from the White House in three years.” Native-born felt solidly snubbed by native-son. They registered their rage that November.

In the film “Hurry Sundown,” an actor remarks “Take care of the land, and it will take care of you.” The South deeply nurtured and shaped millions of us now far away. Her impact upon us remains significant. Clearly, Steve Smith is a friendly witness to that land.

Staley Hitchcock
Union Theological Seminary


In this work the author traced the events surrounding the capture of Santa Anna by Sam Houston’s army. The disposition of the dictator became one of the first problems faced by the infant Republic of Texas. Unfortunately, this book does not adequately address these important issues. His view of the problems in Texas was excessively pro-Anglo. Similarly, his brief narratives of Mexican history were superficial and often inaccurate. For example, he claimed that in “... 1821 the Mexican Catholic Church initiated the Mexican Revolution ...” (p. 1) and he defined Mexican creoles as “... those of mixed French or Spanish and Negro descent.” (p. 2). Errors such as Cordoba as “Cordaba,” Zacatecas as “Zacateras,” Nunez as “Nunuz,” Jose Corro as “Justo Corro,” and missing accents indicated a lack of attention to detail in Mexican history. Poor quality pictures without sources combined with a weak summation made this book a disappointment.

Richard Bailey
San Jacinto College North

Those who missed the publication in 1971 of John Weems' impressionistic study of the Texas Republic, Dream of Empire, can thank the Texas Christian University Press for reissuing this fine work as volume four in its Chisholm Trail Series of reprints. While one can get a fuller political picture from Stanley Siegel's A Political History of the Texas Republic and a more detailed (and humorous) view of the social scene from William Ransom Hogan's The Texas Republic, Weems' book packs more human drama and catches the essence of the Republic in a more exciting form.

Ably assisted in his research by his wife, Jane, Weems has woven an artful narrative of the trials and fortunes of the Lone Star Republic by telling the story through the eyes and pens of twelve participants, none of whom are major figures. Regrettably, none of his reporters are Hispanic or black, but two, Mary Maverick and thrice-married Harriet Moore Page Potter Ames, do provide the woman's view.

One comes away from this absorbing narrative with several strong impressions. One is that life in the Republic was very chancy indeed, with threats of Indian massacres, Mexican invasions, outlawry, illness, and economic ruin hanging over the heads of most inhabitants. One is impressed also how precarious the very existence of the flimsy Republic was, with its inept government, its vicious factionalism, its undisciplined defense forces, and its bankrupt treasury. That it survived long enough to be annexed to the United States can be attributed more to the character and grit of unsung heroes, male and female, such as portrayed here, than to the questionable skills of its leaders, even Sam Houston.

A delightful foreward by Joe Frantz introduces this fine volume of "Human History."

Edward Hake Phillips
Sherman, Texas

Captain Bill McDonald, Texas Ranger. By Albert Bigelow Paine. (State House Press, P.O. Box 15427, Austin, TX 78761), 1986. Illustrations. Appendices. Index. P. 454.

Texas Indian Fighters. By A.J. Sowell. (State House Press, P.O. Box 15427, Austin, TX 78761), 1986. Photographs. Index. P. 861. $29.95

These two books are among the historic volumes published by State House Press during the Texas Sesquicentennial. One of these volumes details the vicious warfare between white settlers and Indians, and the other
romanticizes the exploits of a noted lawman during the last period of frontier disorder and outlawry.

*Captain Bill McDonald, Texas Ranger* was written by Albert Bigelow Paine and first published in 1909. Paine worked closely with McDonald and keenly admired the famous law officer. Indeed, McDonald enjoyed a notable career. Born in Mississippi in 1852, he came to East Texas (East Texans are referred to as “sand-lappers”) as a young man, spent a few years as a merchant, then, attracted by bounties posted on Texas’ numerous lawbreakers, he became a highly successful manhunter. He served as a deputy sheriff, special ranger, deputy U.S. marshal, as a captain of Texas Rangers from 1891 until 1907, and as state revenue agent. An expert marksman with an uncanny skill at disarming gunmen, Captain McDonald broke up several outlaw gangs and was assigned to the most notorious crimes and trouble spots of the era. Although McDonald was a formidable man of great courage — he was the source of the “one riot, one Ranger” legend — Paine unabashedly portrays him as the master of every situation, unfailingly dominant over dangerous criminals and prominent state officials alike. Paine rarely provides dates or other significant historical information, and he invents absurd, stilted dialogue (“Dad-slap it, that sorter makes me ashamed of myself” — a supposed quote from McDonald, p. 113), throughout the book. Paine’s florid, laudatory biography merely whets the appetite for an objective, precise account of McDonald’s adventurous life.

Far more satisfactory and informative is *Texas Indian Fighters*, a facsimile reproduction of A.J. Sowell’s *Early Settlers and Indian Fighters of the Southwest*, originally published in 1900. A native Texan born in 1848, Sowell campaigned against Indians as a Texas Ranger in 1870-71. Fascinated by the Indian wars which troubled the Texas frontier for decades, Sowell concentrated on the subject in a number of books, including *Life of Big Foot Wallace* (1899). Sowell interviewed scores of pioneers, meticulously chronicling their reminiscences of raids, tortures, and battles in straightforward prose. *Texas Indian Fighters* boasts 844 pages packed with hair-raising details of hundreds of bloody clashes between warriors and Texas pioneers, along with occasional accounts of the Texas Revolution, the Mexican War, and the Civil War. Crammed with vivid details of wounds, weaponry, fights, and desperate flights, *Texas Indian Fighters* contains a treasury of harsh reminders of the long struggle for Texas between Indians and white men. It will make a valuable addition to any collection of Texana.

Bill O'Neal
Panola Junior College
"What a country to dream in!"

This enthusiastic expression of admiration came from the pen of one of the American invaders of Mexico in 1847. The Mexican-American War was the United States' first foreign war and American soldiers were awestruck at the exotic scenery and customs of Mexico. A stream of articles and letters flowed back to the United States vividly describing cock fights, fandangoes, and bull rings. Soldiers returned home with Mexican war brides in tow and cigaritos dangling from their lips. In the United States readers avidly devoured everything printed about the combat and the travel discoveries.

Robert W. Johannsen, history professor at the University of Illinois, just as avidly has devoured these accounts — in contemporary newspapers, popular magazines, books, and letter collections — and provides a brilliant interpretation of the response of Americans to the Mexican War. To The Halls Of The Montezumas is a panoramic cultural history of the United States at mid-century, a young, vigorous republic still in search of a sense of identity. Johannsen perceptively explores the romantic, chivalrous American attitude toward war, the literature and popular arts of the period, and the new heroes who marched onto the national stage just as the Revolutionary generation vanished. Rich in insight and detail, To The Halls Of The Montezumas is indispensable to understanding the United States and its people during a crucial and exciting period of development.

Bill O'Neal
Panola Junior College


On April 17, 1863, Colonel Benjamin H. Grierson, commanding a column of federal cavalry, began his famous raid through central Mississippi. When his successful operation was reported to the North, Grierson became a national hero to a people frustrated by military reverses. Strategically, his raid supplied General U.S. Grant with valuable intelligence information needed in the Big Black River campaign. To the casual Civil War historian, this is about all that Grierson is remembered for. This, despite the fact that the movie "The Horse Soldiers", a John Wayne North-South Western, was loosely based on this episode.

The authors of Unlikely Warriors have compiled an exhaustive
biography that thoroughly rounds out Grierson’s illustrious life. Indeed, the book convinces the reader that his famous raid was but one success in a lifetime of many valuable services rendered to the government. Civil War buffs will appreciate the authors’ coverage of federal military problems and operations in the oft-neglected theater of southern Tennessee and northern Mississippi. The authors’ love of their subject may have caused them to dismiss a bit too casually the successes of Grierson’s Confederate antagonists, namely Earl Van Dorn and Bedford Forrest. Certainly Grierson’s superior, General Philip H. Sheridan, is clearly identified as Grierson’s nemesis. The ill-feeling between Sheridan and Grierson would carry over into peacetime military politics.

Grierson was one of the few fortunate officers to secure a command in the regular peacetime army. He was assigned to command the Tenth United States Cavalry Regiment, an all-black unit officered by whites. At a time when general public prejudices were skeptical of the proficiency of such an organization, Grierson retained a high respect for and confidence in his troops. His black troopers repaid his faith in them by making the Tenth one of the finest frontier regiments in service. They earned the grudging respect of the plains Indians who referred to the black troopers as “buffalo soldiers.”

Colonel Grierson’s humanitarian views about the Indians eroded badly under the realities of government bureaucracy as well as the frustrations of trying to determine the guilty parties among Indian depredators. Indian agents, Quakers, and eastern humanitarians were constantly pressuring Army commanders to be lenient on Indian culprits who were, in many cases, guilty of the most hideous crimes. Grierson developed a general retaliatory attitude about entire tribes as a means of punishment although he never carried this into effect.

The book is as much a family history, which covers the trials and hardships of the Griersons and their near-relatives, as it is a military biography. The Leckies have done an outstanding job in presenting the total perspective encompassing the life of General Benjamin Grierson.

Robert W. Glover
Tyler Junior College


One step ahead of the law, Augustine Blackburn Hardin, accompanied by a single slave, entered Texas in 1825. Several brothers later followed young Blackburn, settling along the Trinity River in the Atascocito District, where they built a home called Seven Pines. Through its doors came members of three families — the Hardins, the Berwick-O’Briens, and the Davies — who held positions of local authority from
Mexican, Republic, state, and federal governments.

In the present volume, Camilla Davis Trammell, a descendant of the families involved, lovingly traces the history of Texas through their eyes from 1825 to 1872. Genealogists will find the book a veritable treasure-trove of information and photographs about a number of nineteenth century Texans. Historians, while wary of the steadfastly pro-Texan, pro-Southern nature of the text, should find the many letters reprinted here to be of value in studying life in southeastern Texas and southwestern Louisiana. Particularly intriguing are those which discuss treatment of slaves, the Civil War, and Reconstruction. The book should also alert genealogists and scholars alike to the valuable collections at the Sam Houston Regional Library, where many of the letters printed and referred to in the present text have been collected.

Robert Wooster
Corpus Christi State University


One of the best volumes on the history of Galveston is now available from the University of Texas Press. Written by David McComb, this book will be of interest to all who have visited the island's historical attractions, some of which were owned and inhabited by the town's three seignorial families — Moody, Kempner, and Sealy.

McComb's work is long overdue. There are earlier histories of the city, but this study puts everything in its proper perspective — including a solid chapter on the era when Galveston gambled gauche and gaudy.

The author presents his research in a fresh, knowledgeable style that is easy to read and comprehend. His facts are well supported by documents held by the Rosenberg Library and from interviews conducted with contemporary experts on the island's history or on tapes.

Of particular interest is the author's interpretation of why Galveston never really expanded or grew in population when compared to cities located in the interior of the state. A complex situation, McComb unravels the mystery well.

One case in point. While other cities devoted energy to various civic improvements, Galveston concentrated its tax dollars on protecting itself from the Gulf of Mexico — including a seawall and grade raising project. And, although the wall was completed in 1904, subsequent hurricanes and extensive beach erosion have kept its citizens aware the fight is far from over.

Galveston is also unique in that much of its destiny was controlled by three major families who controlled the town's banking and insurance
interests and its port-related economy. A fourth operated the illegal attractions, including gambling and a flourishing red light district, that thrived well into the 1950s. McComb describes how these same families often vied at the ballot box for political control of the city’s future.

Each city has its own unique history, and Galveston is no exception. And if you have enjoyed any of Galveston’s more recent attractions, such as Dickens on the Strand or the annual summer Rainbow Festival, you will certainly enjoy McComb’s study of the city’s rich and interesting history.

Maury Darst
Galveston College

*How Fort Worth Became the Texasmost City, 1849-1920.* By Leonard Sanders. (Texas Christian University Press, P.O. Box 30783, Fort Worth, TX 76129), 1986. Photographs. Notes on Sources. Bibliography. Index. P. 201. $29.95

In *How Fort Worth Became the Texasmost City, 1849-1920* Leonard Sanders, a Fort Worth novelist, has emphasized the “significant and colorful events” which helped produce Fort Worth’s “individuality.” He has in this new edition of the first publication of 1973 accomplished his objectives. Along with photographs and captions by Ron Tyler, Director of the Texas State Historical Association, Sanders has covered the beginnings of the fort, the growth of the meat packing business, and the development of the city as a center of the oil industry. He also has explained how each change made a significant impact on the destiny of Fort Worth during this eighty-year period.

Although presenting an interesting part of Fort Worth’s history, the book has both strengths and weaknesses. The narrative is at times choppy which is distracting. Even so, this book is a valuable addition for those who are collectors of local history because Sanders has provided a detailed, factual account and Tyler has included rare photographs of Fort Worth.

Janet Schmelzer
Tarleton State University


This is a dilettantish history written for the benefit of Buffalo Bayou Park and the Texas Museum of History and Technology. It is filled with partial information about events, exaggerated facts, genealogy, reminiscences, and bias for the wealthy people of the city. There is precious
little about the problems of Houston — pollution, crime, public education, transportation systems, and racial difficulties. These also, unfortunately, are part of the Houston legacy. Clio would have been better served by Mrs. McAshan if she had confined her observations to what she knows best — Houston high society.

David McComb
Colorado State University


Few subjects arouse our historical senses as much as ghost towns. Like their ethereal namesakes, they whisper a summons from the past, offering rare glimpses at the towns and settlements we left in the midsts of history.

T. Lindsay Baker's Ghost Towns of Texas, which deals with eighty-eight of the “best” ghost towns in his native state, is the fifth in a series of Southwestern ghost town anthologies published by the University of Oklahoma Press. The four other books dealt with Oklahoma, Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona.

Baker's collection includes a number of Texas' best-known ghost towns, such as Thurber, New Birmingham, and Indianola, as well as an interesting list of lesser-known towns and settlements, such as Praha, Doole, and Calf Creek.

Baker, curator of agriculture and technology at the Panhandle-Plains Museum at Canyon, drove some 25,000 miles and visited about 300 sites ranging from virtually intact but empty structures to forgotten sites in bare fields.

His descriptions of the eighty-eight ghosts offer an interesting look at each town’s history, its past significance, and the reasons for its demise. The book is also amply illustrated with photographs and maps. A large Texas map, coupled with locations on how to reach each ghost town, makes it easy for visitors to enjoy the fruits of Baker's labors.

If the book has any deficiency, it is the lack of sufficient attention to the sawmill and logging towns of early East Texas. Only three such towns — Fastrill, Haslam, and Manning — are covered in the book, and they are only a fraction of the hundreds of towns that were spawned and later cast aside by the old “cut-out and get out” logging boom during the early part of this century.

Baker, however, has produced a worthwhile contribution to the rich history and legacy of our forgotten communities. It is a book that belongs on the shelves of any historian interested in ghost towns.

Bob Bowman
Lufkin, Texas
Landmarks of Texas Architecture. By Lawrence W. Speck and Richard Payne. (University of Texas Press, P.O. Box 7819, Austin, TX 78713), 1986. Photographs. P. 115. $29.95.

Landmarks of Texas Architecture is a coffee-table book with a bad conscience. It consists of images of twenty-four buildings and groups of buildings by the Houston photographer Richard Payne. These represent the most outstanding works of architecture in the state, in the judgment of a panel of architects and historians assembled by the Texas Society of Architects in 1983. Accompanying the images is a text by the Austin architect Lawrence W. Speck, Roland G. Roessner Professor of Architecture at The University of Texas at Austin and director of the university’s Center for the Study of American Architecture.

The fundamental shortcoming of the book is that it fails to explicate the reasons why these twenty-four buildings are exemplary. The panel’s choice of eighteenth and nineteenth century buildings is unexceptionable (the missions of San Antonio, the Governor’s Mansion, the Texas Capitol, and three buildings — one a county courthouse — by Texas’s two foremost Victorian architects, N.J. Clayton of Galveston and J. Riely Gordon of San Antonio.) There are no buildings from East Texas included. But the twentieth-century buildings chosen require an interpretive analysis to make their singularities, as well as their underlying connections, evident. Instead Speck offers the reader capsule histories of the buildings’ design and construction, with little interpretation, minimal documentation, and just enough careless factual errors — and more than enough misspelled proper names — to inspire distrust. Speck departs from this formula only once — his profile of the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth — to provide an architecturally informed account of the experience of the building. His observations are sound, telling, and persuasive. One is at no loss to understand why this particular building is an architectural landmark.

Stephen Fox
Houston, Texas


Western and regional art is experiencing vast popularity. Crowding the stage for limelight with Remington and Russell are many artists who are being rediscovered by a new generation. Included in this group are Alexandre Hogue and W. Herbert Dunton, both with Texas connections.
DeLong's *Nature's Forms/Nature's Forces* is a biographical sketch of Hogue and a catalogue of his works. Accompanying a traveling exhibition by the same title, the book reintroduces and reevaluates Hogue within the context of twentieth-century American art.

Hogue draws deep from his own experience with nature. While his interpretive styles during his career took a cyclical journey, from realism to 'psychoreality,' to abstract, to contemporary realism, his singular theme has been nature. Whether he is interpreting the dust bowl of the 1930s, the oil industry, the atom, or the Big Bend landscapes, Hogue has explored man's relationship with the earth and nature's reaction to man. His association with the Dallas Group has given importance to Texas regionalism.

Schimmel's study of Dunton documents a conservative twentieth-century artist and is based upon a large collection at the Stark Museum in Orange, Texas. Originally an illustrator, Dunton moved to Taos and is known for his paintings of Anglo subjects and wildlife. His work is highly romantic; the West he pictured, a natural life dedicated to moral and spiritual regeneration, was gone. Schimmel interprets Dunton's career in the tradition of other artists who recorded the West. Mostly self-taught, Dunton's earlier works were in an academic style, but by the 1930s his painting was distinguished by his concern for design and decorative patterns as influenced by post-impressionism.

Both books contain lengthy informative references and listings of known works and exhibition schedules. They are copiously illustrated, some in color, each with identifying explanations. The books are beautifully designed and, for Western art lovers, they are a must.

Thomas H. Smith
Dallas County Heritage Society


Vietnam was not the first time military commanders were done in by their men. On September 6, 1853, Dr. Josephus M. Steiner, the post surgeon, shot and killed Major Ripley A. Arnold, his post commander, in what was afterward called "the Fort Graham Affair." The gunfight occurred after Steiner had Arnold investigated for a questionable horse deal and Arnold had Steiner arrested for his part in a drunken brawl. Steiner was later "rescued" before the military tried him, and he was acquitted of local charges on the plea of self defense, thanks to very able Richard Coke.

Part Two is the census of 1860 for Hill County. Schedule 1 shows 2,996 free inhabitants listed by name, state of birth, age, occupation, value of personal and real property, and residence. Schedule 2 lists 656 slaves
Part Three narrates the history of the Old Settlers and Confederate Veterans Reunion Grounds at Hillsboro. It is followed by a roster of the Confederate Veterans living in Hill County from 1865 to 1925.

Simpson's Sesquicentennial county trilogy is well done and of interest to family, local, and Texas history. The quality of the work shows in an attractive book, interesting endnotes, and abundant illustrations.

William R. Enger
Trinity Valley Community College


The author's love of Texas and Texans is evident in Backroads of Texas, a guide that divides the state in four geographic regions. Following highway routes that crisscross each region, he tells as many good tales about each community along the way as space allows, and he alludes to stories that prick the reader's imagination.

It's obvious from his descriptions that he has traveled most every backroad in the state. He advises travelers of local festivals and suggests checking with Chambers of Commerce for tour routes and county travel guides, good advice since he only mentions locales of interest and in a few instances makes errors, such as in Round Rock (p. 73), where he places sites on the wrong side of I-35 and confuses historic old Brushy Creek with a river.

This guide will serve as a handy beginning for travelers wishing to explore Texas backroads.

Myra Hargrave McIlvain
Cedar Park, Texas

The Loblolly Book II. Edited by Thad Sitton and Lincoln King. (Texas Monthly Press, P.O. Box 1569, Austin, Texas 78767). Paper. P. 228, Photographs.

Publishing, like movie-making, sometimes operates on the theory that one good book deserves a sequel. So it is with The Loblolly Book II.

And in this case, the sequel is just as good as the original.

Thad Sitton of Austin and Lincoln King of Carthage put together their first Loblolly book — a collection of folklore ways in rural East Texas — in 1983 as a means of broadening exposure to the research of King's small history classes at Gary High School in Panola County.

They took most of their material from back issues of a Gary student publication called Loblolly, the earliest of the Texas cultural journalism
projects. The result was a delightful collection of articles dealing with the all-but-forgotten cultural heritage of our older citizens.

Following Texas Monthly Press' publication of the first anthology, King’s high school students were challenged to produce a sequel in a year and a half.

They did their job superbly. Their efforts produced in *The Loblolly Book II* such chapters as Syrup Making, Moonshiners and Bootleggers, The Hanging of Dan Shields, and Box Suppers — all drawn from the fragile but rich memories and recollections of grandparents, grandaunts and granduncles, neighbors, and community historians.

As a collector of East Texas idioms and expressions, I was drawn to the chapter dealing with country proverbs, and was struck by a saying, "Memory is the watchman of the brain."

Thank goodness that the older people of East Texas have left us with some viable guardians.

Bob Bowman
Lufkin, Texas


*Oil Booms* is neither an exhaustive nor a definitive study of general oil boom history, but it is an excellent analysis of the long-range impact of the petroleum industry on five similar, but distinctly different West Texas communities. As residents of the Midland-Odessa complex, one of the most sophisticated oil centers in the nation, the Oliens have taken advantage of the relatively recent history of the Permian Basin field, and in fact drew heavily upon the experiences of those involved in one of the nation’s last booms, the 1949-50 Snyder story. Through scores of oral interviews and the use of local records, the authors define the impact of booms on Midland, Odessa, Snyder, Wink, and McCamey. Even though the five towns experienced booms of different sizes, time periods, intensity, and duration, they all shared the common problems of crime, housing, and public service and education shortages.

The Oliens' assessment of the impact of the boom is carefully couched in optimistic terms. Dismissing the stereotype of the violent, rip-roaring, booming communities that brought instant riches to some and hardships to others, the authors indicate that typical characteristics of boom towns, such as makeshift housing and crime, were elements to be expected. Makeshift housing was the norm; crime was associated with those who dabbled in alcohol and gambling, and those who did not usually were undisturbed. The Permian Basin communities generally were able to respond
to the demands placed upon them, thanks in a large part to the oil revenues produced by the booms. "Though oil development brought pressing community problems, it also contributed both material and human resources for their solution" (p. 85). Moreover, oil booms brought economic promise, especially to those "who wanted work in its scope; women and members of a racial and ethnic minority groups did not often find work in the oil fields themselves, but they found a myriad of other job opportunities in the bustling boomtowns" (p. 170).

The oliens conclude that each boom generally was a positive influence on the communities impacted and served as a springboard for men and women who would have been otherwise confined to the drudgery of farm life. "The vast majority of those who came to oil boom towns were speculating on their own futures and those of their families. For them oil booms did not mean social chaos: oil booms meant personal economic gain" (p. 171). There is no doubt that, for those who stayed in the Permian Basin and those who became subjects of Olien interviews, life was better. But perhaps we will never know the outcome of those who passed through the booms and drifted on.

A concluding critical bibliographic essay serves as an excellent overview of oil boom literature.

David J. Murrah
Texas Tech University


_Thurber, Texas. The Life and Death of a Company Coal Town._ By John S. Spratt, Sr. Edited by Harwood P. Hinton. (The University of Texas Press, P.O. Box 7819, Austin, TX 78713), 1986. Photographs. References. Index. P. 138. $22.50.

At a time when the Permanent University Fund has come under legislative scrutiny, Berte R. Haigh, formerly of the University Lands Office, has published his detailed account of one of the largest educational endowments in the country. In _Land, Oil, and Education_, Haigh has provided "a compilation of historical, legal, reference, and statistical data" to explain the complex subject of the University Lands and the Permanent University Fund. (p. iii) Having divided the book into three periods — the acquisition of the original Fifty Leagues, the management of additional grants in 1876 and 1883, and the leasing of mineral rights under the lands — he has put together a plethora of documentation including entire texts of state laws, correspondence of university regents, state legislators and governors, and reports of various state agencies. All of this information, when carefully read and studied, has begun to untangle
the origin and administration of University Lands.

In *Thurber, Texas: The Life and Death of a Company Coal Town* John S. Spratt, Sr., author of *Road to Spindletop: Economic Change in Texas, 1875-1901*, has chronicled "a memorable nostalgia trip" (p. xvi), as noted by editor Harwood P. Hinton, of the day-to-day occurrences in Thurber and Mingus which in many ways have "represented a pattern throughout Texas" (pp. xx-xxi). Although focusing on the dramatic changes in both towns when the local coal-mining industry was broken by the discovery of oil, Spratt, with great care for detail, has described how the common folk lived in small, rural Texas communities. For instance, he has catalogued the many items such as coffee, lard, cloth, licorice, and cigars that were stacked on the shelves of the local drugstore or grocery store. Likewise, he has drawn vivid pictures of such traditional preparations as making the pumpkin pie and the turkey dressing for Christmas and other holiday family gatherings.

Both *Thurber, Texas* and *Land, Oil, and Education* are worthy additions to the histories of Texas life. Each book represents a wealth of information and pages of enjoyable reading — Spratt recounting a valuable social history and Haigh supplying a voluminous land policy documentary.

Janet Schmelzer
Tarleton State University


Friends of the Governor's Mansion, established in 1979 as a non-profit corporation to support and preserve the Governor's Mansion of Texas, published *The Governor's Mansion of Texas: A Historical Tour* for visitors to the Mansion and persons interested in the building's history.

The book is divided into three parts. "A Tour of the Governor's Mansion" provides the reader with a room-by-room tour enhanced with more than 120 color and eighty black and white illustrations. "The Restoration" details the extensive changes made during the administration of Governor William P. Clements. "A Historic Perspective" gives the history of the Mansion, an architect's view, a description of the Mansion's grounds, and sketches of people who occupied the home. The book includes a list of the first families and terms in office, along with a bibliography and an index.

The magnificent color photographs of the present-day Mansion as well as the interesting earlier black-and-white photographs provide a valuable history of one of Texas' most famous homes. Unfortunately, several major errors do stand out. L.R. Ross was not the only governor
to have a college named in his honor (p. 113), and Mrs. Ferguson was not the first woman in the United States ever elected governor (p. 124). And did 20,000 (p. 96) or 25,000 (p. 137) guests attend Molly O’Daniel’s wedding? These and some other errors need to be corrected when the publication is reprinted.

Dorman H. Winfrey
Texas State Library


This is a business history of the Texas Commerce Banks and their relationship to the financing of Houston and the state from 1886 to 1986. The emphasis is upon company change, the effect of banking regulations, the economic history of Houston, and the changing strength of the banks compared to the rest of the nation. The history confirms the old notion that the Great Depression struck Houston only a glancing blow, that no banks failed in the city at that time, that World War II was the great catalyst for Texas industry, and that the petroleum and cotton businesses were historically the most important for the area. What Buenger and Pratt add to these notions is inside information from interviews and company records to reveal bank policies and the history of the leadership. Sprinkled through the narrative like raisins in a bowl of dry cereal are biographical sketches of important men and events. There are lists of directors and short biographies of bank leaders at the end of the book.

You need a taste for this kind of history. There is little social information here concerning blacks, Hispanics, or women. Nor is there much in the way of middle management technique. The authors, for example, mention the coming of computers to the industry, but not the details of when, what kind, where, and how. Still, this is a very worthwhile book. There is a wealth of rare material about the banking industry, a good summary of changing economic conditions in Texas, and helpful information about Houston business leaders. The printing is faded in parts of my copy, which is rare for a Texas A&M book, and the authors probably wish they could have carried their narrative for just another six months. At the end of 1986, just beyond the closing of their research, under the impact of the oil and real estate depression which terminated twenty-three Texas banks, according to *The Economist* (December-January, 1986-87), Texas Commerce merged with New York’s Chemical Bank to become the fourth largest in the country. That event provides a strong conclusion to the story.

David McComb
Colorado State University

Much has been written and said about the "wheeler-dealer spirit" of Texas and Texans, and this has been reinforced over the years on the silver screen and on the nightly TV fare. The ultimate coronation of this wheeler-dealer spirit probably occurred in John Bainbridge's 1961 book appropriately titled The Super-Americans.

The myth of the wheeler-dealer spirit will probably live on. However, this book would appear to drive several nails in the coffin and come close to serving as the obituary notice for that celebrated specie. The central thesis of this collection of articles dealing with Texas businessmen is that the old wheeler-dealer ways no longer work. Texas has changed and the successful entreprenuers are those who recognize the vast changes. Texas is now part of the national economy and the national culture.

Some fifteen case studies drawn from Texas Monthly are presented. The success stories represent those who adopted modern methods, adapted to change, and helped their state become more a part of the national culture. The failures were those who ignored changes, held to old ways, and maintained parochial attitudes.

This is an entertaining and instructive book. It tells us much about our state and state of mind.

Charles W. Brown
Stephen F. Austin State University


In recent years traditional "labor" history, with its emphasis upon unionized workers and their institutions, has been somewhat ignored by young scholars who are practitioners of the "new labor history" or "working class history" which attempts to go beyond unions and their members and examine the totality of the worker's experience in the home, the community, the ethnic group, and the church, as well as in the workplace. Zieger's work is somewhat difficult to categorize, for while he does examine the ethnic and religious backgrounds and attitudes of workers in the pulp and paper industry of the 1930s and early 1940s, his primary emphasis is upon their union, the International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite, and Paper Mill Workers, and their leaders, particularly President-Secretary John P. Burke. However, the book is not really representative of the older "labor history," for most of the studies in that genre dealt with large industries and organizations, dramatic battles and leaders. This
work, in contrast, deals with an industry that, although significant, has been ignored by historians, and with a union that was relatively small and whose history was undramatic.

As the national economy staggered under the impact of the Great Depression, the International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite, and Paper Mill Workers, whose origins dated back to the early years of the century, was a small organization of fewer than 4000 in an industry which employed approximately 120,000 workers concentrated in the Northeast and Canada. They were predominantly male and ethnically homogeneous. By 1941 the union had more than 60,000 members. The industry employed 400,000 workers, and had spread into the South. It now had considerable racial, ethnic, religious, and sexual diversity within its work force. Zieger's emphasis is upon the way the Brotherhood achieved its growth while reacting and adapting to these changes.

There were several union characteristics that made the Brotherhood's experiences interesting. First, while it was a loyal AFL affiliate, its philosophy and organizational structure were those of an industrial union. Second, while President-Secretary Burke was a moderate socialist, his leadership was conservative and was characterized by strong cooperation with company leaders who tolerated or encouraged the Brotherhood in order to keep the more threatening CIO out of their operations. Also, while the organization benefitted considerably from Section 7(a) of the National Industrial Recovery Act and the National Labor Relations Act, Burke was extremely distrustful of government and was not an admirer of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Burke was willing to endure occasional charges from the rank and file that he was too conservative or too much of an accommodationist, for he was convinced that workers were not sufficiently unified or union-oriented to protect their own interests without outside assistance.

Zieger's book is well-organized and clearly written, although it suffers from occasional repetition. It is a valuable addition to the literature of labor and working class history, and should be of particular interest to East Texans because of the rise of the pulp and paper industry in the piney woods since the 1930s.

James E. Fickle
Memphis State University

Alex Sweet's Texas. The Lighter Side of Lone Star History. By Alexander Edwin Sweet. (University of Texas Press, P.O. Box 7819, Austin, TX 78713), 1986. Illustrations, Index. P. 202. $19.95 hardcover; $9.95 paperback.
Top Grain Cowhide History of Texas. By D. Lee McCullough. (Eakin Press, P.O. Box 23066, Austin, TX 78735), 1986. P. 214. $9.95.

The Uncensored John Henry Faulk. By John Henry Faulk. (Texas Monthly Press, P.O. Box 1569, Austin, TX 78767), P. 164. $16.95.

These three fine books of Texas humor begin with superbly selected essays of renowned nineteenth century humorist Alex Sweet. Sweet’s essays are divided into sections about the state, cities, people, life, and natural resources. Each section contain well-written, humorous sketches of Texas life. In particular, readers will enjoy Sweet’s versions of LaSalle, climate, immigration, Texas Rangers, General Sheridan, Texas and Hell, boys, typical Texan, Christmas, the memorable New York’s Day calls, cattle, and chili con carne. Of particular interest to students of late nineteenth century Texas, and those with an interest in Galveston, Austin, and San Antonio, the book contains appropriate annotations, bibliography, and illustrations. These features enriched the reading pleasure of an excellent volume.

D. Lee McCullough’s Top Grain Cowhide attempts to survey Texas history. A pleasant book of anecdotes, it includes the geology of Texas, the Spanish explorers, French settlement, the colonization of Texas, Austin’s mission to Mexico, the Alamo, Goliad, and the Republic of Texas. Regrettfully twentieth century Texas is surveyed in only twenty-five pages, and the book has far too many clever phrases. While shorter in scope, Texas History Movies remains the classic survey.

In the third segment of this Texas humor trilogy, John Henry Faulk strongly defends the First Amendment of The Constitution. Skillfully he uses folklore and the humor of liberal, rural Texas compounded by his own personal experiences, to make readers react in a mixture of laughter and tears. Using characters such as the Reverend Tanner Franklin and Cousin Ed Snodgrass - interlaced with Texas dialect - Faulk saturizes feelings and events since the 1930s. He discusses civil rights, religion, politicians, attitudes about the Vietnam War, recognition of Communist China, Watergate, and nuclear war. In “To Secure the Blessings of Liberty,” with missionary zeal, Faulk reminds us of the dangerous impact that fear and ignorance can have upon liberty. A bit too zealous, too naive on Cuba, too rural for some snobbish urban Texans, this admirable book - like ribbon cane syrup and hot biscuits - is worth digesting.

Irvin M. May, Jr.
Blinn College at Bryan