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Book Reviews

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BOOK REVIEWS


Helen Green’s autobiography recounts the author’s struggles in growing up the African American daughter of a poor East Texas family. Although her family lacked the economic resources possible to provide Green with a university education, tenacity enabled Green to face racial discriminations prevalent in Texas and put herself through nursing school.

Green eventually graduated from Methodist Hospital School of Nursing – the only black student in her class. Her struggles continued as some hospital administrators and patients treated her with little respect because of her race. Nonetheless, Green made it a goal to fight discrimination, and she eventually earned positions at such facilities as Timberlawn Psychiatric Hospital, the Dallas County Mental Health and Mental Retardation Community Center, and other prestigious posts. Green’s book certainly functions as a historical resource, for she tells us of her thoughts and actions in details historians cannot simply reproduce by describing inequitable racial sentiments in the South in the 1960s. Green’s autobiography makes discrimination more personal. With her account, readers gain insight into how engrained racial stigmas were in her time. At one point in the book, the author describes an encounter in which a patient naively explained her racially biased conception of black individuals. Green’s experience is poignant, for the patient never realized that her ideas assigned negative qualities to individuals based solely on skin color. As Green states, “I found it amusing that this little lady had it all worked out... because this woman really believed what she said” (p. 205). Green’s book is recommended as a resource for any historical discussion on Southern race relations and experiences.

Sara Crowley
Texas Christian University


David La Vere has researched and written a book that will become a classic. He updates the story of Indian Texans with an eye toward using the most current primary research in the field, including his own. Also using secondary material, he places Native Americans on center stage rather than having them merely reacting to intruders, for they had a history of several thousand years before non-Indian groups arrived, spreading disease and death in their wakes. The last synthesis on the subject was William Newcomb, Jr.’s offering in 1962, one that relied heavily on secondary research and leaned toward the
"Eurocentric" view of Native American history even though Newcomb was an excellent scholar and a skilled and respected anthropologist.

This book should have a wide audience. It will be a valuable supplement for any college course on Indians in the Americas and for any course on Texas history. Since historians use no jargon, this work can be understood not only by college undergraduate and graduate students but also by high schoolers who have reached the junior-senior stage in their education.

The author uses ten chapters to deliver his message. The first two highlight Texas Indian history before intruders arrived. Then comes an account of the arrival of both the Spaniards and the Apaches. Another chapter covers the great Caddo culture of eastern Texas. The Atakapa and Tonkawa receive notice, even as they, too, were hard-pressed by the invading Apaches. Nations from the north follow next in La Vere's train as he covers the history of the Wichita, Comanche, and other groups. He describes the great wars between the Comanche and Apache for dominance in western Texas, a struggle won by the Comanche. La Vere discusses the history of the immigrant tribes from the East: The Five Civilized Tribes and the Alabama-Coushatta, a tribe that had broken away from the Creeks. La Vere devotes space to practically all the tribes that once called Texas home. He delves into the age of conquest when white and black Americans subdued the Indians and eventually destroyed them.

La Vere's work is well researched and well organized. His writing is clear, lively, and free of errors. There seems to be no flaws in his work; I have one caveat, however. Essentially, La Vere ends his work when the nineteenth century has come and gone. He has a chapter on the 1900s, but I would have liked to have seen more coverage, perhaps dividing that last chapter into two and giving more detail on Texas' modern Indian community. That said, we still have a great book that will be studied, most probably, for at least the next fifty years.

James M. Smallwood
Oklahoma State University, Emeritus


With this volume, author-historian-attomey William C. Foster adds much significant information to the story of René-Robert Cavalier, Sieur de La Salle. Using his investigative skills as a lawyer and his broad knowledge as a historian, Foster meticulously traced the journey of La Salle down and back up the Mississippi River in 1682 and presented an abundance of corollary evidence that heretofore has remained unknown.
As Foster explains in his preface, Ron Tyler, director of the Texas State Historical Association, called his attention in 1998 to a French manuscript of unknown provenance entitled “La Salle M.S. 1682” in the holdings of the Texas State Library in Austin. After much study, Foster concluded that the document was a previously unknown manuscript copy of the lost original manuscript of the Nicolas de La Salle diary account of the René – Robert Cavalier, Sieur de La Salle’s trip on the Mississippi River in 1682. Nicolas de La Salle, not a known relative of the explorer, was the only diarist on the journey.

With the aid of expert translator Johanna S. Warren, Foster went to work on the manuscript and came up with remarkable interpretive information about a generally obscure period of American history. Besides the detailed diary account of the expedition of discovery on the Mississippi River in 1682, the book describes the Indian trade routes between northern outposts of New Spain and Indian villages along the Mississippi River Valley. Over these Indian trade routes moved Spanish goods, weapons, horses, and domesticated fruits and vegetables to the Mississippian tribes in exchange for their products and goods. A main route and branch routes traversed East Texas territory, which eventually evolved into the caminos reales de los Tejas, a road system of New Spain that is, in part, still used today and is in the process of being recognized as a national historic trail.

I highly recommend this superbly written and crafted publication for all history buffs, history teachers, middle school libraries, high school libraries, public libraries, and university libraries in Texas and other states in the U.S.A.

Robert H. Thonhoff
Karnes City, Texas


In 1834 the Mexican government sent Colonel Juan Nepomuceno Almonte to Texas to make what turned out to be the final inspection tour of the territory by a Mexican official before the revolution. Almonte spent nearly five months in Texas. He traveled southwest from the Louisiana border to the Rio Grande by way of Nacogdoches, San Felipe de Austin, and San Antonio. Upon his return to Mexico, Almonte issued a report, which was eventually translated into English by Carlos E. Castañeda and published as the “Statistical Report on Texas by Juan N. Almonte, 1835,” by the Southwestern Historical Quarterly in 1925. A decade later, Helen Willits Harris completed a dissertation on Almonte’s public life, from which was taken an article on his inspection tour in 1834, which appeared in 1938.
Historians neglected Almonte and his important inspection tour for more than six decades until the publication of the excellent book under review here. The expert team of editor Jack Jackson and translator John Wheat, who together in 2000 published the diary of General Manuel de Mier y Terán’s inspection tour of Texas in 1828, recently uncovered in Mexico and at Yale University manuscript copies of Almonte’s Secret Report and its fifteen attachments, which form the core of this book. In addition to the Secret Report, however, Jackson has provided what amounts to a biography of Almonte’s early life, background, and commentary on the inspection tour, as well as his journal of the Mexican military campaign in Texas in 1836, in which Almonte served as Santa Anna’s special adviser and interpreter. Jackson also details Almonte’s involvement in Mexican affairs through the end of the war with the United States in 1848. Almonte filled important diplomatic, political, and military roles during this tragic and chaotic period of his country’s history.

In opposition to many Anglo Texan contemporaries, Jackson portrays the conservative Almonte as an honest, honorable, and reasonable man. Jackson persuasively demonstrates that Almonte stepped in to save Susanna Dickinson and her daughter after the fall of the Alamo, and prevented his troops from firing on David G. Burnet and his family as they were fleeing across the Brazos River in a rowboat. Although many Mexican historians see Almonte as a traitor for his support of the French occupation of their country in the 1860s, Jackson demonstrates that he did so only in hope of providing his country with a strong government to withstand the threat posed by the expansionist nature of the United States. Following the reading of this excellent book, no one can doubt the crucial role that Almonte — who was the illegitimate son of the revolutionary priest, José Morelos — played in the affairs of Mexico and Texas during the first half of the nineteenth century.

F. Todd Smith
University of North Texas


Master mason (maestro de albañil) Antonio de Tello arrived at remote Béxar on the San Antonio River about 1741, bringing with him the complex knowledge of church design and construction. At the invitation of Franciscan friars determined to upgrade their frontier mission San Antonio de Valero through substantial new buildings, de Tello also brought the continuity of the master/apprentice building system perfected centuries before by the Egyptians, Greeks and Romans from his home in Zacatecas. His own master
in Mexico's urban interior would have been impressed with young de Tello's initial stonework for the new church at San Antonio de Valero. But in 1744, with only foundation work completed, the friars and the combined military and civilian government of Béxar banished the maestro back to Mexico's interior.

The divinely inspired but worldly tempted de Tello, it seemed, involved himself in a love triangle that resulted in the mysterious death of his friend — and lover's husband — assigned to the garrison at Presidio de Béxar. His departure from the settlement at Béxar, later named San Antonio, halted work on the church at the nearby mission, later named the Alamo. The Béxar Archives housed at the University of Texas at Austin since 1899 hold the 1744 depositions explaining de Tello's departure. Yet few historians of what we now know as the San Antonio Missions — including the Alamo — have used such human stories to explain the mission buildings and why they took so long to build.

James Early, retired professor of English at Southern Methodist University, refreshingly utilizes the de Tello drama (p. 99) in his latest work to explain the Alamo's star-crossed beginnings. And he draws from other standard and neglected sources to reconstruct the intriguing era of Spanish domination across the present southern United States from — in roughly chronological order — Florida to California.

Professor Early treats all present U.S. states — in order: Florida, New Mexico, Texas, Louisiana, Arizona, and California — with chapter-length attention to Spanish explorers, colonizers, mission builders, and defenders. His emphasis on event-causing people and not just events is a refreshing and revealing approach to the basics of Spanish colonization. The state-based studies are framed with an opening chapter on Spanish settlement and construction in North America (ah, some recognition that the U.S.-Mexico border is a much later fabrication), and a concluding chapter on the influence of Hispanic culture on architecture in the U.S. after 1846.

The "Texas" chapter's opening at once condenses Spain's first 150 years in present Texas to three pages, but also introduces the personalities who financed, explored, and settled the region in a readable text. The highly motivating conflict between Spain and France, played out around Louisiana and along the Texas coast through the 1600s and 1700s, inspired the Marqués de San Miguel de Aguayo, his money, and his position to establish Spanish communities in present Texas. These places left indelible marks in East Texas at the site of La Salle's ill-fated settlement on Matagorda Bay and along the San Antonio River where Franciscans named one of their missions to honor the marques — San José y San Miguel.

Early describes this continental chess game with such ease that his narrative should be substituted for the dull "dates and battles" porridge fed to Texas public school students struggling to find significance in Texas history.

Early also presents a comprehensive collection of narrative, photographs, building and town plans, and bibliography on the Spanish architectural and
community imprint in the United States. His work is thoughtful, scholarly, and perhaps the best contextual work to date—in English—on this pertinent subject. But the first glaring limitation is the political border between the present United States and present Republic of Mexico. Early himself produced another work in 1994, *The Colonial Architecture of Mexico* (University of New Mexico Press), and indeed introduces the present work “to extend the range of my earlier book” (p. x). The two works, however, apparently stand independently and Early offers few clues here to New Spain’s undeniable continuity of trade routes, colonial ambitions, and further context to the origin of *maestros de albañil* such as the Alamo’s tragic Antonio de Tello.

As this reviewer has noted previously in this journal about works on historic places, the absence of maps and visitor information is at best mysterious and at worst inexcusable in this day and time. No academic press after the mid-1990s should find itself ignorant of, or parsimonious in funding for, what its own institution’s colleagues in geography, planning, and economic development offer in computer-generated map production. With government-program maps (e.g. U.S.G.S.) available instantly and without charge on the Internet, and with the easily procured computer skills of geographic information system (GIS) specialists, *Presidio, Mission, and Pueblo* could have easily and inexpensively offered several contextual maps, as well as way-finding directions for heritage tourists.

In other words, if this were a purely academic work, the omission of Mexico physically from its context and discussion should be embarrassing. Conversely, if this were a travel book only for English-speaking U.S. citizens, then maps, contact information, and public-access notes would be essential. As it is, Professor Early’s book is now one of the best and affordable sources for casual students to learn how Spanish ambitions from Florida to California managed both to follow rigid ideals and to produce world-class architecture that survives the ages.

James Wright Steely
Phoenix, Arizona


The author’s intention in this useful book is to explain not HOW Davy Crockett died, but WHY. Winders does this by establishing an historical context in which the loss of the entire Alamo garrison may be understood properly. Eschewing myths of willing sacrifice, he offers instead an integrated political and military analysis of the famous battle and the war in which it took place.
"The Texas Revolution," says Winders (p. 15), "is best understood as an episode that occurred within ... a larger ongoing Mexican civil war." The reader, therefore, is given a brief review of the republican ideologies which motivated both Mexicans and Anglo-Americans early in the nineteenth century, as well as a summary of the military doctrines which both sides utilized to accomplish their goals.

A fateful convergence of political assumption – that Mexican Federalists in the interior would be eager to assist the Texans – and military practice – in the form of undisciplined volunteer citizen-soldiers – produced the stillborn but nevertheless disastrous Matamoros Expedition, which derailed and almost doomed the Texas Revolution. Those who dreamed of capturing Matamoros drained the Alamo of both the men necessary to defend it and the carts and horses necessary to withdraw its formidable ordnance to the east.

The defenders of the Alamo thus fought for symbol rather than substance; had Santa Anna not stopped to destroy them, he could have penetrated the Anglo-Texan colonies even earlier than he did, with his foes utterly disorganized.

Winders' account of the siege and fall of the Alamo is detailed and compelling. However, the Alamo is remembered today because of Santa Anna's subsequent loss at San Jacinto. Unfortunately, like the recent Disney "Alamo" movie, this book's three-and-one-half-page treatment of the Texas Revolution's final phase is both too short and riddled with errors.

James E. Crisp
North Carolina State University

Walker's Texas Division, C.S.A.: Greyhounds of the Trans-Mississippi,

This is a superb account of John G. Walker's Texas Division, known as the Greyhound Division for the speed in which its infantry covered vast distances in the Confederate Trans-Mississippi. The only division in the Civil War that drew all of its regiments (and one battalion) from a single state throughout the war, it was also the largest body of Texans to fight in the war, numbering between 11,500 and 12,000 men, recruited largely in East Texas, when mustered in Confederate service in spring 1862.

Because of the large number of deaths and discharges due to illness and old age, the division was reduced by one-third before it reached its first camps in Arkansas. The division spent much of 1862 and 1863 fighting disease and marching and countermarching through southern Arkansas and Louisiana. Although some regiments took part in engagements with the enemy at Milliken's Bend and Bayou Bourbeau in 1863, the entire division was not in combat until the Battle of Mansfield in April 1864. There, and later at Pleasant
Hill and Jenkins' Ferry, the division distinguished itself as one of the finest fighting units in Confederate service, although it paid a high price in casualties.

In recent years there have been numerous publications describing Civil War regiments and brigades, but surprisingly little study of entire divisions. Consisting usually of four regiments commanded by a general officer, the division was the mainstay of army organization in the major battles of the Civil War. This work is a model of what such studies should be.

Walker's Texas Division, C.S.A., the first scholarly account of the division, represents the finest example of historical research and writing. Making full use of manuscript and published sources, the author, Richard Lowe of the University of North Texas, has written what will be the standard account of Major General John G. Walker and the officers and men who served in the division for many years. In so doing, Professor Lowe has established himself as the premier chronicler and interpreter of the Civil War Arkansas and Louisiana campaigns.

Walker's Texas Division, C.S.A. is a volume that all interested in the Confederate and Texas struggle for independence will want to read and re-read for its insightful analysis of military operations in the Trans-Mississippi.

Ralph A. Wooster
Lamar University


John Lundberg’s The Finishing Stroke: Texans in the 1864 Tennessee Campaign and George Skoch’s and Mark Perkin’s edited Lone Star Confederate: A Gallant and Good Soldier of the Fifth Texas Infantry provide accounts of the service of Texans in both major theatres of action. The efforts and sacrifices of soldiers detail the support that Texas provided the Confederacy, which was out of proportion to its population.

Every McWhiney Press publication is dedicated to a strong narrative. Lundberg’s work, part of the Military History of Texas Series, tells the story of Confederates in the Army of Tennessee. The Finishing Stroke reveals that these Texans and their valor were equal to the better known efforts of those in Hood’s Texas Brigade. The narrative traces the ill-fated campaign of 1864
and, ironically, the poor leadership of John Bell Hood, who was revered by
Texans. Lundberg makes a strong case that the Confederates in the West con­
tinued to fight despite poor leadership, short supplies, and a lack of support
from the central government. Unlike traditional accounts, he concludes that
the soldiers in the army failed to lose their enthusiasm for the war effort.

Robert C. Campbell’s recollections from 1862-1865 also illustrate the
fervor Texans demonstrated for the war effort. Campbell recounts his service
in Hood’s Texas Brigade in a fashion consistent with the Lost Cause school of
interpretation. The work demonstrates that war was muddy, weary, wet, long,
and far removed from Texas. Campbell found war not romantic, though he
valued his service to his country – especially the contributions made at
Second Manassas. Not surprisingly, he also revered both Robert E. Lee and
John Bell Hood not only as fine soldiers but also as role models for the entire
country. Campbell does not criticize the aggressive, even reckless, tactics of
either leader. Instead, he believed the sacrifices made were worthwhile. Most
interesting in his work, however, is his account of his time in a hospital and
on furlough. The work supports the already impressive amount of material on
Hood’s Texas Brigade and is an excellent addition.

Texans contributed the highest percentage of its population to the cause
of independence of any Confederate state. Importantly, Texans served in areas
far removed from their home state, indicating their nationalistic nature. This
nationalism, however, was not shared by many other Confederate states
that opted for a more state-centered approach.

Dallas Cothrum
Dallas, Texas

*Murder and Mayhem: The War of Reconstruction in Texas*, James M.
Smallwood, Barry A. Crouch and Larry Peacock (Texas A&M University
Press, 4354 TAMU, College Station, TX 77843-4354) 2003. Contents.
Illus. Notes. P. 182. $24.95. Hardcover

While the title of this work suggests a statewide occurrence, the authors
have focused on a particular region of North East Texas, the four-corners area
joined by Collin, Grayson, Fannin, and Hunt counties. Here occurred one of
the bloodiest and prolonged post-Civil War feuds in what the authors refer to
as the War of Reconstruction. They contend that the war in the four corners
was but a microcosm of what happened throughout the South and in Texas in
particular.

The contestants in the guerrilla-type warfare were led by Lewis Peacock,
pro-Unionist and Republican, and Bob Lee, ex-Confederate and Democrat.
The fact that one of the authors of *Murder and Mayhem* is a direct descendent
of Lewis Peacock lends a bias to their work.

Historians of this “war” have tended to vilify the Peacock faction and glo-
rify the Lee group. Through this well-researched book, the authors contend that they have “set the record straight.” Or, to quote from p. 134 “…by reex­
amining the Reconstruction era and moving beyond myth and toward truth, their (revisionists) work has not been accepted by those white Southerners who think that the Civil War is still raging and that the South still has a chance to win.”

The authors readily admit that the South won the war of Reconstruction. Further, the book asserts that it was the Ku Klux Klan and terrorists such as the Bob Lee gang that were most responsible for the ultimate Democratic vic­
tory of the Redeemers in Texas.

Perhaps the war still does go on, as the descendants of the Lee-Peacock War view the events of those times of ancestral participation. Who were the good guys and the bad guys in that bloody era will never be identified defin­
itively, but it appears that there were enough bad deeds to go around on both sides.

This book is recommended for genealogists and anyone interested in the history of North East Texas.

Bob Glover
Shiloh Ranch


On June 22, 1940, the French surrendered to Germany and signed an armistice in an historic railway car in Campiegne Forest. Soon after the German Luftwaffe began bombing British airfields and ports. From September 7, 1940, through May 11, 1941, the Germans blasted London nightly.

Before the outbreak of World War II, the British Royal Air Force recog­
nized the need to train their aircrews outside of England in the event of a war. Drawbacks to flight training in Britain during wartime included the abysmal English weather, the limited size of the country, and the possibility of enemy attacks on their airfields.

With the aid of the United States Lend-Lease Act, the Royal Air Force located its principal flight school at Terrell, Texas, a city located thirty miles east of Dallas, Texas, in northern Kaufman County.

The first cadets came to North America aboard converted merchant ships. Others traveled on a luxury liner taken over by the British after the fall of France. Their first embarkation point was Halifax, Nova Scotia. From there they traveled southwesterly to Toronto.
Travel arrangements for the British cadets were crude. A hundred cadets traveled by train from Halifax to Toronto and later to Moncton, New Brunswick. No provisions had been made for food on the trip and the cadets arrived sore, filthy, and hungry. Upon their arrival at Moncton they found that the mess hall had closed. A wise RAF captain opened the kitchen and fed the students.

Upon their arrival in Canada, the British cadets faced an unusual situation. To maintain the appearance of American neutrality they were issued civilian clothing – a grey flannel suit and two pairs of pants. They also applied for a visa in order to enter the United States.

The RAF supply system in Canada suffered some stupefaction. The first cadre of cadets bound for Texas but unaware of their final destination, received an initial issue of thick woolen socks, woolen underwear, a heavy long-sleeve shirt and a small clothing allowance to cover additional items. Cadets were advised to spend this allowance on a heavy overcoat. Most of them followed this advice and arrived in Texas in the summer heat outfitted with woolen underwear and an overcoat.

The first contingent arrived in Dallas, Texas, on June 2, 1941. They arrived before an agreement with the city of Terrell had been completed, before aircraft and equipment had arrived, and before the construction of their facilities had begun.

When the English arrived in Terrell, they were surprised and pleased to find much pro-British sentiment in North Texas. But another matter quickly appeared: the total absence of aircraft, parachutes, equipment, supplies and support facilities at their new school.

The British came with some concern about the quality of the flight school but this was overcome when the U.S. flight staff proved not only experienced, but eager to incorporate RAF training methods into their flight curriculum.

W. G. Tudor
Dallas, Texas


How pleased I am that Doctor McDonald invited me to review this book for the East Texas Historical Journal ... and not alone ... because along with a larger brotherhood, author and Silver Star infantryman Tony Hillerman and I busted a few caps during World War II in Europe.

The book is largely a running commentary by Hillerman wrapped around a series of combat images recorded on camera film by Signal Corps photographer Frank Kessler, now deceased, and rescued by his brother, Leland J. (Lee) Kessler.
The virtue of this outsize book is the verisimilitude recorded by Hillerman, one who was "there," to capture the Kilroy password.

Quoting the author, the dust jacket declares that "No public relations here ... These were up-close snapshots of the dirty, damp and disheveled men in the rifle companies and tank units." For one of the few times in memory, the dust jacket does not overcook the contents.

The irony is that the book was published by an agency of the campus notorious for a riot and subsequent fatal shooting of a number of its students for which the Army got a black eye.

So accurate is Hillman's commentary that I even will forgive him the grunt's belief born of being at the tip of the spear, that we artillerymen were in the rear echelon of the fight.

As a self-serving disclaimer, lest I be thought a shill, I must acknowledge that Hillerman and I have a background which I once described as six degrees of separation.

I am from Shawnee, Oklahoma. He is originally from Sacred Heart, a Citizen Pottawatamic mission which I recently visited, located in the southern reaches of a county given the name Pottawatamic, where I was born. He attended a secondary tribal school of girls, while I attended public schools in Shawnee.

Both of us are University of Oklahoma graduates in journalism. We both worked for small newspapers. And I acknowledge that we shared a platform in 2002 at a Star-Telegram book and author luncheon at the Texas Motor Speedway in Fort Worth after we each had published memoirs the year before.

That said, this is nevertheless a splendid piece of historical authorship for which I will always be grateful to Doctor McDonald and a book which occupies an honored place on my shelves.

Max S. Lafe
Marshall and Fort Worth


Bill O'Neal presents a compelling story in Captain Harry Wheeler: Arizona Lawman, which chronicles the life of Harry Cornwall Wheeler and his impact on law enforcement on the fading American frontier late in the nineteenth and early in the twentieth century. O'Neal states that his inspiration came from reading newspaper accounts of the Arizona Rangers and their adventures in bringing law and order to that state. While researching these articles, O'Neal repeatedly noted mention of Captain Wheeler's reputation as a just and honest man. O'Neal next established contact with the granddaugh-
ter of Captain Wheeler, from whom he obtained excellent information, including letters, diary entries, journals, and stories about the famed lawman.

In the first chapters, O'Neal presents the history of the Wheeler family during the aftermath of the Civil War. From there he tells how Harry Wheeler's father inspired his son to become a soldier in the United States Army and then to follow a career in law enforcement.

O'Neal writes about Wheeler's experiences as a young Arizona lawman and how he became a Ranger. One of the points noted is Wheeler's particular affinity for employing the Colt .45 "Peacemaker" as his weapon of choice, instead of the double-action revolvers of the early twentieth century.

*Captain Harry Wheeler: Arizona Lawman* is an excellent work that presents a concise history of a family on the Arizona frontier and how they lived. The book is filled with photographs, which help the stories "come alive" for the reader. Anyone wishing to learn about law enforcement early in the twentieth century will find this book delightful.

Brandon H. McElroy
Nacogdoches, Texas

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As recipients of both the Texas State Historical Association's Carpenter and the Texas Historical Commission's Fehrenbach awards for best book published on Texas history in 2003, Judith McArthur and Harold Smith present far more than just another biography about a progressive clubwoman turned suffragette. Called "Minnie Fish" by both political enemies and admirers alike, Cunningham was a political insider, an organizer, and an agitator. She helped bring public sewers, clean water, pure milk, hot school lunches, women jurors, and credit and property rights for married women.

Unlike suffragettes who got the vote and lost their quest for extending reforms, Cunningham continued the Progressive crusade until her death in the 1960s. Not a feminist, she opposed the Equal Rights Amendment yet supported "equal pay for equal work." Through the Democrat Party, Cunningham fought the conservative power structure of Texas that exploited race and gender issues, whether the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s and 1930s or "Christian Americans," as they labeled themselves in the 1940s. They called her a communist in the 1950s when she helped found the *Texas Observer* as a critic of "Texas fascists" (p. 169), as Cunningham labeled those who sought to roll back Progressive regulation and New Deal reforms. The daughter of slaveholders seems an unlikely candidate for a lifetime of reform politics, yet the authors of several books on the Progressive movement and suffragists deftly
weave the story of Cunningham's personal life of caring for her family and her private and public fight for social justice.

Linda S. Hudson
East Texas Baptist University


If there is one word that describes this book by Jim Knight with Jonathan Davis, it would be balance. For those looking for answers to the many historical "black holes" of the short-lived gang, this piece is the latest that provides information and rare photos to explain the story. It is also balanced by content, the elimination of the same dry urban legends exploded after the 1967 "Bonnie and Clyde" movie.

This narrative flows smoothly, but does not assume that means a lack of depth. Knight is almost too specific on points to make sure the reader understands completely the situation with limited room for speculation. The use of new information instead of the same rehashed material, the input of oral history by Clyde Barrow's sister, a look at Bonnie Parker's personality metamorphosis, and rarely used photos make this a wonderful read.

Perhaps the strongest attribute to the work is its good endnotes. The writers go out of their way to provide proof as back-up that the story of the Barrow gang was a complex weave of events gone wrong rather than a mindless rampage.

Knight and Davis, two well-regarded experts on Bonnie and Clyde, break new ground here. The dessert of an epilogue that explains what happens to the major players after the ambush of a couple hell-bent for disaster makes the work even better as a guide to those who want to know the aftermath. Enjoy the lives of a "cigar smoking moll" who wasn't, a young man turned a "rattlesnake," and the lawmen who knew they had to kill them. Enjoy Bonnie and Clyde: A Twenty-First-Century Update.

Patrick McConal
Bryan, Texas

Robert H. Thonhoff, author of four books on Spanish colonial Texas, presents a traditional history of Camp Kenedy, Texas, which was located sixty miles southeast of San Antonio. Thonhoff examines the transformation of the camp and the "local, state, national, and international significance" (p. vii) of the camp from its origins as a training camp in World War I to a depression-era CCC camp, and then as an Alien Detention camp, German POW camp, and Japanese POW camp during World War II.

This well-organized work does an excellent job in presenting the information clearly and serves as a good example of the home front in Texas during these times and events. The author provides a balanced approach to understanding the camp by examining its history from the perspectives of every group the camp affected. He gives personal accounts of the men and women who worked at the camp, the prisoners from the nations the U.S. fought in WWII, and the local citizens.

Included with the personal stories are numerous photographs of the camp throughout its history and drawings made by the German POWs. The only significant weakness of the book is the author's quotation of many whole documents in the text. In almost every chapter, Thonhoff quotes consecutively three to four documents with little interpretation in between. The use of these sources in the book is good and strengthens the points he makes, but the text would flow better if Thonhoff had incorporated only the most important sections of the sources.

Overall, this book demonstrates effectively the important role that Camp Kenedy played from WWI to the end of WWII, and I recommend it to anyone interested in the history of small towns in Texas.

Charles D. Grear
Fort Worth, Texas


This skillfully edited collection of oral histories immediately engages the reader with first-person memories of rural Texas communities. The work is based on interviews with fifty-two individuals recalling thirty lost communities displaced in 1942 by the wartime expansion of Fort Hood.
Editor Thad Sitton seeks to get “out of the readers’ way so they could make
direct contact with the primary sources” (p. 13). He is being modest. Much of
the book’s usefulness comes from the thoughtful way this experienced histori­
an moves behind the narratives through selection, categorization, and structure
to set the work’s theses into motion. Each topical chapter begins with a brief
introduction and thereafter the interviewees are uninterrupted. Their recollec­
tions are organized – with a well-read eye – outward from the family and
“homeplace” to the household economy, the institutions of community (church,
school, visiting) to, finally, “modernization and takeover” (p.vii).

Sitton hopes to display the full repertoire of early twentieth-century rural
life. Eschewing nostalgia, he presents memories of neighborly mutuality and
family closeness alongside healthy doses of illness, death, loneliness, conflict
and violence, realities commonplace to twenty-first century readers.
Conversely, Sitton also wants to show contemporary readers how different
rural life was then; in a world of “island communities” (p. 5), where travel
required the muscle of human, horse, or mule, “fifteen miles down the road
was like another land” (p. 3).

*Harder Than Hardscrabble* was written and edited for a popular audi­
ence; nevertheless, this work will prove beneficial to all readers, including
undergraduates, graduates, and working historians. Through the unforgettable
voices of the interviewees, *Harder Than Hardscrabble* manages to convey
both the universal humanity of its storytellers as well as prove Sitton’s point
that “life in the countryside was stranger than we usually think” (p. 13).

Kyle Wilkison
Collin County Community College

Kenneth E. Hendrickson, Jr., Michael L. Collins, and Patrick Cox, editors
(University of Texas Press, P.O. Box 7819, Austin, TX 78713-7819)
$26.95. Paperback.

Transformation dominates the epoch of twentieth-century Texas as per­
haps no other single theme. Whether torturously slow or breathtakingly rapid,
change – demographic, economic, political, and social – refashioned the state
in myriad ways. Throughout it all there was at least one constant: from begin­
ing to end, Texas wielded extraordinary political influence in Washington, D.
C. Utilizing the resources of the federal government, legendary figures such
as John Garner, Sam Rayburn, Jesse Jones, and Lyndon Johnson facilitated
the emergence of modern Texas while simultaneously shaping the policies
and history of the entire nation.

This new edition of *Profiles in Power* provides readers insight into four­
teen such individuals who “made major and sometimes colossal contributions
to the development of the United States" (p. xi). Co-editor Michael Collins readily admits in introductory comments that the list is far from exhaustive and readers may well question the inclusion of some and the exclusion of others. Indeed, the selection of Barbara Jordan seems a stretch given the stated criteria. This collection of character sketches nonetheless makes clear the depth of political talent in the Lone Star State and the magnitude of their impact.

Without question, the surest path to power for Texans of the twentieth century lay in the slow climb up the congressional seniority ladder. The nine examples offered here, ranging from Morris Sheppard to Henry B. Gonzales, averaged nearly thirty-three years on Capitol Hill. Such longevity produced an impressive string of committee chairs, three House speakers, and arguably the most powerful majority leader in Senate history. Appointive office conferred clout upon others. Jesse Jones as head of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation and secretary of commerce helped steer the country through depression and war while George Bush parlayed a string of appointive positions into a successful presidential bid. An anomaly, Colonel Edward House never held an official position in government. As President Woodrow Wilson's informal advisor, he nonetheless helped formulate New Freedom legislation and influenced foreign policy during and immediately following World War I. Irrespective of the route taken or the position occupied, these were figures of immense power who played pivotal roles in the history of both state and nation.

The editors are to be congratulated for bringing forth not just a new but an expanded and improved edition of an existing work. Revision of the chapter on Garner makes clearer his pivotal contributions to the creation of the modern vice presidency while Patrick Cox's recent scholarship updates coverage of Ralph W. Yarborough. Julie Pycior's piece on Henry B. Gonzales is a welcome addition as are new photographs from the Center for American History. Designed as a supplemental reader for collegiate-level courses in history and government, Profiles in Power provides readers, whether students or newcomers to Texas, an excellent introduction to an important slice of our rich political heritage.

L. Patrick Hughes
Austin Community College

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In the fifth book in the Sam Rayburn series of rural life, Myers and Sharpless have documented the history and place of open-country churches in East Texas from the mid-1800s to the present day. What initially appears to be a topic of
rather limited appeal soon develops into an intriguing account of the determination of ethnic groups to maintain a cohesive and distinct regional presence.

Through the church, communities of Mexicans, Czechs, German, and Norwegian emigrants promoted particular language and culture, in addition to providing members with a spiritual and social base. Of particular interest is the description of African American churches, many of which were formed immediately after emancipation. These places of worship offered a relatively safe haven for freedom of expression and provided an opportunity for African American men to develop leadership roles.

Generations belonging to a cotton-crop culture were baptized in the church or buried in the grave-yard, but as technology increased and small family farms were gobbled up into large commercial operations, a sense of ownership of place was lost and many of the churches began to lose their central position of importance in the community.

The text is based on a variety of sources, including church records, oral histories and memoirs. The information is presented in an entertaining, and at times, whimsical manner, and the inclusion of over sixty black-and-white photographs capture the decay and prosperity of these country churches.

Claire Phelan
Fort Worth, Texas


In this slim volume, a man Walter Cronkite called an icon of the profession fires both barrels at the twin ills of influence purchase of politics by the highest bidder and what he sees as the dangerous control of the media by corporate conglomerations. Neither does anything, Moyers insists, for the pursuit of democracy as outlined by the U.S. Constitution. Although the book was written for a national audience, most of the essays are full of references of his East Texas memories and mentors.

Bill Moyers who spent nearly a decade in the inner circle of Washington politics and most of four decades reporting on it, has gathered a number of recent speeches and commentaries into essays on the current condition of the media, the government, and the larger world. Sprinkled throughout are Marshall memories and experiences that still have an impact on Moyers.

One of Moyers’ greatest concerns is for the current condition of the media, particularly the major television networks, now owned by conglomerates that also control a Hollywood studio – ABC by Time Warner which also owns Disney; CBS by Viacom; NBC by General Electric, which also controls Paxton Communications; and Fox by Rupert Murdoch, who also owns 20th Century Fox.
“What difference does it make?” Moyers asks his readers. “For one thing, those conglomerates are interested in profits, not journalism. It is more profitable to cover celebrity lifestyles, murder and mayhem, natural disasters, plane crashes and crime stories than to investigate who is polluting a river, who is getting away with tax breaks, what's happening to education.... Local news is dominated by crime and violence, triviality and celebrity and... in order to feed the bottom line of the media giants that own them, devote more airtime to commercials than to news.”

From his New York office Moyers could see the destruction of the Twin Towers on September 11, 2001. His son-in-law, who worked nearby, saw people leaping from windows to avoid the flames. So Moyers was particularly proud, he said, of the coming-together of the nation after the disaster where the heroes of the hour were the public servants. In an essay called “Which America Will We Be Now?” he writes, Congress failed to respond in kind. Instead, in the weeks after the horrible disaster it restored the three-martini lunch, cut capital gains for the wealthy, and “slipped a special tax break for poor General Electric.”

“Our business and political elites owe us better than this. To hide behind the flag while ripping off the country in crisis fatally separates them from the common course of American life.”

An essay on fellow Texan Lyndon Johnson, “thirteen of the most interesting and difficult men I ever met,” whets the appetite of the political junkie for Moyers’ promised book on his one-time boss. When Moyers announced he would retire from the daily grind of network television following the November elections, he said one of his goals was to write about the Johnson years. Moyers is the only prominent member of the Johnson Administration who has not written a book about LBJ’s political career.

Moyers touched on Johnson’s support for the civil rights of African Americans. Queried by a reporter as to why Johnson, who had never showed much enthusiasm for the protection of civil rights as a congressman or senator, was vigorously pushing passage of the Civil Rights Bill of 1964, Johnson paused for a moment, Moyers said, then replied: “Most of us don’t have a second chance to correct the mistakes of our youth. I do and I am.”

The essay, first delivered as a speech in 1986, also examines Johnson’s domestic policies. A product of the Great Depression and World War II, he remembered homeless men wandering the countryside for food and work. Government was now part of an intricately intertwined economy and a pluralistic society. Somehow it had to all work together for the benefit of everybody, Johnson thought, and he believed his Great Society was the way it could be done.

As he often does, Moyers takes a profound experience in his personal life and expands it into a broadcast story or public speech. So he does in the final essay of Moyers on America, one he calls simply “Aging.” The personal experience was his mother’s death in 1999, three years after suffering a stroke.
"Simply put, I did not know how to help my mother as she was dying."

Filling in that lack of knowledge led not only to this essay but also to his multi-part series on death and dying, "On Our Own Terms."

Gail K Beil
Marshall, Texas


Federal support of the arts proved one of the more controversial aspects of Franklin Roosevelt's response to the Great Depression. In particular, conservatives such as Congressman Martin Dies of Orange savaged the Works Progress Administration's Federal One program for its purported radicalism and propaganda efforts on behalf of the New Deal. Whether because of the more mainstream values it espoused or its less partisan operation within the Treasury Department, the Public Works of Arts Project (PWAP) ruffled few feathers during its decade of existence. The murals it commissioned for newly constructed post office facilities across the nation provided desperately needed work for artists such as Tom Lea, Howard Cook, and Jerry Bywaters while simultaneously bringing art out of museums to the general public. Seven decades later, the paintings, the majority of which remain on public display, provide a fascinating glimpse into the depression era and how people reacted to hard times.

Potential purchasers of Philip Parisi's _The Texas Post Office Murals_ should not mistake it as simply a book for the coffee table, a collection of pretty pictures and little else. While the color photography of the almost seventy Texas murals is exquisite and exceptionally well presented, Parisi provides far more. Systematic examination of PWAP records in the National Archives enables the author to relate the artists' intentions, their use of symbolism, the cost of their pieces, as well as the reactions of the people for whom their art was intended. Of critical import to students of the Depression experience in Texas, Parisi makes clear throughout the volume the messages the government wished the murals to convey. Historical themes "fulfilled the psychological need for stability and continuity" in an age when everything seemed to have gone wrong" (p. 8). Images of Texans at work cultivating fields, herding cattle, processing timber, and drilling for oil were meant to assure citizens that the state's economic potential was limitless, guaranteeing a bright future once the aberration of depression passed.

_The Texas Post Office Murals_ is a handsome piece of work from both artistic and historical perspectives. While not inexpensive, readers will find it a bargain at the purchase price and a valuable addition to their libraries.

L. Patrick Hughes
Austin Community College

No dictionary has every word any person would ever want to find; hence, the need for specialized dictionaries, such as encyclopedic, historical, and special-vocabulary dictionaries. Vocabulario Vaquero combines a couple of these types to offer a handy resource for anyone interested in the American West. Many specialized dictionaries feature only selected word listings and brief or comparative definitions, omitting pronunciation keys, etymologies, or other useful tools found in "standard" dictionaries. These types of supplements, however, make Smead's work perhaps the most thorough reference for anyone interested in Spanish terms related to ranching and cowboys.

Richard W. Slatta's Foreword is particularly beneficial in that it contains a fairly comprehensive history of scholarship on ranching and the cultural history of the American West, thereby providing a good working bibliography on the topic. He explains why the Spanish influence in such studies previously has been ignored, due to racism, the lack of official records during the early ranching era, and the fact that many Latin American cowhands were illiterate. Slatta justifies the value of Smead's work, especially because it provides the "linguistic evidence" that proves "the significance and primacy of Spanish origins of the western range cattle industry..." (xvii).

Smead describes his method of selecting words in his Introduction. He gives an overview of linguistic borrowings, with a brief explanation of Saussure's theory of linguistic signs, discusses the dictionary's contents, and includes a chart that describes phonetic symbols, a list of sources and their abbreviations, and a detailed sample entry. Some readers will never use any of this information, but it is nice to have, and Smead cites these features' significance and explains them clearly.

Smead clarifies the scope of his work in the Introduction, stating that he includes only cowboy and ranch terms that come from Spanish, although some words have filtered through Spanish from other languages. He includes many uncommon words: while remuda may be familiar to most people, cavvy probably is not. The print is clear, and Ronald Kil's illustrations are excellent. Overall, this dictionary is limited but focused, and it is an essential resource for anyone who reads extensively about the American West.

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