

# Review of Texas Books

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*Review of Texas Books*  
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Editors' Choice: <i>Journey to San Jacinto</i> , Melodie A. Cuate	2
<i>Prairie Gothic: The Story of a West Texas Family</i> , John R. Brickson	2-3
<i>The First Tortilla—A Bilingual Story</i> , Rudolfo Anaya	4
<i>Aunt Claire's Yellow Beehive Hat</i> , Deborah Blumenthal	4
<i>Best Stories of the American West</i> , Marc Jaffe, editor	4
<i>Grandpa for Sale</i> , Dottie Enderle and Vicki Sansum	5
<i>Granny Gert and the Bunton Brothers</i> , Dotti Enderle	5
<i>Ricardo's Race/La Carrea de Ricardo</i> , Diane Gonzales Bertrand	5-6
<i>Learn About...Texas Birds</i> , Mark W. Lockwood	6
<i>Ranger's Law: A Lone Star Saga</i> , Elmer Kelton	6
<i>Sandhills Boy: The Winding Trail of a Texas Writer</i> , Elmer Kelton	7
<i>Military Medicine to Win Hearts and Minds: Aid to Civilians in the Vietnam War</i> , Robert J. Wilensky	7-8
<i>Historic Hotels of Texas: A Traveler's Guide</i> , Liz Carmack	8
<i>Perseverance</i> , Patrick Dearen	8
<i>The Garden Lover's Guide to Houston</i> , Eileen Houston	8-9
<i>The Rebels: Sons of Texas</i> , Elmer Kelton	9-10
<i>Texas Quilts and Quilters: A Lone Star Legacy</i> , Marcia Kaylakie with Janice Whittington	10
<i>Sugar Lump's Night Before Christmas</i> , Lynn Sheffield Simmons	10-11
<i>The Women There Don't Treat You Mean: Abilene in Song</i> , Joe W. Specht	11

*Journey to San Jacinto* by Melodie A. Cuate presents Texas history in an interesting story likely to delight juvenile readers. Also available in this series is *Journey to the Alamo*.

Melodie A. Cuate has taught school in Texas for seventeen years.

Other books available for middle readers who enjoy historical fiction include *Harvey Girl*, by Sheila Wood Foard, and *Remember the Alamo*, by Lisa Waller Rogers. Both books were published by Texas Tech University Press.

## Editors' Choice: *Journey to San Jacinto* Melodie A. Cuate

Journey to San Jacinto  
Melodie A. Cuate

**Middle-School Time Travelers Take Part in the Battle of San Jacinto**  
Review by Stephen Curley

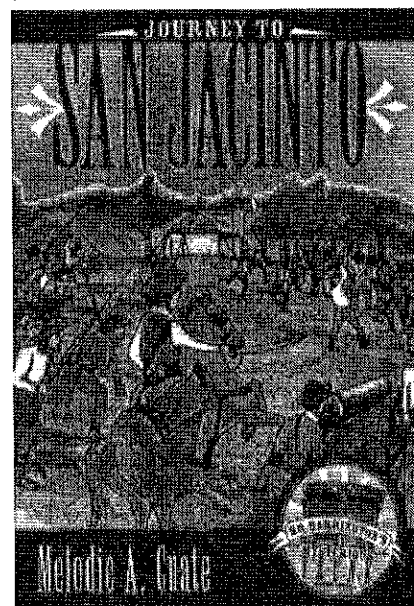
When the word "Help" appears on a magical trunk full of historical artifacts, Hannah Taylor and Jackie Montalvo suspect their seventh grade history teacher Mr. Barrington has gotten himself in trouble in another time-travel adventure. The last time they ended up at the Battle of the Alamo (see volume one in this series). This time, the girls find themselves—with the teacher's adult niece Miss Barrington—trekking alongside Sam Houston's men on the road to the Battle of San Jacinto. And Hannah's older brother, Nick, gets sucked unwillingly into the past—but on the Mexican side!

Cuate adeptly introduces readers to the realities of the early nineteenth century by having the children use breezy, anachronistic slang from the present. They describe bread, cheese, and jerky as the "take-out food of the past." As their clothes get dirtier, Jackie misses her mom's Maytag. Getting a wooden wagon wheel stuck in the mud is worse than a flat tire. Nick calls his friend Diego "dude" and teaches him to catch and throw like one of the Houston Astros. And, of course, the total experience of re-living history is just "so cool."

Cuate focuses on the ordinary people of 1836 whose spirit, tenacity, and determination made possible today's Texas. But the story is not reducible to a simple lesson in patriotism. What takes this book beyond mere pleasurable fantasy is Nick's journey as a member of the losing side. We experience—through him—the humane generosity of General Castrillón, the struggles of the Mexican soldiers, and the pathos of watching friends be killed. At the battle's end, Nick can say nothing good about what happened; he now knows that history is far more complex than words printed in books

Highly recommended for budding historians, ages nine to twelve. The book also might convince some of the disaffected that true history has little to do with memorizing names and dates.

CUATE, MELODIE A. *JOURNEY TO SAN JACINTO*. LUBBOCK: TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2007. 160 PP. PHOTOS. \$79.95 CLOTH. ISBN 10: 0-89672-602-9. ISBN 13: 978-0-89672-602-4. 2006029847.



## *Prairie Gothic: The Story of a West Texas Family* John R. Erickson

**Rugged Country, Rugged People**  
Review by Dale Farris

Texas Institute of Letters member Erickson, 5<sup>th</sup>-generation Texan born and raised in the Texas panhandle and most well known for his highly successful *Hank the Cowdog* series of children's stories (begun in 1982 and now totaling fifty different titles) provides readers a vivid and well-rounded picture of several generations in a pioneer family. The work is the story of Erickson's own family, ordinary  
(Continued on page three)

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people who through strength of character found dignity in the challenges presented by nature as well as human nature. This is also a tale of how the family's place of origin was instrumental in shaping their lives. Their roots are in the flatland prairie of northwestern Texas, land that has gone by various names, including the High Plains, the South Plains, the Staked Plains, and the Llano Estacado, as well as the rugged country on its eastern boundary, often referred to as the caprock canyonlands.

As Erickson reveals, one branch of his family arrived in Texas in 1858, settling in Parker County, west of Weatherford. Another branch helped establish the first community on the South Plains, the Quaker colony of Estacado. The family lines crossed paths with numerous prominent people in Texas history, including Sam Houston, Sul Ross, Charles Goodnight, Cynthia Ann and Quanah Parker, Jim Loving, and famous outlaw, Tom Ross. Erickson's research also took him into the homes of well-known Texas authors, such as J. Evetts Haley and John Graves, since Graves had written about the death of Erickson's great-great grandmother, Martha Sherman.

The central theme of the work is the strength in family and the efforts of his four generations to nurture the values of civilized people, including reverence of the written word, honesty, godliness, thrift, and personal relationship. Erickson also shares the stories of pioneer women and their struggles to keep their families together and of cowboys, outlaws, and Indian raids, all influenced by the harsh environment of droughts, blizzards, and rattlesnakes. This personal story of a definitively West Texas family ultimately proves universal, as Erickson creates a fascinating blend of family and regional history that will appeal to all fans of memoirs.

Highly recommended for all public libraries, especially those in West Texas and the Texas Panhandle.

ERICKSON, JOHN R. *PRAIRIE GOTHIC: THE STORY OF A WEST TEXAS FAMILY*. DENTON: UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS PRESS, 2005. 224 PP. BIBLIOGRAPHY. INDEX. MAPS. PHOTOGRAPHS. \$40.00 CLOTH. ISBN 10: 1-57441-200-0. ISBN 13: 978-1-57441-200-0. 2005016189.

## *Fun with the Family in Texas: Hundreds of Ideas for Day Trips with the Kids* Allan Kimball

**Family-Friendly Vacation Fun**  
Review by Dale Farris

Just in time for vacation plans comes author Kimball's collection of inside information on family-friendly fun to be had in Texas. Kimball focuses this series on traveling in Texas on the special interests of children. Kimball has driven, walked, flown, or paddled through just about all areas of Texas, while frequently dragging his family with him, and he has assembled his travel recommendations in to seven geographical zones, including the Texas panhandle, the prairies and lakes of North Texas, the East Texas piney woods, the coastal plains, the hill country, the South plains, and West Texas and the Big Bend. In each zone, Kimball explains the family-fun features that include amusement parks, hiking trails, zoos, aquariums, children's museums, festivals, parks, restaurants, camp grounds, and other special sights that are sure to interest and entertain children. This fourth edition includes latest information on the selected attractions, detailed maps, quick reference icons, and age-appropriate guidelines. For families with children who like to travel in Texas, Kimball's title is essential for their vacation or weekend get-away plans, and belongs in all public libraries.

KIMBALL, ALLAN. *FUN WITH THE FAMILY IN TEXAS: HUNDREDS OF IDEAS FOR DAY TRIPS WITH THE KIDS*. GUILFORD: THE GLOBE PEQUOT PRESS, 200. 304 PP. ILLUSTRATIONS. INDEX. \$13.95 PAPER. ISBN 0-7627-4174-0.

**Note:**

The Globe Pequot Press has recently published an updated, 6<sup>th</sup> edition of *Fun With The Family in Texas*. Allan Kimball and Sharry Buckner are co-authors of this book, which was released December 1, 2006.

288 pp. Paperback. \$13.95

Illustrations and Index

ISBN: 0-7627-4174-0

John R. Erickson is the author of the *Western Life Series*. Titles in the series include *Catch Rope: The Long Arm of the Cowboy*, *Through Time and the Valley, LZ Cowboy: A Cowboy's Journal 1979-1981*, *Panhandle Cowboy*, and *Some Babies Grow Up to Be Cowboys*, among others.

The *Western Life Series* titles are available from the University of North Texas Press.  
[www.unt.edu/untpress](http://www.unt.edu/untpress)

All Texas A&M University Press publications are available from local book stores or at the secure online site of A&M University:  
[www.tamu.edu/upress](http://www.tamu.edu/upress)

## *The First Tortilla— A Bilingual Story*

Rudolfo Anaya

### **Danger, Fear, and an Amazing Feat**

Review by Andrea Karlin

Jade, the heroine of Rudolfo Anaya's bilingual story *The First Tortilla*, faces danger and overcomes fear to accomplish an amazing feat. She saves her village from the terrible drought that is causing crops to die and the people to starve. The weaving of part of an old Mexican legend by Anaya into his tale helps to create a story for all times and ages.

Vividly colored with illustrations by Any Córdova perfectly complement the text, which is written in English and Spanish. As one reads the words and studies the illustrations, one is transported to the magical time and place of the story.

Those who are familiar with a Texas favorite—*The Legend of the Bluebonnet*—will delight in this story that has a familiar theme.

ANAYA, RUDOLFO. *THE FIRST TORTILLA—A BILINGUAL STORY*. ALBUQUERQUE: UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO PRESS, 2007. 32 PP. ILLUSTRATIONS. \$16.95 CLOTH. ISBN 10: 0826342140, ISBN 13: 978-0826342140.

## *Aunt Claire's Yellow Beehive Hair*

Deborah Blumenthal

Mary Grandpré illustrator

### **Where She Fits In**

Review by Andrea Karlin

There seems to be a universal curiosity about one's family—the relatives that have preceded one or the ones that the youngest members of a family can not believe were ever young. In Deborah Blumenthal's "Aunt Claire's Yellow Beehive Hair," the reader is introduced to young Annie, who with the help of her grandmother and old family memorabilia, learns about those who came before her as well as where she fits in the whole family scheme of things.

Mary GrandPre's grand illustrations allow the reader to accompany Annie on her multi-generational journey. And, what a treat it is to become acquainted with her family's cast of characters!

BLUMENTHAL, DEBORAH. *AUNT CLAIRE'S YELLOW BEEHIVE HAIR*. GRETNAL: PELICAN PUBLISHING COMPANY, 2007. 32 PP. ILLUSTRATIONS. \$15.92 CLOTH. ISBN 0-8037-2509-4.

## *Best Stories of the American West*

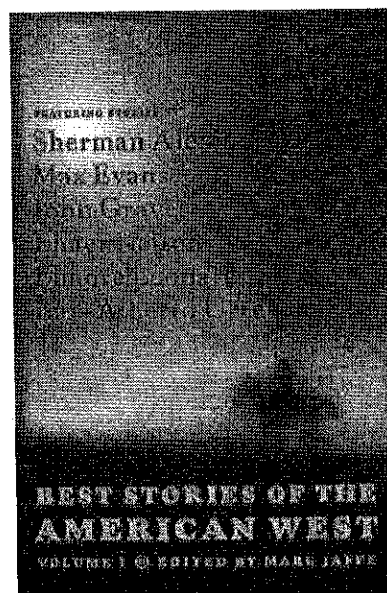
Marc Jaffe, editor

### **No Classic Western Here**

Review by Max Loges

There is very little I liked about this book. I have never come across a title that so completely misrepresented the contents of a book. If one is expecting to find classic stories by writers such as Owen Wister, Andy Adams, or A. B. Guthrie, he should look elsewhere. In fact, if one is at least looking for stories with traditional western themes, he will find only a bare handful here. However, if one is looking for stories about deviants and misfits unable to confront modern life and struggling with the dire prospect of their life choices, he has found a treasure trove here. Only two stories come close to living up to the title's claim. Elmer Kelton's "Continuity" is a story of a modern ranch family which experiences the death of its patriarch and the introduction of the younger generation into the family business with all its "new fangled" ideas. In his final days, the patriarch sees continuity in his efforts as a young man to convince his father to adopt new innovations in the business and the struggle of his grandson to achieve the same goal with his father, the patriarch's son. Elmer Leonard's "The Hard Way" is the story of a Mexican-American deputy trying to enforce the law in a town where one man has too much political influence and his own ethnic group has none.

Most of the stories contain strong profanity and adult situations. I do not recommend the work as a whole.



JAFFE, MARC, EDITOR. *BEST STORIES OF THE AMERICAN WEST*. NEW YORK: FORGE PRESS, 2007. 316 PP. \$25.95 CLOTH. ISBN 10: 0765310899. ISBN 13: 978-0765310897.

## Grandpa for Sale

Dotti Enderle and Vicki Sansum

### Who Needs Grandpa?

Review by JoAn W. Martin

Lizzie works hard at Oldman's Antiques. She dusts all the old furniture, lamps, clocks, and books. A lady with tall hair, Mrs. Larchmont, is surprised to see someone so young running the store. Lizzie admits that she is just watching the store until her mother gets back. But Lizzie secretly knows she can run the entire store.

When Mrs. Larchmont sees a Louis XVI sofa for sale, she must have it. Lizzie finally realizes that the woman is actually bargaining for the one antique that is not for sale—Grandpa, who is napping on the sofa. Mrs. Larchmont insists that everyone has a price, but just how high must she go for Grandpa? Smotherby's Antiques offers to locate a grandpa for Mrs. Larchmont.

Temptation rears its ugly head when Lizzie begins to visualize what she could buy as Mrs. Larchmont keeps bidding up the price. The potential customer offers so much money that Lizzie could have a tree house, a boat, a bedroom suite, an ice cream shop, then an amusement park. But what fun would any of those things be without Grandpa?

Another Dotti Enderle picture book, but this time Vicki Sansum collaborates with her on Vicki's first picture book. This is also T. Kyle Gentry's first picture. He usually illustrates for toy, game, and print industries. Gentry's double spread illustrations are graphite pencil and digital pencils, watercolor, and chalk. His attention to details places the reader inside a crowded shop and extends the text beautifully. He makes clever use of color versus black and white to indicate Grandpa's importance.



ENDERLE, DOTTIE, AND VICKI SANSUM. *GRANDPA FOR SALE*. BROOKLYN: FLASHLIGHT PRESS, 2007. 32 PP. ILLUSTRATIONS. \$15.95 CLOTH. ISBN 10: 097292258X. ISBN 13: 9780972922586.

## Granny Gert and the Bunion Brothers

Dottie Enderle

### Starla Scissors and the Boys

Review by JoAn W. Martin

In Texas when the dumbest, ugliest boys in the state run up against Granny Gert, the reader can expect sparks to fly. Their banjo-playing talent results in sour pickles. The Bunion brothers, Buddy and Buck, have been getting along fine until jealousy, envy, and competition rear their ugly heads.

But who could resist Granny Gert's lovely granddaughter, Starla Scissors. Just the sight of Starla causes the brothers to forget that blood is thicker than water, and immediately they are in the middle of another fist fight. Threatened with Granny Gert's ferocious per, Mad Dog, the boys eventually reach a compromise in this amusing Texas tale.

Even though Joe Kulka lives in Pennsylvania, he illustrates like a Texan. His vibrant colors and bigger-than-life pictures extend the text. Obviously, if one is cleaning the outhouse, a clothespin comes in handy. The text need not tell the readers that the Bunion brothers are down to their last dime; holey socks and bad teeth make the point through Kulka's vivid illustrations.

ENDERLE, DOTTIE. *GRANNY GERT AND THE BUNION BROTHERS*. GRETNIA: PELICAN PUBLISHING COMPANY, 2006. 32 PP. ILLUSTRATIONS. \$15.95 CLOTH. ISBN 10: 1-58980-373-6. ISBN 13: 978-1-58980-373-2. 200600978.

## Ricardo's Race/La Carrera de Ricardo

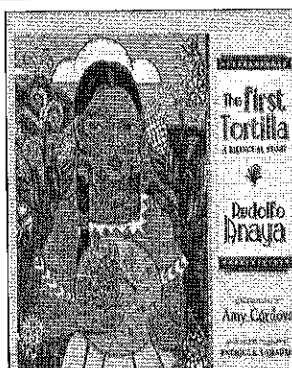
Diane Gonzales Bertrand

### Biography of Ricardo Romo, President of UTSA

Review by Frances M. Ramsey

Full page color illustrations by Anthony Accardo and English text by Diane Gonzales Bertrand with Spanish translation by Rocio Viegas-Barros present a lively account of the life of Ricardo growing up helping in his

*Continued on page six*



Rudolfo Anaya is the author of numerous books including *Shaman Winter* (2000), *Jemez Spring* (2005), *Albuquerque: A Novel* (2006), and *Curse of the Chupacabra* (2006).

Dottie Enderle has been telling fortunes since an early age. She's extremely psychic as she always knows when there is chocolate nearby. Her inspiration for the *Fortune Tellers Club* series came from her own childhood of divination. She and her best friends spent hours foreseeing the future with a Ouija board, fortune-telling cards, or by scrying (crystal gazing) in a bowl of water.

*Continued from page five*

parents' grocery store in San Antonio. Working in the store helped him learn English and arithmetic while getting to work from school developed his skill as a runner. His running earned him a college scholarship, and he became the first Texan to run a mile in less than four minutes.

This inspiring book continues with his college years, his marriage, and his teaching career. The story demonstrates the values of diligence and dependability without seeming preachy. Readers practicing Spanish will enjoy reading the Spanish text. This juvenile text is recommended.

BERTRAND, DIANE GONZALES. *RICARDO'S RACE/LA CARRERA DE RICARDO*. HOUSTON: ARTE PUBLICO PRESS, 2007. 32 PP. CHRONOLOGY. ILLUSTRATIONS. \$15.95 CLOTH. ISBN 10: 1-55885-481-9. ISBN 13: 978-1-55885-481-9. 2006051517.

## Learn About...Texas Birds

Mark W. Lockwood

### Bird Study Activity Book

Review by Frances M. Ramsey

First published by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Press in 1997, this activity book provides a thorough study of Texas birds suitable for use in schools, scouting programs, or by anyone interested in birds.

The thirty-one birds pictured on the colored cover are identified in the first page. Charts show the number of bird species in the world, in North America, and in Texas. Scientific taxonomy is explained. The ecological regions of Texas are shown on a state map. Field note symbols describe range, nesting places and type, and favorite foods of the species. External features such as feathers, bills, and feet are shown in line drawings and are compared between species. Full page drawings of birds in typical poses include informative text and thoughtful questions. There are also instructions for simple bird feeders, blinds, and nesting boxes.

Texas birds are listed phylogenetically by family in the back of the book. Silhouettes in the margins help to locate what one sees in the field. The book includes puzzles and suggestions for keeping a field journal. This activity book is highly recommended.

LOCKWOOD, MARK W. *LEARN ABOUT...TEXAS BIRDS*. AUSTIN: UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS PRESS, 2007. 52 PP. ILLUSTRATIONS. MAPS. \$10.95 PAPER. ISBN 10: 0-292-71685-0. ISBN 13: 978-0-292-71685-0. 2006939525.



## Ranger's Law: A Lone Star Saga

Elmer Kelton

### Life of the Texas Rangers after Reconstruction

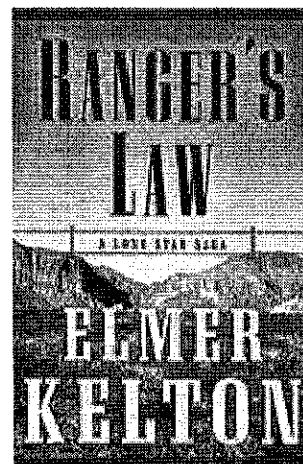
Review by Frances M. Ramsey

*Ranger's Law* is a re-publication of three of Elmer Kelton's novels about the life and times of the Texas Rangers after reconstruction. Andy Pickard, a child captive of the Comanches, was reared as a warrior until injury brought him under the care of Rusty Shannon. In *Ranger's Trail*, he follows Rusty's example by joining the Texas Rangers. When Alice Monahan elopes with a questionable hired man, Rusty brings her home and stirs up trouble with her husband's mean outlaw family.

When the Rangers send Andy and Farley Brackett to return a prisoner to the sheriff in a town racked by feuding families, they must protect their prisoner from the lynch mob. *Texas Vendetta* deals with the ensuing violence in the struggle for justice.

*Jericho's Road* deals with the animosity between Mexicans and Anglos between the Rio Grande and the Nueces rivers. Many Mexicans have been cheated out of their land, and white settlers have pushed into the area. Andy and Farley are sent to patrol the Rio Grande and maintain some degree of peace, but their sergeant would just as soon let Jericho Jackson's hired hands kill off the Mexicans.

Each of the three books has a bit of romance as well as plenty of action adventure and an examination of an issue important to Texas history. The back history relating the three volumes is a bit repetitious, but it does help to keep the characters straight. Recommended for readers of serious historical fiction.



KELTON, ELMER. *RANGER'S LAW: A LONE STAR SAGA*. NEW YORK: FORGE, 2006. 640 PP. \$24.95 CLOTH. ISBN 0-765-31519-X.

## *Sandhills Boy: The Winding Trail of a Texas Writer*

Elmer Kelton

### What Makes an Award Winning Texas Author?

Review by Frances M. Ramsey

In his prologue, Elmer Kelton defines the Spanish term *querencia* as the place of the heart, the homeland. As he describes growing up on the Jigger Y ranch where his father was a foreman, it becomes clear that the sand hill area of west Texas is his *querencia*. Although he failed to become the cowboy his father wanted, he participated in the hard ranching chores and absorbed the real cowboy way of life. He relished the tales they told and enjoyed writing his own stories from an early age.

He describes family life, recurrent drought, the Permian Basin oil boom and its effect on cattle ranching. He studied journalism at the University of Texas until he was drafted in to the army during World War II. His war experience led to his distrust of bureaucracy. While serving in Austria, he met the love of his life, Anni Lipp and her young son Gerhard. A year after his discharge, she was able to come to the United States for their marriage.

While Elmer honed his fiction writing skills and survived many rejected manuscripts, he worked as a journalist on the *San Angelo Standard-Times* and the *Livestock Weekly*. Experiences and interesting people he met on the job added color and detail to his fiction writing skills while he supported his family through journalism. While reading of the Kelton family and friends, one encounters places and ideas found in his more than fifty books for which he has won a record seven Spur Awards from Western Writers of America. This autobiographical book is recommended for both public and private libraries.

KELTON, ELMER. *SANDHILLS BOY: THE WINDING TRAIL OF A TEXAS WRITER*. NEW YORK: FORGE PRESS, 2007. 252 PP. \$23.95 CLOTH. ISBN 10: 0-7653-1521-1. ISBN 13: 978-0-7653-1521-2. 2007006539.



## *Military Medicine to Win Hearts and Minds: Aid to Civilians in the Vietnam War*

Robert J. Wilensky

### Medicine as a Military Objective

Review by Dianna Lipp Rivers

Robert Wilensky draws on first-hand experience to produce an insightful, comprehensive study of programs that provided medical care to Vietnamese civilians during the Vietnam War. He himself was one of the U.S. military doctors serving in the war in 1967 and 1968. He finds that 40 million encounters between American military physicians and Vietnamese civilians occurred from 1963 to 1971. During the height of the war, from 1964 to 1968, there were 69,590 civilians admitted as inpatients to U.S. Army hospitals in South Vietnam, and 786,472 were treated as outpatients. Wilensky's purpose is to examine the motivations for these medical programs to civilians as well as evaluating the quality of care provided.

Wilensky concludes that the motivation of both the civilian and military leaders in creating these medical programs was more political and strategic than humanitarian, despite what the public relations campaigns of the time implied. Altruism was the motivation of the medical personnel, including the doctors, nurses and corpsmen. But the generals and politicians were more interested in using the medical programs for intelligence-gathering or even for keeping the physicians too busy to be troublesome. Wilensky also determines that the quality of care was substandard, mostly due to

*Continued on page eight*

Mark W. Lockwood, author of *Learn About... Texas Birds*, is a conservation biologist in the State Parks Division of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. He lives in Alpine and is one of the state's leading ornithologists.

Elmer Kelton, a resident of San Angelo, Texas, is one of the most honored Western writers of our times. His awards include the Spur Award and Western Heritage Awards. He is the author of more than forty books. His recent novels include *The Smiling Country*, originally published in 1998, (2006), *Six Bits a Day* (2006), *Sons of Texas* (2005), *Texas Vendetta* (2005), and *Jericho Road* (2004).

*Continued from page seven*

a lack of laboratory backup, x-ray availability, and patient follow-up. In addition, he finds that the health programs did not last long after our troops were gone. A major lesson that Wilensky draws from this is that foreign programs never do well in the long run because they make the host government look unwilling or unable to have provided these services to its own people.

Although Wilensky keeps his focus on Southeast Asia, there is much in his book that may well apply to other wars past and present. Hard learned lessons such as the ones in this volume should not be forgotten or ignored.

WILENSKY, ROBERT J. *MILITARY MEDICINE TO WIN HEARTS AND MINDS: AID TO CIVILIANS IN THE VIETNAM WAR*. LUBBOCK: TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2004. 192 PP. BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOS. \$29.95 CLOTH. ISBN 0-89672-532-4.

## *Historical Hotels of Texas: A Traveler's Guide*

Liz Carmack

**An Essential Guide to Authentic Texas Lodging**

Review by Janet K. Turk

Just in time for the holiday travel season comes Liz Carmack's *Historic Hotels of Texas*. This guide is well-written, comprehensive, and easy to use. Carmack covers sixty-four hotels that are at least fifty years and are still open today. They range stagecoach inns and railroad hotels to resort and community-built lodging. Some of the establishments have retained the essence of their origins, while others have been transformed in to sleek, modern facilities. With Carmack's book, a traveler will clearly know ahead of arrival the type of facility he is headed to.

The guide is organized according to the seven official Texas travel regions, and the establishments in the regions are alphabetized by their respective communities. Likewise, up to date contact information is included for contacting the facilities. Carmack, likewise, includes room amenities, facilities, credit card information, author's tips, and visitor information. Carmack offers historical information on the sites and any special characteristics which make a particular hotel stand apart from another one.

This guide is recommended for public and private libraries.

CARMACK, LIZ. *HISTORICAL HOTELS OF TEXAS: A TRAVELER'S GUIDE*. COLLEGE STATION: TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2007. 253 PP. INDEX. ILLUSTRATIONS. MAPS. PHOTOGRAPHS. \$23.00 PAPER. ISBN 10: 1-58544-608-4. ISBN 13: 978-1-58544-608-7. 2007003213.

## *Perseverance*

Patrick Dearen

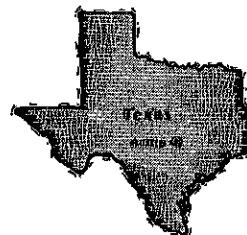
**Surviving the Rails**

Review by Janet K. Turk

In *Perseverance* Dearen explores life along the rails of Texas during the Great Depression. His protagonist, Ish Watson, encounters many adventures and misadventures when he hops the rails in an attempt to get to Galveston to visit his critically ill mother. He brings with him the traits instilled in him by his religious, rural upbringing: faith, conviction, and dedication. Clearly as he attempts to thwart an attack on a young female, endures a beating and knifing, and encounters some of the worst people on the rail, he will need these positive personality traits if he is to survive.

While Ish seems to endure more than his fair share of misadventure, he tends to take most of it in stride, leaving many of the characters he encounters with a more upbeat attitude because of his positive personality.

This piece of historical fiction is highly recommended. It offers a subtle Christian message and the idea that people can persevere if they truly try.



DEAREN, PATRICK. *PERSEVERANCE*. AUSTIN: SUNBELT EAKIN PRESS, 2006. 132 PP. \$17.95 CLOTH. ISBN 10: 1-57168-235-X. ISBN 13: 978-1-57168-235-2. 2006925097.

## *The Garden Lover's Guide to Houston*

Eileen Houston

**Nurseries, Plants, Garden Art and More**

Review by Janet K. Turk

Readers will need to be careful about judging a book by its cover with Eileen Houston's *The Garden Lover's Guide to Houston*. This is a travel and trivia guide as opposed to a book on how to garden. The focus of the book is "all things garden related in Houston and environs." The author covers public gardens, farmers' markets, garden events, garden clubs, nurseries and their specialties, along with volunteer and community service opportunities.

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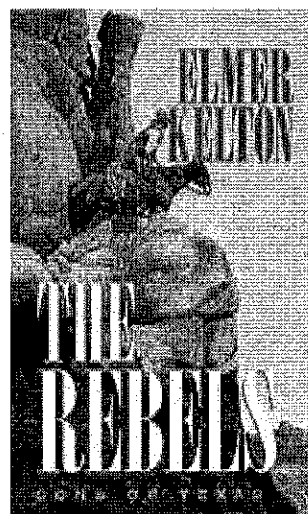
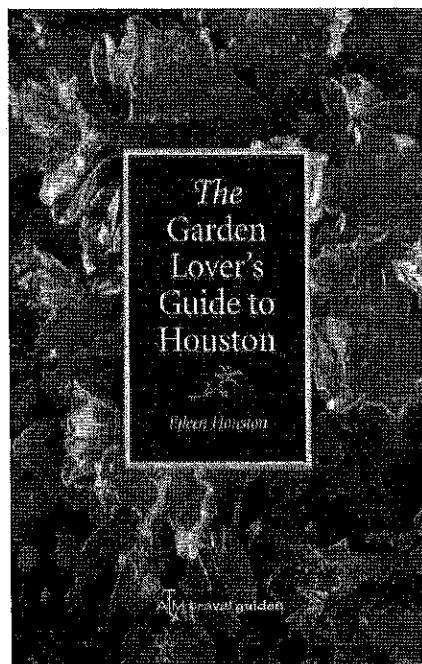
For each garden site, outlet, nursery, and event, Houston includes required fees, locations, times of operation, and contact information. She also presents the necessary key map location to allow readers to readily maneuver along Houston's roadways.

While the author is quite inclusive of the locations and events associated with gardening, she does offer a brief section titled "Best of the Best" for readers who may not want to explore all of the sites listed in the book. Other divisions include "Gardens Open to the Public," "For Children of All Ages," and farmers' market locations. Perhaps the most interesting chapter is "Day Trips," in which Houston elaborates on why people might wish to visit a certain area or center.

This guide presents many lovely photographs and is flexbound with flaps. It is user friendly and full of information.

This book is recommended for public libraries in the Houston area and private libraries for readers who love everything associated with gardening.

HOUSTON, EILEEN. *THE GARDEN LOVER'S GUIDE TO HOUSTON. COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS* A&M UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2007. 190 PP. ILLUSTRATIONS, INDEX, MAPS, NOTES. \$19.95 PAPER. ISBN 10: 1-58544-613-0. ISBN 13: 978-1-58544-613-1. 2007003209.



## *The Rebels: Sons of Texas* Elmer Kelton

**The Saga Continues**

Review by Janet K. Turk

Kelton's *The Rebels* is the final installment of the *Sons of Texas* saga dealing with the Lewis brothers. Fifteen years have passed since the Lewis brothers Michael and Andrew came to Mexican Texas. In this continuation of their story, they are joined by their impetuous younger brother, James, and their stubborn, independent sister, Annie.

As the family members attempt to reach Michael and Andrew, they encounter Mexicans who are hostile to the idea of any additional Americans settling in Mexican Texas. They are forced back across the Sabine and eventually saved because of Michael's and Andrew's reputations and quick thinking. The newly arrived Lewis members receive their land grants from Stephen F. Austin, but their lives are not easy, especially after hotheaded James shoots a Mexican soldier.

The rising number of Americans in Texas sows the seeds of discontent and revolution. The harrowing stories of the battles of Gonzales, Bexar, Goliad, and the Alamo are witnessed through the eyes of the Lewis brothers, their wives, and their kin as they join forces with characters readily recognized from history: Davie Crockett, Sam Houston, William Barret Travis, and others.

Readers, whether they read *The Raiders: Sons of Texas* or not, will find this work of historical

*Continued on page ten*

Patrick Dearen, author of *Perseverance*, lives in Midland, Texas. He is the author of sixteen books, including nine novels. Through his seven nonfiction works, he has come to be recognized as an authority on cowboy life and Pecos River regions of Texas. He has been a finalist for the Spur Award of Western Writers of America and the 2006 winner of the R. C. Crane Award for the Best Fiction Book on West Texas, presented by the West Texas Historical Association.

Eileen Houston earned her B. F. A. from Rice University. She completed the Texas Master Gardener program in 2003 and currently serves on the publications committee of the Harris County Master Gardener Association.

Marcia Kaylakie is a quilt collector, teacher, judge and appraiser. She also presents lecturers and workshops for quilters and quilt lovers.

Janice Whittington is the author of the poetry book *Into a Thousand Mouths* and the coeditor of *The Waltz He Was Born For: An Introduction to the Writing of Walt McDonald*.

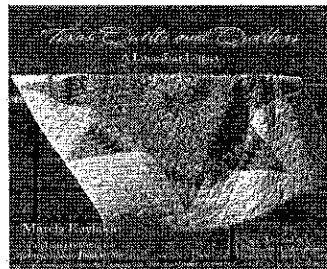
Jim Lincoln has been photographing throughout the United States, Canada, and Central America for more than thirty years. He lives in Austin.

Continued from page nine  
fiction enjoyable despite knowing how the revolution ends. Recommended for all libraries and readers of western fiction.

KELTON, ELMER. *THE REBELS' SONS OF TEXAS*. NEW YORK: FORGE, 2007. 302 PP. \$24.95 CLOTH. ISBN 10: 0-7653-1526-2. ISBN 13: 978-0-7653-1526-7. 2007028850.

## Texas Quilts and Quilters: *A Lone Star Legacy* Marcia Kaylakie with Janice Whittington

Not Just a Blanket  
Review by Janet K. Turk



Kaylakie's beautiful book showcases thirty-four quilts from Texas. Geographically, the quilts span the state with samples from Hemphill to Hildalgo counties, Hudspeth to Red River counties, and many in between. The map which prefaces the introduction shows the diverse areas in which the quilts were found. The quilts range in date from the 1870s to the turn of the twenty-first century. Each quilt has been beautifully and professionally photographed by Jim Lincoln.

Along with the pictures of the quilts come stories about the quilts, what they were used for, who the quilters were, and delightful insight in to the people who produced and used the quilts. One quilting story recounts the tale of Annie Martin, a newlywed whose husband was sent to France during World War I. She wanted her husband to have a piece of home life with him, so she made a quilt and shipped it overseas. When the Red Cross reported that the quilt had never arrived, Annie quickly made another one with the remaining fabric. Both her husband and the quilt arrived home safely from the war. Another interesting story revolves around Reverend Eugene Tomlin and his quilt.

Although Reverend Tomlin made the quilt blocks, usually, women in his congregations did the actual quilting. Why did a reverend learn to quilt? He was bedridden in 1931 with a childhood illness, and his mother taught him to sew as a means to entertain him. Reverend Tomlin began creating the quilt blocks as an adult because he wanted to memorialize aspects of his ministry.

This book is lovely enough to use as a coffee table book and fascinating enough to entertain readers for hours. The stories, photography, and trivia included for each quilt represent not just quilting and quilters but Texas history as well.

A nice edition to the Grover E. Murray Studies in the American Southwest Series, this book is recommended for all public and private libraries.

KAYLAKIE, MARCIA, WITH JANICE WHITTINGTON. *TEXAS QUILTS AND QUILTERS: A LONE STAR LEGACY*. LUBBOCK: TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2007. 243 PP. ILLUSTRATIONS: INDEX. \$39.95 CLOTH. ISBN 10: 089672-606-1. ISBN 13: 978-089672-606-2. 2006100529.

## *Sugar Lump's Night Before Christmas* Lynn Sheffield Simmons

Move Over, Rudolph  
Review by Janet K. Turk

Obviously, *Sugar Lump's Night Before Christmas* is a twist on Clement C. Moore's classic poem, yet this tale offers a sick Santa who can barely speak because of a head cold and eight sneezing reindeer who just want to go home and get in bed. When Santa shows up at the Simmonses' Texas farm, the cows all vie for the chance to help Santa by pulling his sleigh. Sugar Lump, an orphaned calf, wants to participate too, but Santa recognizes that the calf is too small to help. In a Rudolph-like twist, Sugar Lump helps save Christmas eve by riding in the sleigh with Santa and calling out the commands that Santa can barely whisper so that the cattle know what to do.

In addition to the delightful rhythmic narration, the story is enhanced by the illustrations of Sue Marshall Ward. Readers will enjoy seeing the longhorns holding a note which states "Reindeer sick / Need help/ Santa." Likewise, the portrayals

Continued on page eleven

*Continued from page ten*  
of sneezy, drippy, red noses on the reindeer will have children laughing as will pictures of the cattle working out with weights to get in shape to help Santa. The pictures are thoroughly detailed and bright, yet another tribute to the talent of Ward.

Recommended for public and private libraries and homes with children.



SIMMONS, LYNN SHEFFIELD, *SUGAR LUMP'S NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS*. GRETNA: PELICAN PUBLISHING COMPANY, 2007. 32 PP. ILLUSTRATIONS. \$14.95 CLOTH. ISBN 1-589804395. 2007011787.

*The Women There Don't  
Treat You Mean:  
Abilene in Song*  
Joe W. Specht

A Potpourri of Songs  
Review by Janet K. Turk

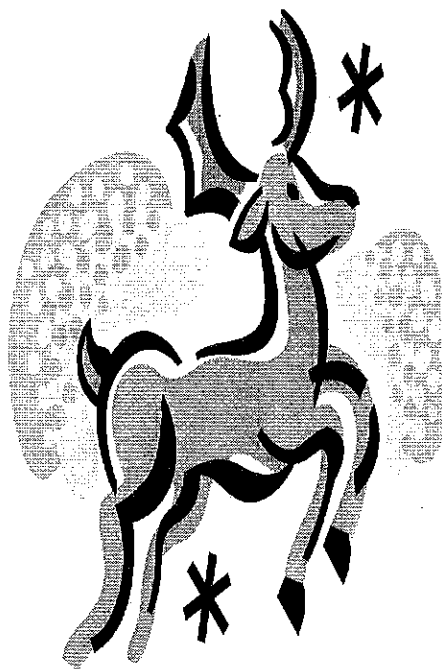
Specht opens his compact book with the observation that more songs have been written about Abilene, Texas than any other. As he ponders about this fact, he hits upon one reason for Abilene's popularity: "it rhymes. 'Abilene, Abilene prettiest town I've ever seen'" (10). He goes on to note that its many pronunciations allow the town's name to rhyme with a multitude of words. In addition to the rhyme factor, his research of the town, the song writers, and singers finds that most people view the town as unforgettable, which also adds to the popularity.

The book facts and trivia about the artists associated with the Abilene songs is divided in to several chapters. Some focus on famous people affected by Abilene ("Three Troubadours—Tubbs, Dylan and Cash") while others focus on the town's local talent and its locale.

Song lovers, trivia buffs, and music history readers will find this book well-written and Specht's research well-documented and solid. Recommended for public and university libraries.

SPECHT, JOE E. *THE WOMEN THERE DON'T TREAT YOU MEAN: ABILENE IN SONG*. ABILENE: STATE HOUSE PRESS, 2006. 112 PP. CD. ILLUSTRATIONS. INDEX. NOTES. PHOTOGRAPHS. \$14.95 CLOTH. ISBN 1-933837-06-0. 2005032783.

*Happy Holidays and  
Happy New Year from all  
of us at Review of Texas  
Books.*



Lynn Sheffield Simmons live on a small farm in Argyle, Texas. She is also the author of *Sugar Lump the Orphaned Calf*, *Do, the Famous Retriever*, and *Bo and the Missing Dogs* among other works of juvenile fiction.

Sue Marshall Ward studied art at Arlington State College. She is the illustrator of the Children's Choice Award book *Ten Redneck Babies* as well as *Texas Mother Goose*. She lives in Arlington.

Joe W. Specht is director of the Jay-Rollins Library at McMurry University. He is co-editor of *The Roots of Texas Music* and has published numerous articles. He lives in Abilene.

## Reviewers

**Stephen Curley** holds a Ph.D. in English from Rice University. He is professor of English at Texas A&M University—Galveston and a frequent contributor to *Review of Texas Books*.

**Dale Farris** has a master's degree from the University of Texas at Austin and a bachelor's degree from Lamar University. He is a professional reviewer for *Library Journal*, *Quality Press*, and *Quality Progress*.

**Andrea Karlin** earned a Ph.D. in curriculum and reading instruction at the University of New Mexico and is associate professor of education specializing in children's literature at Lamar University.

**Max Loges** is full professor of English at Lamar University. He has published articles on a broad range of subjects including the Civil War.

**JoAn W. Martin** is a retired teacher from Baytown schools and author of *Yankee Girl* and *Good Night, Mrs. Dinglewall. Sleep Tight!* She has published numerous articles and book reviews.

**Frances M. Ramsey** is a retired librarian from the Beaumont ISD. She received her B. S. in zoology from Kansas State University and received her library Certification from Oklahoma State University.

**Dr. Dianna Lipp Rivers** is an Associate Professor of Nursing at Lamar University in Beaumont, Texas. She served as an Army Nurse Corps officer during the Vietnam War era.

**Janet K. Turk** has been a lecturer of English at Lamar University for twelve years. She teaches freshman composition, sophomore literature, and distance learning classes.

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