Book Reviews

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The Battle of Palo Alto was the first major battle of the Mexican-American War. In this battle, Zachary Taylor’s Army of Occupation fought General Mariano Arista’s Army of the North on disputed ground approximately five miles north of present-day Brownsville, Texas. Here, twenty-four hundred American troops collided with thirty-four hundred Mexican troops as a response to the Mexican besiegement of Fort Texas. The end of this battle decidedly proved the Mexican army an inferior opponent to American forces. Mexican soldiers were under-trained, used the outdated military techniques of Napoleon, and had cumbersome artillery that kept them from moving quickly against America’s more modern “Flying Artillery.” Traditionally, historians conveyed these events through political and military history. Recent years, however, have seen an increase of cultural histories on the Mexican-American War, including On the Prairie of Palo Alto: Historical Archaeology of the U.S-Mexican War Battlefield. Even though it adheres to the traditional Mexican-American War narrative, this book takes a non-traditional approach by incorporating archaeological discoveries with cultural history to explore the topics of American victory and Mexican deficiencies.

On the Prairie of Palo Alto: Historical Archaeology of the U.S-Mexican War Battlefield, co-authored by historical archaeologist Charles M. Haecker and historian Jeffrey G. Mauck, provides an interdisciplinary approach to analyzing the events and outcome of the Battle of Palo Alto, the first battle of the Mexican-American War. Using evidence from a 1994 archaeological dig at Palo Alto and battle maps as primary sources, Haecker and Mauck determine the history and consequences of the battle.

Haecker and Mauck divide the text into six chapters. The first chapter serves as an introduction to the topic as it provides the historical context.
of the Battle of Palo Alto, the purpose of the book, and the research used to write the book. The next four chapters include a historical overview of the battle; a discussion of the weapons, accoutrements, and the soldiers; a topographic and documentary analysis; and a survey of the physical evidence of the battle. The sixth chapter, a conclusion, restates the goals of this book and explains how those goals were accomplished. It also examines the historiography of the field, discusses the importance of this work, and considers how it can contribute to future research.

The biggest asset of this book is the incredible use of photography and maps. These photographs allow the authors to maintain their story line while keeping readers focused and engaged with the subject. Without the photographs, many of the discussions on artillery would become dry, possibly alienating many non-military readers. In addition to these amazing photographs, there are images of battle maps created by Mexican-American War officers. These maps, which can be found throughout the book, help the reader understand battlefield tactics as well as the location of events in relation to the entire battle. This enables the reader to form an idea of place and imagine the battlefield as something other than grass and debris. For example, the fifth chapter of the book is dedicated to “The Physical Evidence of the Battle” (133-155); and here the authors explore many weapons, ammunition, and uniforms used by both American and Mexican soldiers. In conjunction with the text, the authors supply grids and high-resolution photographs to make the material more understandable and engaging.

The Mexican-American War has typically been viewed as the finale to the Texas Revolution and the precursor to the Civil War. It is frequently overlooked and underappreciated, and the histories written about it usually only summarize a few battles. Hopefully, with the publication of cultural histories, such as On the Prairie of Palo Alto: Historical Archaeology of the U.S-Mexican War Battlefield, memory of the Mexican-American War will be more dynamic and nuanced.

Pamela Ringle
Tomball, TX

“There is a great deal of history in myth and folklore which is good,” state the authors of Myth, Memory and Massacre. “But sometimes there is too much folklore and myth in history” (87).

Authors Paul H. Carlson (retired professor of history at Texas Tech University and a resourceful and innovative researcher/author/speaker) and Tom Crum (retired district judge and current president of the East Texas Historical Association) have examined a legendary historical incident and have proved it to be rife with folklore and myth—and fabrications. The incident under the Carlson/Crum microscope is the “Battle” of Pease River. On December 19, 1860, L.S. “Sul” Ross, a young Texas Ranger captain and future governor, led an attack against a small Comanche hunting camp on the Pease River in northwest Texas. There were about forty Anglo attackers, including a score of U.S. cavalrmen. Seven Comanches were killed, including four women, and three were captured while a handful managed to escape. Two of the captives were thirty-four-year-old Cynthia Ann Parker and her baby daughter.

Cynthia Ann was nine years old in 1836 when a large Comanche war party attacked the stockaded settlement of the Parker clan. Several settlers were slain, and Cynthia Ann and her little brother were among the captives. Her brother was recovered, but Cynthia Ann grew up as a Comanche. She became one of the wives of Peta Nocona and had three children. Her oldest son, Quanah, was destined to become a noted warrior and chief. Cynthia Ann’s recapture a quarter of a century after the Parker Massacre distinguished the Pease River action from numerous similar clashes during the period.

Paul Carlson and Tom Crum have traced the distortion of this incident from an attack on a small, defenseless encampment to a battle against as many as 600 Comanches, including 150 to 200 warriors. “Chief” Peta Nocona (who was not a chief and was not present at the Pease River) purportedly was killed after fierce combat. There were numerous other embellishments, most of which were created to promote the ascendant career of Sul Ross. Still in his twenties, Ross
rose from private to brigadier general in the Confederate Army. In 1873 Ross was elected sheriff of McLennan County, and in 1880 he won election to the state senate. Having discovered the political benefits of publicizing his heroics in Civil War combat and in the 1860 battle which rescued Cynthia Ann Parker, Ross encouraged friends and supporters to emphasize his military exploits in military literature. The Pease River fight became wildly exaggerated, helping Ross to an overwhelming victory in the 1886 governor’s race. Following two productive terms as governor, the combat hero became president of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas, serving until his death in 1897.

The authors carefully re-examined and compared the accounts of the Pease River fight, particularly those of participants. They found diary alterations, missing reports, and outright falsehoods in first-hand testimony, all contributing to the exaggeration of a minor raid into a mythic battle. Because of this fabrication for political gain, a fictional version of the Battle of Pease River has been accepted for generations. The authors located original, true accounts of the modest action of 1860 while skillfully tracing the evolution of the myths and fabrications. In addition to presenting an accurate version of the Pease River raid, Carlson and Crum performed an impressive work of historiography—"a clear example of how memory, in this case collective memory, is manufactured more than recalled." (130) Historians should utilize these methods to reexamine other mythic, long-accepted incidents of 19th century Texas.

Bill O'Neal
Panola College


*Los Brazos de Dios: A Plantation Society in the Texas Borderlands 1821-1865* is a remarkable study which expands our understanding of one of the most prolific plantation regions of Antebellum Texas. It also affirms the value of local and regional historical studies as a tool underscoring similarities and differences of frontier borderland
plantation societies compared to other plantation areas in the Antebellum agricultural South.

Sean M. Kelley’s volume spans the 1820s arrival of the earliest Anglo settlers in the Lower Brazos River Valley—the counties of Brazoria, Fort Bend, Austin, Washington, and Grimes—to the close of the Civil War. Many of these settlers, particularly the well-to-do, brought with them slaves, evidently hoping to recreate the plantation agricultural society they left behind in more established southern states to the east.

In some respects, the culture they created strongly resembled what they left behind. It also significantly differed as a result of the demographic diversity unique to the Lower Brazos. In addition to the Anglo majority and their slaves, the region had significant minorities of German immigrants and African-born slaves.

The former comprised about thirty percent of the region’s free population. Although a few German settlers eventually purchased slaves, the majority in German communities looked askance at the peculiar institution. Even though most Germans were reserved in their criticism of slavery during the decade preceding the war, Anglos increasingly perceived their immigrant neighbors as a subversive element that was dangerous to the established order. The diversity of the Lower Brazos was further enhanced by a small but evident number—Kelley guesstimates 500 by 1837—of African-born slaves transported via the Middle Passage to Cuba and ultimately smuggled into Texas to work on cotton and sugar plantations.

Further complicating the nature of this rich, varied, multicultural frontier milieu, the Lower Brazos was a borderland plantation society. Consequently, Kelley’s work becomes an unprecedented examination of slavery as a borderland phenomenon. The region’s geographic proximity to Mexico conditioned the outlook of the river valley’s slave population. If official antebellum Mexican policy on slavery in Texas remained ambiguous, Mexico’s unqualified rejection of slavery south of the border was a temptation to slaves with dreams of freedom. More than a few such Lower Brazos refugees found redemption south of the Rio Grande. These factors combined to make slavery in this particular local context less stable than in America’s older plantation regions.

Kelley even-handedly explores relationships within and between each of the area’s four population groups in terms of class, gender, and
master and slave.

The book's uniqueness lies not only in the exploration of how a borderland plantation society differs from plantation regions securely ensconced to the east, but also in Kelley's informed judgments concerning the character, origins, and significance of the Lower Brazos African-born slaves. Although the author refreshingly acknowledges his lack of traditional resources, Kelly boldly makes persuasive, intuitive leaps based on credible circumstantial arguments combined with shards of archaeological evidence, slave narrative excerpts, and the 1870 population census. The author reconstructs the story of Anglos, Creole slaves, and Germans through the use of more conventional evidence, including plantation ledger books and collections of planter papers, census and courthouse records (particularly succession documents, inventories, divorce records, and court proceedings), election returns, county tax records, and contemporary newspapers and periodicals of the day.

With these tools, Kelley creates a fascinating sociological tapestry reconstructing Lower Brazos society in all its complexity. His deft selection of detailed anecdotal accounts provides concrete illustrations of the evolving character of marriage, family structure, gender relations, and the master-slave interaction. Kelley not only recounts the stories of representative individual planter families but also, perhaps more importantly, gives occasional voice to their more anonymous plain folk neighbors and bondsmen. He has initiated a discussion certain to yield new understanding of the plantation economy's diversity and breadth.

From beginning to end, Kelley provides a delightful, informative read. His highly descriptive, compelling style, combined with exquisitely interesting introductions, pull the reader effortlessly forward. From the "Introduction," which places his examination in its larger historiographical context through the "Epilogue," which summarizes his persuasive, articulate arguments and explains why the war and emancipation mark a distinctive chronological divide, Kelly makes an important, ground-breaking contribution to the literature on American slavery and plantation society.

Rick Sherrod
Stephenville, Texas

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James C. Kearney has written an original and insightful work on an often-overlooked aspect of the Society for the Protection of German Emigrants in Texas (Adelsverein)—the Nassau Plantation, an attempt to set up a slave plantation by German noblemen in the 1840s near present-day Round Top. Drawing heavily on the reports, letters, and documents contained in the Solms-Braunfels Archives, Kearney traces the development of the plantation from the formation of the Adelsverein in Germany to its beginnings in Texas, the rise of the plantation as a valuable asset to the Society, and finally to the eventual demise of the plantation. The result is a wealth of new information on German-Texan history.

Kearney’s first chapter on the formation of the Adelsverein and its conception as a society to promote German emigration to Texas is outstanding. The society believed the best approach was investment in a slave plantation modeled on an almost feudalistic system, in which the plantation replaced the castle. In an effort to accomplish this, the Society sent Joseph Count of Boos-Waldeck to Texas in 1842. Despite the Count’s misgivings about a large-scale immigration project, he preoccupied himself with the task of establishing Nassau Plantation, the centerpiece of his program and vision. Boos-Waldeck purchased seventeen slaves in New Orleans and Houston and began work on the plantation in March 1843, the pre-eminent building of which would be a “dog trot” called the Herrenhaus. The Count completely underestimated the difficulties of setting up a plantation on the Texas frontier and returned to Germany in December 1843, leaving German Texan Charles Fordtran in temporary charge of the plantation. Three slaves soon ran away, two of which were never recovered.

Prince Solms-Braunfels arrived to replace Boos-Waldeck in July 1844. Upon arriving at Nassau, the colorful and pompous prince was disgusted with the Adelsverein’s association with slavery, remarking that slavery “is a true stain on human society, and something completely unworthy of our Society.” Despite his condemnation, the plantation
served Prince Solms well as a convenient and comfortable home base from which to conduct the business of the Society, specifically preparing for the first boatloads of settlers who began arriving in the winter of 1844-1845. The Prince stayed at the plantation on three separate occasions before returning to Germany in June 1845. That same year, in response to criticism in Germany, the Adelsverein declared its new colonies “slave free zones.” Ironically, the German settlements the Society later established became hotbeds of anti-slavery and anti-secessionist sentiment.

John O. Meusebach succeeded Solms-Braunfels as commissioner-general, and he too spent time at Nassau during the first months of 1846 before he attempted to move colonists onto the Fischer-Miller grant. At this point the plantation was essentially leaderless, and in an improbable twist a slave rose to become overseer of Nassau Plantation for a good part of the year 1847. By fall of the same year, it became painfully clear to the leadership in Germany that plans in Texas had not worked but instead taken a disastrous turn when a shootout at the Herrenhaus left two dead. The shootout at the plantation set into motion a series of events that culminated in the dismemberment of the plantation. The revolution of 1848 in Germany created further turmoil.

Into the leadership void at the plantation stepped Otto von Roeder, who by the Civil War became the largest German-Texan slaveholder in the state. As a gristmill owner, he organized shipments and supplied grain to desperate colonists in New Braunfels and Friedrichsburg in 1846, 1847, and part of 1848. By the summer of 1848, the Society’s debt to Otto von Roeder rose to $6000. In 1850, von Roeder gained control of the Nassau Plantation in exchange for the assistance he had provided. He began to parcel off the plantation and sell it to fresh immigrants from Germany, transforming the region into one of the most exclusively Germanic areas of the state.

Kearney deftly illuminates the importance of the Nassau Plantation. It had historical significance as the first and most important possession of the Adelsverein from beginning to end. The plantation served above all as a reservoir of value that could be parlayed into food and other desperately needed supplies. Although it failed miserably as an experiment in slavery, the plantation’s supportive role gave newcomers from Germany a chance to get established in Texas. Nassau Plantation is a welcomed addition to German-Texan history and should remain the
definitive work on the subject for decades to come.

Matthew D. Tippens
Abilene, Texas


Foregoing the grandiose scope (and necessary limitations) of a traditional biography for a more practical, focused, and nuanced examination, Kenneth Wayne Howell reviews the central decades in James Webb Throckmorton's life, paying closest attention to the defining aspects of Texas politics that in various ways shaped the career of a man remembered for both his political pragmatism and principled defiance, both preceding and following the American Civil War. Like most good political biographies, Howell largely succeeds in contextualizing the life of his subject within the broader scope of the subject's times. In this case, scholars interested in knowing more about the psychology of antebellum or Reconstruction-era Texas or about Texas political culture more generally will find much utility in this volume. In several small ways, Howell shows Throckmorton to be a reflection of a multiplicity of ideological and philosophical impulses, ranging from his Whiggish protectionism of small farmers against the more dominant and emerging planter class to his distrust of federal interventionism; his antipathy of political extremism; and, ironically, his defense of white supremacy. Along those lines, Howell also discusses with reasonable clarity and insight Throckmorton's evolving position on issues of race, particularly in the post-slavery era. Like the state he eventually and briefly came to lead, Throckmorton's views on race were repugnant but also relatively superficial. He actively resisted and denied equality for the freedman, though also like many Texans, he arrived at those positions for reasons that transcend simple bigotry and even reflect strands of early populism.

Almost by default, Howell's study will certainly stand as the definitive biography of Throckmorton for some time to come. Still, the fact that Howell fills an obvious void in both the historiography
of nineteenth-century Texas and political biography in no way detracts from what is a very readable, insightful, and engaging study of one of the Lone Star State’s most intriguing and dichotomous leaders.

Sean P. Cunningham
Texas Tech University


The Jewish Diaspora is perhaps one of the greatest ethnic migrations in history and led to the settlement of Jews in nearly every part of the world, including Texas. However, as with most ethnic migrations in the late nineteenth century, settlement patterns tended to be concentrated in urban areas, owing to chain migration patterns as well as to the presence of established enclaves in the larger cities. The Texas immigration experience, on the other hand, poses a different story in that there were no established communities when larger numbers of Jewish settlers arrived. Texas was, in a sense, truly a frontier for ethnic migration. In *The Chosen Folks: Jews on the Frontiers of Texas*, Bryan Edward Stone explores how the presence of this frontier impacted Jewish settlement in the Lone Star State and how the immigrants sought to sustain and maintain their culture in such an environment—which often meant adaptations and compromises to the traditional Jewish way of life.

Stone argues that although there were earnest attempts to create Jewish settlement schemes in Texas—not unlike the German **Adelsverein**—most Jews did not consider the area as a first choice, instead preferring densely populated east coast cities, such as Boston and New York, as prime locations for settlement. The main reason, he maintains, is that Texas was a “frontier” region and offered few amenities for Jewish life—clerical access; availability of Kosher foods; and, above all, camaraderie—that the urban centers offered. A few adventurous early Jewish settlers, such as Nicholas Adolphus Sterne, to whom the author refers as “proto-Jews,” exercised and observed few, if any, Judaic customs, traditions, or cultural practices.

After the Civil War, as immigration to the United States from
Eastern and Southern Europe increased, enthusiastic promoters attempted to convince Jewish settlers to forgo the urban centers and settle in Texas—which they promoted as a new “Zion.” This “Galveston Movement” succeeded in bringing a sufficient number of Jews into the area, creating a fledgling ethnic community. By the early 20th century, the Jewish communities in Galveston, Houston, and Dallas grew to sufficient sizes that Judaic religious services and rites became accessible in most parts of the state.

The Jewish communities in Texas were quite vibrant as evidenced by the maintenance of several periodicals and benevolent organizations, as well as their share of internal politics. In the book Stone explores several issues pertinent to Jews at the time: the decision to support the international Zionist movement (the creation of a Jewish state), the choice to embrace “Reform” or “Orthodox” Judaism, and the debates on further settlement into the state. In the end, Stone maintains that the Jewish communities—despite their internal divisions—united in the face of issues such as the rise of nativism, the Second Ku Klux Klan, Nazism, and support of the Civil Rights Movement after World War II.

Throughout the book, Stone addresses the issue of the frontier within the Jewish-Texan communities. Here, he points out several compromises that Jews made while they embraced their “Texanness”: using former gubernatorial candidate “Kinky” Friedman as an (perhaps extreme) example of this effort to sustain both Jewish and Texan identities. In researching the work, Stone relied heavily on dependable sources, such as oral accounts and personal correspondences, as well as the bourgeoning ethnic Jewish American press. The result is an excellent, groundbreaking account of an understudied ethnic group in Texas. *The Chosen Folks* addresses a need for more contribution to ethnic studies in Texas historiography.

Son Mai
McNeese State University

Jim Hoy and David Stanley have produced an excellent book which tells of the life and range adventures of Frank Maynard as a freighter, buffalo hunter, Indian trader and cowboy. Maynard started these adventures at age sixteen, and although he came back home from time to time, the free life on the open range kept drawing him back to the frontier.

The book is divided into four sections, plus the foreword and preface. A reader should not fail to read the foreword and preface, which contain much interesting reading and information. The introduction is a brief history of Frank Maynard's life and is followed by the second section that contains Maynard's own recollections of his adventures from 1870 to 1880. These adventures took him from Nebraska to Kansas and on herding trips through Indian Territory into north central Texas.

Maynard was a poet, and the third section of the book is devoted to several of his poems. Although Maynard referred to it as a song, included among these poems is one titled "The Dying Cowboy." The authors, as others have done, claim that with this poem or song Maynard was the first to take an old song, "The Bad Girl's Lament," and change the words to reflect the untimely death of a young cowboy or ranger. Although Maynard called his song "The Dying Cowboy," he referred to the dying young man as a ranger, meaning a cattle herder or range rider or simply ranger. Although much of the song remains the same as Maynard's original work, further alterations by other writers meant the song eventually became known as "The Cowboy's Lament" or "The Streets of Laredo," thus the book's title.

The book is more than a history of this song and Maynard's other writings. The preface is a good description of how serendipity often plays an important part in historical research, and anyone who has done such research can identify with the author's good fortune.

The introduction describes the life of Maynard from his birth in 1853 in Iowa City, Iowa, through his adventures, starting at age sixteen.
working first as a freighter and then as an Indian trader, buffalo hunter, and cowboy. It ends with Maynard’s life in Colorado Springs, Colorado, where, after the settling influence of marriage, he became a carpenter and wrote several newspaper articles, which he titled “Maynard’s Western Tales.” These articles make up the fourth section of the book.

The authors include a glossary of names, which is helpful in identifying the many people Maynard tells about in his recollections and newspaper articles. Everyone who has an interest in the life of the working cowboy at the end of the open range will find this book an excellent addition to his or her library.

Tom Crum
Granbury, Texas


This is an impressively informed, judiciously argued, well-written monograph on the Great Southwest Railroad Strike of 1886. Readers of this journal will find much Texas history here with workers’ communities from Marshall to Mineola to Palestine and Fort Worth playing leading roles in the dramatic events of the 1880s.

This work is an admirable blending of labor, social, political, and cultural history. While manifestly a “labor history” book, Case succeeds in making it much more. The densely-packed pages with details of engineers, firemen, brakemen, switchmen, shopmen, and track crews are not only necessary for understanding worker ideas of equality versus hierarchy on the job, but also provides riveting glimpses into the dangerous and grueling everyday world of nineteenth century African American and white Southwestern industrial workers. The author also pays attention to these workers’ voting behavior and their complicated relationship to party and place in the recently “redeemed” South. And, finally and most impressively, she successfully opens for examination their ideology/culture of “free labor.”

Case introduces the world of nineteenth-century American workers from the upheavals of the 1870s through the promise and
disappointments of the 1880s to the straitened realities of the 1890s. The bulk of the work concerns the Southwestern railroad workers’ uprisings of 1885 and 1886, and provides greater clarity of detail and analysis than any preceding work on this theme. More importantly, no previous work successfully places worker decisions, both individual and collective, within the context of nineteenth-century American free labor ideology.

It is difficult to imagine a more thorough use of the available sources. The author consulted relevant local newspapers from Kansas, Missouri, Arkansas, and Texas, as well as trade union organs, paper collections and the correspondence of main actors, and critical government documents. The work is also broadly informed by historians’ writings on nineteenth-century worker culture.

It is a relief to find good readable prose in an academic monograph. While only a faint hope for most academic monographs, this book is so well-written as to be accessible to the general reading public.

Case begins with the daunting reality of late-nineteenth century railroad workers’ daily regimen. From the best-paid locomotive engineers to the most heavily exploited member of a track maintenance crew, the daily work was difficult; costly to life and limb and, except for shopmen, often required extended periods away from home.

The author makes plain the racial hierarchy at work within worker culture, with the most skilled positions jealously guarded by the white aristocrats of labor. But, perhaps not so ironically, white and black workers found common ground in jealously guarding entry into railroading by Chinese workers and leased convicts, based both on wage concerns as well as ethnic bigotry.

Case then explores the rise of the Knights of Labor, attending the seemingly spectacular victory against Jay Gould in the 1885 Wabash strike. Thereafter, Knights’ locals along Gould’s lines grew rapidly to the delight of local unionists, but also brought dire predictions of too-rapid expansion by the order’s always cautious Terrance Powderly. However, the explosion in growth could not be stopped due to the optimism following what appeared to be a resounding labor victory in 1885.

The victory was short-lived and could not be repeated in the 1886 strike for two reasons. First, the Gould railroads systematically broke the spirit and the letter of the 1885 contract. Gould and his leadership knew
the contract could not be adequately enforced by the Knights (growing quickly but without deep roots and torn by internal weaknesses), and would never be enforced by state power or the courts. Indeed, the railroad managers knew that the courts and the coercive power of state government were at their disposal should they seek a confrontation.

The second reason 1886 failed, according to the author, is that the Knights exceeded the limits of “anti-monopoly,” cross-class, community support they had enjoyed in 1885. Building upon the work of pioneers like Herbert Gutman, Case makes a signal contribution with her lucid examination of the tension between the ideology of individual workers’ rights (broadly supported within local communities), and the collective rights of workers together. There had been widespread support among the community press, other skilled workers, farmers, and small merchants class for the right of workers to walk off the job and seek to defeat the monopolistic Gould in 1885. But, in 1886, when the fiery Southwestern strike leader, Martin Irons, and many Knights actively sought to shut down the railroads’ operation (through moral persuasion, disabling of engines and threats of and actual violence), middle class support went away.

It is in interpreting this moment that the author materially expands our understanding of nineteenth-century America, as well as the world of the Southwestern worker in 1886 and after. Case brings her highly analytical narrative beyond the bitter defeat of 1886 to explore the tenuous “bi-racialism” of Southwestern Knights, delving into white workers’ culture of white supremacy on the one hand, as well as the use of that culture by elites successfully seeking to maintain a fragmented and more easily controlled working class. The author also does a good job of looking at the same issue from the wary perspective of black workers caught in a devil’s dilemma. Her nuanced grasp of nineteenth-century American racism and race relations is particularly rich; readers will benefit from the care she takes in exploring labor’s painfully ambiguous struggle with America’s original sin.

Kyle Wilkison
Collin College

The Jim Crow Era created many institutions, customs, and occupations in America in general, and the African American community in particular. One of these occupations was the African American photojournalist-documentarian. Calvin Littlejohn in Fort Worth served in that role, as did many others in all of the major cities in Texas with sizable African American communities. They captured life in the African American community not seen by the white community. They photographed school activities, church celebrations, business meetings, national leaders, community events, and sports and entertainment. Bob Ray Sanders, Senior Columnist and Associate Editor of the Fort Worth Star Telegram, with the help of Littlejohn family members, has organized select photographs taken by Calvin Littlejohn and featured them in a book that captures African American life at a significant time in Fort Worth.

Calvin Littlejohn came to Fort Worth in 1934 as a domestic servant in the home of a white family. Because of his self-training in photography, he eventually opened a studio and simultaneously became the official photographer for I.M. Terrell High School, the only African American high school in Fort Worth that could trace its origin back to the East Ninth Street Colored School founded in 1882. In the section of the book on schools, photo images date back to 1948. These images depict football games, band activities, pep rallies, proms, and beauty contests.

In the section of the book on businesses in the African American community, Littlejohn’s images depict a vibrant business community, which operated not just hamburger and barbecue joints but a major bank (Fraternal Bank and Trust), hotel (Jim Hotel), taxicab companies, hospitals, and pharmacies. Prominent professionals from the medical and legal communities are portrayed. This volume includes a rare photo of Bill "Gooseneck" McDonald, one of the most prominent African American businessmen in Texas history.

Community life in the African American community was very similar to the white community—sororities, fraternities, lodges, literary
clubs, nightclubs, and churches. Littlejohn took photographs of the first class of African Americans to graduate from the Police School in Fort Worth in 1951. In this section of the book, Sanders highlights Littlejohn's images of parades sponsored by the National Urban League, Boy Scout troops, and other community oriented activities.

As in most African American communities, the church played a prominent role. In Fort Worth, churches served as "not just places of worship, each was a refuge, a security zone, a solid rock in a land that sometime seemed alien for a people who faced constant discrimination," (p. 127). Littlejohn's images include church dedications, musicals, weddings, and important religious leaders.

Because Fort Worth has a sizeable African American community, nationally known entertainers performed on a regular basis. Littlejohn captured images of such luminaries as Ruth Brown, Duke Ellington, and Cab Calloway. Also featured are images of Nat "King" Cole, T-Bone Walker, Lionel Hampton, Oscar Peterson, Ella Fitzgerald, and others. From the world of sports are images of Jackie Robinson, Joe Louis, Mohammed Ali, and others.

Over the years, many national leaders visited Fort Worth. Among the images captured by Littlejohn were Paul Robeson, Thurgood Marshall, Ralph Bunche, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Jesse Jackson. Littlejohn also photographed white leaders when they addressed African American audiences in Fort Worth.

In summary, *Calvin Littlejohn: Portrait of a Community In Black and White* is an excellent book that helps preserve the history and culture of the African American community in Fort Worth. Although the book focuses on Fort Worth, it reflects the growth and development of typical African American communities throughout East Texas. Special thanks go to author Bob Ray Sanders and the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History at the University of Texas in Austin for having the foresight to undertake this project.

Theodore M. Lawe
A.C. McMillan
African American Museum
Emory, Texas
For those of us who suffered from polio in that dark era, it was indeed "terrifying." If you survived the first week or so (and most did), it meant an indefinite period of recuperation, marked by exposure to the unfolding treatment of the day. To a kid, three months in a hospital could be forever, but the disease plagued some for an entire lifetime. And, in view of the recognition of a post-polio syndrome, thousands today face recurrence of complications.

Just remembering those days before the development of a polio vaccine is painful. That's why Heather Wooten's book is important. Most of the population today has no memory of polio and its heritage. Thanks to her work, which took about five years to complete, Texans may gain some idea of what polio meant. In tandem with David O'Shinsky's Pulitzer-Prize winning Polio: An American Story (2005), Wooten's study pinpoints the suffering that occurred in our state from the early part of the 20th century through the mid-1950s when a vaccine emerged.

Although medical researchers had some knowledge of polio's existence before the modern era, they had virtually no understanding of its cause or how it should be treated. Indeed, this modern plague shocked the nation when New York experienced an epidemic in 1916. Then known as infantile paralysis, polio showed up elsewhere in the following years, but it was not until the mid-1930s that epidemics became widespread.

With the coming of World War II and the resultant population shifts, polio continued its devastating tolls. Texas experienced several bad years in the later 1940s, especially in 1948 and 1949 (my sister and I became victims in August of 1948.) As Wooten notes, "Between 1942 and 1955, the disease struck hundreds of Texas communities, with the most devastating outbreak occurring in 1952. . . . Each year frightened parents prayed for a cure" (57). Indeed, every year from 1948 through 1956, more than a thousand Texans suffered polio attacks, with 1952 recording a total of 3,984 victims. (A national count revealed nearly
58,000 cases that year.) Harris County alone recorded 706 cases in 1952, including 439 in Houston (121). It was a good year for iron lungs and wheelchairs.

In addition to surveying the impact of polio on Texas, Wooten devotes considerable attention to treatment, fundraising, and the search for a vaccine. She rightfully focuses on Franklin D. Roosevelt, who was badly crippled by polio in 1921. He overcame his handicap and later became president. He ultimately became a "hero and role model for thousands of polio survivors and their families" (30).

Thanks to FDR, the treatment for polio received a boost beginning with his establishment in the mid-1920s of the Warm Springs, Georgia, Hospital for Rehabilitation. Subsequently, and with the aid of his business partner Basil O'Connor, he became prominent in the development of the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis, which led to systematic fundraising (the March of Dimes) and assistance in treating polio. Every polio victim and all future generations benefited from such philanthropic activities that ultimately resulted in the discovery of a vaccine in the 1950s by Dr. Jonas Salk.

Wooten’s work originally served as her doctoral dissertation at the University of Texas Medical Research Branch at the University of Texas at Galveston. Her study is based on a variety of sources, including numerous archival collections, oral history interviews, newspapers, and secondary works. She brilliantly portrays the human suffering and determination of those who endured a disease that no longer exists in our state or hemisphere. Except for isolated places in third world countries, polio has been defeated. In 2009, she won the Fehrenbach award from the Texas Historical Commission and the Ottis Lock award from the East Texas Historical Association, both for best books. It is a book that deserves reading.

Bobby H. Johnson
Nacogdoches, Texas

Alan J. Watt’s Farm Workers and the Churches is a comparative religious study chronicling the effectiveness of two farm worker strikes, one in California and one in Texas. In September 1965, Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers Union launched a strike and boycott against table grape growers in Delano, California, forcing the latter into contract negotiations and resulting in a union victory. Unlike the UFW California strike and boycott, the June 1966 Lower Rio Grande Valley wildcat melon strike was a dismal failure.

Locating his revisionist study in the context of New Western History and resource mobilization theory, Watt delineates how religious dimensions—traditional and liberal Protestantism, institutional Catholicism, and popular religion—intersected with economic, political, and demographic realities in two distinct regions and ultimately accounted for success in the California farm worker movement but failure in Texas.

Watt debunks religious scholarship that interprets Southwestern religious traditions as based solely on New England Puritanical orthodoxy and the single foundation for our Judeo-Christian faith. Specifically, Watt’s religious treatise not only allows for the east-west and north-south migration of religious dogma but also accounts for multidirectional movements of that orthodoxy. For example, Watt shows how Northern Protestant sects, who espoused a socially conscious liberal theology, proselytized a Social Gospel seeking social and political institutional reforms.

Consequently, Northern Protestants sects, along with the pro-Union liberal supporters of the Roman Catholic Church, provided unwavering support for La Causa. In the California grape strike and boycott, Watt attributes its success not only to the role of liberal Protestantism and the institutional Roman Catholic Church but also to Chavez’s ingenious ability to invoke nationalist-cultural symbols and Mexican devotional Catholicism, which is a subcategory of Latina/o popular religion. Chavez also possessed the uncanny ability to intertwine his own spirituality with a nascent awakening of a Mexican-American
self-consciousness that helped mobilize a cadre of college students, "new breed clergy," laity, nuns, priests, union leaders, politicos, college professors, and social activists that propelled a farm worker victory.

In Texas, Southern Protestantism and Roman Catholic orthodoxy—which mirrored the region's provincialism and conservative race relations that portended the strike's failure—proselytized a Social Gospel that promoted personal salvation more than institutional reform. That religious conservatism, along with the recruitment of Mexican strikebreakers, weak union organizational structure, vacillating union leadership, failure to clarify the strike's objectives, entrenched racism, the Texas Rangers infamous reputation as an arm of the agribusiness, and anti-labor legislation crippled the farm workers' efforts in the melon strike. Although the farm worker movement failed, Watt contends, "it contributed to a series of events that led to a greater sense of self-determination [the Chicano/a Movement] among Mexican Americans in Texas" (161).

Watt traces the evolution of the roles of Protestant and Catholic Churches in the farm workers' struggle for social justice as they evolved from service to advocacy and finally to servanthood. In the initial decades of the twentieth century, the Catholic Church targeted religious instruction and the social welfare of farm workers through Catholic Charities and the Social Action Department. Meanwhile, the Protestant Church worked through the Migrant Ministry of the Council of Women on Home Missions. In the post-World II era, the Catholic Church and the Protestant Church shifted their focus from service to advocacy. The Catholic Church supported farm workers through its Social Action Department, the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, and the Bishops' Committee of the Spanish-Speaking and the Protestant Church through its National Council of Churches and the Migrant Ministry. Together they advocated for legislation to address the plight of farm workers and legally challenged the Bracero Program. Finally, while the institutional Catholic Church kept a lukewarm relationship with grower organizations, the Protestant Church—through the Migrant Ministry's community organizing and the unrelenting efforts of "new breed ministers"—adopted a servanthood form of ministry, placing them at the disposal of the farmworker.

Watt's monograph makes a compelling argument on religion's role in the farm worker movement and how the struggle impacted
the Chicanas/os quest for civil rights. Another noteworthy feature of Watt's book is the inclusion of various personalities, whose names have escaped the historical record. This well-researched and superbly crafted monograph is a provocative and engaging study that merits the attention of religious, labor, Chicana/o, and borderlands scholars.

David Urbano
Victoria, Texas


Most early literature on Texas women centered on the nineteenth-century pioneer generation, who immigrated, settled, and adapted to frontier conditions. Only recently have scholars of both Texas history in general and women's history in particular refocused their historical lens on the modern, post-1900 era. Utilizing themes of reform, politics, suffrage, race, family, and feminism, historians Judith N. McArthur and Harold L. Smith at the University of Houston, Victoria, examine the "New Woman's century" which marked the emergence of a public female role in the twentieth century.

The objectives of _Texas Through Women's Eyes_ are twofold: "to synthesize the existing scholarship and to map the historical terrain" (xiii). The authors, therefore, divide the book into four parts that conform to standard chronologies found in other texts. Part One covers the first two decades of the twentieth century, generally referred to as the Progressive Era. During that time, Texas women entered the workforce and professions in larger numbers, organized for multiple reforms, and claimed the right to vote. Part Two discusses the post-suffrage era from the 1920s to World War II. The achievement of the ballot, however, did not transform the entrenched political system; and Texas women continued to be excluded from jury service and equal employment protection. The depression decade, 1929-1939, affected all Texas women, regardless of race or ethnicity, while the New Deal programs only marginally helped women. Men generally got the jobs "while women were more likely to get direct relief and welfare." (88) Although sexual segregation in the workforce broke down during World
War II, the reconversion to peacetime forced many Texas women out of the workforce. Part Three, which covers the turbulent 1945-1965 period, contrasts the cultural emphasis on domesticity after the war with the advances by Texas women on many fronts—civil, legal, and employment. In the last section, covering the years 1965-2000, the authors document the emergence of a new feminist movement to combat continued job discrimination, wage inequality, and restrictive laws. However, Texas women did not always speak with one voice, and instead supported competing goals. Consequently, a backlash by conservative women’s groups, such as the Texas Right to Life and the Committee to Restore Women’s Rights, mobilized against the new morality of the sexual revolution. They lobbied against the Equal Rights Amendment, abortion rights, and sex education in public schools. The emergence of activist women on both the political right and left culminated in the splintering of the two factions at the 1977 Houston Women’s Conference. So, century’s end saw Texas women divided, and the tensions between the two factions remained “unresolved and seemingly irreconcilable” (138).

*Texas Through Women’s Eyes* is a well-researched, thoughtful, and thorough analysis of women’s experiences in the twentieth century. It combines in one volume a synthesis of women’s lives, achievements, successes, failures, and divisions. While the authors include women from all racial, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds, the emphasis of the volume is primarily on urban, working to middle class, politically-active women. Considering that Texas was a rural state until 1940, farm women—who composed the majority of the female population for almost half of the century—are underrepresented. Nevertheless, the book should be essential reading for anyone interested in Texas and women’s history during the modern era. The addition of vivid firsthand accounts to support the narrative further enhances the volume. Most importantly, this award-winning book fills a much-needed void in the literature and will be an important source for information about twentieth-century Texas women for a long time to come.

Mary L. Scheer
Lamar University

Screen adaptations and fiction have long constructed a specific image of the typical Texas ranch, not to mention the stories told around a campfire on a cold night or those spun from a front porch swing on a hot summer's day. The presence of the strong human guardian is often a recurring theme in such forms and takes center stage to create a romantic and captivating hero for the listener or reader to enjoy. Rhonda Lashley Lopez provides the reader with factual stories of real women who took the reins of their ranching world and, in their own words, creates accounts that detail the ups and downs of earning a living from ranching.

The book's subjects occupy a range of ages. Many of the women of an advanced age still do a long day's work with hard physical labor. Their knowledge is not considered old fashioned in the least and parallels quite nicely with the younger generation of ranchwomen. Some of the younger women are college educated. One young ranchwoman worked in Washington as a legislative intern, but she still intends to ranch for a living, despite the hardships. She expects to remain politically active because, in her mind, it is important that legislators and leaders receive input from those who actually practice agriculture daily and understand the challenges faced by such a lifestyle.

The dreams and accounts of determination in this volume bear witness to the qualities necessary to be a successful ranchwoman. As one woman stated matter of factly, "You have to be hard-headed or persistent or tenacious, or you don't accomplish what you need to do. You give up" (83). Work on a ranch is never ending and requires an individual who can be both resourceful and strong. Each of these oral histories reveals a strength of character and spirit that engages the reader from the start. Lashley Lopez began this project in the late 1990s while working on a graduate degree in journalism/photojournalism, but after accumulating oral histories from these dedicated women, she continued her work and turned the project into the current book. She believed from the beginning that this was an important record of the changing way of ranch life—a lifestyle that had persisted generation
after generation, change after change—and the documentation of such a transformation became increasingly important as the way of life slowly vanished. Readers will also understand the meaning of the title as they finish this fine work.

Leslie Daniel
Nacogdoches, Texas


The long work of creating historical markers dotting the Lone Star State began in 1932 when a constitutional amendment created the Texas Centennial Commission. In 1953 work continued under the auspice of the Texas State Historical Survey Committee, which changed its name to the Texas Historical Commission (THC) in 1973. In fact, Texas boasts the most state markers of any in the U.S. with more than one to two hundred markers positioned each year. Still, little is written about this bigger-in-Texas movement to commemorate, and educate about, the past. Besides the phenomenal collection in Lone Star Pasts: Memory and History in Texas (edited by Gregg Cantrell and Elizabeth H. Turner, 2007) and James E. Crisp’s excellent work on the Alamo and Davy Crockett (How Did Davy Die? And Why Do We Care So Much, with Dan Kilgore, 2010; and Sleuthing the Alamo: Davy Crockett’s Last Stand and Other Mysteries of the Texas Revolution, 2005), surprisingly little is written on the process of history in the public in Texas, especially compared to other large states like California and New York. Now, thankfully, Dan K. Utley (former chief historian of THC) and Cynthia J. Beeman (former director of THC) provide a corrective turn. With a much deserved tip-of-the-hat to their writing, Utley and Beeman “explore the diverse history of Texas as told through its state markers” (x-xi).

Identifying historical markers as “iconic elements of the modern cultural landscape,” Utley and Beeman unpack the dynamic history behind more than nineteen state markers, as well as provide numerous
“side bars” to complement each chapter that “are the defining components of cultures and societies” (1). From the woods of Elmer Kelb outside Houston to the mysterious lights of Marfa in the high desert of West Texas, the stories behind the markers speak to both the diversity and the plethora of history in Texas.

*History Ahead* is divided into three parts. Part One (“A Texas Sense of Place”) marks, as it were, the crafting of a sense of place rooted in history. Following the stories of forest conservation, real-estate speculation, King Cotton, faith healing, oil, religion, and even a music director, “A Texas Sense of Place” is concerned “with both the places where history was made, and the individuals who made it” (54). Part Two (“Passing Through Texas”) looks to the storied many who, while not exactly Texan (to which Utley and Beeman are wise not to hold such against them), found their way to Texas and, yet again, reveal the intimate connections of history making to Texas’ past. American icons Charles Lindbergh and Will Rogers stand next to conservationists in Tyler, failed entrepreneurs in Marfa, utopists along the Ozark Trails, and internees and POWs at Crystal City during World War II. They all, without doubt, highlight the “basics of a national story that began in Texas” (189)—or if not beginning in Texas then visited nonetheless—and tell a story that moves beyond state boundaries. Part Three (“Texans on the National Stage”) exposes the effect Texans have had not just in their home state but also around the nation and world. A female progressive reformer, bluesman, literary scholar, aviator, rock n’ roller, and theater magnet give just a small glimpse into the larger world Texans both traversed and helped shape.

The stories behind the markers are more than just vignettes into the remarkable, sometimes untold, stories of the past—or as another reviewer called them “the state’s oddballs” (back cover of *History Ahead*). Rather, beyond the rich histories told in this work, two other aspects render it truly valuable: diversity and public history in Texas. Utley and Beeman provide a history that unquestionably captures the diverse landscape of Texas. The stories of Charles Lindbergh and Will Rogers flow seamlessly with the stories of Bessie Coleman, a female African-American aviator, and Carl T. Morene, a self-educated working-class white man from Schulenburg. Stories from Dallas and Houston also accompany stories of towns that no longer exist or are tucked away in the rural pine curtain of East Texas. These are all the
faces and landscapes of a diverse and lively Texas.

Moreover, History Ahead will prove very useful to those interested in cultural resources management, historic preservation, memory, and public history in Texas. Utley and Beeman present insights into what history making in the public looks like in practice and, again, in Texas. Often accompanying the history of the people, places, and events behind a state marker is the history to create the state marker itself—the people involved; their motivations; and, more importantly, the meanings they ascribe to their markers. Put differently, History Ahead reveals how Texans have looked to take ownership of their own past and, in the process, makes known to readers just what Texans decide is important about both themselves and their community.

As with Lone Star Pasts and Crisp's work, Utley and Beeman provide a snapshot into the ways Texans have gone about quite literally marking a sense of their own identity. This book is nothing shy of a detailed chronicling of the construction of historical identity in and throughout Texas. Moreover, History Ahead (not surprisingly with two authors from THC) provides insight into the issues of marking preservation and commemoration. They chronicle the not always smooth history of historic preservation efforts, the hard work by individuals to create the places and markers Texans now enjoy, and the life of a place after a noted person or event has long left or receded from popular memory. Particularly notable is the importance of local activity and initiative to history making in Texas—as elsewhere to be sure. History Ahead repeatedly spotlights individuals and communities that took history into their own hands. Equally intriguing are the small glimpses into the inner workings of THC as it struggled to define standards and then balance these standards with local populist needs to find meaning and ascribe local significance. History Ahead then is more than a story of oddballs—no matter how fascinating they truly are; it is the story of how history is made and what the past can mean for people in the present and future.

Paul J. P. Sandul
Stephen F. Austin State University

State of Minds: Texas Culture and Its Discontents, by Don Graham
As its title indicates, University of Texas literary professor Don Graham's latest book attempts to justify John Steinbeck's famous line, "Texas is a state of mind." Through his well-crafted and witty critiques of Texas authors and filmmakers, Graham demonstrates how popular culture shaped the image of the Lone Star State in the minds of both outsiders and native Texans.

Graham's book is a compilation of nineteen articles previously published in Texas Monthly, as well as various other journals and edited books published between 1999 and 2009. Graham claims to have made numerous updates and revisions to each of the included articles, but readers familiar with the author's writings may find themselves wishing for new and updated material. That being said, anyone with little or no previous contact with Graham's work will quickly be taken in by his extremely entertaining writing style.

Lovers of Texas movies will find Graham's three essays on the motion picture industry particularly interesting. In his essay "Wayne's World," Graham suggests, "Davy Crockett became a Texan by dying at the Alamo, and John Wayne became a Texan by making The Alamo" (124). In the second essay that deals with Texas movies, Graham provides readers with an edited transcript of his interviews with several key players behind the production of the 1971 classic Texas film The Last Picture Show. The author ends his look at Texas films with a highly entertaining discussion on the evolution of the Hollywood cowboy in the movie Brokeback Mountain.

The majority of Graham's essays focus on Texas literature. Over the course of the book, Graham introduces little known Texas authors and reacquaints readers with some of the state's most influential writers. Having taught the famed course "Life and Literature of the Southwest" at the University of Texas for over three decades, Graham is uniquely qualified to comment on the subject of Texas writing. One of the many interesting opinions on Texas literature that Graham presents in his essays is that cotton—not cattle or oil—provided the driving influence behind some of the Lone Star State's greatest works of fiction. Graham is particularly fond of the writing of Larry McMurtry and calls his first novel, Horseman, Pass By, the Texas version of Catcher in the Rye. On
the other hand, Graham is not quite as kind to Cormac McCarthy and suggests McCarthy's Hollywood success may have gone to his head.

Scholars seeking a better understanding of the history of Texas in popular culture and literature cannot help but run into the writings of Don Graham. More than any other professional, Graham has shaped this underdeveloped field, and State of Minds fits nicely into his extensive list of published works. However, the book offers little in terms of new information. The essays included have previously been published elsewhere, and most can be easily accessed through a simple Internet search. Graham missed an opportunity to expand on his work, as well as a chance to advance the literature of Texas cultural history. In addition, the book fails to include any type of conclusion. Without a concluding chapter, readers finish the book wondering exactly how Graham's assortment of essays ties into his introductory argument. Despite its numerous shortcomings, readers with an interest in Texas cultural history who are not already familiar with Graham's work owe it to themselves to take a look at this informative and entertaining book.

Preston Blevins
Nacogdoches, Texas


In 1999, students and academics mourned the death of renowned scholar and University of Texas at Austin professor Américo Paredes. Born in Brownsville, Texas, Paredes spent his career celebrating the diversity and richness of border culture. His works, which include With His Pistol in His Hand: A Border Ballad and Its Hero (1958), A Texas Mexican Cancionero: Folksongs of the Lower Border (1976), and George Washington Gomez: A Mexicotexan Novel (1990), contributed to the development of Mexican American/Chicano scholarship and studies. The influence of Paredes' writings has been the subject of several studies. For instance, Jose R. Lopez Morin's The Legacy of Américo Paredes (2006) explores the impact of Paredes' writings on the evolution of Mexican American cultural scholarship.
While the work of Lopez Morin and others examines the significance of Paredes' scholarship, Manuel F. Medrano, professor of history at the University of Texas at Brownsville, provides readers with a look at the life of a humble man who inspired many. *Americo Paredes: In His Own Words, an Authorized Biography* traces the life of Paredes from his childhood in South Texas to his activities after retirement. Utilizing interviews with Paredes, his family, and friends, Medrano shows the triumphs, as well as the difficulties, Paredes experienced.

As a young boy, Paredes spent hours listening to his mother as she regaled him with stories (such as the tale of Mexican folk hero Gregorio Cortez) that inspired in him a love for storytelling. During summers Paredes visited his uncle's ranch near Matamoros, Tamaulipas, where he heard border tales and folk ballads, including those associated with Catarino Garza. Paredes' father, Justo Paredes Cisneros, joined Garza's 1891 rebellion against Mexican President Porfirio Diaz. Paredes' appreciation for border culture grew out of these childhood experiences.

Tracing his life through the depression and war years, during which Paredes enlisted and edited the *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, Medrano shows Paredes' dedication to writing and education. After the war Paredes earned a doctorate in English and folklore. His dissertation focused on the 1901 Gregorio Cortez incident, which found Cortez, a Mexican peasant, accused of horse theft and murder. Using Spanish-language border ballads, Paredes placed the Cortez affair in the context of Anglo-Mexican relations and border conflict. Paredes was rebuked for his criticism of renowned folklorist Walter Prescott Webb and the Texas Rangers. Paredes' study brought to light the abuse Mexicans suffered at the hand of the Rangers, which challenged Webb's portrayal of the Rangers as a just frontier agency and the Mexican people as inherently cruel and treacherous.

Despite these objections the University of Texas Press published Paredes' dissertation, *With His Pistol in His Hand: A Border Ballad and Its Hero*. During an interview with Medrano, Paredes recalled that despite a UT Press tradition of hosting a book signing event for newly-released books, the publication of *With His Pistol in His Hand* received no such fanfare. Publication of *With His Pistol in His Hand* coincided with the rise of the Chicano Movement and served as a catalyst for the study of Mexican American/Chicano culture and folklore.

Among Paredes' many achievements was the creation of The
Center for Mexican American Studies (CMAS) at UT in 1970, which recognized the importance of the Mexican-American experience. Paredes continued to produce significant works after his retirement and received many honors, including the Order of the Aztec Eagle from the Mexican government in 1990 and a lifetime achievement award from the Texas legislature in 1998.

Medrano celebrates Paredes' professional accomplishments by placing them within a general narrative of Paredes' personal life. An outstanding feature in America Paredes is the unedited transcription of the author's interview with Paredes in which Paredes details his childhood, his struggle to obtain a higher education, and the conflict over the creation of the CMAS. Despite the limited focus on Paredes' relationship with family and friends outside of academia, America Paredes is an excellent work that complements existing scholarship on the legendary scholar.

Ana Luisa Martinez-Catsam
The University of Texas of the Permian Basin


Mexican modern identity, argues Zuzana M. Pick, is not part of an "absolute break" from the past but rather involves "a cultural and discursive rearrangement of the already existing visual signifiers of nation, identity, and modernity" (5). This includes both the ideas of "mexicanidad" at home, as well as stereotypes of Mexico found abroad — particularly in the United States. This discourse, she argues, uses archival images and films that serve to create the image of Mexico through the twentieth and into the twenty-first centuries on topics like violence, gender, and urban landscapes. This is important, argues the author, because it sets Mexican identity formation squarely outside of European models of modernity as has been argued by past works on the subject. Mexico and Mexicans have decided what it means to project their sense of identity and modernity, not external forces.

Pick examines key images and films through seven chapters and
argues that archival images, when compared to cinematic theater and promotional films, show how Mexico has been imagined and re-imagined through visual media. Of particular importance are foundational films from the Mexican Revolution or those created as a result of the conflict: chapter one covers landmark documentaries, such as Memorias de un Mexicano (Carmen Toscano de Moreno Sánchez, 1950); chapter two looks at films that address the work The Life of General Villa (now-lost); chapter three compares views of Villa from the U.S. and Mexico in Viva Villa! (Jack Conway, U.S., 1933) and ¡Vámonos con Pancho Villa! (Fernando de Fuentes, 1935); chapter four looks at Sergei Eisenstein’s classic 1930s film Que Viva México! as edited by Grigori Alexandrov (1979); chapter five examines golden-age melodrama with las abandonadas (Emilio “El Indio” Fernández, 1944); chapter six analyzes films dealing with aesthetics of spectacle, such as the The Wild Bunch (Sam Peckinpah, U.S., 1969); and in chapter seven she dives into films about foreigners transformed by Mexico with Reed: Insurgent Mexico (Paul Leduc, Mexico, 1971) about American communist and journalist John Reed and Tina in Mexico (Brenda Longfellow, 2001) about actress and photographer Tina Modotti.

One of the best ideas discussed by Pick is the paradox of the creation of film as a “freezing” of the Mexican Revolution into bits of controllable celluloid, a project conducive to the United States and the ruling party (PRI), as well as cues of memory to those millions of Mexicans who participated. Because so many Mexicans experienced the Revolution as either a producer or a recipient of its violence, the uprising inevitably becomes a site of uncontrolled meaning. For example, the presence of female soldaderas and indigenous rebels in images might either remind the viewer that the Revolution promised liberation or that it had not yet delivered on those same promises.

While the author is successful in her argument, Pick writes for an audience that is familiar with Mexico, the Revolution, and film theory; and this is not a book lightly picked up for general audiences with a casual interest in film or the Mexican Revolution. Indeed, those interested in history and use of Mexican film and less interested in the jargon of film theory would be better served by reading Seth Fein, professor of American Studies at Yale, who has published on film in the post-revolutionary period, or Thomas Benjamin and Ilene V. O’Malley, both imminently respectable and authors on the production of Mexican
identity during the Revolution. While Pick's work is of value for film studies and the idea of the creation of the image of Mexico, the work is less unique — though not uninformative — for historians of the Mexican Revolution, who are familiar with the cultural and political "repurposing" of cultural tropes that serve as sites of contested meaning.

Jason Dormady
Stephen F. Austin State University


While the decision to take military action in Southeast Asia remains a hotly debated topic, the endeavor to locate and return the 2,585 missing United States military personnel reaffirmed an American commitment that exemplifies our humanity. Armed with a confection of pungent memories, Thomas T. Smith, a Vietnam veteran and Texan, returned to that country as the officer charged with command and control of the 1992-formed Joint Task Force-Full Accounting military organization. He distills the identification processes of the missing, and he sprinkles his serious-subject memoir with quotidian tales of cultural misunderstandings among his residence maids and staff, as well as relay the nuances of political protocols required for an overall successful mission. Although on duty most of the time, Thomas also donned a tourist hat and describes for the reader a communist country that remains culturally divided between approximately fifty-four tribal entities in the old French Colonial North and the Los Angeles-style, traffic-laden Saigon occupied by a separate ethnic group that flaunts its imagined racial superiority.

Thomas conveys a sense of duty, honor, and country without the over sentimentality that generally accompanies personal recollections. During his 2003-2004 assignment, Thomas artfully wove into his story elements of existentialism as defined by Albert Camus, Shakespearean references to fallen warriors, and Homeric examples and comparisons to the trials and tribulations of the journeys of Odysseus. Flavoring his classical illustrations with down-home Texas truisms, Thomas
emphasizes the importance of handshakes and the avoidance of rattlesnakes! He prized candor when explaining the exact reasons for the “restricted” areas that prevented the search for some of those missing heroes. Vietnam suffered insurrections over political strife between traditional religious practices and the introduction of Christianity in the highlands.

Not only did the recovery process depend on tedious excavation methods and cutting-edge forensic anthropological techniques, serendipitous discoveries by locals provided the tips that determined potential recovery sites. Rife with rumors that the United States would pay a king’s ransom or allow the holder of the secrets a chance for life in America, Thomas faced a daunting task. He understood the stakes of his mission; therefore, he gingerly negotiated the release of the remains held by local tribal families. He recognized early on that well-chosen words could illicit emotional outbursts and copious tears by many Vietnamese women, indicating that mothers and grandmothers held much sway with their family members as they convinced sons to give up their precious finds without those rumored rewards of money or trips to America. Transported to the laboratory in Hawaii, the remains were identified and repatriated for burial. Although peripheral to his main theme, he intimated his disgust for the remnants and residue of the infamous Khmer Rouge Prison S-21 that he found even more repulsive than his visit to Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in Germany. Readers will also enjoy his lighter tales of scary flights, rutted roads, a cake cut with a machete, and an attack of the leeches.

Fate often provides an avenue for humans to face those memories that seem best left behind—a time to jettison the flotsam that gnaws at the soul during the darkest nights. Thomas’ “soft” journey allows those who served a vicarious insight into the twenty-first century countries of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia and how Americans and these Southeast Asians arrived at an uneasy reconciliation that benefited each country in dramatically different ways. The United States needed the remains of its citizen soldiers for closure; and these countries, although communist in organization, desired a venue into the world marketplace—what the State Department deemed a win-win. The Thomas book is also a win-win for all those who choose to share his touching and educational journey into an area of the world perceived by most Americans as a mysterious backwater with the issuance of the
1964 Gulf of Tonkin Resolution that gave President Lyndon Johnson his authority to put “boots on the ground” in Vietnam. Thomas “absorbed” a Vietnamese cultural belief that embracing the good while accepting the bad completes the circle of life. He and his various dedicated teams repatriated fourteen Americans—each name, each state origin, and each burial detailed. From all across America, though some were Texans and two were graduates of Texas A& M University, all finally home. This was Thomas’ finest hour.

Cynthia Devlin
Stephen F. Austin State University