



REVIEW OF TEXAS BOOKS



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★★★★★ FICTION ★★★★★

Albert, Susan. *RUEFUL DEATH: A CHINA BAYLES MYSTERY*. New York: Berkley Publishing Group, 1996. 305p. Hardcover: \$21.91, ISBN 0-425-15469-6. 95-26165.

China Bayles is back, and this time her mission is to get some rest and sort things out for herself. In order to take a break from her demanding herb shop and reflect on her relationship with Mike McQuaid, China accepts an invitation to stay at St. Theresa's monastery in the beautiful Hill Country of Texas. Before she can rest and catch up on her reading, however, China must root out an arsonist and a poison pen author who is demanding penance from the sisters. She must also determine whether the Mother Superior's death was from natural causes or linked instead to the turmoil regarding the future of the convent. Rue and foxglove take center stage as China examines the motives behind the convent's competing factions. Will greed prevail and turn the modest garlic farm into a convention center? Along the way to finding the truth, China makes a few rueful mistakes of her own, but ultimately finds the answers.

Adding to the enjoyment of this book are the numerous quotations regarding rue and other herbs, as well as a list of resources for information about these intriguing plants. *Rueful Death* is the author's fifth China Bayles mystery.

Sarah Tusa

Brown, Sandra. *EXCLUSIVE*. New York: Warner Books, 1996. 457p. Hardcover: \$22.95, ISBN 0-446-51978-2. 96-6252.

What dark secret enshrouds the death of the First Lady's baby? Official word from the White House attributes the tragedy to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). When the intuitive but bumbling news reporter Barrie Travis is granted an exclusive interview with the grieving Vanessa Merritt, danger and intrigue ensue. Did a jealous President murder the illegitimate son of his wife's lover? A combination of driving ambition and compassion for the grieving mother compels Barrie to pursue the truth about the infant's demise. Hindered by high level cover-up and her own professional blunders, Barrie stubbornly pursues the story. Among the complications is the heroine's intimate encounter with the presumed father of the ill-fated infant. Along with her cohorts -- an emphysemic old friend and the self-exiled former White House aide -- Barrie braves the traps set by the President's top man and ultimately gets her career-making exclusive. Entertaining and suspenseful, this novel will make many trips to the circulation desk.

Sarah Tusa

Delgado, María Isabel. *CHAVE'S MEMORIES: LOS RECUERDOS DE CHAVE*. Houston: Piñata Books, 1996. 30p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$14. 95, ISBN 1-55885-084-8. 95-47732.

Chave is a little girl who enjoys being bicultural. She and her family take many trips from Brownsville, Texas, to Mexico in order to visit her grandparents. She cherishes the memories of these trips across the border, the games she plays with relatives, the magical stories of a ranch employee named Venancio, and his friendship with wild animals.

Chave's Memories is a story inspired by the author's childhood experiences and reveals what it is like to live in two different cultures. Told from a child's point of view, the story is written in both English and Spanish with illustrations by Yvonne Symank. Although many children and adults will identify with Chave, there are problems with the narration: the story lacks much plot and the book ends with an unconnected thought from the author. This gives the appearance that the author is unsure whether the book is meant for children or adults. The bilingual text has serious shortcomings, because the author frequently omits important words and even sentences, resulting in the loss of meaning in both of the languages. Not recommended.

Norma L. Zarzosa

Grattan-Domínguez, Alejandro. *THE DARK SIDE OF THE DREAM*. Houston: Arte Público Press, 1995. 434p. Hardcover: \$22.95, ISBN 1-55885-140-2. 95-9769.

With a strong narrative and lean prose, Alejandro Grattan-Domínguez' first novel is a moving epic about Mexican immigrants who come to Texas immediately after America enters World War II. Realizing that the war would mean job opportunities for Mexicans in the U.S, old Sebastian Salazar urges his sons to migrate. Unscrupulous labor contractors split the two families: José Luis and his family are sent to El Paso and Francisco and his family are sent to Mission. The stories of these two families are poignant, as they experience the dark side of the dream: discrimination, poverty, and disappointment. Miguel, José Luis' son, failing in school and employment, enlists and is assigned to Company E, composed of Mexican American officers and enlistees, which becomes one of the most decorated combat units in American history. Miguel is awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his bravery in Italy. With newly won pride and self-confidence, he expects a successful future, until he discovers that E Company was apparently considered expendable and served as cannon fodder for the Germans. Mexicans fought not to defend democracy, but to be accepted as Americans, a goal at which they failed. Even the VFW refuses to accept them, and they form their own GI Forum. These realizations and experiences nearly defeat Miguel as he struggles to find himself.

The other brother, Francisco, is a Valley farm laborer and quickly involves himself in a life-long attempt to organize his co-workers, to the neglect of his family. When Francisco's son Alejandro returns from the Korean Conflict, he holds his father in contempt for his absence at the illness and death of his mother. How Alejandro participates in the work of his father as he sorts out his feelings for his father and his own future provides another look at the dark side of the dream.

Alejandro Grattan-Domínguez, a SMU graduate, wrote and directed films in California. Some received international acclaim. Now writing novels in Mexico, he hopes his literature will provide historical background for today's multicultural America. In this he has succeeded. He writes with sensitivity and understanding about the trials and triumphs of believable characters in well developed plots. The pain he depicts is nearly palpable and shames the culture that perpetuates discrimination and prejudice.

Sally Dooley

Griffis, Molly Levite. *THE BUFFALO IN THE MALL*. Austin: Eakin Press, 1996. 30p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$13.95, ISBN 1-57168-118-3. (Juvenile)

The rhyming verse by Molly Levite Griffis in her first picture book, *The Buffalo in the Mall*, combined with the charming, detailed black-and-white illustrations by Kim Doner, will make children and adults smile as they turn each page of this humorous story extolling the virtues of having a buffalo as a pet. Curious? Then you will have to read the book to find out why you too may want a buffalo as your pet.

Andrea R. Karlin

Hemlin, Tim. *IF WISHES WERE HORSES*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1996. 243p. Paperback: \$5.50, ISBN 0-345-40318-5. 95-96146.

Neil Marshall is having a bad day. His marriage is ending and his best friend has been murdered. To add insult to injury, a surly detective considers Neil a murder suspect. The searing criticism of his poetry from his creative writing professor further dampens his spirits. When Neil attempts to find his friend's murderer, his own life is endangered as he encounters the treacherous world of illegal horse breeders. When the outlook seems darkest, however, Neil can count on his friends: an attractive classmate, his coworkers from the catering business, and a precocious teenaged stable hand.

Tim Hemlin draws from his own catering experience to give this first novel its savory realism. His hapless hero narrates with a wistful humor that draws the reader's empathy throughout the well-crafted plot. *If Wishes Were Horses* is recommended for all popular fiction collections. Readers will be looking for more works from this talented writer from Houston.

Sarah Tusa

Kelton, Elmer. *WAGONTONGUE*. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1996. Reprint. 160p. Hardcover: \$21.95, ISBN 0-87565-165-8; Paperback: \$5.50, ISBN 0-87565-166-6. 96-17016.

Wagontongue is definitely a masculine novel about the open-range life and segregation of black and hispanic cowboys from their white counterparts. While the entire crew, black, white and hispanic, were in all probability on a first name basis with each other, at least a trace of the color line always remained. This particular novel describes the life of a slave, Isaac Jefford, who saves the life of his master, Major Lytton, during the Civil War. After the war ends, Isaac is a free man and becomes one of the Major's top cowhands. He is respected by the other men in the crew, but never quite accepted. When camping out on trail drives, the rest of the crew gather round together for supper, but Isaac always takes his dinner sitting alone on the wagontongue. When a southerner, Pete Runyan, still bitter about the war, joins the crew, Isaac has to swallow his anger time and time again. Pete and Isaac are assigned the task of getting "cash" -- profits from the sale of the herd -- safely to a Fort Worth bank before a foreclosure deadline on the ranch. Struggling against the twin odds of time and three gunmen, one of the two proves to be the better man.

This novel was originally published in 1972 as an expansion of the short story "Man on the Wagontongue," which is included in this new edition.

Pamela Brashier

Liles, Maurine. *THE LITTLEST VAQUERO*. Austin: Eakin Press, 1996. 104p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Hardcover: \$14.95, ISBN 1-57168-103-5. 96-24043. (Juvenile)

The Littlest Vaquero is a fictionalized account of the first official trail drive out of Texas. In 1779, cattle originating from the San Antonio River area near present-day Floresville were needed in Louisiana to feed Spanish troops commanded by General Bernardo de Galvéz. One of the imaginary vaqueros taking part in the drive is Juan Ruiz of Rancho de las Cabras. His young son, Manuel, is invited to come to the staging area for the great herd's departure. The turning point for the protagonist Manuel comes when he irresponsibly follows the drive instead of returning home. Manuel's father, distracted by his son's disrespectful behavior, is thrown from his horse. The resulting broken leg deprives him of the adventure of a lifetime. Manuel realizes the only way to rectify the situation and restore his father's pride is to assume his place on the trail. Through determined perseverance, Manuel becomes a "true" vaquero during the trip. This coming of age story unfolds within a fascinating and little-known chapter of Texas history. Unfortunately the narrative is somewhat uneven, and the action occasionally difficult to follow. The book is intended for children in late elementary school.

Paul W. Miller

Mayo, Wendell. *CENTAUR OF THE NORTH*. Houston: Arte Público Press, 1996. 127p. Paperback: \$11.95, ISBN 1-55885-165-8. 96-16943.

In this collection of nine short stories, Mayo focuses on the power of family histories and family myths and the lack of distinction between the two when they are handed down from generation to generation. The strong, matriarchal characters with mystical practices and mental imbalances serve as conduits for the tidbits of family folklore and legends which further blur the line between the true and the imagined. Characters journey through the tales of their parents' past in hopes of discovering

something about their own identities as well as some direction for their lives. But the answers they find only lead to more questions which can never be fully answered. Particularly poignant is the story "Soledad" in which a young man's insight into his mother's life occurs only after her suicide.

All nine stories in this excellent collection have been previously published in various magazines. Mayo, a professor of Creative Writing at Bowling Green State University, has won numerous awards for his writing and was a finalist in the Associated Writing Programs Award Series in Short Fiction.

Gayla Chaney

Mora, Pat and Charles Ramírez Berg. *THE GIFT OF THE POINSETTIA: EL REGALO DE LA FLOR DE NOCHEBUENA*. Houston: Arte Público Press, 1995. 30p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$14.95, ISBN 1-55885-137-2. 94-37233.

Growing up in a little town in Mexico, Carlos, an outgoing, understanding, and loving child is under the care of an old aunt. He must attend alone the traditional Christmas festivities of *las posadas* for eight consecutive nights. Every night he returns home and tells his aunt about the *posadas*: the street and house decorations, the food and delicious candies, the piñata, and the nativity scene. Carlos' happiness is clouded when he faces his poverty and the impossibility of buying a present for Baby Jesus. This feeling is soon dissipated when he discovers the truth of his aunt's words about love.

The Gift of the Poinsettia is a well-developed narrative, in both English and Spanish, that highlights family relationships. It endeavors to teach the reader how important it is to give gifts from the heart. Elementary school readers will enjoy this story, written in clear and simple language, and they will gain an understanding of a popular Christmas tradition. Daniel Lechon's charming and colorful drawings illustrate the text. Furthermore, the translation is so well executed that neither rendering is inferior in style or content to the other.

Norma L. Zarzosa

Peery, Janet. *THE RIVER BEYOND THE WORLD*. New York: Picador USA, 1996. 286p. Hardcover: \$24.00, ISBN 0-312-14719-8. 96-19122.

Fourteen-year-old Maria Luisa Villamil y Cantú is eager to understand the mystery of life. In her simplistic attempt to sort out the difference between virtue and sin, Luisa devises her own way of accounting for her behavior with a jar of beans. "For each bad act, she took one out." When she becomes pregnant from her role as the sacrificial mate for the celebrated "Uncle," Luisa first tries to make herself legitimate by offering herself to the esteemed teacher as his bride. When this offer is rejected, she leaves Salsipuedes, as the translation of the town's name suggests: "leave if you can."

Luisa eventually comes to tend house for a couple in South Texas. Eddie Hatch, the wife and head of the household, desperately clings to her illusion of high social status and long refuses to address Luisa in Spanish or acknowledge the housekeeper's devotion. Despite their difference in status and their frequent clash of wills, the two women face the years--with all the joys and crises that arise--with a degree of companion-

ship. Luisa treats her tolerance of Eddie's injustices as a virtue, represented by her jar of beans, until life deals her a blow that compels her to redefine her values. The true reward of this novel is to witness the spiritual growth of both women as they gradually come to understand and acknowledge each other. *The River Beyond the World* is a finalist for the National Book Award and should be added to collections everywhere. The author, Janet Peery, has won a number of awards for her short stories.

Sarah Tusa

Redd, Louise. *PLAYING THE BONES*. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1996. 262p. Hardcover: \$21.95, ISBN 0-316-73511-6. 95-47917.

What does Lacy Springs want most out of life? The heroine of this winsome and witty novel is not yet ready to answer this question when the story begins. All she can think about is pursuing her intimate liaison with a blues musician named Black Jesus. Despite Lacy's engagement to a caring and devoted man, she contrives every manner of false excuses to be with her false savior. Flashbacks to the abuses Lacy suffered as a child provide clues to the underlying reasons for her obsession with Black Jesus and her unorthodox behavior, but until she is able to confront those responsible for her troubled past, this jive-talking protagonist takes a few wrong turns while trying to regain her sense of self. For Lacy, the road to self-discovery is paved with elements of absurdity and tragedy.

Redd draws effectively on the raw lyricism of the blues to give voice to her heroine's rebellion against the racial traditions and Southern values that played a part in her tortured childhood. Though recommended for mature readers, this novel has considerable literary merit and should be added to fiction collections everywhere.

Sarah Tusa

Terry, Marshall. *LAND OF HOPE AND GLORY*. Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1996. 224p. Hardcover: \$24.95, ISBN 1-57441-006-7. 95-46719.

In this historical novel, Marshall Terry continues the Northway family saga, covering one hundred years of American experience. General Marcus Arelius Northway is a homeopathic physician with deep faith in the curing powers of oil and whiskey. In the early 1920s and 1930s, General Northway consorts with some of the nation's greatest men: Henry Ford, Thomas Edison, and Luther Burbank. He later marries his late wife's nurse, Ida Bailey, a strong-willed woman who does her best to keep the general honest with her and with himself, as he attempts to control the future of the rest of the Northway family, especially his namesake, the son of his cousin. The story moves from New York to Florida, to Ohio and on to California. The author successfully portrays a believable old character in General Northway, proudly struggling to hold onto his independence against the ravages of aging and confronting the memories of years gone by. This story is told with a touch of irony and humor and it contains elements of classic tales about early America during a time of incredible pride and self-assertion.

Pamela Brashier

Weatherford, Carole Boston. **JUNETEENTH JAMBOREE.** New York: Lee and Low Books, 1995. 32p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$14.95, ISBN 1-880000-18-0. 94-26543. (Juvenile)

This is the delightful story of Cassandra in her new home in Texas, discovering a new holiday. It gives an account of the origins of Juneteenth and tells how many towns now celebrate. Weatherford's simple prose sweeps the reader along from the preparations at home to the whole town's joining in parades and special events. The story focuses on the celebration and the coming together of family and community. The joyous watercolor illustrations by Yvonne Buchanan add much to the narrative. This highly enjoyable book is recommended as an addition to the African American history section in any school or public library's juvenile collection. Suitable for ages eight and up.

Beth Fuseler

Woolley, Bryan. **SOME SWEET DAY.** 3d ed. El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1996. 137p. Hardcover: \$18.00, ISBN 0-87404-238-0. 96-60100.

First printed in 1974 by Random House, this brief novel is reissued with an introduction by Max Evans and a foreword by Bryan Woolley, which describes his creation of the book and its lengthy publishing history. After many rejections, the book finally found a home at Random House in 1974 where Toni Morrison, his editor, declared it "a little masterpiece." The book was kept in print by Gnomon Press in Kentucky over the past fourteen years while *Redbook* magazine published a condensed version in 1982 and Avon published a mass market paperback in 1985. The book's popularity is easily understood: Woolley tells a deceptively simple story with economy, but words and phrases are heavily freighted with sights, sounds, and tone, to depict characters who engage the reader.

The novel is a memoir of Gatewood Turnbolt when he was six-years-old in 1944 and living on a cotton farm in Comanche County. The family life he describes is dominated by his father who vacillates between loving care and cruel violence. There is much that a child cannot understand at the time as Gate relates what he remembers, the impressions of a child. The inclusion of Gate's father's obituary after the end of the memoir brings an understanding and closure to this slice-of-life presentation. Woolley is an outstanding Texas author who presently is a feature writer for the *Dallas Morning News*. He has won a 1994 Pen Center West Award for the title story of *The Bride Wore Crimson and Other Stories*, Texas Institute of Letters awards for his newspaper work, and a Spur Award from Western Writers of America for his novel *Sam Bass*.

Sally Dooley

POETRY

Mora, Pat. **CONFETTI: POEMS FOR CHILDREN.** New York: Lee and Low Books, 1996. 32p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$14.95, ISBN 1-880000-25-3. 95-02038. (Juvenile)

This collection of poems, which vibrantly reflects the Mexican American culture in the Southwest, appeals to the child in all of

us. The lively rhythms, interspersed with Spanish words, depict the treasures of a child's life in the Southwest. Enrique O. Sanchez' illustrations, reflecting all the varying colors and motifs of the area, are aptly described by the title of one of the poems: "Colors Crackle, Colors Roar." Another delightful selection, "Dancing Paper," exemplifies the joyous tone of this book: "Let's fill the room with laughing / before our friends arrive. / We'll bring the colored paper. / The room will come alive." The glossary is useful for the few words that may be new to the young reader, although many will be able to discern the meanings from the context and the lively illustrations. Recommended for all children's collections.

Beth Fuseler

★★★NONFICTION★★★

BIOGRAPHY

Barta, Carolyn. **BILL CLEMENTS: TEXIAN TO HIS TOENAILS.** Austin: Eakin Press, 1996. 479p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$29.95, ISBN 1-57168-090-X. 96-02707.

Carolyn Barta has written this biography as a reporter -- in the finest tradition of that calling. The prose is lucid and never boring. She does not attempt to flatter or demean her subject in any phase of his life or career. The facts presented are based on her meticulous research. This work does not reveal the author's sentiments toward her subject, but rather portrays him in the character of the various phases of his life, including his stint as Secretary of Defense during some of the darkest hours of the Nixon Administration. The author instead allows the reader to view Clements' life and achievements through the eyes of such prominent individuals such as James Michener. In her portrayal of Bill Clements as the first Republican to be twice elected Governor of Texas since Reconstruction, Barta treats the reader to a period in Texas political history that continues to fascinate those who enjoy the sport of politics. While the biographer shies away from Clement's personal life, this biography provides a close look at the political career of a prominent Texas politician and belongs in public and academic libraries throughout Texas.

Victor Lang

Bennett, Michele and Barbara Bennett. **TWENTY-TWO TEXAS WOMEN.** Austin: Eakin Press, 1996. 116p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Hardcover: \$14.95, ISBN 1-57168-062-4. 95-37373.

Although the quality of the writing is uneven in these twenty-two brief biographies, the authors have selected Texas women who have made outstanding contributions to Texas life throughout history. Some are well known such as Lady Bird Johnson, Barbara Bush, Barbara Jordan, and Ann Richards; while other women's names may be less familiar, but their stories are as meaningful. An outstanding example is Sarah Hughes, who swore in Lyndon Johnson to the presidency aboard Air Force One after the assassination of John F. Kennedy. She is less well known for her work to make Texas laws more favorable to

women: the rights of women to serve on juries and to own property were won in 1954 and 1969 respectively. Similarly, Marrie Reynolds Garcia's name is not easily recognized, but she became the first female Texas Ranger, an organization 170 years old. Important female aviators are highlighted: Katherine Stinson, Bessie Coleman, and Kara Hultgreen along with scientists, authors, and business women. This book should prove to be a good resource for middle school students.

Sally Dooley

Farman, Irvin. *STANDARD OF THE WEST: THE JUSTIN STORY*. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1996. 260p. Illustrations. Index. Hardcover: \$26.95, ISBN 0-87565-167-4. 96-14897.

In this book, which looks very much like an authorized biography, John J. Justin, Jr. is described and lauded for his business acumen, financial success, and civic leadership. The late author Irvin Farman, who wrote for the *Dallas Morning News* and the *Fort Worth Star Telegram*, provides a flattering portrait of Justin and his boot company.

Beginning as a one-man boot shop in 1879 in Spanish Fort, a village near Fort Worth, H.J. Justin built a business by making quality boots and knowing how to market them. The story of how that business grew into a large and vibrant company on the New York Stock Exchange is told in an entertaining way. Embedded is a most interesting theme: how America's romance with the cowboy culture has shaped and contributed to Justin's growth with the popularity of dude ranches, rodeos, and urban cowboy chic. Over the years, the company bought two competitors and later Acme Brick to form Justin Industries in 1972. Apparently, even during turbulent times, John Justin managed to remain a composed leader of multifaceted, money making enterprises. His civic contributions to Fort Worth include service as city councilman and mayor and leadership in raising money for the Equestrian Center for the livestock show. He is portrayed as a remarkable man, but readers are given no footnotes, no bibliography. It is puzzling that the holder of the copyright is Justin Industries, while the book is the second publication in TCU's Texas Biography series. Perhaps the book is intended for Justin employees and dealers to instill company pride. It is an unlikely selection for a university press publication.

Sally Dooley

Fisch, Louise Ann. *ALL RISE: REYNALDO G. GARZA, THE FIRST MEXICAN AMERICAN FEDERAL JUDGE*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1996. 240p. Illustrations. Index. Bibliography. Hardcover: \$32.95, ISBN 0-89096-713-X. 96-5433.

Readers and researchers who are interested in Mexican American culture, American politics, and judicial history will find this biography of Reynaldo G. Garza to be a valuable resource. Louise Fisch's carefully documented and informative book is based on the judge's personal papers as well as interviews with Garza, family members, friends, and associates. She hopes her efforts will encourage research into the lives of other Mexican Americans who have also broken barriers.

In 1961 a well qualified Reynaldo G. Garza of Brownsville was appointed to the federal court bench in South Texas, becoming

the first Mexican American to serve as a federal court judge. By 1969, Garza had ascended to the position of chief judge. Ten years later, he became the first Mexican American appointed to the bench of the U.S. Court of Criminal Appeals. It was said that Judge Garza ran his courtroom with utmost precision, retaining a common sense approach to the law. President Jimmy Carter asked him to be Attorney General of the U.S., but Garza declined saying he felt too old to start a new career. Being considered for a cabinet post showed the high degree of acceptance Garza had in the U.S. In spite of his honors and tributes, Garza never thought of himself as extraordinary. He credited his success to a system that allows any citizen to rise as long as he gains an education and works hard. Fisch earned a bachelor of journalism degree from the University of Texas at Austin and a M.A. degree in history from Tulane University. Presently she works in Washington D.C.

Shirley Brown

Halsell, Grace. *IN THEIR SHOES*. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1996. 252p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$24.95, ISBN 0-87565-161-5; Paperback: \$14.95, ISBN 0-87565-170-4. 96-12868.

Drawing her inspiration from Walt Whitman's "Song of the Open Road," Grace Halsell chose to take the open road, to reject what was known and comfortable, and to seek the "liberty of experience." A child of the West Texas plains, she traveled the world as a journalist working in Europe, Asia, and South America. Curiosity drove her to know what it was like to walk in another's shoes. At different periods in her interesting life, she disguised herself as a black domestic worker, a Mexican wet-back, and a Navajo nanny to a white family. From these experiences, she wrote *Soul Sister*, *Bessie Yellowhair*, and *The Illegals*. "Like Whitman, I am many persons in one....to put it in Whitman's grand phrase, 'I contain multitudes.'" To realize how remarkable her story is, one must know that she came of age at the end of World War II and therefore was traveling a landscape which few or no women had traveled. More recently she lived with aged people in Ecuador to discover how they attained such longevity in good health, which led to her writing *Los Viejos*. Her experiences in the Middle East are captured in *Journey to Jerusalem*.

Through Halsell's fearless capacity for adventure and her perceptive observations, readers learn a great deal about the world and its multicultural peoples. Halsell is truly a global citizen, although she now lives in Washington, D.C. A woman like Halsell is a unique pioneer who serves as a role model for countless women. Her story is genuinely fascinating.

Sally Dooley

Hankins, Barry. *GOD'S RASCAL: J. FRANK NORRIS AND THE BEGINNINGS OF SOUTHERN FUNDAMENTALISM*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996. 232p. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$24.95, ISBN 0-8131-1985-5.

This fine biography paints an unflattering portrait of one of the more controversial religious figures of the twentieth century. According to Barry Hankins, a history professor at Baylor University, J. Frank Norris, the longtime pastor of the First Baptist Church in Fort Worth, was an unprincipled sort who waged battle more to draw attention to himself than to right

theological error. His intellectual shifts were more a matter of pragmatism than enlightenment, as illustrated in his stance on Catholicism. The hated papacy of the early twentieth century, for example, became an ally against the hated communists of mid-century. And a predisposition to conspiratorial thinking skewed Norris' perception of reality. To Hankins, the Fort Worth preacher was the embodiment of Richard Hofstadter's "paranoid style" in religion and politics.

Hankins came to Norris by way of a broader interest in fundamentalism and American culture. He argues persuasively that Norris was more of a Southern Fundamentalist than a Southern Baptist, one whose denominational affiliation had more to do with geographical roots than thoughtful religious considerations. Peripherally, Hankins sees the ghost of Norris in the recent fundamentalist takeover of the Southern Baptist Convention, yet he acknowledges that convention leaders, more publicly than privately, are wary of the "Texas Cyclone." Even so, one is left wondering if Hankins might regard the present leaders of the national body as something other than Southern Baptists. This useful study will be of particular interest to students of religion and culture.

John Storey

Miles, Ray. "KING OF THE WILDCATTERS": THE LIFE AND TIMES OF TOM SLICK, 1883-1930. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1996. 166p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$29.95, ISBN 0-89096-715-6.

The name, Tom Slick, "king of the wildcatters," reminds one of a fictional character in a potboiler, but this man is very real and very interesting. He was born in 1883 in Pennsylvania and died in 1930, but the forty-seven years in between were filled with adventure in the oil fields of Oklahoma, Kansas, and Texas. Ray Miles had quite a job researching this man who, with one exception, never gave interviews and protected his privacy aggressively in both his public and private life.

Slick started as an independent and for the rest of his life maintained almost total control over his oil operations. Never merging with a larger company, he stayed in exploration, drilling, and production with a largely one-man operation. There are some interesting descriptions of his operations when he was buying into a new lease area. Early in his career he failed more than succeeded, but his luck changed and he died a wealthy man with interests in oil and railroads. Most of his oil holdings were in the MidContinent Oil Field, and he was responsible for bringing in some major areas of production. Many people benefited from his activities, his honesty, and his generosity which took the form of private gifts.

Aside from the interesting central character, the major value of this book is that it covers a period of great change in the oil industry. First the reader sees the fiercely independent actions of Slick in the early stage of his career, but follows his career to the period of overproduction and the need for controls over this industry. Slick's feelings were mixed, but he generally supported proration. He always overworked, broke his health, and died of a stroke as a fairly young man. There was a giant fight over his estate among states in which he lived and did business. In the early years of the Great Depression, the potential estate taxes fueled the fight.

Although Tom Slick had done business in Texas, it was not his primary residence and received very little from estate taxes. However, after his death, two of his three children made San Antonio their adopted home. Anyone who knows that town will recall the Southwest Research Institute organized by Tom Jr. from his father's estate and his own oil interests and about the exclusive Argyle Club in Alamo Heights organized by Slick's daughter Betty and her husband. Although this book is not primarily about Texas, it is a fascinating glimpse into issues in the oil industry that deeply affect the history of this state. Also, Tom Slick is a really interesting man.

JoAnn Stiles

Myres, Sandra L. *FORCE WITHOUT FANFARE: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF K.M. VAN ZANDT*. 2d ed. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1968. Second Printing, 1995. 200p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$19.95, ISBN 0-87565-154-2. 69-19424.

Khleber Miller (K.M.) Van Zandt was born in 1836, when Texas achieved independence, and died in 1930 at the onset of the Great Depression. He was a man whom most people outside Fort Worth will know little about, but he comes to life in the pages of this autobiography dictated in his ninety-third year, published in 1968, and reprinted in 1995. In 1929 Mrs. Alice Van Zandt Williams, while on a visit with her parents, convinced her father, still President of the Fort Worth National Bank, to commit his memories to paper and then in the early 1960s, she brought the typescript to Dr. Sandra Myres at the University of Texas at Arlington for conversion to book form.

Born in Tennessee and moved to Texas in 1839, Mr. Van Zandt was the son of Isaac and Frances Cooke Lipscomb Van Zandt. In 1842 his father became the Texas representative to the United States working on the annexation question. K.M. lived next door to John Quincy Adams on one side and John C. Calhoun on the other. Adams did not particularly like children, but Calhoun did and regularly took walks around the neighborhood with them. There are all sorts of interesting tidbits interspersed throughout this book, over half of which concentrates on the first thirty years of Van Zandt's life. The last sixty pages focus on his movement west during Reconstruction and the decision to settle in Fort Worth, a city not exactly beautiful to the eye when he first arrived. He committed the remainder of his life to that city as a businessman, banker, cattleman, state legislator, and civic booster.

For those interested in 1840s Washington, D.C., the politics of the Republic, life on the frontier, and Civil War history, as well as early business history, this book is easy and interesting reading. Van Zandt was a fine story teller, and Dr. Myres enhances his story with excellent footnotes and without intruding.

JoAnn Stiles

James C. Shaw. *NORTH FROM TEXAS: INCIDENTS IN THE EARLY LIFE OF A RANGE COWMAN IN TEXAS, DAKOTA AND WYOMING, 1852-1883*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1996. 109p. Bibliography. Index. Paperback: \$9.95, ISBN 0-89096-730-X. 96-03103

Like many young men his age in Texas in the late nineteenth century, James C. Shaw answered adventure's call. The lure of

the Western frontier and the opportunity for excitement, fame, and fortune led Shaw to put aside his occasional occupations as farmer and school teacher to follow the "romantic" life of the cowhand. In this slim volume, Shaw brings to life in riveting detail the sights, sounds, and smells of life on the trail. As he heads his first herd north from Texas to the Dakota Territory in 1879, Shaw describes the 1,500-mile journey, the harsh realities of the cowman's life, and the daily routine in a cow camp and on the trail.

Along the way, Shaw also gives brief vignettes of some Texas cities that, at the time, were nothing more than crude settlements. He also reveals the seamy underside of life on the trail as he describes the deadly violence in the gambling halls and saloons that infested most of the boomtowns such as Dodge City, Ellsworth, and Wichita that sprang up along the major cattle trails and around the railheads where the cattle shipped out to the Eastern markets.

Shaw went on to spend nearly fifty years in the saddle and became one of the most prominent pioneer cattlemen in the Wyoming Territory. Although written over a century ago, his adventures ring true, with all the dust, sweat, and grit of the cattle drive brought vividly to life. Public libraries will want to add this book to their Western collections.

Ky W. White

EDUCATION

Hoffman, Marvin. *CHASING HELLHOUNDS: A TEACHER LEARNS FROM HIS STUDENTS*. Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions, 1996. 260p. Paperback: \$14.95, ISBN 1-57131-214-5. 96-8264.

Marvin Hoffman is both a remarkable writer and teacher. For fourteen years he taught at T.H. Rogers and at Jones High School in Houston ISD, served as consultant for the Rice School startup, and is presently on leave from Rice and HISD to work on a University of Chicago project to train classroom teachers. In this memoir, he describes his responses to the trials and tribulations that he watched his students deal with. Indeed the "hellhounds" of the title are not the students, rather the chasing of the "hellhounds" is the role of teachers to make a safer way for students to learn. While he watches some students surmount tremendous hellhounds to learn and achieve, others are overwhelmed by their lack of parental guidance, substance abuse, or poverty. His understanding portrayal of specific students and his attempts to encourage the flowering of their talents manifests the nobility of the profession that teaching can be. He reaches out to Jeff who decides to report his mother for using cocaine, to Carlotta who fears leaving her dependent mother for a scholarship to an Eastern university of prestige, and to Monique who works two jobs in addition to school.

In some instances, Hoffman is counselor, friend, and surrogate parent, but he is an extremely demanding English teacher. Students keep journals, read Shakespeare, and write poetry. He admits the tremendous problems of the public schools, and he offers no simple nor complex remedies. Schools need to reach all pupils but especially those with whom other institutions such as family, church, and community fail. The book is fascinating reading for its content which is complemented by Hoffman's insight and writing style. Adults interested in education will

enjoy this fine book.

Sally Dooley

Romo, Harriet D. and Toni Falbo. *LATINO HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION: DEFYING THE ODDS*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996. 324p. Index. Hardcover: \$37.50, ISBN 0-292-72494-2; Paperback: \$17.95. ISBN 0-292-72495-0. 95-16645.

Why have high school dropout rates among white and African American students steadily declined while the rate among Mexican American students has stayed constant at thirty-five percent? To answer this puzzling question, the authors tracked 100 Mexican American students in Austin, Texas, from 1989 to 1993. Case studies showed numerous reasons for dropping out: peer and gang pressure, family financial need, teenage pregnancy, and failure to pass. The authors argue that unconcerned teachers and schools were major contributors to students' not completing high school. They recommend that teachers and staff be retrained routinely to meet the challenges of retaining students in school so that they can be better employed or obtain higher education. Romo and Falbo believe that presently schools make it easy for a student to drop out and hard for him or her to return. Internal motivation to do well and to graduate, coupled with involvement in extracurricular activities and family expectation, were identified as major reasons for students' retention.

One wishes the authors had used a broader base for their study so that comparisons could have been drawn to show why only the Mexican American dropout rate has remained constant. Also, there were no reports of interviews with school officials, so the conclusions reported were from parents, students, and authors. Community leaders, school officials, and those interested in Mexican American culture will find this book helpful. Harriet Romo is Associate Professor of Sociology at Southwest Texas State University while Toni Falbo is Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Texas at Austin.

Shirley Brown

EMPLOYMENT

Kittrell, H. Olivia. *THE NANNY WORLD. HEAVEN OR HELL?* Kaufman: Water Hill Press, 1996. 185p. Paperback: \$12.00, ISBN 0-9653618-0-2. 96-90491.

Olivia Kittrell is well prepared to write this book; she earned a master's degree in social work, was employed in Child Protective Services, and ran a nanny placement agency for eight years. Kittrell explains the many-faceted role of a nanny and discusses live-ins, immigrants versus American made, and nanny training schools. The nanny/parent relationship requires excellent communication so that both parties are satisfied with the arrangement. Kittrell discusses the different needs of career moms versus non-career moms and the problems that can arise with nanny/child bonding versus employer jealousy. On the subject of pay scales, Kittrell states that "low salaries can only establish minimal requirements." A good agency is aware of the education, experience, and skills of a nanny and will seek to place her where she will succeed. The important needs of children, physical, emotional, social, educational, and spiritual are covered. Kittrell explains the laws governing employment, wages, and

taxes, along with an agency's application process and the parental interview. Completing the book are samples of a work agreement, nanny evaluation, employer self-assessment, medical release, phone list, and a child's daily schedule. Running throughout the book is the refrain, "Can't anyone take care of children?" Kittrell's experiences prove they can't, and this book provides a practical and informative guide for both the prospective employer and the nanny.

Sally Dooley

ESSAYS

Baylor, George Wythe. *INTO THE FAR, WILD COUNTRY: TRUE TALES OF THE OLD SOUTHWEST*. ed. by Jerry D. Thompson. El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1996. 442p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$30.00, ISBN 0-87404-237-2. 96-60102.

This memoir, comprised of fifty-two articles written by George Wythe Baylor for the *El Paso Daily Herald* between 1899 and 1906, details his exploits on the violent Texas frontier and beyond. Particularly interesting are stories of Civil War battles west of the Mississippi, ranging from the surrender of federal forces at St. Augustin, New Mexico, to the Red River Campaign in Louisiana. Col. Baylor also writes of fights with Comanches and Apaches in Texas and Northern Mexico and of life in the California gold fields, among other things. A natural storyteller, he holds the reader's interest throughout with fast-paced descriptions such as when he dismounted in the middle of a fight "as easily as a mud turtle slides off a log" to avoid an Indian's arrow. Putting stories ranging from "How Mangas Colorado Died" to "Massacre of Confederates in the Big Bend" into historical perspective are a lengthy biographical introduction and copious annotations by editor Jerry Thompson, a dean at Texas A&M International University in Laredo.

Mary M. Fisher

Craven, Jerry. *TICKLING CATFISH: A TEXAN LOOKS AT CULTURE FROM AMARILLO TO BORNEO*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1996. 147p. Illustrations. Paperback: \$14.95, ISBN 0-89096-728-8. 96-25540.

Originally a series of articles printed in a weekly supplement to the *Amarillo Daily News* for subscribers in Canyon, this potpourri of pint-size tales is sure to entertain. In eight dozen short pieces, author Jerry Craven, a West Texas A&M University English professor, ponders on life's idiosyncrasies both in Texas and beyond. The title story, for example, details how Texans "tickle" catfish on the bottom of the bayou by grabbing them -- an illegal but highly macho activity. Among Craven's other stories are ones with such intriguing titles as "Take Two Sapphires and Call Me in the Morning," "Headhunters Drink Cokes," "Fried Eyeballs, Please," and "Freeze Drying Little Brother." Short and snappy, his lighthearted observations on linguistic and cultural quirks range from Amarillo, where people greet folks with "nass to meechea," to Borneo, where Craven's headhunter guide was seen carrying a case of cokes. Readers will find themselves shaking their heads both in amazement and agreement with Craven's whimsical musings, which are aptly illustrated with line drawings by Jean Dixon.

Mary M. Fisher

FOLKLORE

Abernethy, Francis E., Patrick B. Mullen, and Alan B. Govenar, eds. *JUNETEENTH TEXAS: ESSAYS IN AFRICAN-AMERICAN FOLKLORE*. Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1996. 364p. Illustrations. Index. Hardcover: \$29.95, ISBN 1-57441-018-0. 96-21854.

This kaleidoscopic selection of essays on African American folklore in Texas runs the gamut from a personal memoir of Sacred Harp singing in East Texas to a scholarly treatise on cultural attitudes towards the history and legends of Emily Morgan. In between are a dozen and a half pieces--written by whites and blacks--on subjects such as foodways in the WPA slave narratives, development of zydeco music in Houston, Juneteenth celebrations, and African American blacksmithing. Particularly interesting is a profile on Bongo Joe, an itinerant street performer who was a downtown fixture in San Antonio for many years. Originally written in 1970, the article has been revised by the author Pat Mullen "in light of changing concepts about folklore and African American culture." Echoing Mullen's observation that there is no set-in-stone truth about the African American experience in Texas are editors Mullen and Govenar, who in an illuminating introductory essay point out that each writer brings his or her own assumptions depending on race, age, class or other cultural factors but that "every writer here shares a conviction that...the ongoing cultural and racial dialog in which we are engaged will produce a greater understanding in the future." Present day Texans of all color would do well to check out this engaging, highly readable dialog by some of the state's premier folklorists.

Mary M. Fisher

GUIDES

A MARMAC GUIDE TO HOUSTON AND GALVESTON. Gretna: Pelican Publishing Co., 1996. 3rd ed. 238p. Illustrations. Index. Paperback: \$10.95, ISBN 1-56554-100-6.

This guidebook states in its forward that it is "designed for the resident and traveler who seek comprehensive information in an easy-to-use format and who have a zest for the best in each city and area" This guidebook does what it sets out to do with the Houston area. It covers the past and present, the places to stay and dine, the arts, the nightlife, the shopping and even sightseeing. Sections cover information for the international, elderly, or handicapped visitor and even one for new residents. An interesting and useful aspect of the dining section is the inclusion of restaurants by area of the city and types of food offered. The shopping section focuses on shopping centers and by types of items wanted. There are also self-guided walking and driving tours. A section on one-day excursions includes trips north to the Alabama-Coushatta Indian Reservation and Heritage Village and south to the Space Center, Galveston, the refurbished San Jacinto Monument and the USS *Texas*. The section about Galveston is disappointing, but it is a useful introduction to that port city. The last section, called "Bits and Pieces," includes trivia about this interesting section of Texas. The guidebook would be a good purchase for libraries whose patrons who like traveling and exploring.

Karen B. Nichols

★ ★

HORTICULTURE

English, Sarah Jane. **THE WINES OF TEXAS**. Rev. ed. Austin: Eakin Press, 1996. 209p. Illustrations. Index. Hardcover: \$16.95, ISBN 1-5716-8054-3.

The Wines of Texas is an ambitious book, covering the history of viticulture in Texas from the early Coronado expeditions in the 1540s through the present-day successful efforts to make Texas a significant producer of quality wine. There are extensive descriptions of wines and histories of current wineries. The book's only shortcoming is that it does not give consistent treatment to all Texas wineries. Some receive extensive coverage, while others receive only brief mention in the index. Counted among those receiving minimal coverage are the Piney Woods Country Wines in Orange, the Blue Mountain Vineyard in Fort Davis, Delaney Vineyards, Incorporated, in Lamesa, and others. Still, the information that English provides on many wineries is unequaled by other sources, and the reviewer recommends this book for any fan of Texas history and/or Texas wines.

Mike Avery

NATURAL HISTORY

Andrews, Jean. **PEPPERS: THE DOMESTICATED CAPSICUMS**. 2d ed. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996. 186p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Hardcover: \$65.00, ISBN: 0-292-70467-4.

Peppers: The Domesticated Capsicums has something for every pepper lover. The pepper lover with an artistic bent will delight in the lovingly drawn peppers. In addition to thirty-four large plates in this coffee-table-sized book, there are many smaller illustrations throughout. Others will enjoy reading about the history of cultivated peppers. Andrews presents more scientific information about peppers than is apt to appeal to casual readers. However, the material is still a treasure trove for the less scientifically inclined pepper lover. It includes practical day-to-day suggestions on ways to preserve and use peppers, to reduce burning one's skin -- or one's mouth -- as well as recipes to delight the pepper aficionado. The book is, of course, peppered with anecdotes that enliven what would otherwise be the drier sections of this work. The extensive bibliography is quite helpful, and this book is a must for anyone who is interested in domesticated peppers and will make a handsome addition to public library collections.

Mike Avery

Tveten, John and Gloria Tveten. **BUTTERFLIES OF HOUSTON & SOUTHEAST TEXAS**. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996. 292p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$45.00, ISBN 0-292-78142-3. Paperback: \$19.95, ISBN 0-292-78143-1. 95-50198.

Butterfly watching is rapidly increasing in popularity, yet many amateurs are daunted by volumes containing hundred of species from around the world. Now residents of Houston and southeast Texas have an outstanding guide to the more than one hundred species of butterflies found in their area. Entries are classified by butterfly family with a short overview of the characteristics of that group. Each entry contains both common and scientific name, description of adult and larva, life history,

habits, and food plants; each is accompanied by color photographs. The photographs are of uniformly excellent quality and usually show dorsal and ventral views of adults plus larvae. The guide also contains a brief discussion of the biology and distribution of butterflies, a checklist of the butterflies, and indexes of food plants and species by common and scientific names. The guide is highly recommended for all types of libraries in the appropriate area.

Kathleen Murray

Zappler, Georg. **LEARN ABOUT DINOSAURS**. Austin: Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, 1994. Illustrations. Paperback: \$7.95, ISBN 0-9636765-7-1. (Juvenile)

The illustrations by Elena T. Ivy are the highlights of this information-packed activity book. Brief, but complete information is given about the remains of the seventeen dinosaurs found in Texas. The dinosaurs are split into three "batches": Late Triassic, Early Cretaceous and Late Cretaceous. A chart for each dinosaur contains length, weight, era, where found, classification, "notable notes," and a timeline. Each description also contains interesting notes about the meaning of the name and other information about how the dinosaur moved, what it looked like, and what it ate.

In addition to giving children a chance to color each page, Zappler also includes fun activities, such as a word search puzzle, mazes, and a large poster to color. There is also information on classification, fossilization, digs, and each of the pertinent prehistoric eras. The concise presentation and excellent line drawings make this a good addition for school and public libraries.

Beth Fuseler

SOCIOLOGY

Navarro, Armando. **MEXICAN AMERICAN YOUTH ORGANIZATION: AVANT-GARDE OF THE CHICANO MOVEMENT IN TEXAS**. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995. 288p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Paperback: \$16.95. ISBN 0-292-75557-0. 94-39569.

Anyone who is interested in learning about the evolution of the Chicano Movement should read this book. Navarro has provided an in-depth study by documenting the inception, struggle and demise of the Mexican American Youth Organization (MAYO) in Texas. This study was accomplished with primary and secondary sources. The majority of the author's primary sources consist of interviews with individuals who were directly involved in the development of MAYO. The seven chapters in this volume provided an abundance of information regarding the inception of this organization. Another feature is the inclusion of four primary sources that served as the foundation for this organization. Another feature is the inclusion of four primary sources that served as the foundation of this organization. Articulating what occurred in Texas, specifically in South Texas, illustrates what Mexicans were facing in the 1960s and early 1970s. Social injustice was prevalent throughout the nation, but Texas became a leader in demonstrating how citizens could organize and fight against inequalities. The author provides analysis in how social change occurred by focusing on the strategies that were used in addressing these issues. Without a

doubt this book was thoroughly researched and documented.

Reading about the MAYO movement will enlighten individuals interested in learning about a part of Texas history, politics, and leadership. Every library from high school to college should purchase this monograph for their collection.

José A. Aguiñaga

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