

# Review of Texas Books

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## Editors' Choice: *A Liberated Mind: J. Frank Dobie*

Steven L. Davis

**A New Look at Frank Dobie  
& Conversation with the Author**  
Review by Brandon D. Shuler



*Steven L. Davis is the Assistant Curator at the Southwestern Writers Collection/The Wittliff Collections at Texas State University-San Marcos and serves as editor of the Southwestern Writers Collection book series, published by the University of Texas Press. His previous books include Texas Literary Outlaws: Six Writers in the Sixties and Beyond.*

### Featured Publisher

The University of Texas Press publishes books and journals, both for scholarly and general interest audiences. To date the press has published more than two thousand books over five decades and publishes eleven journals annually.

Lon Tinkle's 1978 biography *An American Original: The Life of J. Frank Dobie* tackles an American icon; however, although he reported the facts of Dobie's life, the biography leaves the reader wanting. What made Dobie the "ranching professor?" What made this conservative farm boy from Live Oak county become a progressive liberal later in life? What is Dobie's lasting legacy on Texas literature? Steven L. Davis's *A Liberated Mind: J. Frank Dobie* answers these questions and reveals the late bloomer who becomes the voice of early twentieth century Texas.

Davis explores the tumultuous relationship of Dobie and J. Evetts Haley and how Haley's jump to the ultra-conservative right hastened Dobie's move from the political center to the left. Davis also explores the influence and mentorship of Dobie on Jovita Gonzalez and J. Mason Brewer. But where Davis' writing is the most superb and reveals Dobie's nature surrounds the Machavellian machinations by the University of Texas Boards of Regents to fire Homer Rainey and ultimately J. Frank Dobie. Davis probes beyond the highlights we read of the imbroglio described by George N. Green in *The Establishment in Texas Politics* and Gary A. Keith's Eckhardt and gets to the core of the communist red-scare which invaded the Texas culture and higher education. The resounding effects liberated Dobie's thinking and gave us the man who should be reexamined under an enlightened microscope as Davis does.

I recently sat down with Steven Davis to talk about his Dobie experience. Here's what he had to say:

**BDS:** Leon Edel, Henry James's biographer, writes in *Literary Biography* that through transference and commonality of experience a biographer sends themselves on a journey of self-discovery. As you researched Dobie's life, what common experiences did you find that y'all shared and what did you discover about yourself?

**SLD:** Leon Edel is exactly right. If your biography's going to be any good, you have to

connect with your subject, to find a way to get inside his or her head.

I'd like to think that I have some special gift or insight that allows me to do this, but in truth whatever success I have is due to the archives—in particular, correspondence. There's no better way to see what a person's thinking than to read his or her private mail. That's a great way to climb into somebody's mind.

It's true that I found a number of commonalities with Dobie, and I must say, I was delighted to encounter each one. It really helped me develop a deep kinship with him. At a very basic level, I found that we share an ambivalence about academia. It's no accident that each of us quit our formal schooling after getting our master's degrees. And neither of us has any patience for those pretentious scholars who write in a deliberately opaque manner, believing that inscrutability somehow conveys authority.

There are many more affinities we could talk about, but here's just one more quick example. Those who know me well know that for years I've complained about the outsized attention given to outlaws and such. The numerous books on John Wesley Hardin, Bonnie and Clyde, etc... To me such fixations seem representative of an adolescent culture. How nice it was to discover, then, that Dobie felt the exact same way.

The sense of validation that comes from discoveries like this is so important. For years I felt like a lone wolf stumbling around in the wilderness. By studying Dobie I learned that I'm part of a community, part of an established intellectual tradition in Texas. That was a very nice gift to receive while working on this book.

**BDS:** Some recent Chicano literature scholarship has downplayed, even attempts to negate, the influence of J. Frank Dobie on Mexican-American and minority writers. However, as you point out, Dobie's mentorship of Jovita Gonzalez and J. Mason Brewer, and to an extent Americo Paredes, runs deep. How do you see this recent blush of revisionist scholarship dimming the impact of Dobie on Texas letters, especially Mexican-American

*Continued on page three*

*Continued from page two*

writing, if at all?

SLD: It's true that the Mexican American community in Texas has been marginalized and discriminated against for so long that it's hard to blame them for attacking symbols of Anglo hegemony, and Dobie was certainly that. But Dobie's fall from grace has been far more brutal than the circumstances warrant.

This whole issue gets into a real problem I have with much scholarship today. As the ideological and theoretical stakes in academia have risen, more scholars are acting like lawyers, rather than judges. They amass highly selective bits of evidence in order to "prove" their cases. These sorts of academics would make great attorneys, but you know, there's a reason people hate lawyers. Why should you trust any conclusions they reach?

In the case of Dobie, these critics condemn him as a racist by focusing solely on his early writings—and of course they judge him by the standards of our times, rather than his own. But what's worse, they ignore the very important reality that Dobie evolved, that he later became as wise and admirable as a person of his time and place could be on race issues. You know, it wasn't easy for him to be the only person in public life in Texas to be calling for the complete integration of UT-Austin in the 1940s. That ought to count for something. Dobie deserves better treatment than he's received, and that was in part my motivation for writing this book. We need to set the record straight on him.

BDS: The Texas Triumvirate of Webb, Bedichek, and Dobie obviously created a cabal of Texas intelligentsia and camaraderie that is seldom found in the ivory tower of higher education. You explore some of the later relationships of Texas letters in Texas Literary Outlaws, but those relationships never quite reach the fervor of the great Texas Three. Do you see any minds today that rival the accomplishments and promotion of Texas letters like the triumvirate?

SLD: There are many excellent people working in Texas today, but everything's much more decentralized than it was during Dobie's time. And that's a good thing. No longer can one person dominate the discourse, as Dobie did.

Mark Busby published an interesting essay about this very issue, titled "J. Frank Dobie: Who Replaced Him?" Busby noted that Dobie dominated several fields, including folklore, literary criticism, nature writing, and political/cultural commentary. Busby listed at least 24 people who later became major voices in each of those fields, from Américo Paredes and Don Graham to John Graves and Molly Ivins.

We have clusters of talent everywhere. And, refreshingly, we have pockets of those I consider to be "organic" scholars—those free from theoretical orthodoxies. In many cases, these scholars are direct descendants of Dobie's influence. Dobie believed, like Montaigne, that you should trust your own knowledge, experience, and intellect in making observations or judgments. You shouldn't bend your thoughts to adhere to a fixed doctrine.

BDS: You've said in private conversations that you'd rather write about writers unafraid to foist their political opinions into their writing. You said, "they're more interesting." Dobie was certainly politically motivated and, at times, incendiary, as most great voices I'd say are. What was it in Dobie's nature, do you think, which made him such a politically boisterous character?

SLD: Just to clarify a bit, let me point out that nothing is more tiresome than political writing. What I meant in that earlier quote is that I like writers who aren't afraid to show their emotions, to take chances, to make mistakes, to get involved in the issues of the day. They're simply more interesting subjects.

The hilarious thing about Dobie when it comes to politics is that he was equally boisterous when he was a libertarian conservative as he was as a progressive liberal. It was just in his nature to raise hell. I think it was his wife, Bertha, who observed that Frank was never at peace with himself except when inveighing against something. And, of course, to allude to one of your earlier questions, I'll admit that there's a bit of that in me, too. Certainly enough to be able to relate to Dobie while writing about him.

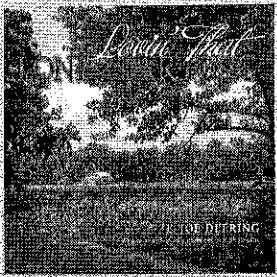
BDS: You are quickly becoming the voice of Texas literary history. The Wittliff Collections have played an important role in this climb. How have you managed to carve out such a unique voice for yourself? Who are your favorite current Texas authors and what can we expect from Steven Davis next?

SLD: Your mention of the Wittliff Collections explains a lot. Dobie said that "luck is being ready for the chance" and I was very lucky to begin working at the Wittliff Collections while I was a graduate student in Southwestern Studies at Texas State. I'm one of those geeks who could never decide between literature and history, and here in the archives I can combine both loves. Obviously I can't do my research and writing on university time—we stay very busy at the collection—but of course being in the center of all this activity confers many advantages. I know that I'm very lucky so I try to respect karmic energy by working very hard at my job and by helping others whenever possible.

As far as Texas authors, I actually try to read very widely outside of Texas in order to prevent myself from becoming too provincial. I don't want to become one of those "homers" who function as cheerleaders for Texas literature. (A view Dobie also held, by the way.)

But there are many interesting Texas writers, and I would certainly never miss a new book by people such as Dagoberto Gilb, Sarah Bird, Elizabeth Crook, Dick Reavis. And if William

*Continued on page four*



E. Joe Deering retired from the *Houston Chronicle* in 2005. These days, he photographs Texas and Texans from his hill country home base in Kerville.

Mark Gretchen is a researcher and librarian with over twenty years of experience with public libraries and municipal government. He holds a Master of Library and Information Science degree from the University of Texas at Austin.

*Continued from page three*

Hauptman ever publishes another book I'll be first in line to buy it. And finally, although Bud Shrake is now gone, I think he's the most criminally underrated Texas writer. His two best novels, *Blessed McGill* and *Strange Peaches*, deserve inclusion in the American canon.

As far as my next project, I'm beginning to feel a little constrained by writing only about Texas literary history. I've been busy composing a light comic opera, set in the Himalayas about an alien spaceship that crash lands on Mt. Annapurna and is rescued by a yeti family, which due to radiation is actually hairless, though they've also grown third arms, which come in quite handy during the rescue. There's also an intergalactic romance. Really, it's much better than it sounds, Brandon. We're doing auditions in San Marcos next month. How's your singing voice?

DAVIS, STEVEN L. *A LIBERATED MIND: J. FRANK DOBIE, AUSTIN*. UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS PRESS, 2009. 296 PP. PHOTOS. \$24.95 CLOTH. ISBN 13: 978-0-292-72114-2.

## *Lovin' That Lone Star Flag*

E. Joe Deering

**Pictorial of Flags from across the State**  
Review by Holly Carey

For those into coffee table books and the Texas flag, Derring's book is a must-have. The flag is featured in traditional settings as well the bizarre—eighteen wheeler grills, crop dusters, wheel barrows, race cars, bowling pins, graduation caps, and, of course, belt buckles. Two pictures in particular stand out to me personally: the first is a two-page spread on pages twenty-four and twenty-five. The flag, slightly blurred, is painted alongside a white building, and in the center of the picture sits in perfect focus a red-bellied woodpecker atop a barbed wire fence. As a novice bird-watcher, to me the shot is stunning. A second favorite features a young girl held up by her dad to a basketball goal; the plywood backboard is, you guessed it, the Texas flag, and the ball energetically sinks through the broken net. If I were to have one complaint about this selection, it's simply that the back cover, a beautiful hot air balloon drifting in the Texas sunset, should be the front. This catchy, eye-

pleasing collection is recommended for those

who enjoy not just the Texas flag but also for those hungry for a glimpse of ordinary Texas life from Fort Worth and Dallas to the plains and countryside.

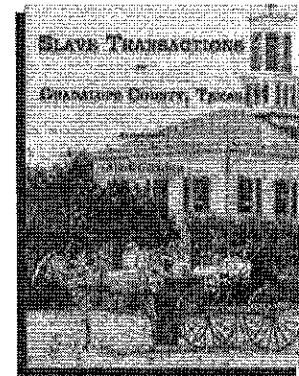
DEERING, JOE E. *LOVIN' THAT LONE STAR FLAG*. COLLEGE STATION: TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2009. 128 PP. PHOTOS. \$29.95 CLOTH. ISBN 10: 1-60344-148-4. ISBN 13: 978-1-60344-148-3. 2009008255.

## *Slave Transactions of Guadalupe County, Texas*

Mark Gretchen

**A Detailed and Well-Documented Text**  
Review by Holly Carey

Mark Gretchen's book will make a valuable addition to public, school, and university libraries across the state. In fact, I have donated the *Review of Texas Books*' copy to Lamar's Mary and John Gray Library. The text is meticulously detailed with bills of transactions, loan notes, deeds, and offers a sheer factual and unbiased account of "owners," the disassembling of families, altering of names, and labeling of slaves as "yellow," "copper," "lame, having one leg shorter than the other," "idiot boy," and the like. The dollar amounts attached to human beings serve as a stark reminder of the atrocities of slave trading in central, south, and southeast Texas. Highly recommended for Texas history majors, teachers, and professors as well as those interested in tracing genealogy and studying Texas slavery from 1840-1865.



GRETCHEN, MARK. *SLAVE TRANSACTIONS OF GUADALUPE COUNTY, TEXAS*. SANTA MARIA: JANAWAY PUBLISHING, 2009. 342 PP. ILLUSTRATIONS, INDEX. \$45.00 PAPER. ISBN 10: 1-59641-159-7. ISBN 13: 978-1-59641-159-3.

# *Duchess of Palms: A Memoir* Nadine Eckhardt

**The Changing Role of a Texas Woman**  
Review by Sally Dooley

Women who came of age in the 1950s found themselves in a world where males dominated their lives and choices, and it was accepted. Nadine Eckhardt, now a New Yorker, recalls her thoughts and experiences as a "fifties girl" who lived at first through the men in her life. As the wife of both Billy Lee Brammer, renowned author of *The Gay Place*, and U.S. congressman, Bob Eckhardt, she was thrust into brilliant literary and political circles. Coming from McAllen where she was crowned a high school Duchess of Palms, she wanted to escape and obtain an education at North Texas, now the University of North Texas. Impressed with his wit, charm, and good looks, she married Brammer while in school. Soon a mother of two children and a husband whose writing career took him away from home, the marriage grew fragile. A six-year whirl in Washington D.C. and Austin where they both worked for Senator LBJ was a primer in politics. After divorcing Brammer, she assisted Bob Eckhardt, a promising Texas legislator, into Congress. Her accounts of these years are interesting for the history she witnessed. She is frank about her growing self-knowledge, often declaring, "I would never have allowed this if I had been aware at the time..." and other life skills to be learned by many a "fifties girl."

Societal changes of the '60's brought her slowly to the painful awareness that "I didn't know how to achieve for myself, only for others, and I felt ripped off and empty." Here Eckhardt is at her best as she reveals her struggle to mature, become self-supporting, and at peace with herself. She describes sexual awakenings, drug use, addicted-husband fatigue, and ultimately a successful woman during an eventful time in Texas and Washington politics. Each chapter covers five or ten-year periods with short but colorful memories of a particular era, place, and personalities.

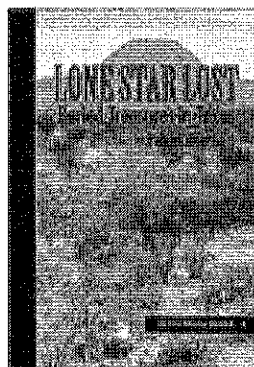
ECKHARDT, NADINE. *DUCHESS OF PALMS: A MEMOIR*. AUSTIN: UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS PRESS, 2009. 152 PP. INDEX, PHOTOS. \$29.95 CLOTH. ISBN 978-0-292-71912-5. 2008025288

# *Lone Star Lost: Buried Treasures in Texas* Patrick Dearen

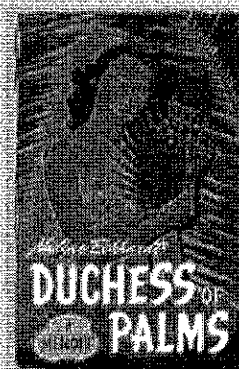
**More Lost Treasure Stories**  
Review by Emma B. Hawkins

This attractive little book (4½ x 6¼) comprises one volume of the Texas Small Books Collection. For those who are interested, on the back cover are listed seven books in the series, including this title. The book has a hard cover, nice heavy pages, and both black and white and color photographs. Ten stories of Texas lost treasures are recounted. A list of thirty-four Texas treasure-hunters who were knowledgeable about the treasures mentioned in the stories and who were interviewed in 2007 is included in the back of the book.

The stories focus on treasures from the time of Spanish exploration/settlement in Mexico and the Southwest United States, especially one buried near Denton Creek along the Denton-Wise county line, to the most recent excavations such as that conducted in 1991 at a site in the Cross Timbers area of Texas, near Sunset. This treasure hoard was supposed to include an underground labyrinth, an underground city with marble columns, and a wagon-load of gold. Several of the stories are associated with the central part of Texas, especially Wise County and Denton, instead of the usual southwestern region. The last, most documented, and longest story deals with the Spanish cache of Santiago Peak in west Texas.



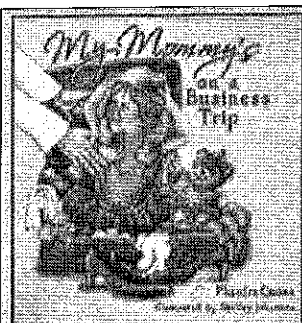
DEAREN, PATRICK. *LONE STAR LOST: BURIED TREASURES IN TEXAS*. FORT WORTH: TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2009. 96 PP. BIBLIOGRAPHY, PHOTOS. \$9.95 CLOTH. ISBN 13: 978-0-87565-392-1. 2008036395.



*Nadine Eckhardt has worked in politics and journalism, lobbied, sold real estate, and run restaurants. Now retired, she continues to enjoy life as a writer, mother, and grandmother. *Duchess of Palms* is her first book.*

*Patrick Dearen has researched lost treasures of Texas more than twenty-five years. The author of nine novels and eight non-fiction books, he has been honored by Western Writers of America, West Texas Historical Association, and the Permian Historical Association.*





Phaedra Cucina is a marketing and branding specialist who has worked in corporate America since the early 1990's. She is the President of Dolce Vita Woman, a woman to woman network for executives, to talk about what's really on their minds, both professionally and personally. *My Mommy's on a Business Trip* is her first book.

Bruce Glasrud is Professor Emeritus of History at California State University, East Bay, and retired Dean, Arts and Sciences at Sul Ross University. He has authored/coauthored nine books and edited *Buffalo Soldiers in the West: A Black Soldier's Anthology*.

Merline Pitre, author of *In Struggle against Jim Crow: Lulu B. White and the NAACP, 1900-1957* is dean of liberal arts and behavioral sciences and professor of history at Texas Southern University.

## *My Mommy's on a Business Trip* Phaedra Cucina

**A Helping Hand for Mom & Child**  
Review by Andrea Karlin

Phaedra Cucina's *My Mommy's on a Business Trip*, which can be customized for businesses whose employees travel or as customer gifts, is told from the perspective of a young girl whose mother is on a business trip. Although the child misses her mother, she understands why her mother is away and recognizes that her mother misses her too and will return home soon. Children will relate to Shelley Johannes's illustrations which complement the text.

CUCINA, PHAEDRA. *MY MOMMY'S ON A BUSINESS TRIP*. ROUND ROCK: DOLCEVITA PRESS, LLC, 2008. 32 PP. ILLUSTRATIONS. \$18.99 CLOTH. ISBN 13: 978-0818807-0-94.

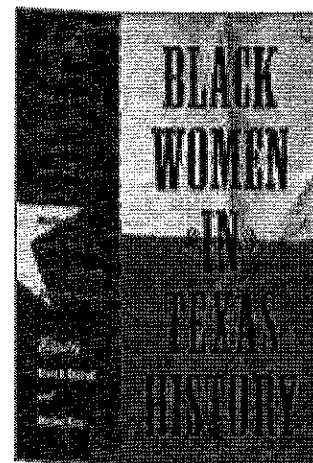
## *Black Women in Texas History*

Eds. Bruce A. Glasrud,  
Merline Pitre

**A Significant Contribution to Women's Studies**  
Review by Sara Pace

This well researched volume of essays covers the largely neglected topic of African American women's lives--the editors do acknowledge that there is a growing body of scholarship on the subject, but the existing research opens up many further questions--especially ones about the struggles and tenacity of Black women in Texas. The eight essays cover topics as diverse as how freedwomen lived in Texas after the civil war (some became landowners), the lives of married black women, how African American women in Texas grew to accumulate property and wealth, and African American women's careers in the early twentieth century. The essays cover the spectrum of women's experiences, both public (such as Bruce Glasrud's chapter on Black women in the early twentieth century, in which he discusses the political importance of women's clubs and also how many Black women fought the KKK and sought anti lynching legislation) and private (such as

Rebecca Sharpless's chapter on Black women in Texas from 1874 to 1900, in which she showcases primary research through snippets of oral histories, some recounting abusive relationships with husbands), making for a comprehensive and cohesive whole. Contributors followed the themes of place, time, class, and race, "by providing specialized studies on African American women from slavery to the civil rights movement to the present" (vii). The essays are arranged chronologically (the last chapter deals with Black women's educational and political leadership from the mid 1970s to 2000), with the purpose of sharing "the interconnections among a variety of historical experiences" (vii). The book concludes with an extensive bibliography, which would be of great help to other experienced or fledgling scholars wishing to extend the work of this insightful and interesting volume. Overall, this collection would be of great interest to a wide range of audiences, including those interested in women's studies, Texas history, and the experiences of Black women in the state throughout a fairly long span of time.



GLASRUD, BRUCE A. AND MERLINE PITRE, EDS. *BLACK WOMEN IN TEXAS HISTORY*. COLLEGE STATION: TEXAS A & M UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2008. 256 PP. BIBLIOGRAPHY, INDEX, NOTES. \$19.95 PAPER. ISBN 10: 1-60344-031-8. ISBN 13: 978-1-60344-031-8. \$40.00 CLOTH. ISBN 10: 1-60344-007-0. ISBN 13: 978-1-60344-007-3. 2007026474.

# Western Legends

Zane Grey

## Three Classic Westerns

Review by Frances M. Ramsey

Readers of current Western fiction will notice the difference of style in these three novels which were first published in 1915 or 1921. There is more description of the natural setting and the physiognomy of the characters than in most of today's writing. However, the suspense of the narrative will carry the reader to the conclusion.

In the Foreword the author states: "In this materialistic age, this hard, practical, swift, greedy age of realism, it seems there is no place for writers of romance, no place for romance itself. . .Romance is only another name for idealism; and I contend that life without ideals is not worth living." This insight enhances the reader's appreciation for the stories Zane Grey wrote.

In *To the Last Man* the half Indian son of a wealthy cattleman is called to Arizona to help with a brewing feud between cattlemen and sheep men. He is drawn to a mountain girl until they discover that their fathers are leaders on opposite sides of the conflict. Each is torn between loyalty to their fathers and what their own observations tell them.

*The Mysterious Rider* is hired to clear out the predators attacking the calves and solve the growing threat of rustlers. Columbine, a foundling reared as the daughter of a respected rancher, is sought by the rancher's wild prodigal son and the ranch's most reliable cowboy. If the girl sacrifices herself to reform the prodigal, is his change of character possible? Who is the mysterious rider?

Zane Grey explains that he learned all he could about a legendary outlaw and visited the area many times to imagine how the son of a fast gun became an outlaw even though he wanted an ordinary pleasant life. His lonely life trying to avoid conflict and his experience with *The Lone Star Ranger* provides an action filled adventure.

Beside the pleasure of reading western tales this volume could be used as a window into early twentieth century attitudes especially toward women and law and order.



GREY, ZANE. *WESTERN LEGENDS*. NEW YORK: FORGE, 2008. 784 pp. \$19.95 CLOTH. ISBN 10: 0-7653-2065-7. ISBN 13: 978-0-7653-2065-0. 2008029742.

## Texas Sunrise: Two Novels of the Texas Republic

Elmer Kelton

### Birth Pangs of Texas

Review by Frances M. Ramsey

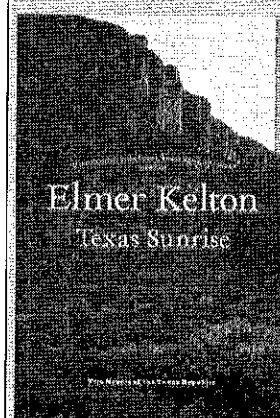
Combining *Massacre at Goliad* and *After the Bugles*, previously published separately, the early struggle for Texas independence is told from the viewpoint of Joshua Buckalew who comes to the Austin Colony with his older brother Thomas and a simple friend Muley Dodd seeking available land.

Tension builds in the first novel as settlers and even brothers have different attitudes about friendship or hatred between American and Mexican settlers. While Joshua befriends their Mexican neighbors, learns from their methods, and falls in love with one of the girls, his brother has only hostility and distrust. Eventually both brothers and neighbor Ramon Hernandez fight against Santa Ana. Joshua is involved in the first battle of the Alamo, escapes from the massacre at Goliad in which his brother dies, joins the runaway scrape, and participates in the victory at San Jacinto where he is reunited with Ramon.

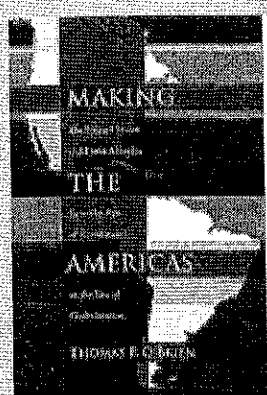
The second story depicts the aftermath of war and the struggle to rebuild what had been destroyed by Santa Ana's forces or outlaws. A disparate group returning to the same area near the Colorado River bands together for protection and struggles with their remaining prejudices. Eventually they help one another rebuild their lives.

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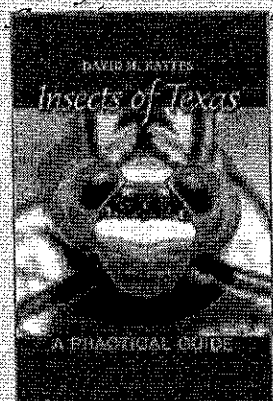
Zane Grey, the bestselling author of sixty-five western novels, is one of the most recognized and respected writers of Western fiction. His works have been translated into twenty-three languages and generated over one-hundred movies.



Elmer Kelton is a native Texan and the author of over fifty Western novels. He has won numerous awards for his work and has been recognized as the Greatest Western Writer of all time by Western Writers of America, Inc. He is the author of *Forge's Texas Ranger* series.



Thomas F. O'Brien is professor of history at the University of Houston. He is the author of *The Century of U. S. Capitalism and Latin America*, also published by UNM Press, and *The Revolutionary Mission: American Enterprise in Latin*



David H. Kattes is a professor of agronomy and horticulture at Tarleton State University in Stephenville, Texas, where he specializes in entomology and integrated pest management.

*Continued from page seven*

As in his other writing, Elmer Kelton makes history personal and explores controversies which divide, offering insight into what might ease today's conflicts. Highly recommended.

KELTON, ELMER. *TEXAS SUNRISE: TWO NOVELS OF THE TEXAS REPUBLIC*. NEW YORK: FORGE, 2008. 368 PP. \$24.95 CLOTH. ISBN 10: 0-7653-2064-9. ISBN 13: 978-0-7653-2064-3. 2008034735.

## *Making the Americas: The United States and Latin America from the Age of Revolutions to the Era of Globalization*

Thomas F. O'Brien

### **Latin America and the United States**

Review by Frances M. Ramsey

The author, history professor at the University of Houston, states in the introduction that the central argument of this work is that over the past two centuries the people of the United States have envisioned themselves on a global mission of reform because of their confidence in the superiority of their free-market economy, competitive individualistic society, and republican political institutions.

In chapters usually covering from ten to twenty years, the author details the interactions of the Americas from the first rare encounters to present day globalization. A somewhat arrogant, paternalistic attitude toward Latin Americans has led politicians, corporations, philanthropists and missionaries to pursue a civilizing or modernizing mission. This effort has brought the extraordinary productivity of capitalism, the wonders of consumerism, and the promise of democratic institutions and individual rights. This mission has been variously embraced, rejected, and reconfigured by Latin Americans, and now the increase of immigrants from Latin America will have a profound impact on the United States.

This academic volume is packed with valuable, well documented information and deserves a careful reading by those affecting U.S. policy. The final statement merits thoughtful consideration. "What is unclear is whether in light of their experiences in Latin America, the people of the United States and their leaders

possess the wisdom to appreciate the limits of their powers to transform the globe and a respect for the ability of people in other cultures to shape their own destinies.

O'BRIEN, THOMAS F. *MAKING THE AMERICAS: THE UNITED STATES AND LATIN AMERICA FROM THE AGE OF REVOLUTIONS TO THE ERA OF GLOBALIZATION*. ALBUQUERQUE: UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO PRESS, 2007. 376 PP. BIBLIOGRAPHY, ILLUSTRATIONS, INDEX, NOTES, PHOTOS. \$24.95 PAPER. ISBN 13: 978-0-8263-4200-3. 2007004234.

## *Insects of Texas: A Practical Guide*

David H. Kattes

### **Easy to Follow and Well-Illustrated**

Review by Frances M. Ramsey

As stated in the *Preface*, "This book is not an authoritative or definitive book on insect taxonomy, but rather a guide to the more recognizable identifying characteristics of many common insect orders and families in Texas." The *Introduction* defines the term "insect" and describes the structures which help in identification. Examples of variation in these structures are illustrated by colorful, informative photographs.

The *How to Use This Book* section lists common names of each family included in a class with major identifying characteristics and pages for more information. Pronunciation and meaning of scientific names are made plain throughout. Information on each family page includes physical characteristics, habitat, and food for both adults and larvae, all enhanced by multiple color photographs.

Using this attractive book is like having a good teacher to guide one. The logical presentation, the pronunciation guides and glossary, and the beautiful photographs pique one's interest and guide one's reaction to each insect, whether harmful or beneficial. Highly recommended.

KATTES, DAVID H. *INSECTS OF TEXAS: A PRACTICAL GUIDE*. COLLEGE STATION: TEXAS A & M UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2009. 216 PP. GLOSSARY, ILLUSTRATIONS, INDEX, PHOTOS, TABLES. \$27.00 FLEXBOUND WITH FLAPS. ISBN 10: 1-60344-087-8. ISBN 978-1-60344-082-0. 2008023996.



# *To Get a Better School System: One Hundred Years of Education Reform in Texas*

Gene B. Preuss

**A History of Changes in Public Education**  
Review by Frances M. Ramsey

Dr. Gene B. Preuss, assistant professor of history at the University of Houston-Downtown, uncovers the reasons why Texas lawmakers adopted measures to dramatically change public school administration following World War II. These were measures very similar to those previously rejected.

One controversial impediment to improvement was the divide between those who supported a centralized system of tax-supported public education and those who held that education was a parental responsibility and feared loss of local control.

The author traces efforts to establish free public education from the Republic of Texas to World War II. He points out the effect of conservative politics and racial prejudice. The mainly agricultural population made isolated one room schools with minimally prepared teachers the norm in much of the state. Military needs during World War II revealed the wide lack of education throughout the U.S. and a movement for reform arose.

The last chapter introduces Claud Gilmer and A. M. Aiken who pushed for careful study and final passage of the Gilmer-Aikin laws under which school reform was finally effected.

Copious notes, an extensive bibliography, and the index make this a useful resource for those interested in the development of Texas education. Black and white photographs illustrate earlier schools and some of the leaders for change.

PREUSS, GENE B. *TO GET A BETTER SCHOOL SYSTEM: ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF EDUCATION REFORM IN TEXAS*. COLLEGE STATION: TEXAS A & M UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2009. 152 PP. BIBLIOGRAPHY, INDEX, NOTES, PHOTOS. \$34.95 CLOTH. ISBN 10: 1-60344-111-5. ISBN 13: 978-1-60344-111-7. 2008050656.

# *The Woodcutter's Gift / El regalo del leñador*

Lupe Ruiz-Flores

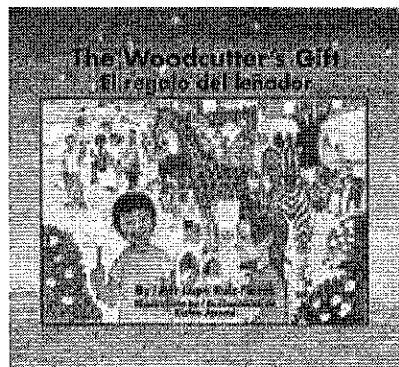
**Surprise Gift from a Fallen Tree**  
Review by Frances M. Ramsey

This charming children's story unfolds with English narrative at the top of the page and the lines in Spanish below a small pictured detail. The opposite page illustrates the tale in soft colorful drawings.

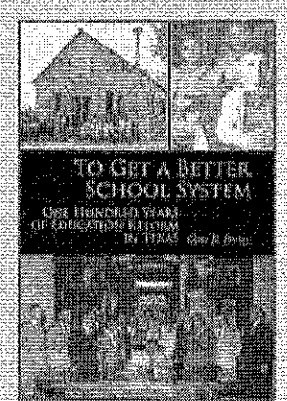
When a violent thunder storm topples a giant mesquite tree in the town square, neighbors who seldom speak congregate to decide what to do. One grumpy painter insists it has value only as firewood. But the gardener advises consulting the woodcutter. "This tree could belong to everyone. It will be a surprise." He cuts it into large chunks and hauls it to his garage where he works behind closed doors. Finally he summons the community to see the life size menagerie of animals he has carved for the square.

The delighted children are allowed to paint the animals with donated leftover paint with bright results. When a museum wants too buy the artistic animals, the children are saddened. However, the woodcutter says, "Look how our zoo has brought us all together. The zoo belongs here. It's not for sale, but I will donate one piece to the museum so others can enjoy it, too."

Recommended especially for bilingual clientele and those wishing to brush up on another language.

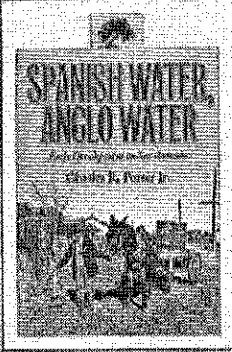


RUIZ-FLORES, LUPE. *THE WOODCUTTER'S GIFT / EL REGALO DEL LEÑADOR*. HOUSTON: ARTE PUBLICO PRESS, 2007. 32 PP. ILLUSTRATIONS. \$15.95 CLOTH. ISBN 10: 1-55885-489-4. ISBN 13: 978-1-55885-489-5. 2007061478.

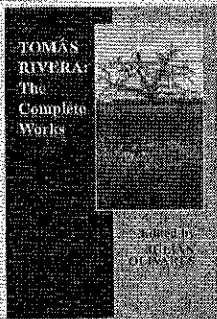


*Gene B. Preuss is an assistant professor of history at the University of Houston-Downtown. His doctorate is from Texas Tech University.*

*Lupe Ruiz-Flores resides in San Antonio, where she writes poetry and children's books. She is the author of Lupita's Papalote / El papalote de Lupita, published by Piñata Books in 2002.*



Charles R. Porter, Jr. is a real estate and construction expert and adjunct professor of history at St. Edward's University in Austin. Certified as an instructor by the Texas Real Estate Commission, he also writes and teaches core and continuing education courses in real estate.



Tomás Rivera was born to a family of migrant farm workers in the South Texas town of Crystal City. In spite of moving constantly to work the crops, Rivera managed to graduate from high school. He then earned a degree in English from Southwest Texas State University and earned a master's degree in Spanish literature and a doctorate in Romance languages.

## *Spanish Water, Anglo Water: Early Development in San Antonio*

Charles R. Porter, Jr.

**The Waters that Bestowed Life to San Antonio**

Review by Cristina Ríos

This well researched book discusses the historical development of San Antonio, using as a framework its water resources, from the first Spanish settlement in 1718 to 1902. The chronicle of the emergence and evolution of an important city in Texas, and how a natural resource shaped a community, could be an appealing topic to many audiences; including historians, sociologists, political scientists, urban developers, engineers, legal scholars, environmentalists, etc.

The book is organized in three parts. Part one presents the original resources of the region and establishes the importance of water in an area where the amount of rain can be uncertain. The author recounts the descriptions made by the first Spanish explorers that named the San Antonio River in 1691, about the magnificence of the river and clear water springs. The reader is reminded of the fact that the original natural splendor of the environment has been altered.

Part Two covers the period of 1718 to 1836, and discusses the planning and founding of the mission, presidio, and village of San Antonio. The construction of the initial irrigation system was a cooperative endeavor and the distribution and use of the water resources was based on the Spanish belief and legal principle that water was to be shared fairly by everyone in the community. The author argues that Spanish colonial laws on water still have an influence on the rulings of Texas courts on this matter.

Historical events that transformed San Antonio from being a part of Mexico to eventually becoming an American city are related in Part Three. The author provides an interesting account of social and political changes comprising the years 1836 to 1902. Water that had been the source of life and collaboration for the community brought disease, controversy, and was used for political gains. The author indicates in the epilogue, that he is

preparing a second volume, covering the subsequent developments in the 20th Century. Unanswered issues raise interesting research questions, that scholars in different fields of study might want to pursue.

PORTER, CHARLES R. JR. *SPANISH WATER, ANGLO WATER: EARLY DEVELOPMENT IN SAN ANTONIO*. COLLEGE STATION: TEXAS A & M UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2009. 192 PP. BIBLIOGRAPHY, ILLUSTRATIONS, INDEX, MAPS, NOTES, PHOTOS. \$34.95 CLOTH. ISBN 10: 1-60344-122-0. ISBN 13: 978-1-60344-122-3. 2009001516.

## *Tomás Rivera: The Complete Works*

Ed. Julián Olivares

**The Migrant Farm-worker Experience and Chicano Literature**  
Review by Cristina Ríos

The complete literary production of Tomás Rivera is compiled in this excellent book, including his award winning novel, short stories, poetry, and critical essays. This edition also includes works that were published after Rivera's death, and some that had not been published previously. In the introduction, the editor presents an overview of Tomás Rivera's literary work as well as a comprehensive discussion, analysis, and interpretation of Rivera's writings.

The literary works of Tomás Rivera are at the heart of the Chicano Literary Movement and portray the authentic experiences of migrant farm-workers. As a child Rivera experienced the hardships of the nomadic life of the migrant families; moving with his own family in search of farm-work from Texas to the Midwest, to work in the seasonal crop-fields. Tomás Rivera's literary production reflects not only his own life experiences as a child and adolescent, but as a witness to the existential occurrences in the daily lives of migrant workers as a social group.

This volume is in both English and Spanish, and includes some copies of the handwritten manuscripts by Tomás Rivera. Apparently, Rivera originally wrote most of his prose works in Spanish. However, Rivera himself translated or prepared several of his works in both languages. The Spanish used by Rivera in

*Continued on page eleven*

*Continued from page ten*

many of his works is the colloquial Chicano Spanish in use by the migrant workers in Texas as he was growing up. The uniqueness of the culture of this migrant community and the speech patterns of Chicano Spanish and Chicano English, including its charming code-switching, are captured in the voices of Rivera's characters.

This compilation is highly recommended for university libraries. Tomás Rivera's literary works are essential readings for anyone studying Chicano literature or interested in the migrant worker experience.

OLIVARES, JULIAN, ED. *TOMÁS RIVERA: THE COMPLETE WORKS*. 2ND ED. HOUSTON: ARTE PÚBLICO PRESS, 2008. 448 PP. APPENDICES, BIBLIOGRAPHY, CHRONOLOGY. \$19.95 PAPER. ISBN 10: 1-55885-509-2. ISBN 13: 978-1-55885-509-0. 91-12328.

## *The Seventh Star of the Confederacy: Texas during the Civil War* Ed. Kenneth W. Howell

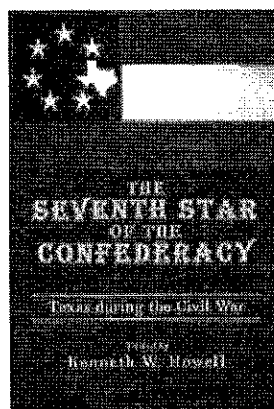
A Collection of Essays about the Civil War Experience of Texas and Texans  
Review by Jon P. Tritz

Civil War historian Ralph Wooster edited an excellent collection of articles in his 1995 book *Lone Star Blue and Gray: Essays on Texas in the Civil War*. Here is now another collection of essays on Civil War Texas, this time compiled and edited by Kenneth Howell, assistant professor of history at Prairie View A&M University.

This new anthology features contributions by eighteen scholars, both well-known academic professors and a few who are recent to the field. Howell divides the seventeen chapters into four parts covering military, social and cultural aspects of Texas' involvement in the Civil War. Part I devotes a couple of chapters concerning new studies on Texas Civil War historiography and a historical overview of the topic. Part II includes an interesting chapter on the Knights of the Golden Circle in Texas. Part III features chapters on enlistment patterns of Texans, prominent Civil War battles in the state, Indian involvement in the war, and a

chapter on the Camp Ford prison camp near Tyler. The final part IV has chapters on the Texas Confederate governors, problems of aid to soldiers' families, Black Texans and slavery, food shortages of corn and beef, and a final chapter on war dissension by German immigrants in Colorado County.

Some of the chapters are complemented with statistical tables, pictures and maps. Especially useful are maps concerning the battles for Galveston and Sabine Pass. One minor suggestion would be to have likewise included maps or diagrams for the chapters on the Red River campaign and the skirmishes along the Coastal Bend. Regardless, this fine work, number 10 in the War and the Southwest Series of the publisher, should be a definite purchase for all academic libraries and optional for public libraries.



HOWELL, KENNETH W., EDITOR. *THE SEVENTH STAR OF THE CONFEDERACY: TEXAS DURING THE CIVIL WAR*. DENTON: UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS PRESS, 2009. 352 PP. BIBLIOGRAPHY, ILLUSTRATIONS, INDEX, MAPS, PHOTOS. \$34.95 CLOTH. ISBN 13: 978-1-57441-259-8. 200805313.

Kenneth W. Howell is an assistant professor at Prairie View A&M University. He received his Ph.D. in history from Texas A&M University and also taught there as a visiting assistant professor. He is the author of *Texas Confederate, Reconstruction Governor: James Webb Throckmorton* and coauthor of *The Devil's Triangle: Ben Bickerstaff, Northeast Texans, and the War of Reconstruction in Texas and Beyond Myths and Legends: A Narrative History of Texas*.



## Reviewers

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