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Book Reviews

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**Book Reviews**


*Peg Leg* is a riveting account of the life and times of Thomas William Ward, a celebrated hero of the Texas Revolution. Born in Ireland, Ward traveled to North America in the late 1820s, stopping first at Quebec and later at the port of New Orleans where he became a hardworking construction worker and commercial contractor. Similar to many unmarried young men living in Louisiana when the Texas Revolution erupted, Ward left for Texas seeking fame and fortune. Unfortunately, he was severely wounded at the Battle of San Antonio. Following “Old Ben” Milam into the city, Ward was hit with a Mexican cannon shot which shredded his right leg. Doctors were left with no choice—they had to amputate Ward’s leg in hopes of saving his life. The revolutionary soldier survived his injury to become a noted hero of the Texas independence movement, thus beginning his improbable, but extraordinary, public career.

Ward’s public career spanned more than three decades and included a wide-ranging number of official duties. Not only was he a military officer, Ward also served three terms as the mayor of Austin, received a presidential appointment as U.S. Consul to Panama, and served as a U.S. Customs officer in Corpus Christi. However, it was his service as the Texas Land Commissioner during the 1840s that made Ward famous among prominent Texans, including men like Sam Houston. During the years of the Republic and early statehood, Ward streamlined the Land Office daily activities, putting a system into place that regulated the granting of land titles to newly arriving immigrants who traveled to Texas seeking free lands.

Though examining the more favorable public career of Ward, Humphrey also examines the darker side of the Texas hero’s personality. Following his wartime experience in
the Texas Revolution, Ward apparently suffered symptoms similar to post traumatic stress disorder that affect modern combat veterans. During most of his adult life, the Texas hero exhibited a hair-trigger temper, an inclination to violent behavior, and marital discord. Adding to his mental anguish, Ward lost his right arm in a tragic accident while firing a cannon during a celebration in Austin that commemorated Texas independence. Because of his personality traits, Ward’s wife, Susan, eventually left him, seeking a divorce based on accusations of verbal, psychological, and physical abuse. Susan’s battle to free herself from her accused tormentor played out in the courts of New York and Texas for more than 13 years and only concluded with the death of her infamous husband in 1872. Regardless of his personal troubles, many of Ward’s contemporaries continued to view him as a famous hero who had sacrificed his leg for Texas Independence.

Humphrey provides readers with a fascinating and informative biography of Thomas William Ward, but the author also reveals a great deal about nineteenth-century Texas. It was a land for white men, providing few rights to women and children. As the case of Susan Ward testifies, women trapped in unhappy marriages had little legal recourse. Even those who did seek divorce had to fight an uphill battle in the courts and often found the legal fight too much to endure.

This book is well written and conceived, and the author should be applauded for his efforts to provide a balanced view of Thomas William Ward. This is a must read for anyone wanting to know more about one Texan’s odyssey in history, beginning with the Texas Revolution and extending through the years of Reconstruction.

Kenneth W. Howell
Prairie View A&M University

When I was a kid, my grandfather used to tell me stories about when Bonnie and Clyde came through Johnson County, Arkansas, about the time "Pretty Boy" Floyd stopped at my grandfather’s Uncle Alf’s café for dinner one Sunday evening in Clarksville, and about the times Ma Barker and her boys would stop at my great-grandfather’s diner in Lamar. I always enjoyed my grandfather’s stories because they were personal, eye-witness accounts, and I grew up with a sort of awe of those famous gangsters. Then, in 1967, the movie *Bonnie and Clyde* hit the theaters, and I remember spending an entire Saturday at the downtown theater. Over the years, I collected and read several books about Bonnie and Clyde, but all of them varied in how they described their lives and exploits; each story differed based on who told it. But now, the definitive and authoritative story of Bonnie and Clyde is finally told.

*Go Down Together: The True, Untold Story of Bonnie and Clyde*, by Fort Worth author Jeff Guinn, is probably the best book written about the pair of outlaws. It is hard to imagine a book better documented and annotated than this one. While previous books relied on single sources and were factually inaccurate, Guinn cross-checked his facts with various sources in the attempt to be as accurate as possible. Therefore, the story he tells is well documented. The author includes fifty-eight pages of endnotes and a sixteen-page bibliography that includes a variety of sources, including interviews with surviving family members and eye-witnesses, newspaper and magazine articles, and previously published books. In addition, Guinn acquired access to some unpublished manuscripts, and he personally visited all the locations where Bonnie and Clyde were known to have been.

Guinn not only makes an impressive effort to get his facts right; he’s also an excellent storyteller. As a journalist, he has developed a reporter’s eye for detail, and yet he can tell the story with a conversational style that makes it a compelling read. Some reviews have criticized Guinn’s book as too sympathetic to the couple, but I don’t agree with that assessment. Guinn has told a story so rich in detail and so personal that the individuals become personal to the reader. After reading the chapter about the ambush in which Bonnie and Clyde were killed, I set the book down — and I probably
shouldn’t say this – but I cried. Yeah, these two people were murderers and they got what was coming to them, but Guinn has written such an excellent description of their lives, I felt I had grown to know Bonnie and Clyde personally, and I was disappointed to see them die. That, in my opinion, is the mark of a really good writer.

The story of Bonnie and Clyde is a classic one of love, devotion, murder, revenge, and betrayal. Jeff Guinn has masterfully pieced together the facts for the reader to experience the lives of Bonnie and Clyde and the numerous tragedies their lives produced. The 1967 movie is still fun to watch, but *Go Down Together* is more interesting than any fictional Hollywood movie could ever hope to be.

Mike Lantz
Tyler, Texas


“He knew things about the game of baseball that I had never even thought about.” This statement was made by Hall of Fame third baseman Brooks Robinson in his Foreword to Warren Corbett’s biography of baseball genius Paul Richards, *The Wizard of Waxahachie*.

Paul Rapier Richards was born in 1908 in Waxahachie. As a boy he became captivated by baseball, playing and practicing endlessly. At Waxahachie High School he starred on a succession of state championship teams. Tall and lanky, he was a fine hitter, fielder, and able to pitch with either hand.

At the age of seventeen Richards signed a contract with Brooklyn, and he would spend the next sixty years in professional baseball. His big league career was limited to eight seasons by a weak bat, but he became a fine, intelligent catcher with a rifle arm. Richards played with Brooklyn, the New York Giants, the Philadelphia Athletics, Detroit, and with minor league clubs all over the country. As a minor
leaguer Richards often was an elite player, and with the world championship Detroit Tigers in 1945, he starred in the World Series.

In the minor leagues Richards became a player-manager, and he began his major league managerial career with the 1951 Chicago White Sox. He drilled his players ceaselessly, often ordering post-game practices to work on costly mistakes. Although he stressed fundamentals, he was an innovative tactician who employed an occasional trick play. Richards was the first manager to compile the statistic that became known as On-base Percentage. He excelled at developing young players, especially pitchers, but the taciturn Texan generated little warmth. Umpires rejected him from games with frequency, and he was called "Popoff Paul." Throughout his career as a manager and club executive, he displayed an eye for young talent. With Baltimore in the 1950s, for example, he groomed future superstar Brooks Robinson; two decades later young manager Tony La Russa became one of the last protégés of Richards.

Throughout his nomadic baseball career, Richards maintained his home in Waxahachie alongside his wife Margie and daughter Paula (another daughter, Lou, died of a congenital heart condition at five). Richards was an excellent golfer, often hustling unsuspecting opponents.

Warren Corbett, author of several other baseball books, has captured the irascible, complex "Wizard of Waxahachie" with exhaustive research and a deft command of the national pastime during the long career of Paul Richards. Corbett’s biography, subtitled Paul Richards and The End of Baseball as We Knew It, is an engaging account of an important era in baseball history and of the Texan who was a key participant.

Bill O’Neal
Panola College

*J. Frank Dobie: A Liberated Mind* by Steven L. Davis (University of Texas Press, P.O. Box 7819, Austin, TX 78713), 2009. Acknowledgements. Notes. Selected Bibliography. Index. P. 296. $24.95 Hardcover.
I hope that my generation is still qualified to evaluate the writings of J. Frank Dobie—and the writings of later generations about J. Frank Dobie. For many of us who grew up in the 1930s and ‘40s, Dobie was our literary hero. I read *Vaquero* and *Coronado's Children* and *Longhorns* when I was in my teens. Those works, and his short tale collections, contained some of the most exciting and readable stories that I had hitherto encountered, and I considered Frank Dobie to be classic. I was therefore conditioned at an early age as a Dobie fan.

Thus was my mind boggled, as it frequently is of late, by a recent visit of two young Austin citizen-historians who were researching Nacogdoches history. We were discussing Texas history generally, and I said something about Dobie. They did not know him. I asked them if they knew Walter Prescott Webb; no, they didn’t. Bedichek? Never heard of him. They vaguely remembered seeing the bronze of the bathers at Barton Springs but had not an inkling of who they were or what they represented. Water sprites, maybe? Nor had they heard of the Armadillo World Headquarters or Threadgill’s. I was afraid to ask them about The Broken Spoke, The Tower, or the state capitol. I waved them back to Austin in a mild state of academic despair.

I believe that it was time to bring out another book about J. Frank Dobie, and maybe a resurrection of interest in his writing. And getting around to this review, I think that Steven Davis did an excellent job of research and writing *Liberated Mind*. It was an easy and an interesting read, and when I put the book down I was anxious to get back to it. I was impressed with the way that Davis blended contemporary social and political history with Dobie’s biography and Dobie’s writing. That was the focus of Davis’s approach: *Liberated Mind* is the story of Dobie’s growth from a regional chauvinist to universalist and a social liberal in response to his encounters in his world.

Most of Dobie’s popular writings are those that are close to his life in the Brush Country of South Texas. *Vaquero of the Brush Country*, *Coronado's Children*, and *The Longhorns* are the kinds of books that made Dobie “Mr. Texas” up through the Texas Centennial years. But during the late 1930s and through the 1940s Dobie began to grow from a Tex-Mex focus to a consideration of national problems and policies that eventually took him far left of
his state's political center. His growth was accelerated by his year of teaching at Cambridge in '43 and '44 and another year abroad teaching for the U. S. Army in Europe.

When he returned to Texas, he became immediately embroiled in University politics, and he found himself on the political far left in most matters. He sided with the liberal U.T. President Homer Rainey against the conservative Board of Regents—and was ultimately fired from The University as a result. He clashed with state senators, with the governor of Texas, and made the FBI listing during the McCarthy era. He achieved his greatest notoriety when he gave support to certain trade unions and when he championed the integration of The University of Texas at a time when Texas and the rest of the nation was still dragging its segregationist feet.

Dobie continued to write about the things of his beloved Texas and the Southwest, about mustangs and coyotes and rattlesnakes, but his mind and his life had moved on to an expanded vision of his social and political world.

A rash of Dobie detractors sprang up about a generation after his death in 1964. Most of their criticism centered around his trumpeting regionalism, and certainly he could be a Texas braggart, and egregious faults remain in his writing. But, of all his critics not a one of them has produced as much significant writing, has preserved as much history and folklore, has written as cleanly and clearly and vividly, or has had as much political and social influence as Dobie had in his prime.

Steven Davis treats Frank Dobie even handedly throughout Liberated Mind. He recognizes Dobie's faults and failures, his humanity, as well as his virtues and his triumphs. He gives Dobie a reality and depth of character that makes me want to go back and read more by Dobie and about Dobie. Hopefully Liberated Mind will create a renaissance and will help get a new generation interested in one of Texas' most influential writers and political figures.

Dare I quibble? The picture of Frank Dobie on the dust jacket is not going to sell any books.

F. E. Abernethy
Stephen F. Austin State University
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Remember the Apaches resonates throughout William Carter’s book _Indian Alliances and the Spanish in the Southwest_, from their migration out of the Rocky Mountains to intimate kinship and trade ties with the Pueblos of New Mexico that endured long before and after the arrival of the Spaniards. The Apaches emerge from the shadows to the extent that they played a “pivotal role” (p. 195) in Native resistance to Spanish occupation culminating with the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. If an empire cannot be ascribed to the rise of the Apaches in the Southwest, as in the case of the Comanche later, then it is because Carter shows that the very core of Apache power and identity remained dependent upon their continual cultural adaptation to other peoples and environmental changes.

Dramatic transformations developed on both sides of the Atlantic as the Apaches and their distant cousins, the Navajos, settled into the Southwest. The Little Ice Age (around 1300 AD) and drought propelled the migration of Native Americans in search for warmer climes while competition for fewer resources led to incessant warfare as evidenced in Puebloan rock art and kiva murals. Carter favors the interpretation of scholars that view Apache-Puebloan relations as alternately hostile and long-standing alliances, dismissing the nutritional dependency alternative view. There is also evidence indicating vast interregional links with central Mexico through trade goods and ball courts just as the Aztecs settled into their final destination at Tenochtitlan in present Mexico City. Meanwhile, similar challenges faced Europeans across the Atlantic as crop failure, famine, plagues, and abandonment of farms brought disparate peoples into endemic warfare. Combined with the Renaissance and new discoveries, Europeans’ search for resources and land overseas fueled the expansion of trade, cities, regional centers, and a renewed spirit in Providence.

These crosscurrents of regional and global developments
climax in the late seventeenth century as the Spanish empire encountered stiff resistance from long standing pre-European trade and interpersonal relationships in North America. Although the author himself acknowledges that his work offers no new evidence to an ever-impressive body of recent historical scholarship, he does remind the reader of the significance Apaches had as the first great barrier against the expansion of Spanish colonization northward from Mexico, upon whose foundation rose subsequent contenders to the Southwest and Southern Plains. Carter also explicitly aims to dispel the prevalent notion among historians and anthropologists that the Apaches were “inherently belligerent marauders” (p. 139), which obscures their ascendancy in the Southwest as part of a much more complicated story over the previous millennia. Simply put, the Apaches aligned their interests principally with the Pueblos against Spanish domination of New Mexico and helped the former cast off the yoke of tyranny. However, Carter reveals that the traditional pattern of relations from friend to foe also worked against the unity that Apaches, Pueblos, and Navajos once shared. Further environmental changes, drought, and increased competition for resources once again fueled conflict, especially as the taking of captives and factionalism on both sides seemingly witnessed no end.

Cultural assimilation and identity are secondary issues that Carter infuses with the demographic, economic, political and ideological changes, calling to mind diverse origins of societies pulled in so many directions. For example, the author shows that Eastern Apaches, in particular the Lipan, appeared as the dominant force in Texas during the early 1700s based upon various influences from the Puebloan and European worlds which included irrigation methods, weapons, clothing, trinkets, and “Mexican-style tamales” (p. 208) in exchange for bison products and captives. Their remarkable equestrian abilities in the adaptation to the horse and the slave trade took them to the apex of power on the eve of the Comanche rise to empire. The author leaves the reader wanting to learn more about this complex process of cultural change and resistance that is otherwise absent from the records. Nonetheless, Carter’s narrative is a pleasant read and
wonderful synthesis that places Indian relations and the Spanish presence in the Southwest within a broader timeline and geography. His fresh perspective helps us understand that there are no simple explanations for the rise and fall of nations.

Francis X. Galán
Our Lady of the Lake University


We are fortunate that military historian Charles M. Robinson III accepted the challenge of editing and annotating the large assortment of writings by General John Gregory Bourke. Certainly many military leaders of the 19th century kept a diary or a journal, but General Bourke may have established a record in the field of autobiographical writings. Robinson has edited and annotated the 124 manuscript volumes and several sub-volumes, the originals of which are now archived in the U.S. Military Academy Library in West Point. The diaries begin with Bourke's entry as a cavalry lieutenant in 1872 and conclude the evening before his death on June 8, 1896.

During part of those years Bourke was an aide-de-camp to Brig. Gen. George Crook, a position in which he observed many significant events in the history of the Indian wars: the Apache campaigns, the Sioux Wars, the Cheyenne outbreak and the last war against Geronimo. He worked with or became acquainted with a host of important figures besides General Crook; he was comfortable with men such as General W.T. Sherman, Dr. V.T. McGillicuddy, General G.A. Forsyth, President Rutherford B. Hayes, and General Nelson A. Miles.

The honest appraisal of these icons of American history is revealing. Of General Miles, Bourke recorded: "He is ignorant; almost illiterate, owing to the lack of early education, but he reads a great deal and is doing all he can to
remove or conceal his deficiencies” (p. 216). To the historian, diaries provide, by their very nature, an honest accounting as perceived by the diarist. This would be opposite of what a public statement would normally be. There was no “spin” in Bourke’s personal diaries.

Bourke experienced and wrote about many of the significant events of the changing American frontier from the Civil War to nearly the end of the century. In this volume alone he expressed and wrote about the Ute country, the region now known as Yellowstone National Park, Fort Niobrara of Nebraska, and his summons to Washington, D.C. to confer with the Ponca Commission. Perhaps most important in this volume, outside the military contribution, is his work in ethnology. A third of this work deals with that aspect of his career.

The diaries, of course, reveal much about the man himself as well as his perception of historical events. Bourke was meticulous and observant. Virtually any time he was introduced to a lady of any social standing, he noted her physical attractiveness, or lack of same. His July 3, 1880 entry describes an excursion on a Nebraska train in which “Bright Eyes,” the daughter of a chief, is noted as “a pretty Ponca Indian lady” (p.17). In his October 29, 1880 entry, he noted “a beautiful Irish girl scrubbing the floor,” but his sketch of this lady belies anything but ugliness to our modern idea of feminine beauty (p.119). Bourke also shared his sense of humor with his journals.

The diaries reveal minutiae which may cause a casual reader to skim passages, but he also relates bits of humor which a careful reader may appreciate even today. We recommend larger illustration reproductions in the remaining volumes; most in this volume are not much larger than a commemorative postage stamp. Most readers will prefer larger reproductions.

This is volume 4 of a projected eight volumes from the University of North Texas Press. Each of the three sections in this volume, “More Staff Duties,” “The Ponca Question Continues,” and “The Bureau of Ethnology” is preceded with an explanatory background section by Robinson that introduces the reader to the subsequent section. This is helpful to the reader who may not have a deep understanding of the
period Bourke describes. Robinson has established himself as one of the leading authorities of Western Americana history.

Chuck Parsons
Luling, Texas


The story of our nation's settlement of the American West is an expansive one, most often told on a grand scale. More than half of the United States lies west of the Missouri River. From Kansas City and Fort Leavenworth, tens of thousands of people and wagons moved west into difficult conditions. To examine that history in the second half of the nineteenth century generally requires a broad perspective. As an alternative to that approach, Fort Laramie: Military Bastion of the High Plains allows the reader to select a point along one of the primary migration routes and watch that rich history pass through.

The author, a former historian for the National Park Service, has a remarkable access to detailed historical records of the fort, and uses those to create a well-documented military history of a key military installation. Anyone whose interests lie in understanding the role of the military in the expansion of the American West will no doubt find this work to be exceptional. Fort Laramie, Wyoming, remains a significant national landmark and interpretive site. However, to look at this work solely as a military history would miss an even richer accomplishment as a lens focused on the lives of the people who were involved.

What Fort Laramie presents in an exceptionally intriguing and complete way are the dramatic social and cultural upheavals that affected both the immigrants who believed the west was their destiny as well as the Native American cultures that relied on the land for their physical survival. The lives of the people whose histories coincide with that of Fort Laramie
are presented with a level of detail that is both complete and compelling. The pendulum of change in policies toward the Indians between trade and treaty and annihilation and expulsion swings back and forth several times during the time period when Fort Laramie was a focal point, roughly 1850-1890. The difficulties of harsh winters, the cycles of thefts and abuses, the tensions of trade and commerce, and the horrors of massacre and retaliation provide a level of emotion to this work that adds significantly to the value of this work.

One scene (p. 231) more than any other summed up the history of the west of which Fort Laramie was a part. In 1865, after years of conflict, a decision was made to remove Indians from the region around the fort. The exodus that followed was like a parade-ground review of time. Led by a makeshift, post-war cavalry, over 2,000 Sioux led their horses, dogs, and travois pulling their supplies. With trading partners leaving, white traders were also in the entourage, pulling twenty-one wagons of supplies and herding fifty head of cattle. Under guard of both the soldiers and an Indian policing party were four Ogala prisoners, physically and symbolically bound by chains.

With its rich detail, exceptional research, and well-written narrative, *Fort Laramie* is a milestone of achievement not only as a military history but as a cultural snapshot of westward migration.

Gary Pinkerton
Silsbee, Texas


*Red Light Women of the Rocky Mountains* is Jan MacKell’s second contribution to the historiography of prostitution in the mountainous region of the American West. Jan MacKell possesses a sustained enthusiasm regarding the history of prostitution in the American West. Her love for the subject
matter and desire to unearth the stories of women occupied by what was none other than the first formal profession open to women of the region remains unmasked throughout the work. The audience for the book, as identified by Tom Noel, who authored the foreword, is the general public. Noel regards MacKell’s work as a “popular, narrative history that will not bore readers” (xiv). In addition to a readable prose, MacKell includes several photographs of her subjects, remarking that she “selected every single one of them because she was special in some way” (xviii).

Although MacKell offers a readable narrative about a subject which draws popular as well as academic interest, the work is based largely upon secondary sources with only minimal primary source references. Also, MacKell utilizes some sources deemed by most professional historians as unacceptable for student research papers, such as online encyclopedias. Additionally, MacKell’s thesis offers nothing new, as she asserts that her goal is simply to “give a good understanding of” the industry, something which professional historians Glenda Riley and Anne Butler have previously achieved based upon primary source research. The strength of MacKell’s contribution may be in her focus on the states touched by the Rocky Mountains: Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming.

Tiffany Fink
Hardin-Simmons University


This book by Mark Lee Gardner is as complete in its coverage of this era in western history as I have ever read. The author presents the story in a very engaging, complete, and readable manner. I have read the long and short versions of the Billy the Kid saga from many authors with just as many viewpoints but have never found one as enjoyable
or informative. Frederick Nolan's *The Lincoln County War* is more complete in its coverage of the subject but not as readable, while other accounts have tended to either glamorize or villainize the central character of Billy the Kid, depending on the author's particular bias. Some have entirely missed the mark. Not true with Gardner.

I have personally done a great deal of research on Billy the Kid and Garrett at the Haley Memorial Library in Midland, Texas with perhaps the idea of preparing a manuscript on some aspect of the subject in the future. Gardner's research is obviously prolific and comprehensive as he and I have treaded in many of the same "tracks." He did well in explaining the early background of Billy and Garrett. His explanation for the reasons as well as the events leading up to the Lincoln County War is fundamentally sound. The financial aspects and political control questions within the factional dispute are both obvious and quite complex, and Gardner aptly examines all aspects. He also provides the reader with the specific details about the geography and sheer physical size of Lincoln County, a quality that keenly enhances the work.

Gardner's treatment not only of the major events in the saga, but also the little known aspects of the capture, the escape, and the ultimate killing of Billy are outstanding. His account also describes location and condition of the graves of John Tunstall and Alexander McSween, something I have not seen in other accounts. Such inclusion is impressive; the graves are in an obscure location behind the current Lincoln Village Museum which I discovered only by accident on a trip to the area fifteen years ago. As is usual when I read chronicles of Billy the Kid, the relative youth of the central characters is amazing to me, particularly since popular culture so often portrays Tunstall and McSween as so much older than they truly were. William Bonney's age is well documented, but John Tunstall was only twenty-five when he was killed, and Alexander McSween was only a decade older.

Gardner also carried the saga further than most with his account of Pat Garrett's life and death years after killing Billy the Kid. His ambitions were never realized as he died broke and in debt, and his murderer or murderers were never convicted. I would recommend this book to all who would want to learn more about Billy, Garrett, and the Lincoln
County War.

Winston Sosebee
Midland, Texas


In Rocky Mountain Heartland: Colorado, Montana, and Wyoming in the Twentieth Century, preeminent Western historian Duane Smith argues that the vast region stretching along the length of the Rocky Mountains marks "the West of the most modern of American places" and at the same time marks the "West of hallowed traditions and captivating heritage." These opposing forces of tradition and modernization not only shaped the histories of Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana during the twentieth century but also provide a greater insight into the emergence of the Modern American West. In ten short chapters, Rocky Mountain Heartland broadly chronicles the history of the three states during the twentieth century. While Smith uses broad strokes to tell his tale, he successfully provides readers with a deeper understanding of the forces that shaped the region throughout the century by placing them in a larger national context. From the Ludlow Massacre in 1914, to the boom in tourism following World War II, to the growing fight over water between urban and rural regions within each state at the century's end, Smith articulates how events in each state both reflected the internal struggles between tradition and modernization while reflecting larger national trends. It is this placing of Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana into a larger context that is the strength of Rocky Mountain Heartland. While rather general at times, such an approach underlines the importance of the transformation of this once isolated region and demonstrates the increasingly complex nature of the American West during the twentieth century.

Michael Childers, ABD
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Black Mexico is neither ground-breaking nor innovative, but it is essential. Edited by two of the most prominent and productive scholars on people of African descent in Mexico, this volume is required for any scholar of the African global diaspora or the question of African identity in the Americas.

The core of this work lies in the well-crafted introduction by Ben Vinson III as well as the six ensuing essays on the colonial experience of blacks in Mexico. Vinson’s introduction lays out the major historiographic questions in a manner accessible to U.S. scholars who may be unfamiliar with the topic of Africans in Mexico. Indeed, Vinson’s introduction in conjunction with Frank Proctor’s essay on slave rebellions and Vinson’s own internal contribution on the daily routine of African labor are ideal selections for those interested in comparative slavery. While the majority of comparative literature focuses on Cuba, Hispaniola, or Brazil, these essays remind scholars that the United States was not alone in the expansive use of African slavery in North America.

However, the editors do not limit themselves to contributions on slavery. Andrew B. Fischer’s essay on the Free-Black experience in south-eastern Mexico draws readers’ attention to the power seized by black’s in shaping their own world as well as the limitations of racial prejudice as they balanced between hostile Spanish ranchers and abusive indigenous communities. Nevertheless, Pat Carroll avoids a stereotype of Black-Indian violence with his essay on Africans that found refuge in Indian society, especially as Indian villages faced a demographic collapse due to illness and disease.

On a lighter note, Joan Bristol and Matthew Restall’s essay on “Love-Magic in the Seventeenth-Century” is at once entertaining and enlightening. An examination of magic – from potions of chocolate and menstrual blood to amulets of power – this final essay amplifies the growing literature
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on African-Indigenous relations in the Americas through the language of pharmacopeia and magic.

More problematic is the second half of the collection. Rushing over independence and, indeed, the entirety of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (including the Mexican Revolution), the reader is left wondering if Afro-Mexicans simply packed up and left the country for 200 years. This omission is made most glaring in the essay of Alva Moore Stevenson who briefly mentions her own African American father’s service during the Mexican Revolution and his gradual conversion to an Afro-Mexican identity – an anecdote which cries out to scholars to investigate further the role of blacks in the first great social revolution of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, the twenty-first century reflections of anthropologists, Afro-Mexicans, and advocates of Afro-Mexican human rights found in section two are both interesting and valuable. Course instructors in modern Mexican history, African Diaspora, or cultural anthropology will find the writing accessible to undergraduates while their content invites interesting comparisons to questions of race in the United States – particularly those essays on discrimination and identity.

*Black Mexico* is a collection of interesting, well structured essays that are brief and direct and should find a home on the shelves of scholars interested in questions of multi-racial societies. And while peripheral areas to Latin America such as Texas bear no mention in this collection, the question of Black / Latino interaction in Texas certainly deserves greater attention, and *Black Mexico* serves as a functional model for that investigation.

Jason Dormady
Stephen F. Austin State University

Building on the research of historians Barry A. Crouch, James M. Smallwood, Thad Sitton, and James H. Conrad, Michelle M. Mears pieces together a comprehensive examination of the freedmen towns of Austin, Texas. After the Civil War and during Reconstruction, freedmen received provisions to settle and farm land, obtain an education, establish schools, and the like via the Freedmen's Bureau Acts of 1865.

Mears argues freedmen towns in the Austin area developed as a response to the “polite” racism that continued after the war. Similar to the freedmen colonies that developed in Nacogdoches and Angelina Counties, freedmen in Austin established communities away from the whites. In Austin, blacks were forced to the margins of the city, especially East Austin. Mears also argues that Austin's freedmen communities eventually crumbled and demised due to the passage of a bill by the Texas Legislature in 1928. The aim of said bill was to effectively segregate all freedmen to East Austin.

As was the case for a majority of freedmen towns in East Texas (as well Georgia, Kentucky, and Alabama), freedmen communities in Austin created a social network of towns. However, even though blacks were free, they still faced many of the same pre-Civil War social, living, and working conditions. Sharecropping developed as the primary labor system, but blacks did not automatically accede to this system and instead pooled money to buy land for general stores, churches, schools, and similar institutions.

According to Mears, a handful of freedmen communities existed in Austin from just before the end of the Civil War through the 1930s and 1940s and included Clarksville, Wheatville, Pleasant Hill, Robertson Hill, and Gregorytown. Freedmen kept completely away from whites when possible and usually made contact only when selling wares at market. Otherwise, blacks stayed within their enclaves and created a friendly group environment in which items were borrowed as needed and paid back when convenient. Freedmen entertained themselves by competing in footraces, playing baseball, and watching public hangings. Within these communities, blacks also resorted to the most basic Western medical care or West African-derived healthcare methods. The Church provided the most important aspect of life in Austin’s freedmen
communities because it acted as a haven for both religious and secular matters such as funerals, schools, and town meetings. Mears notes that many churches constructed during this time period still stand today around Austin, especially in East Austin.

The freedmen communities in Austin eventually fell apart and became deserted in the mid-1920s, and culminated with the legislative measures to segregate blacks into one area of the city. Other factors that affected the seclusion and elimination of freedmen towns was an influx of Mexican American immigrants from south Texas, combined with the fact that blacks had begun the natural process of moving to different locations either within the city or state.

Mears masterfully employs primary sources from government reports and documents, personal correspondences between freedmen, writings from the founders of these communities like the Reverend Jacob Fontaine, James Wheat, the Mason Brothers, and interviews from the W.P.A. Project in the 1930s. Mears's uses excellent secondary sources such as Crouch's *The Freedmen's Bureau and Black Texans* and Sitton and Conrad's *Freedom Colonies: Independent Black Texans in the Time of Jim Crow*.

Mears offers a rich amount of fresh research in the form of a valuable case study in freedmen town history. The language is clear, concise, and easy to follow; the narrative is succinctly organized and reads smoothly. Mears uses illustrations without inundating the reader with too much information too quickly. In particular, the chapter organization is nicely condensed and easily manageable, impressive considering the topic. Any scholar or student of history will find Michelle Mears's book both enlightening and entertaining and a valuable addition to bookshelves and further research projects.

Nathan Copling
Wright City, Missouri


For years baseball historians have explored African American participation in the national pastime. The primary focus has been upon the Negro Leagues and such stars as Satchel Paige, Josh Gibson, Rube Foster, and other gifted players. Now, however, Texas Tech University has produced two books that reveal a more common and widespread African American baseball experience, with Texas as the focal point of each study. African American minor league and semi-professional clubs, although less well-funded and organized than their white counterparts, played before enthusiastic and fun-loving crowds, providing a sporting experience that was universal in African American communities, large or small.

League records and statistics, box scores and game stories, were not often kept systematically, while oral history has centered on Negro League superstars. But Ron Fink painstakingly combed old newspapers and every conceivable archive to reconstruct African American baseball in Texas. Playing in Shadows is a welcome compilation of information about barnstorming semi-pro teams in Texas, city league clubs, and the Texas-Oklahoma-Louisiana League. Baseball greats from Texas included Rube Foster, father of the Negro National League; Willie Foster, the best southpaw pitcher in Negro League history; Smokey Joe Williams, dominant power pitcher of the Negro Leagues; Willie Wells, best shortstop in the Negro Leagues during the 1930s and 1940s; and numerous other brilliant players. Fink perceptively places the story of these teams and leagues and players within the context of segregation and the civil rights movement. Playing in Shadows brilliantly fills a neglected gap in the sports history of Texas.

A converse account is related by Jerry Craft, who was called "Jackie Robinson in reverse" when he pitched for the Wichita Falls/Graham Stars in the West Texas Colored League during the summers of 1959 and 1960. As a West Texas boy growing up in Jacksboro, Craft and his friends
played sandlot baseball almost daily with black children. In segregated Texas, Craft had no other contact with his black playmates. He was a football and baseball star at Jacksboro High School, and during the summers of his five years at Texas Tech, he pitched for semi-professional clubs.

In 1959 he was called by Carl Sedberry, Jr., and asked to pitch for his team of "Stars" at Wichita Falls. When Craft arrived for the Sunday game, he was astounded to see all black teams and fans. The genial Sedberry, also an African American, revealed that he had scouted Craft the previous summer. Sedberry had assembled a talented roster, but he needed an ace pitcher. Although Craft worked on his father's ranch, he agreed to pitch for the Stars on Wednesday nights and Sunday afternoons. In 1959, Craft and the Stars lost only one game, and if opposing players or fans were uncivil to the pitcher, the Stars rushed to the defense of "our white boy." The Stars were not as good in 1960, but Craft pitched a no-hitter in one game and posted twenty-three strikeouts in another. Through the shared experiences of games and road trips, Craft became close to his teammates, and the unthinking racial attitudes of his youth were changed forever.

Craft told his story to sports historian Kathleen Sullivan, and together they produced a highly readable book, full of humor and insight into a little-known baseball world. Our White Boy and Playing in Shadows relate two sides of the same historical tale, and sit side by side in my baseball library.

Bill O'Neal
Panola College


The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is the oldest Civil Rights organization in America. It was formed in 1909, a turbulent time in race relations. Jim Crow laws were firmly entrenched and there was an upsurge in African Americans being lynched by white
mobs all over the South, including Texas. The NAACP was organized just 13 years after the infamous Plessy v. Ferguson Supreme Court decision ruling that "separate but equal" was constitutional.

This book, *Long is the Way and Hard: One Hundred Years of the NAACP*, is a compilation of essays. Because it is an edited book, there is a substantial degree of overlap in the discussion of issues and personalities. However, it still stands as a contribution to the available literature on the rich history of the NAACP. The first part of the book focuses on the NAACP at the national level from its origin, objectives, and leadership and its relationships with other national Civil Rights organizations such as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), the Congress on Racial Equality (CORE), and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). A separate chapter is devoted to the "Uneasy Alliance: The NAACP and Martin Luther King."

The second part of the book is devoted to essays on the NAACP at the state and local levels. In this section of the book is a chapter entitled: "In No Event Shall a Negro be Eligible: The NAACP Takes on the Texas All-White Primary, 1923-1944." This section is most interesting to East Texans. It provides a chronology of the All-White Democratic Primary in Texas and the roles played by the NAACP and the local leadership in African American communities such as Houston and Dallas. In two cases that originated in East Texas, the U.S. Supreme Court made major rulings to dismantle Jim Crow laws in the South. The case known as *Smith v. Allwright* (1944) declared the All-White Democratic Primary in Texas unconstitutional. This decision had national implications. The second U.S. Supreme Court case of *Sweatt v. Painter* (1950) removed barriers faced by African Americans as they attempted to enroll in institutions of higher learning—specifically, the University of Texas Law School. Clearly, Texas-based Supreme Court cases helped strike down the walls of Jim Crow and usher in the Civil Rights Movement in America.

Equally important to the two main sections of the book is the lengthy chronology of events that traces the NAACP from its inception in New York City to its centenary celebration in 2009 when President Barack Obama, in addressing the
organization, acknowledged the "pain of discrimination" and called for a "new mindset, a new set of attitudes" by which African Americans take responsibility for their own destinations.

Among the salient points in the "Chronology of the NAACP" are its nationwide campaign in 1915 to protest the showing of D.W. Griffith's film *The Birth of a Nation*, its multiple campaigns against lynching which passed the U.S. House of Representatives but failed in the U.S. Senate three times, and NAACP Secretary John R. Shillady's beating in Texas and his never fully recovering. The NAACP membership grew from 1,100 members in 1912 to 430,000 in 1944 to over 500,000 for the first time in 1945.

The essays in the book are well documented which provides a good bibliography on the literature available on the NAACP. The volume is quite impressive. This book could serve as a good textbook for college and university students studying the history of race relations in America and the role that the NAACP played in challenging and subsequently knocking down legal barriers and changing customs.

Theodore M. Lawe
A.C. McMillan African American Museum


For those of us who study prisons, have worked in prisons, or care about practices carried out behind prison walls, this book is an important part of the Texas history record. No major social institution within a culture is completely isolated from the core values of that society. With this hypothesis, the authors pose an important question for their research: "Did efforts to desegregate Texas prison cells unleash a torrent of racial violence, and if not, why not?" In this book, Trulson and Marquart carefully document the lagging path of Texas prison desegregation that paralleled attitudes and values of
the broader society, specifically resistance to change based on convention.

Throughout the book, the authors examine how single events have broader implications when they change mores and norms within society, in this instance within Texas prisons. The opening chapter references how popular culture images created a new way of thinking about relations between the black and white races. Additionally, it highlights how science and technology shattered old barriers. From these antecedents, the writers shift their focus to inspect change agents for Texas prison desegregation and the presence or absence of any associated violence.

This book offers a first rate example of content analysis to address the research question in addition to a number of dividends. The text contains several timelines assembled by the authors to provide background to decades old settings for the action taking place. These include a brief history of Texas prisons, school desegregation, 19th century violence against blacks, Jim Crow legislation in Texas, Texas lynchings from 1890-1899, a succinct listing of the allegation of Lamar vs. Coffield, and current examples of unresolved racial tensions in America. Consistent with their effort to create a context for the research question, the authors include a collection of photographs showing prison life from the 20th century. And, as one might expect from writers with this level of research background, each chapter includes well documented scholarship. This book will add much to the record of this critical era in the history of prisons not only in Texas but the South.

The writer of this review joined the Classification Bureau of the Texas Prison System in July 1965, working directly for Mr. Leon W. Hughes ("Frosty" as he was called by the inmates because of his white hair). This role enabled almost daily access to meetings, documents, and casual conversations with both Mr. Hughes, and Dr. George Beto whom Trulson and Marquart associate with the early efforts of desegregation with the system. I can corroborate that what these writers learned about the period of the 1960s from the institutional record closely parallels our experience. Both Beto and Hughes were committed to the humane treatment of inmates. Dr. Beto was a leader of men, including wardens,
officers, and inmates, and often got his way against the forces of tradition because of his charismatic personality. Mr. Hughes’ stride within the System arched two worlds, his long seniority engendered trust by the seasoned officers while he was educated and progressive in his notions of penology. Together they made a good team and were involved ‘hands-on’ with Dr. Beto’s agenda. Our instructions when classifying inmates to the units were to take time to know about their records, their enemies, their prior record, and their experience with jail time and prior prison time. There is little doubt that the careful classification of inmates (albeit on white cards for whites, blue cards for blacks, and orange cards for Hispanics) coupled with Mr. Hughes sixth sense applied to unit placement contributed to the lack of explosive violence documented in this important research effort.

In the end, Trulson and Marquart do not disappoint with their well founded conclusions and direction for further research. If there is one area that might be noted as obviously missing from the record documented by these writers, it is the omission of the same philosophy of “first available cell” in the women’s unit – Goree in the early days and other assignments in later times. Social scientists who wish to investigate the historical record to understand contemporary societal norms and values will find this book provides a rich source of ideas.

James Standley
Stephen F. Austin State University


In the nineteenth-century American South, a man held two sacred duties—to protect his womenfolk and to defend his honor. Many Southerners, including Texans, “clung tenaciously to the old values, including the Old South’s
Code of Chivalry, Code of Honor, and Victorian notions of sexuality” (p. 8). Southern legislatures therefore passed numerous laws criminalizing all forms of sexual misconduct, including rape, adultery, and seduction. Only marital relations were considered sacrosanct. In 1856, however, Texas added “justifiable homicide” to its statutes. Article 1220 of the Texas Penal Code authorized a husband to kill his wife’s paramour, providing that he caught them between the sheets in flagrante delicto. Bill Neal, a practicing criminal lawyer in Abilene, Texas, argues in Sex, Murder and the Unwritten Law: Courting Judicial Mayhem, Texas Style that if the written law failed to satisfactorily provide restitution, then an “unwritten, higher law” allowed victims to take matters into their own hands and vindicate their honor.

In Sex, Murder and the Unwritten Law, the author recounts six legal cases in which the “unwritten law” was used as a defense either openly in court or euphemistically in terms of “protecting the home” or “defending his sacred honor.” Examples include John Hallum, who shot with the intent to kill the Reverend W.A. Forbes in 1896 for seducing his wife. Hallum later successfully convinced a jury to ignore the “puny mandates of man” and find him not guilty. In 1915 Winnie Jo Morris (along with other family members) murdered Garland Radford, the father of her unborn child, because he had drugged and then spurned her. She too was found not guilty. In 1977, oil man Cullen Davis allegedly shot and killed two persons, wounding his estranged wife and one other person. Although the trial ended four years after the repeal of Article 1220, Neal suggests that “subliminal echoes of the old unwritten law” lingered, resulting in a not guilty verdict (p. 204). All these defendants, Neal asserts, utilized in part the “unwritten law” to get away with murder.

The use of the “unwritten law” in Texas was both a Southern and frontier development. The heavy migration of Southerners into Texas, who clung to notions of chivalry and honor, coupled with a rudimentary judicial system, encouraged settlers to take matters into their own hands, especially in cases of sexual impropriety. Rather than utilize lawmen, courts, and lawyers, which were often unavailable or ineffective, Texans turned to the “unwritten law” to redress a wrong. Killing in defense of property—or one’s honor—
was justifiable homicide.

One strength of the book is the debunking of certain myths that have surrounded the use of the "unwritten law." For example, Neal shows that "self help justice" was not just a Southern phenomenon but was utilized by northern defendants as well. Furthermore, he dispels the common assumption that only men avenged sexual dishonor. Outraged women also turned the tables and invoked the "unwritten law" (p. 15).

The book, however, is not without its flaws. One omission is a serious discussion of the culture and gender roles in Texas that produced Article 1220. Since the "unwritten law" flowed from this legal code, it would have been valuable to trace its legal history and debate in the Texas legislature and society at large. Additionally, Neal asserts in several instances that "the unwritten law had saved her" (p. 55) or "the unwritten folk law may well have lingered at least in the subconscious" (p. 203). These suppositions ignore the numerous reasons why juries render their judgments, many of which observers will never know. Without juror interviews (except in the Cullen case), it would be hard to say with any certainty how much the "unwritten law" played in the verdicts. If it is true, as the author states, that "Jurors find what they want to find, whether real or imagined," then it is just as likely that other factors such as insanity, self defense, procedural issues, even jury tampering or no reason at all are also possible explanations (p. 217).

Overall, Sex, Murder and the Unwritten Law is an interesting and lively slice of Texas history that tends to treat serious topics in a sensational manner. It should be of interest to lawyers, historians, and lay persons.

Mary Kelley Scheer
Lamar University


Most of the literature on the U.S. Army in Vietnam focuses
either on the top or bottom echelons of the military hierarchy—either on the generals and the strategies they pursued or the “grunts” and their birds-eye view of the war. Ron Milam, who served as an infantry advisor during the conflict, offers a different perspective. Drawing on an extensive collection of archival sources and a large number of oral histories, *Not a Gentleman's War* examines the experience of the Army's lowest-ranking officers, its lieutenants. In analyzing their war, Milam seeks to correct what he sees as a popular misconception about junior officers in Vietnam: that they were inferior to their counterparts in earlier wars, responsible for the atrocities which are widely regarded as one of the hallmarks of the conflict, and at least partially to blame for America's defeat in Vietnam. On the contrary, he argues, the Army's lieutenants performed “for the most part, with great skill, dedication, and commitment to the men they led” (p.2), in a war that differed from previous American conflicts and was particularly trying for junior officers.

The book is divided into two parts. In the first, Milam provides a wealth of detail on the selection and training process, as well as the Army's efforts to monitor and evaluate its procedures for producing officers. He notes that in spite of the war's insatiable demand for platoon leaders, the Army sought to maintain its training standards. For example, it terminated or recycled more than one-third of the students going through Officer Candidate School.

By and large, he argues, senior officers at the time expressed satisfaction with the lieutenants who arrived in Vietnam to lead the troops. In the second part of the book, Milam examines the experience of junior officers after their arrival in-country. He explores the dilemmas that faced platoon commanders, such as dealing with complicated rules of engagement and the pressure from superiors for high “body counts.” His treatment of the issue of enforcing unit discipline—in the face of drug use, racial tensions, and the increasing unpopularity of the war—highlights some of the problems confronting the Army’s lieutenants that were peculiar to the Vietnam conflict. Here again, Milam challenges the conventional wisdom. He argues that far from being a cause or symptom of the military’s problems in Vietnam, especially after 1968, it was the junior officer corps that actually held
the Army together.

Milam wisely avoids becoming bogged down in the great debates that surround America's involvement in Vietnam — whether the conflict should have been fought and whether it could have been won — to concentrate on telling his story of the lieutenants' war. Never very far from the surface of this story is the massacre at My Lai and the troubling figure of Lieutenant William Calley. Milam suggests that, in the minds of many Americans, Calley is the war's poster-child and has come to stand for all the failings attributed to the junior officer corps in Vietnam — poor education and training, lack of leadership and moral fiber, etc. Yet, he observes, the same selection and training regime that turned out Lieutenant Calley also produced the likes of Chief Warrant Officer Hugh Thompson, who saved the lives of a dozen Vietnamese civilians at My Lai from the rampaging lieutenant and his platoon. There was only "one Calley," Milam concludes, a notable exception and not representative of his fellow officers. This point is well taken, although Milam's coverage of the issue of atrocities seems to rather pull its punches. In emphasizing the egregious nature of the My Lai massacre, he tends to gloss over the question of how widespread was "atrocious behavior" in Vietnam. Recent work by Bernd Greiner, Deborah Nelson, and Michael Sallah suggests that it was, in fact, not uncommon, albeit not on the scale of My Lai. In addition, Milam's effort to set the commission of war crimes within a broad historical context tends to confuse more than it enlightens. It is not clear whether he is trying to tease out the differences between Vietnam and other conflicts, or presenting a variant of the "war is hell" argument to explain atrocities committed in Vietnam.

This criticism notwithstanding, Not a Gentleman's War represents a valuable contribution to the literature. It offers an in-depth treatment of the junior officers' war, the first scholarly work to do so.

Philip E. Catton
Stephen F. Austin State University

Spanish Water, Anglo Water: Early Development in San Antonio
by Charles R. Porter, Jr. (Texas A&M University Press, 4354
San Antonio has always been closely tied to its sources of water, from the colonial era to the present-day. The initial Spanish settlement occurred in large part due to the existence of flowing springs and a lush river that attracted missionaries to the location. Today the River Walk exists as one of the nation’s preeminent tourist attractions. The author of this well-researched book provides an overview of the role water has played in the history of the city up to the beginnings of the twentieth century. He also examines the evolution of water law during the Spanish and Anglo-American eras, noting especially how the use of this water within the parameters of the legal system motivated development of the city. In so doing, this study uses a variety of sources including eighteenth century Spanish accounts, letters and papers of early Anglo-American settlers, and modern municipal records. This analysis is also based on a thorough foundation of secondary sources that includes historical, hydrological, and engineering studies. In so doing, the author brings an interesting perspective to the narrative because his personal background is rooted in real estate matters as well as history. The volume’s narrative moves through three parts, with the first providing a description of the springs and water sources that existed before settlement. This discussion constitutes a good example of environmental history written in a solid matter. The second section of the book provides a full examination of Spanish water rights during the colonial period of the city’s history. During that period, Spanish settlers and the missions of the area constructed an elaborate system of irrigation ditches and aqueducts, known as acequias, which linked San Antonio’s water sources to areas of settlement and agriculture. This discussion highlights how water thus influenced the nature of the built environment of the colonial city, with special emphasis on how Spanish law concurrently contributed to settlement patterns and the development of the local economy. Some of these acequias still remain today as part of the city’s tangible Spanish colonial heritage.

The section of this book dealing with the Spanish era is, in
the opinion of this reviewer, the strongest part of the volume because it develops a very reasoned analysis of how water sources created the colonial city while giving a distinctive character to the settlement. The third and final section of the book provides commentary on the nineteenth century Anglo-American population and its use of water. The arrival of English-speaking settlers brought a new view of water and its uses to the city, although the *acequia* system operated until after the Civil War as an important source for the population. Over the mid-nineteenth century, providing water to San Antonio became a commercial enterprise, especially when banker George W. Brackenridge and his associates opened the city’s first water works.

By the 1890s, the water works and its technology had created a modern distribution system, which included the drilling of over a half-dozen artesian wells. This development meant that by 1900 the San Antonio River and its associated *acequias* no longer provided most of the city’s water. It is at the point in the city’s history that the author ends his narrative with a discussion of the legal evolution of water rights across the twentieth century. This book clearly establishes that San Antonio has an interesting historical relationship to water sources, especially regarding the *acequias* and artesian wells that make it unlike any other place in Texas. Moreover, the book stands as an example of how the perspectives of environmental, legal, and municipal development can be successfully combined into an astute historical analysis.

Light Townsend Cummins
Austin College


Houston has long been hailed as a future oriented city—all about business. Unfortunately, this comes at the expense of preserving its past. When antiquated structures obstruct Houston’s progress, the wrecking ball goes to town.
Houston may have a short history when compared to other American metropolises, but by neglecting its preservation, Houston truncates its already brief past. In *Houston: Lost and Unbuilt*, Steven Strom unleashes a myriad of images designed to change Houston’s mindset to one of preservation. Admittedly elegiac in tone, Strom argues that if Houstonians want a past to preserve, they need to act now to prevent a complete loss of the city’s architectural past.

*Houston: Lost and Unbuilt* was originally published as two separate articles: “Lost Houston: Images From a Century of Erasure” and “The Houston that Never Was.” In this book, they comprise the two sections, “Lost Houston” and “Unbuilt Houston,” and retain the same random sequence of photographs and architectural images from the original publication. Strom maintained this unordered sequence after positive reader reviews. “Lost Houston” provides the main theme for Strom’s work. Strom begins the book with this section, devotes more pages to it (130 compared to 50 in “Unbuilt Houston”), and uses it to illustrate the primary argument that Houston needs to protect its past. In these first 130 pages, Strom depicts an array of historically significant structures that have been substantially altered or completely leveled. Strom briefly discusses the importance of each structure through small introductions and captions, but the pictures do most of the talking.

From the Houston Municipal Auditorium to the grand movie palaces on Theatre Row, Strom explores locales people can no longer experience, save through the archived photographs he offers. He concludes the section with several pages on the Astrodome which defined Space City’s futuristic vision. Though the Astrodome still exists, languishing as a designated National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark, it will soon be significantly altered or destroyed (though the latter is less likely) pending the decision of Houston officials. Unfortunately in “Lost Houston,” Strom never offers solutions to Houston’s lost landscape other than intimating preservation for all. He also occasionally falls short in explaining the details of each destruction—a fact that would be important in examining how and why certain structures were lost. However, he still successfully relates the importance of the lost structures, and even if preservation-for-all is an unfeasible
policy, Strom effectively demonstrates that Houston should have been (and should be) more conscientious about its past. “Unbuilt Houston” contrasts with “Lost Houston” in both material and tone. Unlike the lost past depicted in the first section, “Unbuilt Houston” displays the optimism and expansive visions held by twentieth century Houstonians through futuristic models that never came to be. These architectural renderings of city structure proposals allow readers to sense Houston’s great imagination and boundless dreams. From various San Jacinto Monument proposals to mass transit systems, “Unbuilt Houston” examines the city that could have been in an era of Houston’s unbridled optimism.

As a book composed of two separately published articles, Houston: Lost and Unbuilt’s two sections do not weave together perfectly. The first section has a strong argument that Strom reiterates in his prologue and epilogue; the second section simply shows what Houston could have been or what Houstonians wanted it to be. Overall, however, this does not significantly detract from the book as the two sections decently fit together. For a casual reader in need of a coffee table book, Houston: Lost and Unbuilt provides images for perusal. For a meticulous reader, the book examines how much Houston has lost and how the unbuilt possibilities represent Houston’s push for the future. In the end, Strom’s work is enough to make any Houstonian bemoan our perforated past. Hopefully it’s enough to persuade us to change it.

Travis Wise
Conroe, Texas


As a long time “42” player, I didn’t expect to learn a lot from Dennis Roberson’s book Winning 42. Was I ever surprised, since Roberson opened my eyes to a number of nuances and aspects of the “National Game of Texas.”
I first learned that some people I had played "42" with for years sort of made up the rules as they played. I was especially glad to learn that true, serious players do not bid "nelo." I was also glad to see, in detailed instructions, sample hands and how to bid such hands.

Mr. Robinson's examples and his explanations of the various strategies of bidding, and then following through with the actual playing of the hands were particularly helpful. In each chapter, he provided great detail on various bids and strategies, which made me soon realize that in many instances during my play I had counted on luck more than skill and knowledge. I often tend to rely on the strength of my own hand to properly bid and do not consider the help my partner could offer.

Mr. Roberson has also done a fine job of explaining "42" tournament rules and scoring. Most familiar to me is the system of scoring by "marks," with seven marks necessary to win. The author's explanation of the point system of scoring was very clear. He also deftly explained the strategy of bidding "84" and how to properly play such a hand. The listing of the past state tournament winners was also a welcome addition. Perhaps I shall now consider entering a "42" tournament.

As for the importance of a book on such a subject, it is difficult for me to imagine anyone not enjoying a good game of "42." I can very truthfully recommend this book to anyone who plays the game or would like to learn to play "42" the correct way. I know that if I had read this book years ago I would not only be a better player, but also a more successful one.

Winston Sosebee
Midland, Texas