BOOK NOTES

A number of books have come our way that are of special interest to some of our readers. A few are:

A special issue of the Gulf Coast Historical Review, Volume 4, No. 2, which is devoted to the Civil War and Reconstruction on the Gulf Coast. The issue contains twelve articles on the War and four on Reconstruction by outstanding scholars. Copies may be obtained from Gulf Coast Historical Review, History Department, Humanities 344, University of South Alabama, Mobile, AL 36688. Price is $8. Michael Thomason is Managing Editor of GCHR.

Another book on the War is Stewart Sifakis' Who Was Who in the Civil War. Its subtitle tells what is in it: "A comprehensive, illustrated biographical reference to more than 2,500 of the principal Union and Confederate participants in the War between the States." There are nearly 800 pages of these biographies, and there is an index. Obtain from Facts on File, Inc., 460 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016.

Although the above deal to a degree with Texas, the following are pure Texana: A Short History of Austin College, by Edward Hake Phillips, is a fine example of a college history and a labor of love. Ed sent along a note saying that he wishes to dedicate the book to "all who shared the Austin College Experience," but others will be interested as well.

Flags of Texas, by Charles E. Gilbert, Jr., with illustrations by James Rice, (Pelican Publishing Company, P.O. Box 189, Gretna, LA 70053) $12.95 Hardcover, contains a concise history of early Texas and descriptions and illustrations of thirty-three flags associated with Texas History.

Writers' Guide to Texas Markets, edited by Georgia Kemp Caraway (University of North Texas Press, P.O. Box 13856, Denton, TX 76203) $14.95, will be useful to all who try to get their words into print for fun and/or profit. Especially interesting is Chapter II, "Words of Wisdom from 'them that does it.'"

And some interesting data for "them that does it" can be found in Texas Fact Book, 1989, edited by Rita J. Wright and Lisa Sparkman (Bureau of Business Research, University of Texas, Austin, TX 78712). Maps, graphs, charts and I don't know what all are used to provide various data about contemporary Texas.
EATS: A Folk History of Texas Foods, by Ernestine Sewell Linck and Joyce Gibson Roach (who is among my favorite writers of humor and other stories about Texas women), is pure delight. It is part history, part folklore, part a lot of things, all of them interesting or fun or both. If it has to do with what Texans have eaten, will eat, or won’t eat, you will find something about it in this book. There are even recipes for some things, useful and interesting illustrations, and some of the best anecdotes you will likely encounter in print. Books may be ordered through Texas A&M University Press, Drawer C, College Station, TX 77843. Price is $23.50.

South of the Border, by John Byrne Cooke (Bantam Books, 666 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10103), is a yarn based on the supposition that Butch Cassidy survived his reported death in South America and lived until the 1930s under various names. The specific adventures related here are told by Charlie Siringo, the famed writer of Westerns. Cooke told the story through Siringo, a real-life writer and a real cowboy, as a device to suggest what might have happened. He takes real people and places them in events and locales they actually visited, although not necessarily at the same time and under the same circumstances as are presented in this story. It makes for entertaining reading, especially for those who like old-time cowboy tales. Cooke affects the writing style of the real Siringo successfully. In this story, Robert Leroy Parker, alias Butch Cassidy (Leroy Roberts for most of this story) leaves his hiding place in the Northwest to travel to Mexico where he plans to resume his real identity despite the consequences. Through a series of incidents he joins a movie crew in Hollywood and travels with them to Mexico to help with a film based on the activities of Pancho Villa. There are harrowing escapes from both rurales, federales, and Villistas, and true love triumphs when Butch marries the film’s star and then robs one more bank to save her father’s home. Never mind that none of this probably happened; like I said, it is a good story and makes for fun reading.

Battle Cry of Freedom, by James M. McPherson, (Oxford University Press, by Ballantine Books, Div. of Random House, New York, NY) $14.95, has much going for it. For one thing, it won the Pulitzer Prize; for another, it is the most recent general book on the American Civil War by one of the distinguished scholars in that field. Battle Cry of Freedom is one of a series of books edited by C. Van Woodward that will represent a new look at all of American history. Opening chapters trace the deepening division between the sections, correctly placing slavery right in the middle of the conflict. The main body of the book is a narrative of the events of the war, with appropriate interpretation and due attention to character analysis of the players in this great American drama. A concluding epilogue is even more interpretative. It takes other scholars
to task to explain why the North won and why the South lost. Foot notes are both reference and explanatory, and an excellent bibliography concludes the book. This is a complete history of its period. While due attention is paid to political and military events, I found McPherson’s coverage of economic and social history even more informative. I recommend the book without reservation, while not necessarily agreeing with all of its interpretations; in fact, I intend to use it as a text in my course on the War.

Education For The Future: Addresses from a Public Symposium (Texas Committee for the Humanities, 100 Neches, Austin, TX 78701) P. 63. $4., presents published addresses delivered to a symposium sponsored by the TCH on November 14, 1988. They concentrate on education and needs in the field for the next century. Papers included were prepared by State Treasurer Ann Richards, State Senator Bill Haley, House of Representative members Wilhelmina Delco and Ralph Wallace, and Dr. Francis E. Abernethy, Professor of English at Stephen F. Austin State University and a member of the TCH. The past chair, Ellen Temple of Lufkin, contributed an introduction to the published papers and presided at the symposium. TCH Director James F. Veninga provided a preface and afterword. Richards’ essay is both humorous and thought-provoking; those by other political figures are not humorous, but will still make you think; Ab’s paper will make you worry. His review of the many reasons why we need to understand the Orient and the world of Islam make a plea into an imperative. I urge all our members to read this slender volume.

Finally, in the way of humor and philosophy, we also received Mama Was a Con Man, Papa was a Christian, by Harry Wayne Addison (Pelican Publishing Company, P.O. Box 189, Gretna, LA 70053) $9.95 Hardcover, a sage/humorist from Louisiana. Mama was a conman because during the Depression she served tripe and called it deep-sea fish, and papa was a Christian because he could say the blessing over left-over tripe. Of course, you have to know what tripe is to appreciate the title, but this is not the case with the book. Any who remember the Depression will find that these reminiscences will sound rich cords of memory in the mind and in the heart.