



REVIEW OF TEXAS BOOKS



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***** FICTION *****

Dearen, Patrick. *WHEN COWBOYS DIE*. New York: M. Evans and Co., Inc., 1994. 184p. Hardcover: \$18.95, ISBN 0-87131-756-7. 94-785.

Charlie Lyles, the last cowboy in our modern world, decides to risk his life by stealing a horse and escaping to the Colorado Divide where he can live as cowboys did a hundred years ago. A manhunt for him takes place with Charlie's longtime friend L.D. in command. L.D. hopes Charlie will not be found because he is living out the dream L.D. has let go. The men in L.D.'s group are unaccustomed to the heat, thirst, and exhaustion caused by long hours on horseback, giving Charlie a small advantage during the chase. Accidents plague the manhunt party, resulting in injuries and the deaths of two men. When a confrontation does occur, Charlie drives his horse over a river bank and is left to drown there; however, he escapes by train to California where another man, thought to be Charlie, is killed in a train accident.

Interestingly, certain events in this novel were inspired by an actual horseback-helicopter manhunt in Texas and a subsequent train accident in the 1970s. Presumably a "Western," this novel surprisingly grows into mainstream fiction even though it has a prevalence of Southwest images and clichés about the last cowboy. Dearen also adds elements of mysticism through his inclusion of the Lyles' family history and the beliefs surrounding Charlie's lost soul. Dearen is a Texas author of two novels and three books of Texas history and lore. *When Cowboys Die* recently was named a finalist for Best Western Novel in the Spur Awards of Western Writers of America.

Peyton J. Cole

Duff Gerald. *THAT'S ALL RIGHT, MAMA: THE UN-AUTHORIZED LIFE OF ELVIS'S TWIN*. Dallas: Baskerville Publishers Inc., 1995. 278p. Hardcover: \$21.00, ISBN 1-880909-33-2. 94-49212.

Now that the Presley estate has cracked down on their sale, black velvet Elvis portrait devotees can find a literary equivalent in Gerald Duff's new book, *That's All Right Mama: The Unauthorized Life of Elvis's Twin*. The narrator of this mock-autobiography is none other than Jesse Garon Presley, Elvis' supposedly dead twin brother who is very much alive and determined to prove that in many respects he is superior to his revered sibling. A former Lamar University-Beaumont student who now teaches creative writing at Johns Hopkins, Duff uses Jesse as a vehicle for the angst of the outsider who feels cheated and knows he can never truly recoup his lost chances in life.

The story's running gag is that every time Elvis encounters a major career or personal challenge he becomes too nervous, ill, or drug-addled to cope, and Jesse comes to his rescue by giving a knockout performance and saving the day. Then, like the proverbial crazy aunt in the attic, Jesse is put away until he again can prove useful. This device wears a bit thin, and Jesse comes across as a second-rate Forrest Gump. But there also are some chilling moments, especially those dealing with the shamanistic insanity of Elvis' mother, Gladys, and the nightmares which drive the King to his own madness, greatness and self-destruction.

Duff is talented enough to make us buy all of this, against our better judgment. When Jesse attains at long last some measure of redemption, we feel relieved for our own collective sake.

Kenneth Rivers

Elmore, Barbara. *BREATHING ROOM*. Unionville: Royal Fireworks Printing Co., Inc., 1994. 126p. Library Binding: \$15.00, ISBN 0-88092-109-9; Paperback: \$5.00, ISBN 0-88092-108-0.

Alberta Samantha Sims, a young girl with asthma, is determined to push past the limits that have been set for her by her illness and her over-protective mother. With the help of new medication and the encouragement of a new friend, Alberta joins the cross country track team and becomes a runner. She conceals the truth from her mother, pretending that her afternoons after school are spent in the French Club instead of on the track. But a fall that results in a sprained ankle gives Alberta's secret away. Alberta and her new somewhat eccentric friend, Bethesda, who dresses flamboyantly and refuses to wear anything but primary colors, are entertaining characters. Both girls have problems with their mothers, and their friendship is a refuge where they can offer each other support. Elmore describes Alberta's asthma and its symptoms in a humorous and easy-to-understand manner. *Breathing Room* is enjoyable and is recommended for readers ages ten through thirteen. The book won the 1995 Texas Institute of Letters Award for the Best Book for Young People. Elmore is editor-in-chief of a Waco newspaper.

Gayla Chaney

Flynn, Robert. *LIVING WITH THE HYENAS*. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1995. 211p. Hardcover: \$22.50, ISBN 0-87565-144-5. 95-8082.

As Robert Flynn's title for his recent collection of seventeen short stories indicates, it is sometimes more desirable to live among God's most peculiar beasts than it is to live among the predatory communities of humankind. With hyenas, at least, we know what we are getting. Here, Texas is a "strange country," made stranger by an awareness of how difficult it is to escape from the lives for which "we have volunteered." On this score,

the African American displaced Korean war veteran who moves his hip inner-city Detroit daughter to a "dried-up" redneck town ("Land of the Free"), the recalcitrant miscreants who stuff their aging mother in a nursing home ("Games Children Play"), and the corporate mogul who skins his family and friends for ravenous profits ("A Second Chance") come to realize that freedom necessitates reaching beyond oneself.

Subdividing his collection into "War," "Armistice" and "Peace," Flynn advances from all out conflict to genuine reconciliation. His patently religious stories, such as "X-mas" and "At Play in the Sewers of the Lord," are rather threadbare. Greater artistic durability is achieved in chancier pieces like "Flight to Amman," which embeds an extended metaphor for the circuitous, even chaotic, routes people take to arrive at positions of power that are too abrasive to mask. The slightest lapse in attention can make anyone a victim, as depicted in the Vietnam story "A Boy and His Dog."

In his forward, Flynn recounts those elusive moments when life transforms into literature. An acclaimed novelist, Flynn writes about a Texas that is menacing and familiar. And he writes of resilient people who steadfastly oppose banal cruelties.

Joe Nordgren

Associated Writing Programs Award for the novel.

Joe Nordgren

McClellan, Doris. *BAXTER BADGER'S HOME*. Dallas: Hendrick-Long Publishing Co., 1995. 32p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Hardcover: \$14.95, ISBN 1-885777-03-5. 95-9774. (Juvenile)

Young children ages five and older will learn a great deal about badgers in this attractive read-aloud book. The habitat and natural history of this West Texas burrowing mammal are explained in a simple text that is complemented by Vicki Diggs' beautiful full-color illustrations which appear on every page. Since the story concerns Baxter's burrowed home and his predators, a menacing snake and coyote, youngsters who hear this story may feel more safe in a grownup's lap. New vocabulary words are capitalized and a glossary is at the book's end. Both author and illustrator live on West Texas ranches where they have observed this creature's way of life. The bibliography leads to other readings about badgers.

Sally Dooley

POETRY

Gardner, Mary. *BOAT PEOPLE*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1995. 277p. Hardcover: \$21.00, ISBN 0-393-03738-X. 94-27505.

Boat People is about the collision of cultures and the emotional distances people must voyage to find security. Beyond the posh hotels and condominiums along Galveston's Sea Wall, Gardner delves into the Beach Terrace housing project where African Americans and Vietnamese expatriates seemingly have washed ashore.

Several parallel stories accentuate themes embedded in prejudice and abuse. Among them, Hai Trung, a mother of three, is tormented by her lost "ghost husband" who inhabits her body and prevents her from eating. When her second husband admits her to Galveston Medical Center, she is diagnosed by staff psychiatrists as being schizophrenic. They equate her language difficulties with stupidity and, after shoving pills down her throat, submit her to electroshock therapy. Trang, a fifteen-year-old orphan, is repeatedly beaten by her aunt and uncle who see her as a scapegoat for the death of their son Tuan who died when swimming from their capsized refugee boat during a storm at sea. Azelita Simpson, an African American volunteer worker at Carver School, cares deeply for the deprived and troubled Vietnamese children. She is rewarded by the unexpected mystery of finding love when thinking that time might have passed her by.

Conflicts are numerous and wide ranging: interracial dating, parental and professional responsibility, teenage infatuation, misguided rage, nostalgia for one's lost homeland, restive searches for cultural identity. And all are too conveniently resolved when hurricane conditions strike the island, forcing residents to harbor one another. Despite her pat closing, Gardner's creative dexterity, especially the passages in which characters recall their remarkable voyages from Saigon, rescues the novel from lapsing into sentimentality. The book is a deserving winner of the 1993

Fink, Robert A. *THE TONGUES OF MEN AND OF ANGELS*. Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 1995. 64p. Hardcover: \$16.50, ISBN 0-89672-341-0. 94-46581.

This collection, from TTUP Invited Poetry Series, confirms Fink as one of the best poets in the state. Still, his rationale for the book's structure is hard to grasp; poems dealing with Vietnam and others spoken by St. Paul are spread among five sections, intended perhaps as ironic commentaries on each other. Unfortunately, the Pauline monologues, separated from each other, do not establish a voice distinct from Fink's own. He is best with subjects drawn from experience and observation, for example, an opening meditation on "picture histories of war / nobody buys but can't put down" that focuses on one disturbing photo: "the lovely Russian girl swinging from a rope / delicate as a necklace of pearls." In "The Ex-Grunt Writes His Last Letter to His Former Professor," a veteran engages in a hostile litany: "Mail me the metaphor for an ice pick through the eye. / May I send you twenty ways to slit a throat?" These grim reminders of war and its aftereffects are balanced by love poems that relate getting "home to the woman / any man would kill to get back to" and by thoughtful ruminations on fatherhood that observe teenage sons maturing "toward lands too real for fathers." Fink, Professor of English at Hardin-Simmons University, is the author of one earlier collection, *The Ghostly Hitchhiker*.

R. S. Gwynn

Sáenz, Benjamin Alire. *DARK AND PERFECT ANGELS*. El Paso: Cinco Puntos Press, 1995. 144p. Paperback: \$11.95, ISBN 0-938317-23-7. 95-67867.

Benjamin Alire Sáenz's poetry is best in lyrical passages embedded in narrative poems, many of them about and often addressed to members of the poet's extended family. Line

lengths range from very short ("In the holding tank / an old man, / life stealing / all his teeth, / talks of a finer / past.") to prose, though the poet seems most comfortable in cadences reminiscent of the late work of William Everson: "The river has flowed a thousand years. It is / Spring, and the river is spilling with the newness of winter's / Melted snow, each season flowing into each season." A native of New Mexico, Sáenz spoke only Spanish as a child, a background that lies behind lines like "I want to feel words / swimming in my throat / like fighting fish / that refuse to be hooked / on a line." Sáenz is a skillful writer, but after many diffuse long poems the reader yearns for more of the kind of compression that is found only in "To the Desert," an unrhymed sonnet that turns on John Donne's Holy Sonnet 10: "I was born for you. / Above, below, by you, by you surrounded. / I wake to you at dawn. / Never break your / Knot. Reach, rise, blow, *Sálvame, mi dios, / Trágame, mi tierra. Salva, traga, Break me, / I am bread. I will be the water for your thirst.*" The poet's Catholic background and three years as a priest are evident in the images he chooses for his apostrophe to a beloved yet cruel landscape.

R.S. Gwynn

★ ★ ★ NONFICTION ★ ★ ★

BIOGRAPHY

Aikman, Troy and Greg Brown. *THINGS CHANGE*. Dallas: Taylor Publishing Co., 1995. 38p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$14.95, ISBN 0-87833-888-8. 95-5479.

Readers ages eight to twelve, especially those interested in sports, will be inspired by the personal voice Troy Aikman uses in his first book for older children, *Things Change*. Putting his celebrity status on hold, Aikman offers a simple, yet timeless message. Children are encouraged to accept with a positive attitude the unexpected changes that occur in their lives, particularly changes that initially seem disappointing.

Following a biographical format, Aikman recalls events prompted by change that have motivated him to achieve football stardom. Along the way, he tells of learning to walk in plaster casts to correct a mild form of club foot, of being uprooted from friends in California and moving to rural Henryetta, Oklahoma, of sacrificing his dream to play starting quarterback for the Sooners, of enduring the battering of a one-and-fifteen losing season his first year with Dallas, and of earning two Super Bowl rings. Throughout, he emphasizes the importance of close family ties and friendships. Speaking like an older brother dedicated to improving his talents, Aikman appeals to girls and boys to be confident in their abilities, and, without cynicism or skepticism, to put trust in others. Illustrations by Doug Keith and a variety of family and professional photographs of Aikman create a vivid pictorial story to parallel written events. The book would make a worthwhile gift; moreover, its royalties are to be donated to the Troy Aikman Foundation, which benefits disadvantaged children.

Joe Nordgren

Cayleff, Susan E. *BABE: THE LIFE AND LEGEND OF*

BABE DIDRIKSON ZAHARIAS. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995. 327p. Illustrations. Index. Hardcover: \$29.95, ISBN 0252-01793-5. 94-35584.

A quote by Muriel Rukeyser appears in the front matter of *Babe*: "What would happen if one woman told the truth about her life? The world would split open." This is a statement supportive of Cayleff's approach to this biography, yet it leaves one wondering why her suppositions are earth-shattering. The author, dismissing Babe's autobiography, *This Life I've Led*, as a mythologized creation of a public persona, probes for the private person, arriving at her own interpretation, framed within the cultural context and gender consciousness of Babe's time, yet making judgments based on recent attitudes toward lesbianism and women sports figures.

Rising from the poor southern working class in Beaumont, Babe came to epitomize the American Dream, but her rise to fame and fortune is overwhelmed by Cayleff's interest in androgyny. Babe was labeled "Texas Tomboy" and "Amazing Amazon" by hostile reporters who did not welcome her invasion into male-dominated sports. Though Betty Dodd, her protégée, lived with her and her husband George the last five years of her life, to all appearances there was no aberrant sexual behavior. One could hope for a less obfuscated biography of Babe when writers have distanced themselves from the current obsession with sexual behavior.

Ernestine Sewell Linck

Craver, Rebecca and Adair Margo, eds. *TOM LEA: AN ORAL HISTORY*. El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1995. 185p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$50.00, ISBN 0-87404-234-8. 94-61797.

Tom Lea of El Paso is gifted in both the visual and verbal arts. His murals in state and national buildings, his paintings and book illustrations, along with the books he has written and illustrated, are potent examples of his genius. This book, the result of an oral history project, will no doubt serve as his autobiography, and it is an excellent one. Editor Rebecca Craver is the director of the University of Texas at El Paso's Institute of Oral History, and co-editor Adair Margo is a lifetime friend of Lea's and owner of an El Paso gallery. Together they present a nearly seamless narrative with black-and-white as well as four-color reproductions of Lea's art work.

Lea grew up in El Paso and left in 1924 for study at the Chicago Art Institute where he began doing murals and working with John Norton. Twelve years later he returned to El Paso where his mural work for various state and national buildings continued. Simultaneously his interest in books, typography, and calligraphy grew, and he collaborated on many art and publishing projects with Carl Hertzog and J. Frank Dobie. During World War II, as a war correspondent for *Life* magazine, his colorful paintings depicted battles in the North Atlantic and the South Pacific.

Later, he entered a writing period and authored and illustrated many fine books, all on Southwest subjects: *The Brave Bulls*, *The Wonderful Country* (also made into a film), *The King Ranch*, *The Hands of Cantú*, and *In the Crucible of the Sun*. It is interesting to read in Lea's own words how he creates, and it is notable that he finds writing is more difficult for him than painting. Because

of Lea's stature and the quality of this oral history, this book should be in Texana and art collections.

Sally Dooley

Fisher, Lillian M. **BRAVE BESSIE: FLYING FREE**. Dallas: Hendrick-Long Publishing Co., 1995. 87p. Illustrations. Index. Hardcover: \$13.95, ISBN 0-937460-94-X. 95-8546.

Brave Bessie is a biography for young readers about the remarkable and inspiring life of Texan Bessie Coleman, the first black female pilot in the world. Growing up in Waxahachie at the turn-of-the-century, she fought poverty and prejudice as she pursued education and her dream of flying airplanes. As a young woman she moved to Chicago to earn money and learn the French language so that she could attend flight school in France. After being licensed in 1921 in France, she thrilled audiences across the United States with her air show before she died in an air accident in 1926. A recently issued thirty-two cent stamp honors her endeavors. Her story exemplifies the perseverance and courage necessary to achieve goals despite great odds. Author Lillian M. Fisher succeeds in writing a lively account which will inform and entertain readers in late elementary school.

Sally Dooley

Haley, John A. **WINDMILLS, DROUTHS AND COTTON-SEED CAKE: A BIASED BIOGRAPHY OF A WEST TEXAS RANCHER**. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1995. 107p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$19.95, ISBN 0-87565-141-0. 94-30504.

This "biased biography" is at once anecdotal and thematic. Haley retells his father's stories of setbacks and stubborn triumphs over nature and intrusive government, and at the same time imparts to the reader the wry humor and hearty work ethic of his rancher father. Having experienced ranch life first-hand, Haley succeeds in recreating the dust, sweat, and determination that characterized the lives of those in the first half of this century who survived the Depression, drouths, and unstable boomtowns of West Texas.

Although the author claims he was uncertain about accepting the task of chronicling his father's life, he has accomplished a biography that vividly recreates the life of a man as well as the environment that shaped him. This book is recommended for public libraries and for anyone who has ranching in his blood.

Sarah Tusa

Paulissen, May Nelson and Carl McQueary. **MIRIAM: THE SOUTHERN BELLE WHO BECAME THE FIRST WOMAN GOVERNOR OF TEXAS**. Austin: Eakin Press, 1995. 347p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$27.95, ISBN 0-89015-971-8. 94-4455.

Miriam, the biography of Miriam Amanda Ferguson, known to generations of Texans as "Ma" Ferguson, is a detailed account of the life of the first woman governor of the Lone Star State. Though her pampered--dare I say spoiled--rearing in Belton, Texas, may not have adequately prepared her for the political and financial difficulties she would endure as Governor Jim

Ferguson's wife, her strong will, loyalty, and determination saw her through. When he was impeached in the summer of 1917, three years before ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution which would give women the right to vote, Jim Ferguson, husband and father to two daughters, vowed that a Ferguson would take the governor's seat again. Many believed Miriam's governorship to be merely an extension for Jim's crooked, power-mongering ways, while others viewed it as an enormous victory for American women. Regardless of interpretation, the wife, mother, grandmother, and keeper of prize-winning leghorn chickens found herself in the governor's chair for a second time in 1924 and for a third in 1933.

Paulissen spent over fifteen years researching and interviewing to produce *Miriam*, the first definitive biography of Ma Ferguson. McQueary added his expertise in regional and local history to the project. Together the authors present a clear, extraordinarily detailed, and easy-to-read portrait of the personal and political life of Miriam Ferguson. This book should be included in every Texas history collection.

Brenda L. Herbel

CRITICISM

Busby, Mark. **LARRY MCMURTRY AND THE WEST: AN AMBIVALENT RELATIONSHIP**. Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1995. 344p. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$19.95, ISBN 0-929398-34-3. 94-47200.

Mark Busby's *Larry McMurtry and the West: An Ambivalent Relationship*, a part of the University of North Texas' Texas Writers series--Elmer Kelton, Benjamin Capps, and Katherine Ann Porter to date--makes a nice companion piece to *Taking Stock: A Larry McMurtry Casebook*, Clay Reynolds, ed. Texas scholars and critics keep trying to sum up McMurtry, but Larry, reputedly "eccentric, aloof and somewhat ornery," keeps on writing novels of varying degrees of critical acceptance. Busby readily admits that nothing on McMurtry can yet be complete, but he takes a closer step than *Taking Stock* by focusing on themes that have arisen from McMurtry's work.

Busby carefully examines almost everything that has been written about McMurtry (he has a marvelous bibliography) and comments on previous studies' points. The opening chapters first give a biographical sketch of McMurtry, his literary influences, writing process, and recurrent themes: the frontier myth, the modern world, the artist and writing, initiation, displacement, and especially ambivalence. The next chapters examine these themes through a chronological arrangement of McMurtry's work. Clearly tracing McMurtry's ambivalence about a "West," which could just as easily be labeled Texas, the frontier past or the loss of a history, is Busby's contribution to McMurtry scholarship. As Busby points out, McMurtry is quick to condemn the cowboy past and quick to point out the anti-mythic, realistic elements of his novels, but the novels themselves go beyond mere nostalgia to look at characters who bear the weight of myth and past value. Busby's point then is that McMurtry can neither shake loose from his past and his home, nor fully condemn them.

Jim Sanderson

DRINKING WATER

Symons, James M. **DRINKING WATER: REFRESHING ANSWERS TO ALL YOUR QUESTIONS.** College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1995. 118p. Illustrations. Index. Hardcover: \$24.50, ISBN 0-89096-646-X; Paperback: \$10.95, ISBN 0-89096-659-1. 94-39842.

This is an enlightening book for something we so often take for granted--the safeness of our drinking water. Dr. Symons presents all the important facts, defining precisely what constitutes safe drinking water and why. Written in non-technical language, this book is ideal for the average reader who can quickly become an informed "waterologist." To aid the reader still further, the author provides for all scientific terms both clear phonetic pronunciations and clear definitions. Topics range from E.P.A. standards to healthy water, aesthetics, bottled water, sources, distribution and regulations, and testing. The question and answer form is a refreshing change for presenting this type of subject matter, and the clever and witty illustrations will delight the reader. Each chapter begins with a thought-provoking and insightful quotation, e.g. "having an obedient spring in the kitchen, is really among the most fragile of life's necessities." Dr. Symons is an active researcher in his field, a member of several prestigious national organizations, and the Cullen Distinguished Professor of Civil Engineering at the University of Houston.

Phillip Malnassy

ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS

North, Gerald R., Jurgen Schmandt, and Judith Clarkson, eds. **THE IMPACT OF GLOBAL WARMING ON TEXAS.** Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995. 242p. Illustrations. Index. Hardcover: \$29.95, ISBN 0-292-75555-4. 94-15147.

Opening chapters serve to review the current knowledge of global climate change, Texas climate change, and greenhouse gas emissions. Chapters that follow describe current conditions and postulate effects of global warming on Texas water resources, estuaries, biodiversity, agriculture, urban areas, and economies. Management or policy options to mitigate some effects of climate change are discussed in the short conclusions. These ten chapters, contributed by nineteen authors, are well integrated to increase awareness of effects of global warming on Texas. It is mistake free and a good review of Texas geography. This is not an alarmist book.

Richard C. Harrel

FOLKLORE

Patterson, Paul. **SAM MCGOO AND TEXAS TOO.** Mathis, Van Nort & Co., 1947. Reprint. Commerce: Cow Hill Press, 1994. 183p. Illustrations. Paperback: \$13.00, ISBN 0-9617714-9-6.

The Old West is littered with wild stories, many of which only truly come to life with skillful re-telling. This reprint of Patterson's self-proclaimed "sagebrush saga" is a perfect example of the tall-tale cowboy genre at its best. Elmer Kelton, his long-time protégé, provides wonderful illustrations as nonchalantly distorted as the stories themselves (oversized torsos

and bandy little legs on the cowboys). Surprisingly, Kelton abandoned drawing shortly after this work was produced, choosing instead a writing career. The foreword to this edition was penned by him.

Sam McGoo's travels are recounted in hilarious fashion throughout this charming little book. Sam and various compadres wander from the Pecos country in West Texas to Mexico and New York and even to London. No small part of the humor stems from the westerners' puzzlement in the midst of modern conveniences and civilized society. Whenever they run across anything even vaguely familiar to their culture, they quickly latch onto it. Sam, for example, prefers the "horseless rodeos" i.e. professional wrestling matches, which he finds plentiful in Manhattan. Throughout, Patterson weaves his stories with a sure hand and with his tongue sticking firmly in cheek. Recommended for all folklore collections.

David Carroll

GUIDEBOOK

Little, Mickey. **HIKING AND BACKPACKING TRAILS OF TEXAS.** 4th ed., rev. Houston: Gulf Publishing Co., 1995. 212p. Illustrations. Index. Paperback: \$17.95, ISBN 0-88415-253-7. 95-10005.

This fourth edition of a popular guidebook includes forty-five more pages than the last and has newly added information about mountain biking and horse trails, both of which the author claims are compatible with hiking and backpacking trails. Also included in this edition are twenty-three new parks or areas with trails for public use. All addresses and phone numbers for parks, lakes, forests, and trails have been updated to make this a helpful book for public and school libraries. Novice and experienced hikers, backpackers, bikers, and horseback riders will profit from this clearly written guide.

Sally Dooley

O'Keefe, Eric. **THE TEXAS MONTHLY GUIDEBOOKS: WEST TEXAS AND THE BIG BEND.** Houston: Gulf Publishing Co., 1995. 284p. Illustrations. Index. Paperback: \$16.95, ISBN 0-87719-250-2. 94-36958.

West Texas and the Big Bend is the newest addition to the fifteen-book-series of Texas Monthly Guidebooks for the Lone Star State. Noted for their thorough and up-to-date information, the books are essential for travelers. This book is divided into three regions: West of the Pecos, Panhandle/Plains, and West Texas, and each section has detailed listings of tourist services and feature articles on the geology, history, and biology of its area. O'Keefe, a Rice graduate and an Alpine resident, writes frequently about Texas.

Sally Dooley

HISTORY

Bailey, Anne J. **TEXANS IN THE CONFEDERATE CAVALRY.** Colleyville: Ryan Place Publishers, Inc., 94p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Paperback: \$11.95, ISBN 1-88661-02-2. 95-11704.

Waugh, John C. **SAM BELL MAXEY AND THE CONFEDERATE INDIANS.** Colleyville: Ryan Place Publishers, Inc., 100p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Paperback: \$11.95, ISBN 1-886661-03-0. 95-12958.

These two paperbacks are part of a series entitled Civil War Campaigns and Commanders. Under the general editorship of distinguished Civil War historian Grady McWhiney, the series is designed to provide brief, authoritative, and attractively illustrated accounts of various aspects of America's Civil War. These volumes should have special appeal to readers interested in military operations in the often neglected Trans Mississippi department of the Confederacy. *Texans in the Confederate Cavalry* focuses primarily upon cavalry operations in Louisiana during 1864. While the author, a recognized authority on Trans Mississippi military affairs, provides general information relating to Texans in the mounted service, nearly half of the narrative is devoted to the Red River campaign. In this campaign, Texas horsemen had a significant role in forcing the Union army to abandon efforts to occupy northwestern Louisiana and northeastern Texas.

John C. Waugh's *Sam Bell Maxey and the Confederate Indians* describes the role played by Texas lawyer and soldier Sam Maxey in defense of Indian Territory. West Point roommate of Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson, Maxey helped organize the Ninth Texas Infantry and served in Tennessee and Mississippi before his December 1863 appointment as Confederate commander of Indian Territory. For the next year-and-a-half Maxey defended his department against Union invaders, bureaucratic inefficiency, hostile Indians, and an ambitious fellow officer, Douglas Cooper. The two works provide ideal sources for those interested in learning more about the Civil War. In addition to the text narrative, each book contains numerous contemporary photographs, biographical inserts written by editor McWhiney and David Coffey, and superb maps prepared by Civil War author and cartographer Donald Frazier.

Ralph A. Wooster

Belfiglio, Valentine J. **THE ITALIAN EXPERIENCE IN TEXAS.** 2d ed. rev. Austin: Eakin Press, 1995. 202p. Illustrations. Index. Hardcover: \$19.95, ISBN 0-89015-969-6.

Prior to 1983, the only published work about Italian Americans in Texas was a volume done a decade before by the Institute of Texan Cultures. Dr. Belfiglio, a professor of government at Texas Woman's University, filled this gap with *The Italian Experience in Texas* published in 1983 by Eakin Press. Now extensively rewritten and rearranged in this 1995 edition with the spine subtitle *A Closer Look*, Belfiglio traces the Italian presence in Texas and the Southwest, beginning with the early exploration of Fray Marcos de Niza in 1539 up to the present time. The author's research explains the different immigration patterns and cultures of northern and southern Italians. Several Texans, some prominent and some not well known, are highlighted throughout the book. One contribution to Texan and American culture not to be forgotten is in the popular style of cowboy boots first crafted by Salvatore (Sam) Lucchese of San Antonio and Antonio (Tony) Lama of El Paso and still made today in modern factories.

The extensive bibliographical footnotes reveal a tremendous amount of painstaking research through books, articles, per-

sonal interviews, census reports, and courthouse, church, and cemetery records. This book is recommended for public and academic libraries and, most definitely, for Texas history and genealogy collections.

Jon P. Tritsch

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Christian, Garna L. **BLACK SOLDIERS IN JIM CROW TEXAS, 1899-1917.** College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1995. 232p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$35.00, ISBN 0-89096-637-0. 94-42428.

Dr. Garna Christian's book about black soldiers in Texas from 1899 to 1917 is an excellent addition to Texas history in three primary areas: race relations, military history, and social history. When previous historians touched on this topic, it was usually to discuss the major confrontations in the cities of Brownsville in 1906 and Houston in 1917, but Dr. Christian has done so much more in this solidly researched and well written book. Tracing the experiences of the black Twenty-fourth and Twenty-fifth Infantries and the Ninth and Tenth Cavalries from the end of the Spanish-American War to World War I, he shows us a Texas facing increasing racial strife and its impact on black military men whose regiments had long and successful careers in the Indian wars and in Cuba. These men felt a justifiable pride in their accomplishments and resented efforts to push them into the confines of the developing Jim Crow system of legal and social segregation.

Examining incidents from Texarkana to Brownsville and El Paso, Dr. Christian uses military records, along with other previously underutilized sources, to increase our understanding of the black-white-Hispanic relationship in Texas at the turn of the century and up through the first World War. Mining a wealth of information from these records, the author is even-handed in his evaluation of the racial "incidents" that culminated in the 1917 Houston riot. This book is also a good beginning for the study of black-Hispanic relations in Texas, a newly developing area of research.

Certainly all high school and university libraries should acquire this fine piece of writing and research. All students of Texas history, but also of general race relations in America, will benefit from it as well. It contains early indications that the Jim Crow system would change but not without a sizeable cost to the soldiers in the pages of Dr. Christian's book. Read it.

JoAnn Stiles

Fletcher, William A. **REBEL PRIVATE: FRONT AND REAR, MEMOIRS OF A CONFEDERATE SOLDIER.** Beaumont: Press of the Greer, 1908. Reprint. New York: Dutton, 1995. 223p. Hardcover: \$20.95, ISBN 0-525-93992-X. 94-45324.

Almost forty years after Appomattox, the Texan William A. Fletcher sat down and wrote a highly personal account of his adventures with the Confederate army. What he produced was a remarkable war memoir, one that is fascinating in high adventure and surprising in candor and lack of self-promotion. A youthful carpenter living in Beaumont at the outset of the Civil War, Fletcher joined the Confederate army, and while serving as a foot soldier and cavalryman he saw action at Gettysburg, Chancellorsville, Chickamauga and Second Manassas. Recalling these experiences, he offers a lively account of the war from the perspective of the common soldier. Writing without pretense or sentimentality, he tells of lives taken and lives spared. On one occasion he declined to shoot a pair of Yankee cavalrymen because one was little more than a boy; later he regretted his lack of action, concluding that it was wrong to hold individual remorse above duty to his country. He also recalled amusing and unseemly details of army life. Chickens were foraged ("shoplifted") from nearby farmers, clothes deloused by smoking them over camp fires, and chronic diarrhea was sometimes cured by the excitement and exertions of battle.

First published by Fletcher in Beaumont in 1908, this book has been long recognized for its authenticity by historians and writers, including Margaret Mitchell, who consulted the book in preparation for writing her Civil War story. This new edition of Fletcher's book includes an introduction by Richard Wheeler, a well-known American historian, and an afterward by Vallie Fletcher Taylor, Fletcher's great-granddaughter, who is a Texas writer and lecturer. As Professor Wheeler says, "*Rebel Private: Front and Rear* is a valuable book" and is recommended for all readers interested in the Civil War.

Robert J. Robertson

Foster, William C. *SPANISH EXPEDITIONS INTO TEXAS, 1689-1768*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995. 339p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$45.00, ISBN 0-292-72488-8; Paperback: \$19.95, ISBN 0-292-72489-6. 94-37235.

Anyone who has studied Spanish expeditions into Texas and who has made an effort to determine exactly where an expedition traveled has experienced a certain amount of doubt and frustration. Descriptions of routes are often vague, sometimes contradictory, and frequently confusing. Many scholars deal with the problem by simply ignoring it and relying on generalizations that locate the route from a particular vicinity. In this volume, Foster uses the diaries of travelers from eleven expeditions, a number of rare maps, and other related primary materials and focuses on the question of the precise location of the routes. His study begins with an account of Alonso de León's search for La Salle in 1689 and his subsequent expedition into East Texas in 1690 and ends with a description of Fray Gaspar José de Solís' travels from Laredo to a point in present-day western Louisiana. Readers who are not particularly concerned with precise geographical locations of these routes will find other aspects of Foster's work quite useful. He describes wildlife, vegetation, and Indian cultures, and he has compiled appendixes that clarify and supply additional information. Maps of the expeditions, drawn with reference to present-day towns, are well done and invaluable aids for the reader.

The author places much faith in the accuracy of the travelers who kept the diaries, for these are the records that supply most of the research base. Wherever possible, he has cross-refer-

enced the material with other sources, but in some instances other sources were apparently unavailable.

Adrian N. Anderson

Hendrickson, Kenneth E., Jr. *THE CHIEF EXECUTIVES OF TEXAS: FROM STEPHEN F. AUSTIN TO JOHN B. CONNALLY, JR.* College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1994. 246p. Illustrations. Index. Hardcover: \$29.50, ISBN 0-89096-641-9. 94-36375.

This opinionated survey of Texas governors treats them in a way none of its hero-worshipping predecessors have. Author Hendrickson, a history professor at Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls, assesses the accomplishments and failures of Texas governors, ranging from Sam Houston to the virtually forgotten Henry Smith, provisional governor of the Mexican State of Texas in revolt, who had to resign to avoid impeachment. Forty-four governors (including de facto chief executive Stephen F. Austin and excluding living governors) are organized into a dozen chronological periods. Each leader is afforded a two or three-page mini-biography and career summary culminating with the author's conclusions. Among his picks: Sam Houston, Elisha M. Pease, Jim Hogg, Thomas Campbell, and John Connally, Jr. Among his pans: Mirabeau B. Lamar, Hardin Runnels, both Fergusons, Coke Stevenson, and W. Lee "Pappy" O'Daniel. Whether or not readers agree with Hendrickson's choices, they should appreciate his clearly written overview of the leadership of Texas. In a concluding chapter, he laments that this leadership "has often been attuned not to real needs but to such demands as those for weak government, tax avoidance, pay-as-you-go administration, discrimination, and avoidance of federal intervention, even when these demands were contrary to the public welfare."

Mary M. Fisher

Johnson, Adam Rankin. *THE PARTISAN RANGERS OF THE CONFEDERATE STATES ARMY*. Louisville: G.G. Fetter, 1904. Reprint. Austin: State House Press, 1995. 492p. Illustrations. Index. Hardcover: \$32.95, ISBN 1-880510-29-4. 95-16738.

This reprint of the memoirs of Adam Rankin Johnson will be welcomed by Civil War buffs and Texana collectors. A native of Kentucky, Johnson moved to the Burnet, Texas, area in 1854. For several years he worked as a surveyor, stage driver, and Indian fighter. With the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861 he returned to Kentucky where he joined Nathan Bedford Forrest's cavalry. He later became commander of the Tenth Kentucky Cavalry and eventually became brigade commander. He served under both Forrest and John Hunt Morgan and was with Morgan on his famous Ohio raid in 1864. Johnson was later wounded and held prisoner by the Federals.

Although totally blind, Johnson returned to Texas after the war. He was active in the land and cattle business and founded the town on Marble Falls. He died in 1922 at the age of eighty-nine and is buried in the state cemetery in Austin. His memoirs, rich in stories of cavalry operations and Indian fighting, were enumerated in the late John Jenkins' listing of *Basic Texas Books*.

Ralph A. Wooster

Kearney, Milo and Anthony Knopp. *BORDER CUATES: A HISTORY OF THE U.S.-MEXICAN TWIN CITIES*. Austin: Eakin Press, 1995. 331p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Paperback: \$19.95, ISBN 0-89015-967-X. 95-17848.

Unfortunately, *Border Cuates* is a disaster. The premise is interesting, positing a necklace of border cities from Matamoros to San Diego on both sides of the U.S.-Mexican border. El Paso is the central gem with each pair of border cities radiating in either direction as a historical and geographic mirror image of fractal development, that phenomena dear to mathematicians, philosophers, and artists by which patterns are seen to be replicated indefinitely in ascending and descending scale. This thesis has a strong suggestion of truth about it. But the thesis drives the organization of the book, and what ought to be a fabulous sweep of both border history and natural history bogs down in a catalogue of isolated names and dates. It will take a hardy reader, indeed, to bring the bits and pieces of this collage into a comprehensive whole. If ever a book perished for lack of good editing, *Border Cuates* could and therefore this reviewer recommends a rewrite. Both Kearney and Knopp wrote another book *Boom and Bust: The Historical Cycles of Matamoros and Brownsville* (Vol. VI, No. 3) and it too showed that although the authors know their material, they are oblivious to any purpose of composition.

Randall Holdridge

McComb, David G. *TEXAS: AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995. 143p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$21.95, ISBN 0-19-509246-5; Library edition: ISBN 0-19-509247-3. 94-23279.

In an earlier work, *Texas: A Modern History*, Professor McComb demonstrates his ability to tell a long and complicated story in a remarkably brief book. *Texas: An Illustrated History* is another example of his talent. It is, in many respects, a traditional "picture" book, with pictures, sometimes several on a page, purposefully selected to form an integral part of the story being told. McComb takes a comprehensive approach in his selection; there are pictures ranging from those of "bathing beauties" of 1900 on a Galveston beach to politicians at an inaugural of a governor. Racial issues, sports, economic expansion, disasters, agriculture, and a number of other topics are featured. Altogether, these do an effective job of telling the story of Texas, particularly about the last 150 years.

In this relatively short book, the space available for a narrative is necessarily quite limited. Within those limits, however, McComb provides a succinct synthesis of Texas from prehistoric times to the present, even taking some space for a description of geography and climate. His descriptions of major events are fairly conventional, reflecting for the most part recent interpretations, and he obviously makes an effort to present a balanced account of social, economic, and political affairs. Adding to the interest of the narrative are occasional unusual or rarely told stories, and his portraits of some of the personalities of the past, both well-known and obscure, are well done.

Adrian N. Anderson

Matovina, Timothy M. *TEJANO RELIGION AND ETHNICITY: SAN ANTONIO, 1821-1860*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995. 168p. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover:

\$24.95, ISBN 0-292-75170-2. 94-10617.

This well-reasoned study, amply buttressed with primary source materials, traces the religious and ethnic histories of San Antonio's Catholic Tejanos of Spanish and Mexican descent. These histories include specific accounts of rapid political, social, and cultural changes, which most often would result in disorienting people. The outgrowth of a doctoral dissertation, the book covers three periods: the Mexican (1811-1836), the Texas Republic (1836-1845), and the first decade-and-a-half after annexation into the United States (1845-1860). The author clearly demonstrates the importance of the Catholic Church for the "survival and resilience" of the Latino culture in the face of massive Anglo American immigration and domination. Especially important as a way of bonding people culturally, it is pointed out, were religious festivals such as the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Narrow in focus and academic in tone, the text nevertheless will reach beyond a scholarly audience to students of San Antonio history in general and of the Tejano experience in San Antonio in particular.

Mary M. Fisher

Miletich, Leo. N. *DAN STUART'S FISTIC CARNIVAL*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1994. 243p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$29.50, ISBN 0-89096-614-1; Paperback: \$14.95, ISBN 0-89096-615-X. 94-14957.

The sport of boxing 100 years ago was in a transitional stage. The rules were slowly changing, including the gradual addition of gloves for the participants. Still this was a particularly brutal sport with most matches lasting upwards to 100 rounds and held secretly in back alleys, barns, and woods. Dan Stuart, a Dallas gambler, dreamed of sponsoring a "fistic carnival," with a championship heavyweight match as its main event. Not only did he intend for this to be in the light of day, he, in fact, wanted originally to build an amphitheater for the proceedings at the 1895 Texas State Fair. The plan was for the reigning heavyweight champion, Gentleman Jim Corbett, to meet the champ from New Zealand, Fighting Bob Fitzsimmons.

What Stuart had not counted on was the moral outrage his plan generated. The proposed bout became the topic of newspaper editorials from New York to San Francisco. Preachers railed against him from their pulpits and politicians did likewise from their stumps. The governor of Texas even ordered the Texas Rangers to prevent Stuart's dream from materializing, sending his carnival on a two year outlaw odyssey by train. Miletich's entertaining and well researched book is populated not only with famous boxers, but also with familiar characters from the era, including, among others, Bat Masterson and Judge Roy Bean. The writing is supplemented with copious chapter footnotes and an excellent index. Further enhancing the text are drawings and photographs of the participants. Highly recommended for all history and sports collections.

David Carroll

Ragsdale, Kenneth Baxter. *QUICKSILVER: TERLINGUA & THE CHISOS MINING COMPANY*. 3d ed. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1995. 327p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Paperback: \$13.95, ISBN 0-89096-188-3. 75-4081.

Howard E. Perry, the Chicago businessman who made and lost his fortune as the owner of the Chisos Mining Company in the Big Bend, was the ultimate micromanager. He missed the obvious and ominous reality that technology for mining quicksilver was changing, making obsolete the process on which his prosperity rested.

In garnering material for this story, Ragsdale failed to penetrate the reserve of Perry's former employees when he interviewed them, and, therefore, he relied primarily on available company and public printed records. The result is as detailed as Perry's management style, too dry and colorless to rank as truly popular history. But it is informative about Perry's project, and it offers general insight into company mining towns in the West. Particularly good moments are found in the reminiscences of the Terlingua old-timers about the social scene in the desert outpost of eighty years ago.

Randall Holdridge

Reid, Robert L. **PICTURING TEXAS: THE FSA-OWI PHOTOGRAPHERS IN THE LONE STAR STATE, 1935-1943.** Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1994. 208p. Illustrations. Index. Hardcover: \$49.95, ISBN 0-87611-140-1. 94-21684.

During the Great Depression and World War II, the Farm Security Administration and later the Office of War Information employed documentary photographers to make a visual record of aspects of American life in each state. Well known photographers such as Dorothea Lange, Russell Lee, Arthur Rothstein, and others recorded on film over 5,000 images of Texas life. Two hundred of these duotones appear here, most in full-page size and arranged chronologically within chapters. Roy Stryker, who headed up the project, said that newspaper photographers took "noun and verb pictures" while "our kind of photography is the adjective and adverb." The photographers' field notes and prepared captions are used here. Although several of the photographs are familiar, almost icons, most will be new to readers.

As a whole, the photographs capture the diversity of Texas, in its geography, culture, economy, and population. Documented here is Texas' change from a rural to an urban society expressed by the effects of the Dust Bowl, Depression, mechanization, and oil field booms. With America's entry into World War II, the FSA project moved to the Office of War Information, and the pictures show Texans united in the war effort. Robert L. Reid, Professor of History and Vice-President for Academic Affairs at the University of Southern Indiana, has done a masterful job. His selection of pictures, accompanied by his well written text, places the photographs within a historical perspective that aids our comprehension of this visual record.

Sally Dooley

Smith, F. Todd. **THE CADDO INDIANS: TRIBES AT THE CONVERGENCE OF EMPIRES, 1542-1854.** College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1995. 229p. Illustrations, Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$24.50, ISBN 0-89096-642-7. 94-41590.

Luis de Moscoso, a survivor of Hernando de Soto's ill-fated Spanish expedition, came into contact with Caddo Indian tribes in 1542. These tribes enjoyed a thriving complex culture based

primarily upon agriculture, with settlements extending from the Trinity River to the Arkansas River. Within this area the Kadohadacho, Hasinai, and Natchitoches Caddo confederacies arose and ultimately combined into one tribe by 1874 as they adjusted to successive waves of Euro-Americans.

F. Todd Smith has admirably chronicled the story of the Caddoes' relationship with these intruders who first came from the Spanish empire, next from the French empire, and eventually from the United States, Mexico, and the Republic of Texas. The Caddoes at times quite skillfully turned their dealings with the various intruders to their advantage, especially when their aid was perceived as crucial to success by one rival power over another. In the long run, however, these proud Native Americans suffered a loss of bargaining power and, consequently, found themselves enveloped by cultural and political decline. In 1854 the remnants of the Caddo tribes were resettled on the Brazos River and later relocated to thirty-seven acres in Caddo County, Oklahoma.

This scholarly work should appeal to all who are interested in Native American culture and history because it broadens existing knowledge about this sophisticated tribe, which once inhabited a considerable part of East Texas. Smith is Assistant Professor of History at Xavier University of Louisiana.

Marion Holt

Smithwick, Noah. **THE EVOLUTION OF A STATE OR RECOLLECTIONS OF OLD TEXAS DAYS.** 2d ed. Austin: W. Thomas Taylor, 1995. 293p. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$55.00.

Long regarded as a classic of Texas historical literature, the reminiscences of Noah Smithwick, an aged ex-Texan who lived in Texas between 1827 and the early days of the Civil War, have provided historians and casual readers with a wide variety of information about Texas during some of its most exciting and eventful days. Although Smithwick was more than ninety years of age when most of the material was written, his account has generally been considered to be a reliable source, written with insight and with little in the way of exaggeration. In twenty-six chapters, Smithwick describes people (both famous and otherwise), events (such as the Battle of San Jacinto), on-going issues (Indian battles), and a number of other aspects of life in antebellum Texas. His account is laced with humor, but also reflects the judicious analysis of a man whose understanding of people and the world around him is unusually keen.

Although first published in 1900, the work has been republished or reprinted several times and has consequently been relatively easy to acquire. However, the publisher of the present volume is entitled to special praise for this edition. Professor Alwyn Barr has written a useful introduction; the explanatory notes are plentiful and helpful, and an index adds to the book's value. Attractive in its printing and manufacture, Smithwick's book is a desirable acquisition for anyone's library.

Adrian N. Anderson

LAW

Evans, Don Alan. **TEXAS BUSINESS LAW.** 3d ed. Gretna: Pelican Publishing Co., Inc., 1995. 734p. Index. Paperback:

\$35.00, ISBN 1-56554-116-2. 94-38775.

This is an excellent general reference book that is well organized and easy to read. Mr. Evans, a professor of administrative services at Stephen F. Austin State University of Nacogdoches, Texas, provides an excellent overview of the historical development of our modern legal system. The administrative law material in Chapter 8 is perhaps the best discussion this reviewer has ever read regarding a very dry and somewhat complicated subject. In other chapters he brings to light the Uniform Commercial Code, Texas Penal Code, and comparative negligence. The examples used are easily remembered.

The book's liabilities are two-fold. First, this resource should be used for general reference only and not as a primary source. Readers should look to the statutes and code provisions cited for an accurate and current reading of the law. Second, the vague and tepid information about NAFTA is found at the end of each respective chapter and primarily concerns a very general statement of Mexican law and practice.

J. Mitchell Smith

Murphy, Susan Schuerman. **LEGAL HANDBOOK FOR TEXAS NURSES**. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995. 241p. Index. Hardcover: \$35.00, ISBN 0-292-75161-3; Paperback: \$17.95, ISBN 0-292-75176-1. 94-27848.

As a practicing nurse attorney, Susan S. Murphy provides a unique perspective on legal issues and laws specifically for Texas nurses. In easily understood terms, she covers a myriad of timely topics. Beginning with licensing regulations for registered and licensed vocational nurses, she explains how to stay licensed. The scope of practice for registered nurses, including delegation and supervision, is covered well. Common questions regarding the roles of allied health personnel (i.e., nurses' aides) are addressed. She discusses topics encountered daily by nurses: informed consent, drug therapy, malpractice insurance, AIDS, documentation, nursing negligence, and employment issues. Readers will also discover subjects more rarely in legal reference books for nurses, including a discussion of lay midwives and their relation to the practice of the professional nurse. Information is enhanced by interspersed realistic examples of legal questions and answers throughout the book. Murphy also deals with the ethical implications of legal issues. This book is appropriate for all levels of nursing, nursing students, employers, attorneys, and quality assurance managers as well as physicians or allied health personnel.

Anita L. Carroll

LITERATURE

Oppenheimer, Evelyn. **A BOOK LOVER IN TEXAS**. Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1995. 169p. Illustrations. Index. Hardcover: \$16.95, ISBN 0-929398-89-0. 94-49021.

With this autobiography, Evelyn Oppenheimer chronicles her life-long love affair and untiring involvement with books. Ms. Oppenheimer has dedicated her life to promoting reading and writers. In this book, she relates the evolution of her interest in the literary world from her earliest inspirations to her prodigious book reviews to her projects as a book agent.

Much of the book reads as a who's who in world and contemporary literature as she comments on writers and books. Interspersed in her recollections are tidbits of Ms. Oppenheimer's views about what constitutes a good book review and good writing and what is missing in today's mass market culture. Ms. Oppenheimer energetically supports regional literature of Texas, which she has actively promoted both as a book reviewer and an agent. Fellow book enthusiasts and fans of Evelyn Oppenheimer's radio broadcast reviews will enjoy browsing the pages of this work.

Sarah Tusa

NATURAL HISTORY

Davis, William B. and David J. Schmidly. **THE MAMMALS OF TEXAS**. rev. ed. Austin: Texas Parks and Wildlife (distributed by University of Texas Press), 1994. 377p. Illustrations. Paperback: \$17.95, ISBN 1-885696-00-0.

As a manual concerning the mammals of Texas, this book is quite comprehensive. It contains the usual description, distribution and habits of each species, and, in addition, has a general discussion of the diversity and geographic distribution of the land mammals, the species which are in critical numbers, and some strategies for their conservation. There is a key to the major groups (orders) of mammals in Texas, which can be very helpful to the novice as well as to the more experienced observer. Each order is similarly treated with a key to the different species in that particular order. The appendixes include information about observing and collecting mammals, references on mammals from Texas and adjoining states, and the standard measurements of study specimens. Additionally, there is a glossary which might be quite helpful to the beginner.

Well written and clear, this is a tool that will be used by mammalogists in Texas and contiguous states. It should be available in city libraries and in school libraries for students of all ages.

Jed J. Ramsey

McAlister, Wayne H. and Martha K. McAlister. **ARANSAS: A NATURALIST'S GUIDE**. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995. 392p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$45.00, ISBN 0-292-75171-0; Paperback: \$19.95, ISBN 0-292-75172-0. 94-41619.

As the authors state, "... this is not a definitive identification manual." It is, however, full of information for use by the general public and the seasoned naturalist in his or her enjoyment of the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge. Chapters are devoted to the geological history of the land, its ecological position today, and the effect people have made on that land--from the earliest known inhabitants to today. An entire chapter is devoted to the most well known winter resident, the Whooping Crane. Other chapters discuss endangered species, game animals, and introduced species. Many groups of plants and animals are identified and helpful information is provided concerning their presence at the refuge and at the time of year they might be sighted. These groups include mammals, birds, "herptiles," fishes, invertebrates, woody and herbaceous plants, and nonflowering plants. A bibliography and index are included. This volume is most helpful to those who anticipate visiting the refuge, but it is also of interest to the inquisitive naturalist.

Jed J. Ramsey

SOCIAL LIFE AND CUSTOMS

Karr, Mary. *THE LIARS' CLUB: A MEMOIR*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1995. 320p. Hardcover: \$22.95, ISBN 0-670-85053-5. 94-41252.

Mary Karr's memoir, *The Liars' Club*, offers a realistic view of a dysfunctional family's struggle in Southeast Texas. Karr assumes a gritty, natural voice resonating of the hard-drinking, tough-talking oil refinery men with whom her father, Pete, and she associate in the early 1960s at the American Legion where the Liars' Club gathers to swap lies and spin tales. The main setting of the book is Leechfield, an assumed name to protect the privacy of Karr's mother, Charlie Marie, who still lives in the area. The vivid descriptions of the refinery town that "was too ugly not to love" and "smelled of rotten eggs" and "a wicked fart in a close room" are only surpassed by Karr's ability to make one see and feel the various neurotic family members. One such character is the wicked grandmother from Lubbock who is long on Methodist religion and social convention and short on compassion and love for her daughter, Charlie, and her granddaughters, Mary and Lecia. After the grandmother's death, Charlie becomes a vodka-drinking, pill-popping maniac who is "adjudged more or less permanently Nervous" and is taken away. Mary, in her seven-year-old brassiness, observes that "in East Texas parlance the term Nervous applied with equal accuracy to anything from chronic nail-biting to full-blown psychosis."

After opening the narrative with the vivid scene in which her mother is taken away and Mary is asked by the physician to show him the marks and where it hurts, Karr moves to other events which do not seem related to or explanatory of the night in question. Like a well-honed mystery, this shift piques curiosity and creates a need to continue reading to discover what exactly happened when Mother was deemed Nervous. Karr's novel is not a tell-all book written to inspire pity; instead, it is the story of one family's struggle to overcome and learn to love again. It offers hope in the redemptive love which binds the Karrs together and allows them to help heal one another.

Janet K. Turk

REVIEW OF TEXAS BOOKS

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Jed J. Ramsey holds a Ph.D. in zoology from Oklahoma State University. An avid ornithologist, he is retired from Lamar University where he taught biology and physiology for twenty-five years.

Robert J. Robertson, an insurance broker, is actively researching and writing history of Southeast Texas.

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Jim Sanderson has published fiction and nonfiction in numerous literary periodicals and most recently a collection of short stories, *SEMI-PRIVATE ROOMS*. He teaches at Lamar University.

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