

# Review of Texas Books

VOLUME XXIV ISSUE 4

FALL 2009

*Review of Texas Books*  
is a Publication of  
Lamar University  
Department of English  
and Modern Languages

## Managing Editors

Holly Carey  
Janet Turk

## Founding Editor

Sally Dooley

## Advisory Editor

R. S. Gwynn

## Associate Editors

Joe Nordgren  
Andrew Preslar

## Business and Subscription Offices:

P.O. Box 10023  
Beaumont, TX 77710

## Email Address:

holly.carey@lamar.edu  
jkturk@yahoo.com

## Web Site:

[http://dept.lamar.edu/  
EnglishandModernLanguages/  
RTB](http://dept.lamar.edu/EnglishandModernLanguages/RTB)

Lamar University  
A member of  
The Texas State University System



Editors' Choice: <i>After Ike: Aerial Views from the No-Fly Zone</i> , Bryan Carlike	2
<i>Winnie's War</i> , Jenny Moss	2-3
<i>State Fare: An Irreverent Guide to Texas Movies</i> , Don Graham	3
<i>A White House Diary</i> , Lady Bird Johnson	3-4
<i>Little Big Bend: Common, Uncommon, and Rare Plants of Big Bend National Park</i> , Roy Morey	4
<i>Pecans: The Story in a Nutshell</i> , Jane Manaster	5
<i>What Can I Do with My Herbs?: How to Grow, Use &amp; Enjoy These Versatile Plants</i> , Judy Barrett	5
<i>Gingerbread Man Superhero!</i> , Dotti Enderle	5-6
<i>The Homeless Christmas Tree</i> , Leslie M. Gordon	6
<i>Early Texas Schools: A Photographic History</i> , Mary S. Black and Bruce F. Jorday	6
<i>Taming the Land: The Lost Postcard Photographs of the Texas High Plains</i> , John Miller Morris	7
<i>Death Lore: Texas Rituals, Superstitions, and Legends of the Hereafter</i> , Kenneth Untiedt, ed.	7
<i>Cat in a Topaz Tango</i> , Carole Nelson Douglas	7-8
<i>Dan Moody: Crusader for Justice</i> , Ken Anderson	8
<i>The Line from Here to There: A Storyteller's Scottish West Texas</i> , Rosanna Taylor Herndon	8-9
<i>Charro Claus and the Tejas Kid</i> , Xavier Garza	9
<i>The Dog Who Loved Tortillas / La perrita que le encantaban las tortillas</i> , Benjamin Alire Sáenz	9-10
<i>Big Thicket People: Larry Jene Fisher's Photographs of the Last Southern Frontier</i> , Thad Sitton and C. E. Hunt	10
<i>Memories of the Branch Davidians: The Autobiography of David Koresh's Mother</i> , Bonnie Haldeman	10-11
<i>That Rough Beast, Its Hour Come Round at Last: The History of Hurricane Katrina</i> , Heather Andrews et al, eds.	11
<i>Hill Country Landowner's Guide</i> , Jim Stanley	11

Dividing his time between Houston and the Hill Country, Bryan Carlile is an aerial photographer and owner of Beck Geodetix.

Jenny Moss grew up spending time in a town very much like Coward Creek. Her fascination with the Spanish influenza pandemic started when she realize how little she learned about it in her history books. *Winnie's War* is Moss's first novel. She lives in Houston.

## Editors' Choice:

# *After Ike: Aerial Views from the No-Fly Zone*

Bryan Carlile

### Terrible Beauty from a Distance

Review by Stephen Curley

In the first days after Hurricane Ike, all but official aircraft were banned from the skies over devastated areas. Bryan Carlile was one of the few allowed in the zone to scout damage from his Robinson R44 helicopter. He owns Beck Geodetix, a GIS/GPS environmental mapping firm.

Carlile decided to document the effects of the storm. Taking book-quality photos from a noisy, vibrating helicopter is no job for an amateur. He relied on Canon cameras, specialized lenses (a stabilized telephoto zoom and a wide-angle lens with UV filters), and hi-tech equipment (like a gyro stabilizer). And to make sure the windscreen didn't blur the image or helicopter parts didn't block his vision, he had to climb outside the cabin and hang over the skids. Some of the hardest work, admits Carlile, was emotional rather than technical: "Many of the photographs I shot with a broken heart."

The results of his dedication are handsomely reproduced in this 9-by-9-inch coffee table book. My favorites are close-ups, like the image of a sodden toy Pooh bear lying face down in the muck between flattened clumps of dune grass and the now-calm Gulf of Mexico. This single photo poetically conveys an unspoken story of lost innocence.

I also appreciate images in a related sequence. For example, a cattle drive in Chambers county and a herd of cattle near Winnie on a segment of dry highway surrounded by water. Before and after shots (I wish there were more) of a new housing development on Bolivar Peninsula. Three far-to-near shots of Galveston's West Beach: The final close-up is a shocker, revealing ugly details lost in the deceptively beautiful panorama of the long-distance setup shot.

Of course, aerial perspective can blind one to grim realities. For instance, devastating wreckage of broken glass windows on Houston's streets look like pretty snowflakes from a helicopter high above even the tallest skyscraper's. Carlile admits that aerial shots downplay human struggle, particular hardship, and civil or political unrest.

But they do what a ground-level shot can't. They offer unobstructed views of a landscape, they educate us about the larger scale, and they refresh our perspective. *After Ike* succeeds in dramatically documenting the impact of one of the most damaging storms in recorded history.

CARLILE, BRYAN. *AFTER IKE: AERIAL VIEWS FROM THE NO-FLY ZONE*. COLLEGE STATION: TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2009. 128 PP. MAPS, PHOTOGRAPHS. \$24.95 FLEX BOUND WITH FLAPS. ISBN 10: 1-60344-150-6. ISBN 13: 978-1-60344-150-6. 2009016343.

## *Winnie's War*

Jenny Moss

### A Young Girl's Determination

Review by Holly Carey

*Winnie's War* is set in Coward Creek, Texas, placed between Galveston and Houston. The time period is during The Great War, and rumors are spreading of Spanish influenza. They are more than just rumors. Edna Bloom has just been buried, and two weeks later Lewis Locke, one of the town's young men to first enlist, dies at Ellington Field. Soon after, our protagonist Winnie witnesses one of the town's finest women, Mrs. Wells, experience an acute attack and almost fall out of a second story window; Winnie even helps her father measure a body for a coffin. She and her friend Nolan form a plot to save the town by stealing the hoarded Vicks VapoRub at Mr. Craven's.

(Continued on page three)

(Continued from page two)

Along her journey, Winnie faces many obstacles, including her best friend Tillie who is mad at and ignores her; an overbearing socialite wannabe grandmother who constantly has her doing chores from polishing silver to ironing napkins; and a strangely withdrawn mom whom she loves but can't quite understand. To top it all off, her home sits adjacent to the town's cemetery. She fears the ghosts at night.

Winnie's mom passes as does Tillie and many of the townsfolk, but Winnie's character is remarkable. She assumes the responsibility of caring for both her father and younger sisters. She also finally bonds with Clara, her grandmother, who shares with Winnie her mom's tragic experience that altered her so drastically and left her basically unable to function.

Moss' first person point of view reveals Winnie's amazing fortitude as well as a quietly dry wit that adolescent females will identify with and find funny. Highly recommended.

MOSS, JENNY. *WINNIE'S WAR*. NEW YORK: WALKER & COMPANY, 2009. 178 PP. \$16.99 CLOTH. ISBN 10: 0-8027-9819-5. ISBN 13: 978-0-8027-9819-0. 2008023233.

## State Fare: An Irreverent Guide to Texas Movies

Don Graham

37 Great, Mediocre, and Bad Movies about Texas

Review by Stephen Curley

Don Graham is the J. Frank Dobie Regents professor of American English Literature at the University of Texas at Austin. But don't let the high falutin' title scare you away; he's right friendly. He's one part Sherlock Holmes and one part Gabby Hayes. Reading his judgments about Texas movies is like listening to cowboys talk about cattle around the chuckwagon campfire.

He starts with the four silent movies that have survived the ravages of time and taste. They treat the three most enduring themes of Texas movies: cattle, people, the land, and the

Alamo. The best of these *The Wind* (1928) explores the effect of unrelenting sand storms on a frontier woman. The worst is *Martyrs of the Alamo* (1915), a racist depiction of oversimplified history. But, according to Graham, that's no distinction: no movie has ever gotten the Alamo right.

We learn why even okay movies are worth watching. For instance, *The Big Show* (1936) includes shots on location at the State Fair Grounds at Dallas during the Centennial Exhibition. It also features Gene Autry playing with engaging energy two roles: the snotty movie star and his earnest stand-in double. And if you look carefully you'll see and hear Leonard Sly (later known as Roy Rogers) singing with the Sons of the Pioneers. Graham also touts *Terror in a Texas Town* (1958), written by blacklisted Dalton Trumbo, as perhaps the greatest B-Western ever made.

At the heart of this small book (part of a series of thin paperback-sized hardbacks) are lengthy treatments of the top five movies that convey the Texas mystique to the world: *Red River* (1948), *Giant* (1956), *Hud* (1963), and—surprise—*The Wheeler Dealers* (1963). Here Graham is at his best: entertaining, informed, opinionated, but never boring.

As small books go, this one packs a punch. It'll start arguments, arm you with a passel of Texas trivia, and probably add titles to your Netflix queue. Graham gives star treatment to thirty-seven movies and mentions in passing more than twice that number. Recommended for fans of old movies.

GRAHAM, DON. *STATE FARE: AN IRREVERENT GUIDE TO TEXAS MOVIES*. FORT WORTH: TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2008. 96 PP. PHOTOS. \$8.95 CLOTH. ISBN 13: 978-0-87565-367-9. 2007044346.

## A Whitehouse Diary

Lady Bird Johnson

Five Rough Years as First Lady

Review by Stephen Curley

While time may not heal all wounds, it certainly makes possible a more objective perspective about past events. If political antipathy made you avoid reading Lady Bird's diary when it first came out in 1970, you will be happily surprised to

(Continued on page four)



Don Graham is the author of numerous books and articles including *Kings of Texas: The 150-Year Saga of an American Ranching Empire* (2003).

Originally published in 1970, *A White House Diary* is Lady Bird Johnson's intimate, behind-the-scenes account of Lyndon Johnson's presidency from November 22, 1963, to January 20, 1969.

(Continued from page three)

discover that this book offers no defense for the policies of the Johnson administration. Instead it is a straightforward account by a likably humble woman who lived behind the scenes.

The opening entries alone are worth the price of the book. We witness the mutually supportive relationship of two ordinary-extraordinary women in the aftermath of an assassination. Lady Bird puts her arms around Jackie Kennedy as they wait in a small hospital hallway for the dreaded news of JFK's condition. On the plane, she offers to fetch another outfit to replace Jackie's dress and gloves caked with blood. Jackie refuses on principle: "I want them to see what they have done to Jack." Later they trade domestic favors. Lady Bird allows Caroline to continue school on the third floor; Jackie gives Lady Bird practical advice on running a family in the White House.

Lady Bird, without rancor or apology, tells us stories about what she calls "five years of turmoil and achievement, of triumph and pain." Of course, readers know what's coming: our sense of historical necessity imbues these memoirs with something like tragic inevitability. The early years are astonishingly successful. The war on poverty, civil rights legislation, VISTA (the domestic version of the Peace Corps), the Head Start program for underprivileged children—Lady Bird mentions all of these. She makes suggestions that Lyndon change passages in some of his most famous speeches. His popularity rating soars. But amid the elation, she can't help wondering if "perhaps this is the best it will ever be." It is.

The Gulf of Tonkin incident occurs in August of 1964. Civil rights marchers chant daily outside the White House. Then the anti-Vietnam war marchers ratchet up the decibels. As a beleaguered Lady Bird remarks, "What a house. What a life." LBJ's popularity rating tumbles; hate mail proliferates. Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy are assassinated within two months of each other. By the time the Johnsons leave the White House, Lady Bird admits, "we were played out, numb, all passion spent, ready for it to be over."

Through it all the First Lady remains foremost a family woman, wife and mother. Some of the most poignant moments in the diary recount Lyndon's reaching out to her for support, her advice that he seek election for one term only, mundane details about their daughters' marriages, and their joy at becoming grandparents. Lady Bird is one of us. She is determined to memorize which pieces of furniture were original to the Lincoln presidency; exasperated to discover that she really doesn't have any new clothes; concerned over having gained fifteen pounds; and genuinely puzzled over whether she is setting fashion trends or following them. She also reveals that her best opening gambit for starting a conversation with a foreign chief of state is to say, "How I would like to visit your country!"

It's all here: Lady Bird welcomes us to the political White House and the family White House. As she says, "I like to show people my way of life." We are privileged to make the acquaintance of the good-natured woman who helped hold this house together from the mid to the late 1960s. Highly recommended for those curious about what goes on behind the iconic façade at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

JOHNSON, LADY BIRD. *A WHITE HOUSE DIARY*. AUSTIN: UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS PRESS, 2007. 856 PP. PHOTOS. \$25.95 PAPER. ISBN 13: 978-0-292-71749-7. 200792931.

## *Little Big Bend: Common, Uncommon, and Rare Plants of Big Bend National Park* Roy Morey

### Plants of Little Big Bend

Review by Emma B. Hawkins

Focusing upon 252 species, Roy Morey demonstrates his photographic skills while creating a botanical encyclopedia of cacti, agaves and others plants in the Big Bend National Park located in southwest Texas. This 329-page book is part of the Grover E. Murray Studies in the American Southwest Series. A concise introductory chapter furnishes a geographical, agricultural, and historical background for the Big Bend locale, including a solitary, fairly detailed map on page four. In the "Checklist of Plants (Table of Contents)" on pages 14-33, the plants themselves, identified by both scientific (botanical) and common names, are organized alphabetically by family, genus and species, except the agaves and cacti that have been moved to the front. Each entry includes a clear, attractive photograph of the plant in bloom and often a second, smaller picture of the plant with fruit, generally followed by a one-page description. Two important appendices (A and B) note the endangered (imperiled and vulnerable) plants and the specific park location for the plants. The extensive Index consists of eleven pages, four-columns of entries per page.

A few of my favorites are some of the more flamboyant and dangerous looking plants: Shaggy Stenandrium, Palmleaf Thoroughwort, Trumpetflower, Turner Mimosa, and Purple Sage. Although I understand the economic consideration, since this scholarly book would be an excellent addition to a botanical library in any Texas institution of higher learning, it is unfortunate that it was published in soft cover.

MOREY, ROY. *LITTLE BIG BEND: COMMON, UNCOMMON, AND RARE PLANTS OF BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK*. LUBBOCK: TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2008. 336 PP. APPENDICES. BIBLIOGRAPHY. GLOSSARY. ILLUSTRATIONS. INDEX. MAPS. NOTES. PHOTOS. \$45.00 CLOTH. ISBN 10: 0-89672-613-4. ISBN 13: 978-0-89672-613-0. 2007002522.

## *Pecans: The Story in a Nutshell*

Jane Manaster

### Ah! Pecans Galore

Review by Emma B. Hawkins

This concise but intriguing little book offers an overview of the history of pecans, "a native plant species of North America" (1), from the fossilized remains in the Cretaceous formation in Lampasas County, Texas; through the mention of *nueces* (2) by explorers such as Cabeza de Vaca (1935) and Hernando de Soto (1541); to the first course in pecan culture offered by Texas A&M University in 1910; and several chapters tracing the cultivation, development, and expansion of the pecan industry. Some of the more interesting chapters focus on predators of the pecan, an analysis of the nutritional value of pecans, and one that includes several recipes requiring pecans, including two of my favorites: pecan pie and pralines. The author also dedicates one chapter to pecan cultivation in Texas. True, the subject is limited. However, a multitude of factual details supply all the information about pecans that most readers would ever want to know, and then some. Unfortunately, there is no index to provide easy reference. The bibliography consists of three-and-a-half pages of resources listed in prose form.

MANASTER, JANE. *PECANS: THE STORY IN A NUTSHELL*. LUBBOCK: TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2008. 96 PP. BIBLIOGRAPHY, ILLUSTRATIONS, MAPS, PHOTOS, RECIPES. \$19.95 PAPER. ISBN 13: 978-0-89672-640-6. 2008030498.

## *What Can I Do with My Herbs?: How to Grow, Use & Enjoy These Versatile Plants*

Judy Barrett

### Herbs

Review by Emma B. Hawkins

As a volume (number forty) of the M.L. Moody Jr. Natural History Series, this charming little book deals with herbs, forty of them to be exact. For each herb, the author provides two to four pages of description/

history on how to grow and the primary uses (cooking, teas, bathing; medicinal, etc.). Garlic is honored with seven pages. Basil, chives, cilantro, dill, garlic and sage are some of the more prominent cooking herbs. For teas, the author focuses on borage, fennel, geranium, ginger, lavender and mint. Medicinal herbs include catnip for toothache, comfrey, feverfew, horehound for cough suppressants, and thyme.

The history portion of each herb not only includes the geographical origins (Greek, Rome, China, Mexico, Peru, Native North American, Germany), but also the mythological or folkloric sources. For examples, artemisia is associated with Diana; mullein is linked to Odysseus; bay laurel is connected to the Oracle at Delphi; and rosemary is mentioned in the writings of William Shakespeare. In addition, each entry is accompanied by an attractive drawing (not photograph) of the herb by Victor Z. Martin. In the Table of Contents each herb is listed by both common and scientific names.

Some of the more unusual uses of herbs include artemisia as moth repellant, bay leaf as a deterrent to weevils in flour and ladybugs in the home, and gotu kola as an ingredient in slimming formulas and anti-aging skin creams. But, my all time favorite, especially for here in southeastern Texas, is the "Catnip and Rosemary Mosquito Chasing Oil" mentioned on page twenty-seven. This book would make a wonderful gift for a cook or herbalist.

BARRETT, JUDY. *WHAT CAN I DO WITH MY HERBS?: HOW TO GROW, USE & ENJOY THESE VERSATILE PLANTS*. COLLEGE STATION: TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2009. 144 PP. ILLUSTRATIONS, INDEX. \$19.95 CLOTH. ISBN 10: 1-60344-092-9. ISBN 13: 978-1-60344-092-9. 2008031016.

## *Gingerbread Man Superhero!*

Dotti Enderle

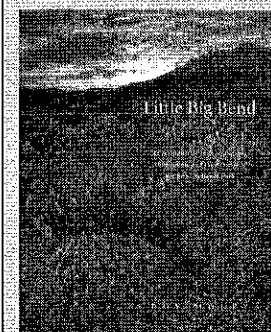
### Flower Power

Review by Andrea Karlin

Readers as listeners already familiar with the traditional story of the gingerbread baby, boy, or man should find *Gingerbread Man Superhero!* quite amusing and humorous, especially if they remember the days when the term "flower power" was as common as texting is today. In

(Continued on page six)

*Little Big Bend* by Roy Morey is part of the Grover E. Murray Studies in the American Southwest series. Morey has been photographing Big Bend National Park and state parks since 1986. His work has appeared in several publications, he has exhibited in Alpine, Texas.



Jane Manaster is a freelance writer and geographer. She is the author of several works, including *Horned Lizards* (2002) and *Javelinas* (2006).

Judy Barrett is the author of *Tomatillos: A Gardener's Dream*, *A Cook's Delight*, and *How to Become an Organic Gardener in Seven Easy Steps*.



(Continued from page five)

this take-off of the traditional tale, the gingerbread man with attitude shouts "FLOUR POWER" as he flies off with his dishtowel cape and prune stomach to save the world from a macaroon gone mad.

The clever text by Dotti Enderle and the colorful, descriptive illustrations by Joe Kulka made this reader laugh out loud. I thoroughly enjoyed this book as will children and adults of all ages.

ENDERLE, DOTTI. *GINGERBREAD MAN SUPERHERO!*. GRETN: PELICAN PUBLISHING COMPANY, 2009 32 PP. ILLUSTRATIONS. \$15.95 CLOTH. ISBN 13: 978-158980521-7. 2009003965.

## *The Homeless Christmas Tree*

Leslie M. Gordon

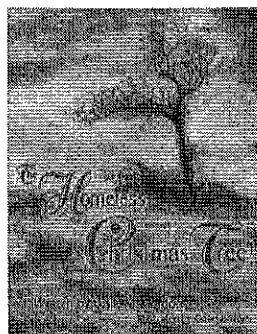
### **Tradition of Giving**

Review by Andrea Karlin

When an old woman decided to decorate a lone and lonely tree on Christmas Eve in recognition of the homeless families in her city, a wonderful tradition of giving is born and grows beyond far beyond Christmas Eve.

Leslie Gordon's text and Court Bailey's illustrations work harmoniously to tell this touching tale.

This story is based on actual events about a funny-looking mimosa tree that sits above a busy freeway in Fort Worth.



GORDON, LESLIE M. *THE HOMELESS CHRISTMAS TREE*. FORT WORTH: TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2008 48 PP. ILLUSTRATIONS. \$19.95 PAPER. ISBN 13: 978-0-87565-384-0. 2008018040.

## *Early Texas Schools: A Photographic History*

Mary S. Black,  
Bruce F. Jordan

### **Recent Photographs of Old Schools**

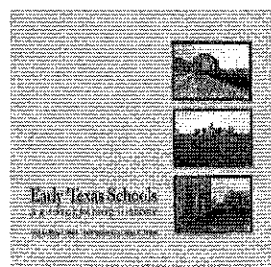
Review by Yves Laberge

This hardcover album retells a short history of education in West, Central, South, and East Texas, from the mid-nineteenth century until the 1930s. The photographs included here are not old, vintage images; most shots have been taken in recent years by photographer Bruce Jordan, who also wrote the preface. Most images are full page, black and white, with a short caption; we see for example the "Pease Elementary School" in Austin (93), the "Our Lady of the Lake University" (146), the "Thomas Jefferson High School" in San Antonio (157), and a former "Asylum for the Blind" in Austin (11), but also the site where the "Lincoln High School" was located until it burned in 1995 (40).

The first thirty-five pages provide a dense overview of what schooling was in the last two centuries, and that includes a few universities as well. Dr. Mary Black offers a presentation of diverse communities in the context of separate schools for whites and Colored" (13), schools for African Americans (12), and for children of Mexican heritage (25).

The purpose of *Early Texas Schools: A Photographic History* is to depict some early Texan institutions that were built one century ago and that still exist, sometimes with another vocation. It could serve as well as an "art book" that focuses on some overlooked Texan heritage.

BLACK, MARY S., AND BRUCE F. JORDAN. *EARLY TEXAS SCHOOLS: A PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORY*. AUSTIN: UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS PRESS, 2008 226 PP. APPENDIX. INDEX. MAPS. NOTES. PHOTOS. \$39.95 CLOTH. ISBN 13: 978-0-292-71793-6.



A native Texan, Dotti Enderle is a member of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, the Houston Storytellers Guild, and the Writers' League of Texas. She has won numerous awards, including the 2008 Storytelling World Resource Award for Young Listeners.

Mary S. Black holds a Ph.D. from Harvard University's Graduate School of Education. She has taught in Texas public schools and at the University of Texas. She currently lives in Austin.

Bruce F. Jordan is a documentary photographer and an educator. He lives in Rockdale, Texas.

## *Taming the Land: The Lost Postcard Photographs of the Texas High Plains*

John Miller Morris

**Texan Postcards from the Early 1900s**

Review by Yves Laberge

This impressive, king-sized album was the Winner of the 2008 Robert A. Calvert Book Prize. Professor John Miller Morris has gathered hundreds of vintage postcards taken between 1905 and the 1930s which are reproduced here bigger-than-life, depicting outdoor scenes, rural life, the Texan landscapes and its people. Topics are varied, mainly from early twentieth century: "A Panhandle Ranch" near Dalhart (28), a "Court House" in Stratford (49), a car race (60), a dust storm in the Ochiltree country in 1935 (62), a "Labor Day Parade" in Amarillo, 1909 (154), and a boundary marker between Texas and New Mexico circa 1908 (192). But this amazing collection is more than just rare photographs showing old cars, ranches, and emerging towns; the author has commented the style of photographers, with artists like Reuben Monroe Gifford, Henry Schmidt, Jennie McDaniel, who sometimes had their own studio. We are only offered the illustrated side of the post cards; therefore, we cannot read the texts, if any, written then, except for a few lines written on some images.

Seeing all these photographs emerging from another country, another century, another cultural background, I was fascinated by the sharp contrast they offered when compared to the many images seen in western movies (in the silent era or afterwards).

MORRIS, JOHN MILLER. *TAMING THE LAND: THE LOST POSTCARD PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE TEXAS HIGH PLAINS*. COLLEGE STATION: TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2009. 232 PP. BIBLIOGRAPHY, INDEX, MAPS, PHOTOS. \$45.00 CLOTH. ISBN 10: 1-60344-037-2. ISBN 13: 978-1-60344-037-0. 2008015577

## *Death Lore: Texas Rituals, Superstitions, and Legends of the Hereafter*

Kenneth Untiedt, Ed.

**Urban Legends and More**

Review by Sara Pace

Have you ever stopped at an old country cemetery and wondered about its history, who was buried there, or if there were any good, spine tingling ghost stories attached to it? If so, this curiosity is more than satisfied by this collection (which is a publication of the Texas Folklore Society) of

twenty-six essays, all rich with solid research but also engaging in their conversational tone. What motivated the editors and authors to compile this collection, as Untiedt explains, was the fact that the Society "had not done much research on the lore surrounding death" (vii). The work is neatly divided into four main sections: "Final' Resting Places," "Getting There: Rituals, Ceremonies, and the

JASINSKI, LAURIE E. *DINOSAUR HIGHWAY: A HISTORY OF DINOSAUR VALLEY STATE PARK*. FORT WORTH: TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2008. 212 PP. BIBLIOGRAPHY, ENDNOTES, INDEX, MAPS, PHOTOGRAPHS. \$19.95 PAPER. ISBN 13: 978-0-87565-375-4.

Process of Dying," "Superstitions, Strange Stories, and Voices from the 'Other Side,'" and "Thoughts, Musings, and Pure Speculation." Not only does the collection showcase a variety of perspectives, but it also shows, in its cohesiveness, a considerable effort on the part of the authors and editor to maintain a consistency in the overall content. Filled with helpful illustrations and photographs that accentuate the elements of death lore covered here, such as cemeteries, urban legends, the rhetoric of obituaries, who was buried with what—as a side note, there is more than one mention of someone being laid to rest still in possession of his or her gun (in one case a woman was buried with her fully loaded Colt)—the book provides many fascinating tidbits about Texas traditions related to death. There are also quite a few laughs provided by the anecdotes about graveside service conversations. The tone of the essays ranges from somber to amusing, and this stylistic variety is one of the aspects of the work that should keep any reader interested. Many of the articles are written by Texas natives, and several of the authors are also poets and/or instructors at a variety of Texas colleges. This entertaining and informative book is a must read for anyone interested in these crucial aspects of Texas history and folklore, and it would, I believe, be suitable for junior high readers all the way up to adults.

UNTIEDT, KENNETH, ED. *DEATH LORE: TEXAS RITUALS, SUPERSTITIONS, AND LEGENDS OF THE HEREAFTER*. DENTON: UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS PRESS, 2008. 288 PP. ILLUSTRATIONS, INDEX, NOTES, PHOTOS. \$36.95 CLOTH. ISBN 10: 1-57441-256-6. ISBN 13: 978-1-54771-256-7. 2008029767.

## *Cat in a Topaz Tango*

Carole Nelson Douglass

**More Midnight Louie**

Review by Frances M. Ramsey

Midnight Louie sleuths again and meets a new feline honey when Temple Barr persuades her fiancé Malt Divine to participate in a Dancing with the Celebs fund raiser. The former priest, now late night radio advice host, and his fellow competitors—an oversized masked magician the Cloaked Conjuror, twitchy teen diva Glory B., handsome

(Continued on page eight)

(Continued from page seven)

Olympic fencer Jose' Juarez, egotistical celebrity chef Keith Salter, postmenopausal soap opera star Olivia Phillips, hefty black hip-hop diva Motha Jonz, and Wanda-woman a World Wrestling Wrangle Amazon--are rigorously trained in the moves they will need for the four dances to be performed on successive nights.

There is a junior division to this dance production, and Lieutenant Molina's daughter Mariah is determined to help her Chechan refugee friend win a place in the event and a chance to win a scholarship. Threats of the Barbie Doll killer persuade Temple to resume the Zoe Chloe Ozone persona to insure security.

As mishaps befall each participant during performances, the question arises whether these are accidents or real threats. Through sometimes steamy descriptions of each dance performance, the tension escalates. Midnight Louie works hard to show important clues and must use his "shivs" to mark the "perp."

While escaping with midnight Louie into this fast paced mystery, one can also explore the tango of love/hate relationships among the cast of interesting characters both in show business and public safety.

DOUGLAS, CAROLE NELSON. *CAT IN A TOPAZ TANGO*. NEW YORK: FORGE, 2009. 416 PP. BIBLIOGRAPHY, INDEX, MAPS, NOTES, PHOTOS. \$24.95 CLOTH. ISBN 10: 0-7653-1862-6. ISBN 13: 978-0-7653-1862-6. 2009012866.

## *Dan Moody: Crusader for Justice* Ken Anderson

**Crusader of the Century**  
Review by Frances M. Ramsey

Growing up in Williamson County, attending the Baptist church, work experience beginning at age nine, and four uncles who were lawyers helped shape the man Dan Moody became. He passed the bar exam at age twenty-one and set up practice in Taylor. When the county attorney decided not to run for reelection, a committee asked Moody to seek the position. He was elected without opposition and assumed the office in 1921. He became known as an effective prosecutor. At the time the Ku

Klux Klan was a menacing power in Texas, prone to violence and wielding great political power. When Dan Moody succeeded in putting four KKK leaders behind bars, it broke the power of the invisible kingdom. Details of the steps in this victory make exciting reading.

Wide acclaim led to his election as Attorney General of Texas. His expose' of fraud and graft under the Ferguson governorships led to animosity which makes another engrossing tale. At age thirty-three, he became the youngest governor of Texas. Although his reform proposals were applauded, not all were adopted by the legislature in the two terms he served as governor. He did succeed in clearing up corruption in the Highway Department, improving funding for schools, and developing better executive procedures.

Through a private law practice in Austin, he continued to work for good government. The *Texas Monthly* magazine named him Crusader of the Century, a fitting title for one who dedicated his life to the rule of law and conquered epic challenges of his time. Recommended for those interested in Texas legal and political history.

ANDERSON, KEN. *DAN MOODY: CRUSADER FOR JUSTICE*. GEORGETOWN: GEORGETOWN PRESS, 2008. 194 PP. BIBLIOGRAPHY, INDEX, NOTES, PHOTOS. \$25.00 CLOTH. ISBN 10: 0-9644421-4-0. ISBN 13: 978-0-9644421-4-6.

## *The Line from Here to There: A Storyteller's Scottish West Texas* Rosanna Taylor Herndon

**Scottish West Texans' Lives and Stories**  
Review by Frances M. Ramsey

After years as a professional storyteller, when the first audiotapes of Professor Herndon's storytelling performances were issued, her daughter urged her to write the stories just as she had told them. She was also motivated by a desire to let others know the heritage the sturdy, hardworking Scottish West Texans had provided through their lives and stories.

She describes the resourcefulness of early settlers facing problems of survival in a new  
(Continued on page nine)

John Miller Morris is associate professor of political science and geography at the University of Texas at San Antonio. He is the author of three books, including *El Llano Estacado: Exploration and Imagination the High Plains of Texas and New Mexico, 1536-1860*.

Ken Anderson, a lawyer and former district attorney, has written seven previous books, including the young adult biography *You Can't Do That, Dan Moody!* (1998).

Rosanna Herndon, professor emerita of communication at Hardin-Simmons University, is also a charter member of the Tejas Storytelling Association.



(Continued from page eight)

and sparsely populated prairie. How do you protect children from wolves while the mother goes for water? How can two little girls find their way to a distant school over the trackless grass?

The contrast between the personalities and lifestyles of her two grandmothers provides two worthwhile role models. One was always cheerful, ready to party, and provide cookies for children on their way home from school. The other toiled diligently to garden and preserve the produce so that her neighbors could enjoy the surplus. This was like other Depression Era generosity demonstrated by the family.

There is mystery in the area's favorite doctor, a fugitive who never came to trial, and in her father's search for black marketers during World War II. Humor is present in several of the tales. The final story presents a lesson on true wealth. It is not the kind that fills your pocket, but the kind that lasts forever like friendship. Highly recommended

HERNDON, ROSANNA TAYLOR. *THE LINE FROM HERE TO THERE: A STORYTELLER'S SCOTTISH WEST TEXAS*. LUBBOCK, TEXAS: TECH UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2008. 133 pp. \$24.95 CLOTH. ISBN 13: 978-0-89672-630-7. 2008001841.

## *Charro Claus and the Tejas Kid* Xavier Garza

**Christmas along the Rio Grande**  
Review by Cristina Rios

A bi-lingual and bi-cultural Christmas tale that takes place on the Texas-Mexico border, this children's book is written in both English and Spanish, and it is appropriate for ages six to nine years old.

A prominent feature of the book is the eye-catching, intense colors of the cartoon-like illustrations. The strong hues of yellow and orange capture the spirit of Christmas in South Texas, with the bright sunshine, instead of the winter-land of the north of the country. The word "Charro," in the title, raises questions to any reader unacquainted with the culture; the concept is clarified in the text. Also, on the cover, the reader might notice that Texas is spelled as "Tejas," which is the correct spelling in Spanish. Throughout the book, the English version includes words in Spanish; this code switching is customary in colloquial communication in some communities.

The illustrations of the characters portray eagerness and determination; they appear anxious to get the job done. Certainly, it is an important and involving task to help Santa deliver presents to all the children on both sides of the Rio Grande; given the extent of the Texas border with Mexico and the well known obstacles for crossing the border. When

the author mentions cities on both sides of the border, children can be motivated to locate on a real map the cities named in the book and learn about the geography of the region. Children living in the area addressed in the book will enjoy the references to places known by them or their families.

For the creative mind of the young reader, it will be interesting to imagine that Santa Claus has a Latino Texan cousin among his extended family. Santa's cousin Pancho is transformed in "Charro Claus," and his nephew Vincent becomes his helper, the "Tejas Kid." You never know, maybe your uncle is also related to Santa, and perhaps some day you will become his helper.

The book can reinforce the development of literary skills in both languages and could be used by teachers to support English Language Learners and bi-lingual readers. This book is an enjoyable Christmas story; which parents could read aloud to younger children during the holiday season.

GARZA, XAVIER. *CHARRO CLAUS AND THE TEJAS KID*. EL PASO: CINCO PUNTOS PRESS, 2008. 38 pp. ILLUSTRATIONS. \$17.95 CLOTH. ISBN 13: 978-1-933693-24-8. 2008011635.

## *The Dog Who Loved Tortillas / La perrita que le encantaban las tortillas*

Benjamin Alire Saenz

**A Latino Family Adopts a Puppy**  
Review by Cristina Rios

Adopting a dog is a significant event for any child. This bilingual, English and Spanish, children's book presents to young readers the joys and worries that a new pet can bring to a family. Little Diego and his sister Gabriela convince their parents to adopt a puppy. The addition of the puppy Sofie to the Domínguez family brings some contention between Diego and Gabriela, but it makes the children become responsible for taking care of a dog and results in an enhancement of the siblings' relationship. Overcoming their initial rivalry, Diego and Gabriela realize that they share similar feelings toward their puppy; their language changes from self centered "my puppy" to a shared ownership and joint responsibility, "our puppy." Their concern for the puppy's health brings the children closer to each other.

The author is able to portray to the young reader a positive family environment, where parents demonstrate thoughtfulness and maintain an open communication with the children, and the children are respectful and sensitive. Little Diego is surprised when he discovers that his dad knows many facts about dogs. The depiction of the family's

(Continued on page ten)

(Continued from page nine)

internal dynamics and culture are subtle and suitable for children six to nine years old. The book presents the English and Spanish text side by side; which can assist English Language Learners to make connections from one language to the other. This is an appropriate book for elementary school libraries and classrooms and can be read by speakers of both languages. The Spanish is a colloquial form, and there are some minor mistakes of grammar and usage in both Spanish and English. The illustrations are creative and colorful.

Sáenz, Benjamin Alire. *THE DOG WHO LOVED TORTILLAS / LA PERRITA QUE LE ENCANTABAN LAS TORTILLAS*. EL PASO: CINCO PUNTOS PRESS, 2009. 38 pp. \$17.95 CLOTH. ISBN 13: 978-1-933693-54-5. 2008056036.

## *Big Thicket People: Larry Jene Fisher's Photographs of the Last Southern Frontier*

Thad Sitton,  
C. E. Hunt.

**Images of a Disappearing Way of Life Preserved In the Photography of the Renaissance Man of East Texas**  
Review by Jon P. Tritsch

Thad Sitton, an award-winning historian specializing in rural Texas life, has teamed with co-author C. E. Hunt to bring attention to a previously little known collection of photographs made by an equally little known photographer who has been gone for over 50 years. Larry Jene Fisher had lived in many places and possessed many "Renaissance Man" talents and interests. It was his talent as a professional photographer and his keen interest in the Big Thicket wilderness area that is revealed in this fascinating and informative book.

In the opening introductory chapter, Sitton gives us an excellent background of the Big Thicket wilderness area and the "plain folk" living there. Until the time of World War II, people lived off the land and engaged in livelihoods and social customs that were little changed from their ancestors who had immigrated to the region from similar areas in the rural South. In the next chapter, co-author Hunt focuses more on Fisher and how his fascination with the Big Thicket led him to chronicle the area and its people with literally thousands of photographs and portraits. Fisher instinctively felt that this primitive way of life, "the last stand of Southern frontier lifeways," was rapidly disappearing. "He feared that the end might be near not just for the old lifeways but for aspects of the natural environment of the Thicket" (21). The remainder of the book features numerous photographs from Fisher's collection picturing the everyday lives of his neighbors and the plants, animals and landscape scenes of the Big Thicket.

The authors have indicated that this book features only a sample of the many pictures and negatives in the Larry Jene Fisher collection, now housed in the Special Collections of the Mary and John Gray Library of Lamar University. They have also included a nice bibliography for those wanting to do more research on the Big Thicket. Without a doubt, *Big Thicket People* is highly recommended for all academic and public libraries. East Texas libraries, especially, will want to add this work to their collections.

SITTON, THAD, AND C. E. HUNT. *BIG THICKET PEOPLE: LARRY JENE FISHER'S PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE LAST SOUTHERN FRONTIER*. AUSTIN: UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS PRESS, 2008. 160 PP. BIBLIOGRAPHY. NOTES. PHOTOS. \$29.95 CLOTH. ISBN 13: 978-0-292-71782-4. 2007025086.

## *Memories of the Branch Davidians: The Autobiography of David Koresh's Mother* Bonnie Haldeman

**David Koresh's Mother Remembers Her Son and the Branch Davidians**

Review by Jon P. Tritsch

Catherine Wessinger, a Professor of the History of Religions at Loyola University New Orleans, has done extensive research in religious movements, with an emphasis on marginal religions and millennialism. She was in Waco in 2003 for the tenth anniversary memorial services for those who died in the fiery ATF raid on the Mount Carmel compound. It was at the April 19<sup>th</sup> service that she decided to record the life histories and experiences of surviving Branch Davidians. This book is the result of over nine hours of recorded interviews and transcriptions with Bonnie Haldeman, the mother of David Koresh, the leader of the Branch Davidians.

Written in the first person throughout, Ms. Haldeman gives a bit of history about her own upbringing. Her oldest son was born before she, unmarried, turned fifteen. She named him Vernon Howell, giving him her father's first name and his father's last name. It was later that Vernon changed his name to David Koresh, although Haldeman gave no reason in the book for his decision on the name change. Her involvement with her son and the Branch Davidians covered several years and involved following her son and the sect to a litany of locations: from wilderness camps near Palestine to locations in California, Hawaii, and back to Texas. Haldeman had actually left the Mount Carmel compound two years before the ATF raid, but did return for visits on three other occasions, the last one only a short month before the February 28, 1993 assault by federal agents.

It should be mentioned that *Memories of the Branch Davidians* is not a history of Koresh, the Davidians, or of  
(Continued on page eleven)

(Continued from page ten)

the events leading to the ATF raid and siege on Mount Carmel. The book is merely the telling of a mother's memories of her life and interactions with her son and the religious sect. A series of 68 plates of photographs are provided in the book, along with an appendix featuring transcriptions of poems Koresh had written on paper napkins. In all, this work would be suitable for public and academic libraries to supplement their holdings on the Branch Davidian disaster of 1993.

HALDEMAN, BONNIE. *MEMORIES OF THE BRANCH DAVIDIANS: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF DAVID KORESH'S MOTHER*. WACO: BAYLOR UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2007. 199 PP. BIBLIOGRAPHY. INDEX. PHOTOS \$24.95 PAPER. ISBN 13: 978-1-932792-98-0. 2007022395.

## *That Rough Beast, Its Hour Come Round at Last: The History of Hurricane Katrina* Heather Andrews, et al eds.

Words from a William Butler Yeats Poem  
Aptly Describe This Monster Hurricane  
Review by Jon P. Tritzsch

A check of many bibliographies and databases shows that hundreds of books have been written about Hurricane Katrina and the effects on the Gulf Coast in its wake. What makes this one a bit different is that it was produced as a class project by students at Sam Houston State University. These students, under the direction of Paul Ruffin, director of the *Texas Review Press*, did all of the research and writing and even designed the cover of this work. The topics in the book are neatly organized. The opening chapter traces Katrina's origins as a tropical wave in the western Atlantic, its journey across Florida and the Gulf of Mexico, and the eventually slamming into southern Louisiana and the Mississippi coast. Succeeding chapters focus on the hurricane's economic and social impact on Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and the heavy rains and tornadoes on other affected states after landfall. A concluding chapter reminds us that animals, likewise, were victims of Katrina's wrath.

The book includes many snapshots taken of the hurricane's aftermath in the affected areas.

Director Paul Ruffin furnished a few brief interviews from victims coping with the disaster. His students also added numerous statistics they researched concerning the storm's economic and human impacts on the Gulf Coast. In all, this is a fine work done by the students and would make a nice addition for all libraries' collections. Incidentally, for those who are wondering, the book's title comes from Yeats' poem "The Second Coming."

ANDREWS, HEATHER, ET AL, EDS. *THAT ROUGH BEAST, ITS HOUR COME ROUND AT LAST: THE HISTORY OF HURRICANE KATRINA*. HUNTSVILLE, TEXAS REVIEW PRESS, 2007. 181 PP. ILLUSTRATIONS. PHOTOS. \$18.95 PAPER. ISBN 10: 1-933896-00-0. ISBN 13: 978-933896-00-7. 2007014880.

## *Hill Country Landowner's Guide*

Jim Stanley

Managing Our Land  
Review by Jeffrey Turk

When my wife handed me a copy of *Hill Country Landowner's Guide* to read, I thought here we go again some old ex hippy trying to tell me how to manage my land so that I could be in harmony with the universe. I was wrong. I found that this book is a very useful guide in managing our property with various land management methods to achieve our desired outcomes. The author, Jim Stanley, asks what owners wish to use their land for and then describes ways in which to achieve it. He describes various means of reaching owners' end goals for their property and lists reference materials for them use if they would like to read a more detailed analysis. He describes several activities that we as land owner are doing to damage our properties and proposes alternative methods of land management that can make our land healthier. He gives information on overgrazing of livestock and wildlife; few mention the later. The author gives recommendations on what types of vegetation to promote and plant in our region. I do not have room here to write all the things I wish to say about this book, so let me just say this book does not bore readers with too much detail but gives enough information to a keep a landowner interested. I enjoyed this book. I found it contains useful information for new and old landowners. I recommend it to my fellow landowners, folks that what to be landowners, and those who just love the Texas Hill Country.

STANLEY, JIM. *HILL COUNTRY LANDOWNER'S GUIDE*. COLLEGE STATION: TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2009. 224 PP. ILLUSTRATIONS. INDEX. PHOTOS. \$19.95 PAPER. ISBN 10: 1-603441379. ISBN 13: 978-1603441377. 2009007535.

Larry Jene Fisher (1902-1956) has been called "the Renaissance man of East Texas." He worked as an aviator, musician, photographer, playwright, and researcher. He lived in Saratoga, Texas, while making theses photographs.

Thad Sitton is an award-winning historian who specializes in life in the Texas countryside before World War II. He lives in Austin.

C. E. Hunt is a writer and is active in conserving the natural and cultural heritage of Texas. He lives in Fort Davis, Texas.

## Reviewers

**Holly Carey** is Instructor of English at Lamar University where she teaches freshman composition and sophomore literature survey classes.

**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*.

**Emma B. Hawkins** is Assistant Professor of Medieval English language and literature at Lamar University.

**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.

**Yves Laberge, Ph.D.** is a Canadian scholar and sociologist, specializing in American studies, cultural studies, and museums. He is the author of numerous articles and publications.

**Sara Pace, Ph.D.** is Assistant Professor of English at Lamar University. She specializes in composition and rhetoric.

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

**Cristina Ríos** is Associate Professor of Education at Lamar University. She is the author of several books and numerous articles.

**Jon P. Trisch** works as a cataloger and helps develop collections for history and political science for the Mary and John Gray library at Lamar University. He holds an M.L.S. from Emporia State University and an M.A. from Sam Houston State University.

**Jeffrey W. Turk** owns and operates a cattle and deer hunting ranch on the southwest edge of the hill country in north Kinney County.

Baylor University Press  
One Bear Place 97363  
Waco, TX 76798  
[www.baylor.edu](http://www.baylor.edu)

Pelican Publishing Company  
1000 Burnmaster Street  
Gretna, LA 70053  
[www.pelicanpub.com](http://www.pelicanpub.com)  
(504) 368-1175

Texas Tech University Press  
P.O. Box 41037  
Lubbock, TX 79410  
(880) 832-4042  
[www.ttup.ttu.edu](http://www.ttup.ttu.edu)

Cinco Puntos Press  
701 Texas Avenue  
El Paso, TX 79901

Texas A&M University Press  
4354 TAMU  
College Station, TX 77843-4354  
[www.tamu.edu/upress](http://www.tamu.edu/upress)

University of North Texas Press  
P. O. Box 311336  
Denton, TX 76203  
(940) 565-2142

Forge/Tor  
175 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10010  
(212) 388-0100  
[www.tor.com](http://www.tor.com)

Texas Christian University Press  
TCU Box 297050  
Fort Worth, TX 76129  
(817) 257-7810  
[www.news.tcu.edu](http://www.news.tcu.edu)

University of Texas Press  
P.O. Box 7819  
Austin, TX 78713-7819  
(800) 687-6046  
[www.utexaspress.com](http://www.utexaspress.com)

Georgetown Press  
P. O. Box 1934  
Georgetown, TX 78627

Texas Review Press  
Box 2146  
Sam Houston State University  
Huntsville, TX 77341-2146  
(936) 294-1992  
[www.shsu.edu/~www\\_trp](http://www.shsu.edu/~www_trp)

Walker and Company  
175 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10010