



REVIEW OF TEXAS BOOKS



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★★★★FICTION★★★★

Alter, Judy. *A BALLAD FOR SALLIE*. New York: Leisure Books, 1998. 288p. Paperback: \$4.50, ISBN 0-8439-4365-3.

Through the eyes of scrappy Lizzie Jones, Judy Alter has given a glimpse into Fort Worth history in 1885 when the coming of the railroads was bringing change to the cattle town on the Chisholm Trail. At fourteen Lizzie had been living on her own since her mother left her in the red light district. She shared a shack back of Miss Lulabelle's with two other abandoned children who supported themselves with shoe shining or errands and their wits. Things began to change when Sallie McNutt came to town to work in the McNutt Mercantile and found that the owner had been murdered. As Lizzie and Ben Boy try to protect Sallie's interests with their knowledge of Fort Worth's seamier side, Sallie teaches them book learning and manners, and eventually how to trust another's care for them. It is hard for Lizzie to give up her independence and control, but a sense of family caring and trust develop.

Judy Alter has written twelve novels and is currently director of Texas Christian University Press and secretary-treasurer of the Texas Institute of Letters. In *A Ballad For Sallie*, the Spur Award-winning author of *Mattie*, has skillfully blended the real-life gambler Luke Short, the former marshall Long Hair Jim Courtright, and the crusading newspaperman B.B. Paddock with fictional characters who might have been similar to others who actually lived. Built on this historical framework one finds a tale of suspense, romance, and evolving human relationships.

Frances M. Ramsey

Bass, Rick. *WHERE THE SEA USED TO BE*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1998. 445p. Hardcover: \$25.00, ISBN 0-395-77015-7. 98-12842.

Rick Bass is a native Texan who lives with his family on a remote Montana ranch. A writer of both fiction (novellas and short stories) and non-fiction, this is his first novel and it exceeds the promise offered by his work over the past decade. This novel is an urgent literary expression of his sensitivity to the fate of wilderness areas remaining in the United States. The Montana setting is so powerfully portrayed that it exerts a force just as the memorable characters do. Bass immediately evokes with his poetic prose the quiet heaviness of snow, the timelessness of winter, the trees, the wildlife, and the isolation of the people living in the fictitious Swan Valley. Located near the Canadian border, the community's only connection to the world is one road in summer.

Old Dudley is a Houson wildcatter who breaks in young geologists by manipulating them, much as he does the falcons he hunts. He's about worn out Matthew after nineteen dry holes in the valley; thus he sends Wallis in November, a peculiar time to study a snow-covered landscape. With only the sketchiest of maps, Wallis arrives and is met by Mel, Old Dudley's daughter and Matthew's lover. For twenty years she has escaped her father's caprice by tracking and observing wolves. Now Wallis comes to search for oil in this valley where the sea used to be. "It was a landscape of jagged teeth; as if the ocean had been frozen in a moment, with all white caps and waves halted."

Over the long winter, Wallis and Mel share their lives, while Wallis studies the maps and journals of Old Dudley. Gradually Wallis and Mel grow to love each other and to view Old Dudley with suspicion. Wallis is certain he knows where the oil lies and has only to wait for spring to prove himself for his boss. Survival of the fittest is observed daily, not only with bears, elk, and deer, but with the inhabitants of the valley.

What the discovery of oil would do to the life of the valley is a fear to all the residents, and Wallis, appreciating deeply the life he has beheld, finds himself almost hoping the drilling will be fruitless, and it is. Old Dudley is both furious and weak. A fall in the snow in his decrepit state brings frostbite and pneumonia. "They could both see and feel his life leaving him now like an upturned leaf floating down a river." He dies a beaten old man consumed by his mania of finding oil. Mel and Matthew can be at peace.

The story is absorbing, the setting is majestic, and the characters are believable. As one reads, one can visualize each scene, so vivid is Bass' writing about man and nature. A geologist by education, he turned to writing about what he observed and his response. Oil Notes, The Watch, and The Book of Yaak are a few of his works. Bass is a fine writer, and Texas will continue to claim him even though he lives in Montana. He is a member of the Texas Institute of Letters.

Sally Dooley

Blakely, Mike. COMANCHE DAWN. New York: Forge, 1997. 416p. Hardcover: \$25.95, ISBN 0-312-86575-9.

Alex Haley's Roots inspired a quest for ethnic origins. Ruth Beebe Hill's Hanto Yo explored the heritage of the Teton Sioux. Blakely's latest novel, Comanche Dawn, now takes its place alongside those other deservedly respected investigative works.

Substantial research went into Blakely's recreation of early Comanche existence in camps along the Yellowstone and Platte rivers. In the late 1600s the Comanches discovered that horses were not large dogs for feasting, but animals to ride. In time they amassed great herds by stealing and breeding them. It was time to move out of the Rockies. With a few facts for structure, the author gave flesh to the bones and wrote an absorbing story.

A boy baby is born at the very same time that a wild horse runs into camp and circles the birthing teepee. It is a sign. Later a number of horses run through the camp and are corralled by the warriors. The boy, moving on to puberty, finds he can talk to his horse and the animal responds. He is a horse whisperer. He teaches his friends his secrets about controlling their ponies and Comanche warriors become the greatest horseman on this continent.

Named Horseback, he proves his leadership and courage and convinces his people that his vision spirit directed him to move them south where the plains were grassy and the hunting good.

Despite bloodshed in war, torture, conflict with Spanish priests and administrators established in Santa Fe, and disgruntled warriors of his own who resent his power, in one generation Horseback settles Comanches in the Llano Estacado and they thrive there until the encroachment of the white man. Comanche Dawn is historical fiction at its best.

Ernestine S. Linck

Borthwick, J.S. THE CASE OF THE HOOK-BILLED KITES. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982. Reprint, 1998. 245p. Paperback: \$5.99, ISBN 0-312-92604-9. 82-5617.

J.S. Borthwick's engaging mystery is once again readily available. Her heroine, Sarah Deanne, has been invited to join one of her male friends for a spring bird watching week in southern Texas. This is a great opportunity to leave Boston over spring break and get to know Philip Lenz even better. Is he really the one for her to spend the rest of her life?

Sarah arrives at the Corpus Christi airport, but Philip has sent mutual friend, Dr. Alex McKenzie, to pick her up and take her to the hotel. Philip's message is that he will be late and to not wait dinner for him since he may be delayed. And he is very delayed . . . he never arrives.

Some of the other guests are from the school where Sarah recently taught. All of the bird watchers, including Sarah, become suspects. Philip Lenz was found strangled at the National Wildlife Refuge. Sarah and Dr. McKenzie are determined to help find out who killed him. Could it have been someone they know?

This is a quick read and part of the series of mysteries involving Sarah Deanne. The characters are varied and well drawn. Recommended for public libraries.

Dorothy Leising

Garland, Sherry. A LINE IN THE SAND: THE ALAMO DIARY OF LUCINDA LAWRENCE. New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1998. 201p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$9.95, ISBN 0-590-

39466-5. (Juvenile)

Written as the diary of a young adult girl living in Gonzales, Texas, in 1835, this work of fiction gives a strong sense of reality and immediacy to the period of Texas Revolution. Through the eyes of Lucinda Lawrence one sees the beauty of her Texas environment, harsh details of everyday life on the frontier and the controversy over how to respond to Santa Anna and the Mexican government. We read of the grief over the loss of loved ones at the massacre of Goliad and the siege of the Alamo, plus the harrowing experience of the Runaway Scrape. This book is one in the Dear America series which uses diary format to make history exciting and personal for young readers from upper elementary grades and older. Black-and-white illustrations and maps are included.

Frances M. Ramsey

Greene, A.C. *THEY ARE RUINING IBIZA*. Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1998. 123p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$21.95, ISBN 1-57441-042-3. 97-39440.

Charles Martyn, a famous but aging retired professor, and his young wife Susan have come to Ibiza, an island off the coast of Spain. He had to come to this paradise years ago with his family and expected it to be the same unspoiled place, its charm crowned by a sixteenth century fortress and heightened by museum pieces dedicated to the Carthaginian goddess of love. What he found was a ruined Ibiza, crowded with European druggies and American hippies giving themselves over to libidinous pleasures pursued to the tunelessness of jarring sounds intended to be music. Charles's generation resisted loss of control; Susan chose to play out her fantasies of being "free."

The story line proceeds with banter between husband and wife. Charles, looking backward, has misgivings about himself. It was here on Ibiza that family ties began to unravel. Harriet had reminded him of his way of life: dedicated solely to academic life, seeking fame and fortune, leaving nothing to share with family. Whatever dark side of his nature enjoyed pushing his bantering into quarreling and moving dangerously to the limit was baffling to him. Would his marriage to Susan end the same way? He has duplicated his first marriage. Should this one fail, there could be no further reduplications. He is an old crochety man, rejecting change.

A.C. Greene, author of a score of highly successful, nonfiction books, has significantly broadened the sweep of his productivity with this arresting novel. Let us look forward to more.

Ernestine Sewell Linck

Martin, Bill, Jr. *THE TURNING OF THE YEAR*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1998. 25p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$15.00, ISBN 0-15-201085-8. 96-53078. (Juvenile)

With simple, lyrical verse by Texan Bill Martin, Jr. and luminous illustrations by Greg Shed, the months of the year and their seasons are celebrated. January's "icy blow" is followed by sledding in February, a warming sun in March, and splashing in puddles in April. And so the months pass with full-color, two-page paintings depicting the brief verse on one page. A favorite of this reviewer is: "In August, on hot days I run through harvest fields that praise the sun." Below the verse are two slices of whole wheat bread with a blue "First Place" ribbon on them. The full-page illustration shows a boy in shorts and cap in a wheat field looking up at a plane with a banner announcing a county fair, the white picture set against an azure sky with milky clouds. One can almost feel the heat of summer and hear the buzz of insects and the plane. Young children will enjoy sitting in a loved one's lap and reading this delightful book.

Marin has authored more than 200 children's books, and he has promoted the use of literature to teach reading across the country. Shed has illustrated numerous children's books, including the well received *Dandelions* by Eve Bunting.

Sally Dooley

Sandifer, Linda. *RAVELED ENDS OF SKY*. New York: Forge Book, 1998. 349p. Bibliography. Hardcover: \$24.95, ISBN 0-312-86378-0.

In her foreword the author explains her desire to portray the westward movement of the 1840s from the viewpoint of the unmarried women who eagerly sought the adventure and freedom of the West as revealed in their journals. Against the wishes of her parents, but inspired by her grandfather's pioneering experience, Nancy Maguire leaves the privilege of her eastern home with the intention of starting a horse ranch in Mexican California. She teams with Lottie England, a fei-

sty young widow with experience as a mule skinner, and together they face the deprivation and excitement of the second group to make the overland trip to California. Nancy's independence and resourcefulness threaten some of her fellow travelers, encourage others, and are appreciated by Hart, one of the scouts with the group. The growing love between Hart and Nancy and the enduring friendship between Nancy and Lottie soften the rigors of the journey and the difficulties of homesteading in an unsettled California.

Placing twentieth century attitudes and motivations in nineteenth century characters is a pitfall which the author has avoided by relying on primary source material such as women's journals. Her descriptive powers help one see the grandeur of the land, experience the heat and dust or cold and wet, mourn the deaths, and feel the joys of a freer life as well as the difficulties obtaining it.

Frances M. Ramsey

Sherman, Jory. *THE BARON RANGE*. New York: Forge, 1998. 304p. Hardcover: \$23.95. ISBN 0-312-86349-7. 98-19404.

The Baron Range is a fiction, like Sherman's earlier *The Barons of Texas*, with parallels to the lives of the persons who established the famous and fabulous King Ranch in South Texas.

Several story lines run throughout, culled up seemingly from major events of earlier novels and creating visible icebergs above the underlying masses. Martin Baron, the ambitious rancher and his pregnant wife Caroline have an ill-omened marriage. The story of villainous Matteo Aguilar is marked by hate or war to regain his father's Spanish land grant, mainly the Baron range. Three coming-of-age stories focus on Anson, Baron's son; Roy, drifter Jack's son; and the Apache Bone.

Dread for the characters' fate creates an atmosphere intensified by Sherman's use of a cliffhanger structure, resulting in peaks and valleys. For example, one-fourth of the book is given to seaman Martin Baron's tracking down some pirates. This story, however, is interrupted with chapters about Bone; about Jack and wife Ursula; about Juanito, the mystic curandero; about Caroline's musing; back to Bone; back to Ursula's sexual pleasures; back to Bone and Matteo's war; then to Matteo's mother, before Baron and Anson triumph over the pirates.

The adhesive for these stories lies in the reap-

pearance of the strongest character, Juanito, Martin's life-long friend who intuitively "things other men had never even imagined" (148). Juanito's letter to Martin, delivered after his death, is addressed to "Dear Father" and is a manifesto of his belief in Christianity, which endowed him with understanding of and love for all people, if not magic.

The Baron Range is interesting once you are accustomed to the patchwork of stories. It's best, however, not to question the characters' actions: sometimes they belie human nature.

Ernestine Linck

Walker, Mary Willis. *ALL THE DEAD LIE DOWN*. New York: Doubleday, 1998. 308p. Hardcover: \$22.95. ISBN 0-385-47858-5. 97-24131.

Walker creates a bag lady named Cow Lady who recites nursery rhymes and pairs her with various homeless friends. Cow Lady overhears a plot to kill everyone in the Texas legislature and faces the moral dilemma of what to do with the information. She contacts Molly Cates, a true-crime reporter whose father's death twenty-five years before was ruled a suicide that she cannot accept. Both women carry more than their fair share of emotional baggage, and neither one really trusts the other. They are on personal quests to discover what went wrong in their lives, and emotions and suspense run high as they each experience the world of the other and try to stop the plot to destroy the Texas legislature. In *All the Dead Lie Down*, Walker masterfully blends poignancy and terror with humor and insight while maintaining complete control over a thrilling plot.

All the Dead Lie Down is Walker's fourth novel and is likely to receive the acclaim of its predecessors. Her first novel, *Zero at the Bone*, won both the Agatha and Macavity awards. *The Red Scream*, her second novel, won the Edgar Award and *Under the Beetle's Cellar* received the Hammett Prize, the Anthony Award, and the Macavity Award.

Janet K. Turk

Windle, Janice Woods. *HILL COUNTRY*. Atlanta: Longstreet Press, Inc., 1998. 396p. Hardcover: \$25.00. ISBN 1-56352-522-4. 98-066357.

Readers who loved Windle's first bestselling book True Women will be captivated by this sweeping novel based on the autobiography of her grandmother, Laura Woods. Like the Windle ancestral females depicted in True Women, Laura is strong, adventurous, and determined. Growing up in the 1970s in Hoge Hollow along the Blanco River in the Texas Hill Country, Laura longed for more than this hardscrabble farm had to offer. Even the traveling circus that wintered near there appealed for the excitement it offered. As a young woman she married a prominent horse breeder and rancher, Peter Woods, whose family forever looked down on her. Years of hard physical labor by the young couple enabled them to accumulate land and horses while adding three children to the family. Along the way Laura developed an interest in politics both state and national, and she participated in ways unusual for a female at that time. She wanted to make a difference. Amazing opportunities arose where she could and did. Teddy Roosevelt visited them to buy the horses that charged San Juan Hill. Col. Edward House, Woodrow Wilson's advisor, recognized Laura's shrewd political abilities and gave her various assignments to advance his causes. Active in the suffrage movement and state and national elections, she demonstrated her zeal and commitment to have a voice and to offer that opportunity to other women.

Laura's real life friendship with Rebekah Baines Johnson found them encouraging their sons, Wilton Woods and Lyndon Baines Johnson to become active and organize students on the campus of Southwest Teacher's College in San Marcos. Business reversals forced both families to move there and both ladies supported their families by running boarding houses. Later when LBJ ran for Congress and then the Senate, Laura and her son Wilson campaigned feverishly for him. Upon his election to the presidency in 1964, Laura, now age ninety-four, was ready to advise him on Vietnam. This saga covers a period of impressive change in Texas as well as America and the world, and Windle's characters make the era vibrant.

This novel is a pleasure to read; Laura's portrayal is vivid and reveals her triumphs as well as the tragedies in her life, most notably the family's financial ruin and the insanity of their daughter. Once again Janice Woods Windle has successfully integrated family stories and history into an absorbing story to produce what will surely be another popular book. Windle, a lifelong Texan, resides in El Paso, where she is president of the El Paso Community Foundation. True Women

was made into a popular TV miniseries in 1996. With its drama and strong characterizations Hill Country could also easily be a successful TV special or film.

Sally Dooley

COLLECTIONS AND SHORT STORIES

Ashworth, Mac, Jr. TALL TALES OVER SHORT FENCES. Vermont: Golden Quill Press, 1997. 65 p. Hardcover: \$14.95, ISBN 0-8233-0512-0. 96-79055.

Once past the clever title, readers will discover slight tales and trite poetry that do not do the title justice. The short stories, most between two and three pages, provide intriguing setting, yet are underdeveloped. Whether at a barbershop, or on a tractor, or reminiscing about a two-holer, Ashworth spends too many of his words reporting instead of storytelling. "In the early years in the country they did not have bathrooms inside the house, they were outside. That's why they are called outhouses." Just when we catch a glimpse of a character or begin to see action, a new paragraph begins and the narrative persona reports, questions, or moralizes. However, Ashworth produces the occasional memorable image. For example, he describes riding a tractor in the open air as "[k]inda like driving a convertible around town waving to all the friends you know."

Most disappointing is "Sayings From the Seat of the Wagon I." Ashworth introduces this piece with a childhood memory of his grandfather taking him to town in a wagon. Ashworth mentions his grandfather telling stories on these wagon rides, but, as the title suggests, he lists sayings that belong on coffee mugs, and office-wall posters. Readers would be better served by stories told by and about Ashworth's grandfather during those wagon rides.

There simply isn't enough story to call these "tall-tales," and the poetry functions as filler. The mechanical problems and simple style of the tales give the feeling of reading narrative freshman compositions. With Ashworth's colorful professional life, which is detailed on the book jacket, readers should expect more from these writings: greater detail, more vivid characters, and less intrusion from the narrator.

Melissa Hudler

Evans, Max. HI LO TO HOLLYWOOD: A MAX

EVANS READER. Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 1998. 384 p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$34.95, ISBN 0-89672-404-2. 98-35709.

Award-winning author Max Evans has put together a collection of his favorite works about the contemporary Southwest: novellas, short stories, essays, forewords, and magazine articles published from 1965 to 1995. The best of Max Evans is very good, indeed; his writing is clean and masculine. He has Jack London's verve but without prolixity or stylistic awkwardness. Evans captures the comic-tragic-pathetic drama of survival in a harsh landscape. For instance, his searing novella "One-Eyed Sky" brings together on one remote patch of ground a calving cow, a coyote trying to feed her hungry cubs, and a worn-out cowboy with a gun. With breathtaking cross cutting, Evans manages to get inside the elemental minds of his creations as they make their desperate ways to their destined confrontation, and he leaves the reader gasping at the conclusion. Both in his fiction and non-fiction, Evans is essentially a teller of tales about well developed personalities. And his subjects are wonderfully varied: a plumber who sacrifices everything to bring a ballerina to town, a youth who comes of age on a two-person trail ride, a bull who refuses to be branded, a hermit haunted by an unearthly scream in the night, a race that puts quarter horses on the betting map, a legendary coon-hunting hound, a payroll thief chased by a posse. And he masters several modes: realistic adventure, magical realism, funny tall tales, and no-nonsense reporting. The anthology's editing is a little quirky. One of the short stories is longer than any of the short novels (but that's the way they were first published). And several pieces of nonfiction contain the same anecdotes about Hollywood director Sam Peckinpah. Instead of following the chapters in order, one genre at a time, readers will have fun alternating between fiction and non-fiction to see from where Evans' stories come. Recommended for those who like their new West gritty and slightly nostalgic.

Stephen Curley

VOCES FRONTERIZAS II: ANTHOLOGY, BORDER VOICES '97. El Paso: Vergen Press, 1998. 58p. Paperback: \$5.00, ISBN 0-935839-20-8.

What do several university professors, a carnival worker, two lawyers, a janitor, some students

and a prison inmate have in common? Their writings are among some forty-four selected out of thousands of entries for an anthology of short story and prose pieces published for the El Paso Public Library. Written both in English and Spanish and in a variety of styles, they find a common voice in their directness, though some may disappoint as to literary quality.

Mary M. Fisher

POETRY

Moore, Michael. CONTEMPORARY VIEW OF HAIKU. VISTA CONTEMPORANEA DE HAIKU. Alicia Z. Galvan, ed. San Antonio: Mustard Seed Press, 1996. 81p. Illustrations. Paperback: \$12.95, ISBN 0-9610702-6-9.

Moore's collection of haiku is written in free verse, otherwise a translation of the original English into Spanish would have been impossible. Many of the translations, indeed, retain the poet's intended picturesque evocations. Unfortunately, some of the translations into Spanish are forced and simply become declarative sentences.

Alicia Z. Galvan does an admirable job as a translator. She does capture the poet's feelings and mental images in most of the poems. There are problems with accent marks and sometimes spelling. These may be attributed to typing errors. There are also problems with direct translations not retaining the same context. For example, the play on words of the English expression "whale of a job" is lost in the Spanish translation. Most disturbing is the translation error in one poem where the poet's bee becomes a sheep in Spanish version.

There are also some faults in the English poems. Again, the problem may be with the printer; however, "bungee" is spelled "bunji" in both the English and Spanish versions of the haiku.

At first glance the collection seems to be an excellent resource for students of Spanish beyond the second year program. The opportunity to enhance one's vocabulary is impressive in such an expressive way. At second glance there are may be too many errors for high school or college-aged students. Most early-stage learners will become frustrated when faced with the errors.

Katherine Knight

★★NONFICTION★★

BIOGRAPHY

Ely, Stanley E. **IN JEWISH TEXAS—A FAMILY MEMOIR.** Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1998. 276 p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$24.50, ISBN 0-87565-187-9. 97-52961.

In Jewish Texas — A Family Memoir is a warm and familiar story of a family from Russia coming to America with traditions of their past and hopes for the future. Many readers will see in the saga of Stanley Ely's family a story that could be substitutable with Italian, Greek, or other groups.

At the turn of the century Ely's parents immigrated through Galveston as Ellis Island was closed for some time to new immigrants. The family, like many before and after, was fleeing oppression and persecution. The story combines the tales of parents, aunts and uncles, friends, siblings, and other members of the extended family.

Ely tells the story of a fledgling Dallas and the ensuing growth of the city and its Jewish population. While detailing Dallas' maturity into being a major city, he embeds stories of his family's assimilation into the Jewish community and into the broader identity of Texas culture. Through many photographs the reader is introduced to the family members as though we are to know them personally.

When Ely moves to New York City, he reflects on the differences of his life in Texas and New York, and concludes that Jews in New York are different from those in Texas: those in Texas have dual citizenship—Jewish and Texan! This book is recommended to all public and academic libraries.

Robert A. Swerdlow

Franklin, Kirk. **CHURCHBOY: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY.** Nashville: Word Publishing, 1998. 131p. Illustrations. Paperback: \$12.99, ISBN 0-8499-4050-8. 98-20991.

In this simply written autobiography Fort Worth black gospel singer Kirk Franklin tells all about his music and life. Born to a fifteen-year-old single mother who abandoned him to his grandmother's sister, Gertrude, when he was three, Kirk was well cared for by this elderly relative, but he suffered endless rejections for his personality, poverty, and size. Wanting to be cool and accepted by youngsters he perceived as role models led him into smoking, drinking, sexual promiscuity, and school failure. Given his early interest and obvious talent in music, Gertrude sold aluminum cans to finance piano lessons for him. By age eleven Kirk was leading a church choir which of course did not impress his peer group. His big chance came when he was awarded a scholarship to the Professional Youth Conservatory, a school for talented youth in Fort Worth. There he was exposed to other students and teachers who recognized and nurtured his talents, and he received acceptance for the differentness he had always felt among others. Slowly, he established his place in the gospel music world and founded his own group, "Family." Happily, success followed success with their first album, a best seller recognized by the National Association of Record Manufacturers, and Gospel Music Association Dove and Soul Train Awards. Additionally, his song "Every Day with Jesus" was the soundtrack for the movie "The Preacher's Wife."

Kirk Franklin's story is one of triumph over tremendous adversities and is a strong witness for his firm Christian faith within the framework of his life and music career. He hides nothing about his past failures in order to show the transforming power of God. Now only twenty-eight, he is a devoted husband and father and desires to be a strong role model and bring others to God through his gospel performances and recordings. Young people and gospel music fans should enjoy this heartfelt story.

Sally Dooley

Metz, Leon C. **JOHN WESLEY HARDIN: DARK ANGEL OF TEXAS.** El Paso: Mangan Books, 1998. 338p. Photographs. Illustrations. Appendices. Index. Hardcover: \$39.95, ISBN 0-930208-35-8. 96-11925.

Leon Metz has thirteen books to his credit. He writes about El Paso, the Border, and southern New Mexico. He writes about lawmen and outlaws, the colorful characters in El Paso del Norte whose riotous deeds in the still raw frontier times

gave rise to legends writers have used and re-used, often favoring sensationalism over the truth. Metz, an indefatigable researcher, writes history that is true.

John Wesley Hardin (1853-1895) wrote his autobiography (perhaps to explain himself?). Though self-serving, it has remained the primary source for details of the life of this complex man, as a man on the one hand who rates as one of the foremost killers in the American West, and a man on the other of "brimstone religiosity" (x), staunch loyalty to his family and friends, and unwavering in his belief that he had never killed a man who did not deserve it.

Metz's undertaking was intended to resolve what he found incomplete in the autobiography and to rectify what he found erroneous—no easy task as there are scant court records and few newspaper accounts with which to work. Even more remarkable is Metz's objectivity toward his character, the dark angel.

Without absolving Hardin of his killer instinct, Metz reminds readers of the stormy times in Texas during Hardin's youth. Hardin's family and friends were Southerners, and the years of reconstruction were especially difficult for Confederates. At fifteen, he shot his first victim, a black man. It was a federal offense. Hardin was from then on a fugitive and would add twenty some-odd or perhaps as many as fifty killings on his way to becoming the most feared man in Texas. Interspersed with the killings, interestingly, are the times he was a school teacher, and while in prison in Huntsville where he spent more than fifteen years, he taught Sunday school and studied law.

Metz obviously has published the last word on John Wesley Hardin. It is left to the reader to determine whether Hardin was "dark" in the sense of Satan, or "angel," an oxymoron to inspire some pondering.

Ernestine Sewell Linck

Scott, Robert J. LEANDER McNELLY TEXAS RANGER—HE JUST KEPT ON KEEPIN' ON. Austin: Eakin Press, 1998. 222p. Bibliography. Index. Paperback: \$18.95. ISBN 1-57168-175-0. 97-52953

My first impression of this book about a little-known but heroic Texan, was that the author had applied a bit too much literary license, as so

many details were provided that were beyond expectation—the feelings of the troopers on a march, the noises of the horses, the fact that McNelly's chronic cough was at its worst at a particular point in combat. As I read further, though, this impression softened, and I found myself intrigued by the character. Scott may embellish with detail to a greater extent than most historians, but he should be allowed more freedom in this respect as his subject is somewhat less cooperative than other military figures, leaving fewer his impressions in writing to build on. So, I hope most readers will accept the book, which is more like a novel, as a readable story of a most interesting frontiersman, Texian, Confederate boy-soldier, and most of all, early Texas Ranger.

Leander McNelly was only seventeen, and a frail and sickly youth to boot, when he set out in September 1861 to enlist in the Fifth Texas Cavalry in San Antonio. At that early point in the war, his request to enlist was not initially accepted by the recruiters because of his youth and frail health. His determination, which was to become the hallmark of his lifework, soon resulted in his overcoming this obstacle, and he was accepted by the regiment. The story of his adventures in New Mexico, as the 5th Texas embarked on its ill-fated mission to expand the empire of the Confederacy is told very well, reflecting the author's earlier book on this subject, *Glory, Glory, Gloria*, and in my opinion, is one of the highlights of the book.

In spite of his apparent shortcomings, Leander turned out to be a pretty fair trooper, exhibiting bravery, grit, and leadership qualities which led to his eventual promotions to sergeant and captain. Scott reasons that the bitter taste of defeat during the forced march back to Texas following the loss of their supplies, and reflecting the problems of leadership during that frustrating enterprise, was a significant factor in the development of Leander's strong will.

Leander also exhibited initiative and tactical skills at the battle of Galveston, in 1863, when as an eighteen-year-old sergeant, he organized, independent of direction from any superior officers, a successful naval assault on a Federal gunship. This incident, which brings to mind Dick Dowling's heroics at Sabine Pass, may have been the first boarding of a Union gunship by a Confederate soldier or sailor.

Leander returned to Texas after the war, and eventually was appointed a Texas Ranger in an

era when reconstruction politics resulted in many problems for law enforcement. He soon established a reputation as a straight-arrow lawman, fearless and determined. His most important contributions to law and order were also his most controversial, though. The reputation of the Texas Rangers for harsh treatment of outlaws, Mexican bandits, and, unfortunately, many innocent residents of Hispanic descent in the Nueces Strip, is better understood after reading of the exploits of Capt. McNelly's company of Rangers. His tactics, though contrasting to our modern expectations of law enforcement, were effective, changing the Southern border of the state from a lawless territory, in which honest enterprise was hopeless, to a region allowing a hardworking rancher a fair chance to prosper. McNelly died at age thirty-four, and given his exploits, it is remarkable both that he lived this long and that he died of a chronic illness, probably tuberculosis, rather than by gunshot. In retrospect, Leander McNelly is best remembered for his philosophy of determination, reflected in a favorite expression; "You just can't stop a man who just keeps on keepin' on."

I recommend this book to those interested in Texan culture, South Texas, the Texas Rangers, or Texas history in general. The book could also be of interest to younger readers, as its easy-reading, novel-like style, can hold their interest.

Ray W. James

Wilkins, Thurman. **THOMAS MORAN: ARTIST OF THE MOUNTAINS**. 2d. Ed. Rev. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998. 429p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$39.95, ISBN 0-8061-3040-7. 97-35740.

With the aid of his daughter, Caroline Lawson Hinkley, the author has revised and enlarged his 1966 biography of Thomas Moran. Born in 1837 in Bolton, England, Thomas Moran came to Philadelphia in 1844 where his weaver father hoped for better opportunity for his growing family. Displays at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and a free gallery gave Moran his opportunity to study the work of renowned artists. Largely self-taught and with keen powers of observation, he became a leading painter of grand western landscapes. As a young artist he was privileged to travel to Yellowstone and the Grand Canyon of the Colorado in the company of government geological survey groups who were ex-

ploring and mapping new territory. Thus he gathered inspiration for the grand canvases of these spectacular beauty spots, which were instrumental in establishing and popularizing our National Park System. In describing the life and work of Thomas Moran the author has provided both a history of American art in the last half of the nineteenth century and the first part of the twentieth century and an exciting view of travel to exotic places during those years. Sixty-nine pages of notes, a thirty-page bibliography, and an index will make this a useful academic reference. It can also be enjoyed by armchair travelers and those who enjoy his landscapes. Eight of the thirty-five works illustrated are reproduced in color; the present location of each is given. Portraits of the artist and his wife are included. The National Gallery of Art and the Gilcrease Museum of Tulsa, Oklahoma, arranged a traveling exhibit of the collected works of Moran (oils, watercolors, sketches, etchings and woodcuts) which concluded in Seattle on August 30, 1998. Pleasure in this volume was enhanced for this reviewer by the opportunity to see his Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, Chasm of the Colorado, and Mountain of the Holy Cross which were displayed together at this exhibit.

Frances M. Ramsey

COOKERY

Pyles, Stephan. **NEW TASTES FROM TEXAS**. New York: Clarkson Potter Publishers, 1998. 191p. Illustrations. Index. Softcover: \$18.95. ISBN 0-609-80332-8. 98-18161.

A companion to Dallas chef Stephan Pyles' public television series by the same name, this collection of Texas-inspired recipes runs the gamut from down-home Barbecued Brisket to Black Eyed Pea Crabmeat Gorditas with Tequila-Orange Vinaigrette. Most of the 100-plus dishes are decidedly on the sophisticated side, taking regional techniques and ingredients into new culinary territory. Among the innovative offerings are Venison Black Bean Chile with Goat Cheese and Slang Jang, Gulf Coast Shrimp with Cucumber-Jalapeno Salsa, and Watermelon Margaritas. Accompanying them are tips on dealing with chiles and other typical Texas foodstuffs and a glossary of ingredients running from achote to tomatillos. Sadly, the overly lavish use of color and glitzy graphics makes it a chore to read some of the text. The table of contents--which is overlaid over a paragraph--is a case in point. Nonetheless, this upbeat sampling of some of new Texas tastes should inspire both

Texans and would-be Texans to scoot their boots into the kitchen and start cookin' a new kind of grub.

Mary M. Fisher

FOLKLORE

Harwell, Thomas Meade. *STUDIES IN TEXAS FOLKLORE—RIO GRANDE VALLEY*. Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1997. 162p. Hardcover: \$79.95, ISBN 0-77344-208-1. 97-947.

Thomas Meade Harwell, whose education included some focus on sociology, discovered when he took a position at Pan American University in Edinburg, that he, an Anglo, was living "atop a submerged culture, about which nothing was said in public and about which much was known and experienced in private" (vii). In 1959 a freshman student handed in a paper on El Mal de Ojo, the Evil Eye. Harwell had fortuitously come upon a "face-off" between two great cultures.

Responding to that paper, Harwell encouraged students to write about beliefs of the folks of the Rio Grande Valley. He taught them techniques of interviewing and methods of research. El Mal de Ojo, his student found, was a belief, not a superstition, among Greeks, Romans, Italians, French, Spanish, and Germans. Anglos, on the other hand, are philosophically grounded in Locke and Hume with their insistence on demonstrable logic. The Anglo way of thinking has impacted the Rio Grande Valley beliefs, but Harwell is convinced the old beliefs have survived. In this volume, Harwell accumulates twelve studies on the evil eye, shock, ghosts, owl and weather lore, and *curanderos*. Of particular interest to folklorists is his commentary following each of the studies. He plans four volumes in all. Folklore makes for entertaining reading; Harwell, however, brings us more: studies of cultures in conflict, a timely thesis as Hispanics become the largest minority group in the United States.

Ernestine Sewell Linck

HISTORY

Bixel, Patricia Bellis. *SAILING SHIP ELISSA*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1998. 93p. Illustrations. Index. Hardcover: \$22.95, ISBN 0-89096-826-8. 98-2699.

Bixel's beautifully written coffee-table book recounts the remarkable tale of a nineteenth-century sailing ship lucky enough to be saved by preservationists and turned into a working display at Galveston's Texas Seaport Museum. The book can be approached in two ways. A casual reader can get the entire story simply by reading the captions below the illustrative black-and-white photographs, artfully arranged by photography editor Jim Cruz. But the text invites and repays close reading. Bixel knows her stuff; she was the director of the *Elissa* from 1988 to 1990. She has a Ph.D. in history from Rice University and is assistant editor of the *Journal of Southern History*. This thumbnail maritime history begins with the British maritime world into which *Elissa* is launched in 1877. We learn about operations at her Scottish shipyard and about the personality of her first owner, Henry Fowler Watt (incidentally, step-nephew to author Thomas Carlyle). Then in 1912, she begins her long decline. She was sold to Irish owners under a Norwegian flag, and then passed through the hands of Swedes, Finns, and Greeks before being sold to American preservationists in 1970. The ship's chance visit to Galveston in 1883 ended up being the key to her preservation and final destination.

But *Elissa* still has miles to go. Her transformation from rusting cigarette smuggler to restored tourist attraction may be the most fascinating and frustrating part of her story. Few would choose to do it over again, says Bixel, had they foreseen the enormous obstacles of money and labor that awaited them. However, the tale has a storybook finish in *Elissa's* 1986 sail to rededicate the Statue of Liberty. (During her previous visit in 1886 to New York, the statue had not yet been built). Recommended both as an outstanding book-to-remember-her-by and as a surprisingly complete account of a quirky aspect of maritime history.

Stephen Curley

Cartwright, Gary. *GALVESTON: A HISTORY OF THE ISLAND*. Reprint. Fort Worth: TCU Press, 1998. 338p. Illustrated. Index. Paperback: \$15.95, ISBN 0-87565-190-9. 98-3289.

Gary Cartwright, a senior editor at *Texas Monthly*, admits that he is not a historian, but he is one heck of a journalist who can conjure up the personalities of the past and retell juicy anecdotes. From the Karankawas to the Civil War, from the Gilded Age to the Great Storm of 1900,

from gambling and prostitution in the Free State of Galveston to architectural preservation by the Galveston Historical Foundation, he recounts the fascinating history of Galveston Island.

Cartwright deals competently with Galveston's early history—the Karankawas, Cabeza de Vaca, and Lafitte—but really comes into his own when he starts muckraking. Galveston has seldom allowed principle to come before expediency, he says. Samuel May Williams, a founding father of the modern city, was widely known as a money-grubbing bounder. The Maceos and racketeering insulated Galveston from the Great Depression. And the three most prominent families of the Island, the Sealys, the Moodys, the Kempners were always jockeying for position. Cartwright's style is engagingly vivid. He names names, gives lurid details, and points out blemishes as well as achievements.

TCU Press is to be congratulated for putting this fine book back into print. Cartwright shows why Galveston's past is so intriguing, in more than one sense of that term. If you have time for only one history of Galveston, you have a tough choice. David McComb's scholarly Galveston: a History has the first-hand research and footnotes; Cartwright's book, which relies heavily on McComb's, has the flair. Recommended for those who like exciting, anecdotal history.

Stephen Curley

Catto, Henry. **AMBASSADORS AT SEA: THE HIGH AND LOW ADVENTURES OF A DIPLOMAT.** Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998. 396p. Illustrations. Index. Hardcover: \$29.95, ISBN 0-292-71212-X. 98-23612.

Native San Antonian Henry Catto served his country as a diplomat for two decades beginning in the 1970s and up through the Gulf War and George Bush's defeat for a second term. Beginning as a deputy U.S. Ambassador to the Organization of American States and ambassador to El Salvador, he rose through the ranks, and in 1989 he presented his credentials as ambassador at the Court of St. James's to Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, at Buckingham Palace. He and his wife, the former Jessica Hobby of Houston, and their four children found adventure, new friends, and learning experiences through their domiciles abroad and in Washington, D.C. Catto recounts his career in an entertaining style using transcriptions of tapes he sent to his mother for many years, personal diaries, date books and in-

terviews with colleagues.

As Chief of Protocol under Nixon, he found it to be mostly a ceremonial job, but he describes many substantive talks he had with world leaders as he performed his duties. His insider view of the Washington political scene and its chief players is revealing. For example at political gatherings, guests cannot leave until the most important guest does. At seated dinner parties, everyone talks at first to the person on the left, then in unison midway through the meal, everyone shifts to the person on the right. His impressions of Henry Kissinger, Margaret Thatcher, Anwar Sadat, and other key figures in history are enlightening. Catto also served as ambassador to the United Nations Office in Geneva as well as Assistant Secretary of Defense, and Director of the U.S. Information Agency, his favorite assignment. Easy and pleasurable reading, the book will also be useful to historians of the era.

Sally Dooley

Cox, Mike. **STAND-OFF IN TEXAS: "JUST CALL ME A SPOKESMAN FOR THE DPS."** Austin: Eakin Press, 1998. 294p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$22.95, ISBN 1-57168-231-7; Paperback: \$16.95, ISBN 1-57168-246-5.

For those involved with the state's mass media, Mike Cox should be a familiar name. Since 1985, he has been the spokesman for the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS). As that agency's chief of media relations, Cox has the sometimes difficult task of dealing with state and national broadcasters, journalists, and reporters in their quest for news.

In his latest book, Cox relays his experience as spokesman for the DPS in three high-profile events this decade: the 1991 mass murders at Luby's Cafeteria in Killeen, the 1993 Branch Davidian siege near Waco, and the 1997 Republic of Texas stand-off in Jeff Davis County. The book reads almost like a diary or notebook of these events as seen through the eyes of a public information officer (PIO) for the state's law enforcement agency. In the one chapter concerning the Killeen massacre, one can sense Cox's emotions as he picked his way through the carnage in the cafeteria. The author also had to sort out the truth from the many rumors concerning the event and give out the official information of what happened, being careful at the same time not to release information that would hinder the inves-

tigation. In the next two chapters, Cox talks about the fifty-one day ordeal at Mount Carmel. Since this was a federal action launched by the ATF (Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms), which did not directly involve the DPS, Cox was able to direct most of the questions to the federal PIOs. However, after the siege was ended by the deadly fire, the FBI turned the investigation over to the state, something which now put Cox and the DPS under the stress of the limelight. One has to appreciate the way Cox had to deal with all of this cumulative stress and his resultant illness with cancer. The remainder of the book relates to the Republic of Texas stand-off near Fort Davis. The author details a chronology of events during the week-long siege and gives a background of the Republic of Texas movement. He also provides several appendices relating to the Republic of Texas, an FBI militia guide, and other guides in dealing with the media.

Cox provides a useful bibliography and a good index in this work. His prior writing experience has resulted in six other books and numerous articles, essays, and reviews during his previous twenty-year career as a newspaper reporter and present position with the DPS. Unlike the Branch Davidian siege, little has been written in books about the Killeen shootings and the Republic of Texas stand-off. This book should obviously be considered by both public and academic libraries. Students considering a career as a public information officer may want to read this book on Cox's experiences and expertise in this field.

Jon P. Tritsch

Haley, James L. *THE BUFFALO WAR*. Austin: State House Press, 1998. Reprint. [New York: Doubleday, 1976]. 290p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Paper: \$17.95, ISBN 0-990620-59-6. 98-7715.

The Buffalo War accounts for Comanche warfare in Texas so fully, the research so meticulous, and the writing so interesting as to be definitive. Haley follows the Indians from the Yellowstone to the Texas plains where they pursued their way of life for about a century. Gradually white hunters came for the buffalo, the Indians' life support. Washington failed to comply with the terms of treaties. It follows that the Indians would fight for survival. Stories about the Battle of Adobe Walls, fearful attacks on wagon trains and on white settlers, the kidnaping of women, and, to

end it all, MacKenzie's battle in Palo Duro Canyon, pretty much summarize what Texans know about Comanches.

Before the Civil War, however, the Indians made sporadic attempts to stop hunters from killing off the buffalo. After the War, the hostilities became concerted and more barbarous. Historians give little space to the Battle of Red River, the Lone Tree Massacre, the Battle for Layman's Wagon Train, and the Battle of Buffalo Wallow. Haley covers them all. The extraordinary treatment of Billy Dixon, buffalo hunter known for his "long shot," and the despised Quaker agent, James M. Haworth, invite close study. The first printing of this book preceded the furor about political correctness, yet Haley has written it objectively, neither condoning the Comanches nor passing judgment on the military.

Ernestine Sewell Linck

Haynes, Michael Thurgood. *DRESSING UP DEBUTANTES: PAGENTRY AND GLITZ IN TEXAS*. New York: Berg, 1998. 180p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Paperback: \$19.95, ISBN 1-85973-939-3.

For eight decades an important ingredient of Fiesta Week in San Antonio has been the Coronation, an annual event in which twenty-four duchesses, a princess, and a queen are presented by the Order of the Alamo, an elite men's social organization.

The young women who participate in the pageant wear exquisite hand-sewn dresses with trains of twelve to fifteen feet in length. All the dresses are individual but united in the theme of the year's court, often one of history, myth, or culture. The dresses range in price from \$18,000 for a duchess to \$35,000 for the queen and princess. The expense is due to the hand work and the artistic manipulation of unusual fabrics, appliques, metallic threads, and the heavy use of glass stones to "catch the light" at the evening coronation. The dresses and trains are worn two other times by their owners, and only once for the public in the Battle of Flowers Parade. To understand this social class and gender role of females is the purpose of this study, which began as a dissertation at the University of Texas at Austin.

Michael Haynes is the Curator of Permanent Collections at the Witte Museum in San Antonio where many of the dresses are kept and occasionally exhibited. As works of fabric art, they are

lovely, but what fascinates Haynes is the participation of generations of San Antonio's aristocracy in this traditional ritual. "The royal dresses and trains are the excuse for the display of cultural capital." People want their daughters to participate in order to establish their social prestige and to form a network for these socioeconomically advantaged youth.

Haynes' histories of San Antonio, the relationship between Anglos and the predominant Mexican population, and the growth of Fiesta into a ten-day-long celebration with over 150 events are informative as well as entertaining. Her research will please the social scientist and general reader, along with those with special interest in the fabric artistry of pageant clothing for debutantes.

Sally Dooley

Marks, Paula Mitchell. *IN A BARREN LAND*. New York: William Morrow, 1998. 451p. Maps. Photos. Bibliography. Hardcover: \$27.50, ISBN 0-688-14143-9. 97-28377.

In a Barren Land is a narrative about the American Indians' loss of their lands and how they have survived, drawn from monumental research, mostly from secondary sources, as one expects. The material, vast as it is, has been compiled by Paula Mitchell Marks, a historian who is both scholar and fine writer.

The book is structured chronologically, with fourteen chapters beginning with the arrival of the white men in 1607. Each chapter is introduced by a relevant quotation from an Indian, as for Chapter II, "Nothing will satisfy them but the whole of our hunting grounds."

The Indians, even those who tried to befriend the Anglo invaders, found they could not trust the Great White Father. Like sympatric agents and statesmen, they have been caught in a web of bureaucracy. A consistent policy instituted in Washington has never been forthcoming. Attempts to deal with the Indians were geared to making them farmers and Christians. No attempts were made to understand the different cultures. A good many nomadic tribes claimed land where the hunting was good; other tribes were already farmers. They engaged in warfare, for that was the way a man proved himself. Indian A was not Indian B, then or now.

The Indian question is still unsolved. Currently,

many tribes are granted self-government; some are highly successful; others have leaders who have succumbed to greed and corruption. The opening of casinos and the reclaiming of their land pose only two of the serious problems confronting our government.

In a Barren Land is informative; it is a valuable reference work; it also asks for a revised understanding of our native people.

Ernestine Sewell Linck

Myers, Dale K. *WITH MALICE: LEE HARVEY OSWALD AND THE MURDER OF OFFICER J.D. TIPPIT*. Milford: Oak Cliff Press, 1998. 704p. Index. Bibliography. Color Photographs. Hardcover: \$35.00, ISBN 0-9662709-7-5. 98-91213.

A recognized expert on the JFK assassination, Myers brings twenty years' worth of scholarship and journalistic expertise to the study of the killing of J.D. Tippit, the Dallas policeman whose fatal confrontation with Oswald forty-five minutes after the JFK shooting precipitated Oswald's eventual capture. Tippit was shot four times, three in the body and one in the head, by a .38 revolver—the same revolver, experts agree, which Oswald had in his hand when he was taken at the Texas Theater.

Described by journalists as the Rosetta Stone of the case against Oswald and as the umbilical cord linking Oswald with the JFK assassination, this pivotal event in Texas and U.S. history has long been overlooked, misunderstood, and misinterpreted by legitimate criminologist and conspiracy buffs alike. *With Malice* is obviously an endeavor by Myers to prepare an authoritative, definitive account that is both accessible to lay readers and valuable to pure historians. He succeeds. Unobtrusive references are keyed to exhaustive endnotes. From interviews, aerial photos, police reports, autopsy results, newly released classified documents, and trial transcripts, Myers has pieced together a second-by-second chronology of that terrible morning thirty-five years ago, offering explanations that are consistent with what we know both about the facts and about human behavior. One by one, discrepancies are considered, alternate interpretations weighed, and evidence sifted; only then are conclusions advanced.

Myers has used the strongest persuasive appeals available—when clear logic, authoritative testi-

mony, and empirical evidence are coupled with the sense that the writer is not only knowledgeable but also objective and well-meaning, even the most skeptical reader is influenced. The supplements supply the most critical thinker with material sufficient for hours of fascinating study and perusal; the photos and diagrams create a sense of tangibility that any student of the humanities would appreciate.

The quality of the book is high, the cost relatively low, and the "heft" of it impressive. I would recommend it for the collections of both public and academic libraries alike.

Andrew B. Preslar

Owsley, Frank Lawrence, Jr. and Gene A. Smith. **FILIBUSTERS AND EXPANSIONISTS: JEFFERSONIAN MANIFEST DESTINY, 1800-1821.** Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1997. 241p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$29.95, ISBN 0-8173-0880-6. 96-51196.

Much has been written in American historical literature about the territorial expansion of the United States and the term "Manifest Destiny," which was coined in later years to describe these land acquisitions. Although much attention has been given to these events in later years (annexation of Texas, Mexican War land cession), expansionists and filibusters were busy in the Republic's early years along the Gulf Coast. In this book, history professors Owsley and Smith focus on the presidential administrations of Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe (collectively referred to by the authors as the Jeffersonians) and their involvement in the land filibustering that occurred in various "hot spots" along the Gulf Coast of the United States.

Officially, these early presidents had no declared policy of openly coveting Spanish territories in North America. The authors, though, build a convincing argument that the Jeffersonians not only were aware of filibustering activities in these areas, but also gave them their informal or tacit approval. James Monroe, especially in his capacity as Secretary of State under President Madison, comes under close scrutiny during this period. It was almost impossible to come out publicly in favor of engaging in or supporting land grab policies. For one thing, this would mean additional states coming into the Union, which would further dilute the political influence

of the states in the Northeast. At the same time, concurrently fighting a war with Britain and engaging in territorial skirmishes with Spain would not be in the nation's interest. The authors successfully tie together a series of incidents that shows the American government had an informal or third party involvement in them. By not getting openly involved with these incidents, the government could still achieve its goals of territorial acquisition with little diplomatic risk by allowing individual filibusters to do the work.

Some of the incidents examined by Owsley and Smith include the early Magee-Gutiérrez expedition into Texas in 1812 along with a later attempt by James Long between 1819 and 1821. On the opposite side of the Gulf, the authors devote chapters on the attempted takeover of Spanish West Florida, the patriot revolution in East Florida, and the annexation of Amelia Island. The authors also make the case that the wars with the Creek Indians was another example of expansionism, this time at the expense of an indigenous people. Future president Andrew Jackson is prominently mentioned in the wars with the Creek Indians and his invasion of East Florida. These cited examples give a convincing argument that the Jeffersonians knew that eventually these Spanish lands would be acquired. By allowing individual filibusters to undertake these campaigns with "a wink and a nod," they would get the blame if they failed, and the government could honestly say it did not authorize them.

This excellent work is well-researched. The addition of some sketch maps is also helpful. The book should definitely receive strong consideration by academic libraries to purchase for their American history collections. The chapters on the early excursions by filibusters into Texas should be reason enough to add to Texas history collections.

Jon P. Tritsch

Procter, Ben and Archie P. McDonald, editors. **THE TEXAS HERITAGE.** 3rd rev. Wheeling: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1998. 268p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Paperback: \$18.95, ISBN 0-88295-976-X. 97-6788.

If one wants to begin to learn about the history of the Lone Star State, this book can be a good starting point. Each chapter is written in an essay format by a respected history professor from

a Texas college or university. The first ten chapters view the state's beginnings from Spanish colonial days and leaves off with the present years of Governor Bush's administration. The next three chapters are devoted to cultural groups whose contributions to the state's heritage have sometimes been overlooked: Mexican Americans ("Tejanos"), African Americans and women. The remaining four chapters examine institutions that certainly typify Texas: the Texas Rangers, the cattle industry, the petroleum industry, and sports. One of the book's strong points is the list of suggested readings at the end of each chapter. The book does not have an index, which could have improved reader access to the various topics. The inclusion of some maps, especially in the chapters concerning the Revolution and Republic years, could also have helped the reader in understanding Texas history and geography (not everyone knows the location of the Nueces River or Nacogdoches, Texas). Regardless, The Texas Heritage can be very useful as a supplemental book of readings for students. High school, academic and public libraries would definitely be interested in adding this title to their collections. Even if there are older editions in the stacks, libraries should still consider adding this new edition because new chapters have been added and existing ones updated or revised into the 1990s.

Jon P. Tritsch

Ragsdale, Kenneth B. BIG BEND COUNTRY: LAND OF THE UNEXPECTED. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1998. 302p. Black and White Photos. Hardcover: \$24.95, ISBN 0-89096-811-X. 97-49196.

Ragsdale's Big Bend Country opens with a descriptive quotation attributed to a cowboy "with the soul of a poet": "... a place where rainbows wait for rain, and the big river is kept in a box, and the water runs uphill and the mountains float in the air except at night when they go away to play with other mountains" (viii). The author's purpose, however, is not to exalt the awesome Big Bend. Photographers have done that. Rather, he says, "To understand the spirit and character of a geographic region, one must understand the people" (xiv). To emphasize the drama of the place, Ragsdale then structures his material into something of a Shakespearean play. In the Prelude, he informs his audience of time, place, and what is to come.

Scene I tells stories of women: Kathryn Casner,

who, though not a doctor, cared for people from both sides of the river at her front porch clinic (Epsom salts was the only medication she had); Mare Coe Daniels, who found happiness in friendship with the Mexicans, making her suspect with Anglo neighbors; and Lucia Madrid, who set up a library in her grocery store for preschoolers to enjoy and learn English. Scene II shifts to violent action— all you expect in Western fiction: shootouts, feuds, beer joint confrontations, etc.

The denouement, or wrap-up, opens with a sketch of Hallie Stillwell, whose life encapsulates the others' lives. She was "the product of the environment, a living symbol of a regional experience" (153). Following is a return to action, this time following treasures seekers inspired by J. Frank Dobie's Coronado's Children. The final scene within Scene III is a behind-the-scenes account of the filming of Giant in and around Marfa.

Read the book for mucho gusto (much pleasure) and meditate on "humanitarian impulses," "racial sensitivity," and "sociological guidelines for urban places" (236-7).

Ernestine Sewell Linck

Ritvo, Roger A. and Diane M. Plotkin. SISTERS IN SORROW: VOICES OF CARE IN THE HOLOCAUST. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1998. 314p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$35.95, ISBN 0-89096-810-1. 97-46013.

Recognizing the lack of memoirs of women who served as nurses in Nazi concentration camps during World War II, Roger A. Ritvo, a professor at Auburn University and the author of two articles on health care ethics, and Diane M. Plotkin, professor of world literature and Holocaust studies at Brookhaven College in Farmers Branch, have contributed quality research on their subject. They carefully interviewed and questioned women who valiantly helped others under conditions which defy comprehension. There is a terrible irony in the idea of nursing people to conserve life in death or slave labor camps. The authors do note that women more than men were more likely to be care givers and value relationships, so that perhaps it was more their role to reach out to help their fellow prisoners even though they might have lacked professional training. At the same time their gender made them subject to rape, sterilization, and abortion.

The interviews contain memories of horrific and savage treatment from the time of their identification as Jews, their transport to camps, and the day-to-day survival techniques they learned and adopted.

With diseases such as typhus, tuberculosis, diarrhea, scarlet fever, and whooping cough rampant and no drugs with which to treat them, nursing care often meant holding a dying woman's hand, giving hope and encouragement to another, or perhaps sharing a small piece of stale bread. Although they dressed in rags and were as malnourished as the rest of their camp mates, occasionally they were able to help someone survive another day. To survive for what? Conditions at Auschwitz, like other camps were such that "... all the hospital blocks were nothing more than supply centers for the gas chamber."

As with other documentaries of the Holocaust, some people demonstrated tremendous strength and courage in spite of inhuman treatment and were able to minister to others. In conducting these interviews Ritvo and Plotkin opened old wounds. Some of those who served as nurses could not bear remembering while others painfully recalled so that the world would never forget what happened. This is an important contribution to the growing number of collections of Holocaust narratives.

Sally Dooley

Russell, Jan Jarboe and Mark Langford. **SAN ANTONIO: A CULTURAL TAPESTRY.** Memphis: Towery Publishing, Inc. 1998. 208p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$44.95, ISBN 1-881096-52-1.

Every few years the Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce contracts for a lavish pictorial coffee-table style "photojournal" about the city, largely financed by business profiles sold at the back. This time the nod went to Tennessee's Towery Publishing Inc., an adept publisher of such works. San Antonio is celebrated with a lucid portrait by award-winning local writer Jan Jarboe Russell, who ruminates on what makes San Antonio San Antonio. Her remarks are aptly and lavishly illustrated by more than 300 top-quality photographs, mostly in color, selected by photo editor Mark Langford. They range from a

night view of the Alamo to a daytime image of the enchilada-red downtown library. Following the text and photos is a section of upbeat corporate profiles prepared by Cathy Smith. Few cities have the appeal of San Antonio. With its attractive words and pictures, this book manages to capture that charm.

Mary M. Fisher

Sheppard, Lorna Greer. **AN EDITOR'S VIEW OF EARLY TEXAS.** Austin: Eakin Press, 1998. 382p. Illustrations. Index. Paperback: \$19.95. ISBN 1-57168-078-0. 96-29361.

Students of Texas history have long been familiar with the Northern Standard, a newspaper published and edited in 19th century Clarksville, Texas, by the colorful Charles DeMorse. Some years ago the late Ernest Wallace wrote a biography of Massachusetts-born DeMorse that traced his career from service in the Texas War for Independence through the Civil War and Reconstruction. Lorna Greer Sheppard, an editor and compiler of this book of selections from the early Standard, grew up in Clarksville on the site where the office and presses of the newspaper were located. Having discovered microfilm copies of the Standard in the Dallas Public Library (fortunately copies from 1842-1888 are available on microfilm and available in numerous libraries including Lamar University's Gray Library), Sheppard selected excerpts from the period of the Texas Republic for inclusion in the present work. She has grouped them in various chapters including such diverse topics as Indians, immigrants, agriculture, law and disorder, love and marriage, life and death, and the weather. In each chapter she provides introductory and explanatory material. Readers will find stories from the Standard informative, entertaining, and never dull. Charles DeMorse was a man of strong opinions and these are reflected in his writing. The volume provides a delightful sample of what life was like in early Texas and should be enjoyed by readers of various ages and interests.

Ralph A. Wooster

Shesol, Jeff. **MUTUAL CONTEMPT: LYNDON JOHNSON, ROBERT KENNEDY, AND THE FEUD THAT DEFINED A DECADE.** New York: W.W. Norton, 1997. 591p. Illus-

trations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$32.50, ISBN 0-393-04078-X. 97-710.

Following the assassination of John F. Kennedy in 1963, the entire country wondered who would inherit and execute his political legacy. Would it be his Vice President Lyndon Baines Johnson? Or would it be his Attorney General, campaigner, confidante, and brother Robert F. Kennedy? The 6'3" Johnson was a deal maker who loved politics, the glad hand, and back room, while Kennedy, physically smaller, was reticent and thought to be aloof to the point of disdainfulness. Johnson loved the tall tale; Kennedy despised "liars." Both men were powerful political movers in their own rights. Both were born to the hunt for power, and, as the years leading to the 1968 presidential race were to evidence, the town both sought to control just wasn't big enough for the both of them.

Mutual Contempt is an exhaustive examination of this dramatic story. Organized chronologically around milestone events, developed by anecdote, interview, extensive reference, and, interpretive analysis, the book is a remarkable achievement. Shesol is revealed to be an apt student, a careful craftsman, and a talented turner of phrases. Although the reader occasionally must suffer through some remarkably weak metaphors—he wrote, for example, that the enmity of Johnson's detractors "ate into his bones like acid"—for the most part the writing is seamless and free of cliché and bombast. Extensive end notes make the work valuable to students and scholars, but Shesol's choice to leave the notes unmarked is clearly an accommodation for the lay reader, as parenthetical or numerical documentation would prove most intrusive to anyone reading the work for appreciation and enjoyment.

And clearly the work may be read purely for these returns. Perhaps Shesol's taste for the dramatic led him to emphasize the interpersonal dynamic; at times the book reads like a remarkably detailed piece of psychological fiction. Also evident is Shesol's subjectivity in his response to the characters of the two men: he liked Bobby better. A lot misrepresentation—nor is any reader (with the possible exception of the occasional retired senator living in Llano or Marble Falls) likely to grudge Shesol his preference.

This is not an expensive book, especially considering its value as both history and engaging biography. It would improve the collection of just about any high school, public, or academic li-

brary.

Andrew B. Preslar

Thompson, Jerry (ed.). *FIFTY MILES AND A FIGHT—MAJOR SAMUEL PETER HEINTZLEMAN'S JOURNAL OF TEXAS AND THE CORTINA WAR*. Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1998. 328p. Black/white photographs. Maps. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$39.95, ISBN 0-87611-160-6. 98-40366.

Major Samuel Peter Heintzleman, while serving as the commander of U. S. Army forces in the Rio Grande valley of South Texas, maintained his practice of keeping a daily journal of his activities and observations for much of his military career. The present work is a transcription, with extensive annotations by the editor during the period April 1859 through December 1860.

Editor Thompson introduces the transcribed journal with a detailed description of Heintzleman and his career prior to his duty in South Texas. Background information on Juan Nepomuceno Cortina is also included. The so-named Cortina War resulted from: long-standing controversies over land titles that came into dispute as the sparsely settled South Texas region grew in population; racial friction between Mexicans and Texas citizens of Hispanic descent; and the growing Anglo population. The introduction also summarizes Heintzleman's career after December 1860 through the War years, during his return to Texas in 1866, and until his death in Washington in 1880.

Heintzleman's journal contains daily entries for most days. In these, he usually comments on the weather, and then summarizes his activities and observations during the day. Often his personal business entries are included, as well, from which the reader can learn of his business relationship with Col. Sam Colt. Entries for many days are only a few lines, some are more detailed, some running several pages.

This is an interesting and valuable first-hand account of the border problems in South Texas during the Cortina War. I recommend it to all students of Texas history, and to anyone wishing to learn more about Samuel Peter Heintzleman.

Ray W. James

Tijerina, Andres. *TEJANO EMPIRE: LIFE ON*

THE SOUTH TEXAS RANCHOS. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1998. 159p. Illustrations. Index. Hardcover: \$29.95, ISBN 0-98096-834-9. 98-20980.

Gone but, thanks to this illuminating account, never to be forgotten are the Tejano-owned ranchos of pre-Anglo Texas. Here, a son of South Texas weaves the story of the hardy pioneer ranch families from Mexico who settled in the area south of San Antonio long before the Texas Revolution. Tjerina details the day-to-day lives of the rancheros and their womenfolk, discussing, among other things, how the main ranch houses were constructed and landscaped, how the vaqueros roped, what the families ate, and how they socialized. He also details the tragic story of the loss of Spanish land grant lands by the Tejanos as Anglo capitalists drove them out and took title to their lands. But the primary focus of this gracefully written history is to describe a way of life that served as a template for the Anglo ranchers and to demonstrate that, though most of the Tejanos lost their land, the values that were part of the ranch life have survived in the culture of their urbanized descendants. With its fascinating detail—anaqua trees were prized for patios in part because their berries provided nutritious chicken feed, for example—this account will attract both academics and general readers. Adding further interest are evocative black-and-white illustrations by Servando Hinojosa and the late Ricardo Beasley.

Mary M. Fisher

Willett, Sue Von Noy and Carolyn Carmichael Wheat. **THE WALDEMAR STORY: CAMPING IN THE TEXAS HILL COUNTRY.** Austin: Eakin Press, 1998. 188p. Photographs. Hardback: \$29.95. ISBN 1-57168-190-6. 97-18750.

In 1926 a San Antonio high school principal, Miss Ora Johnson--well along into spinsterhood at age forty-nine--leased twelve lush acres of the Guadalupe River west of Kerrville and started Camp Waldemar for Girls. Fifty-four campers signed on for the initial eight-week term of canoeing, horseback riding, and crafts, and seventy-two years later their granddaughters are still camping.

Longevity to this degree is rare in any business, but for one that deals in a non-essential service such as summer fun for girls, it is remarkable.

Camp Weldmar's secret of success reposes in two strong-willed, like-minded women: Doris Johnson, the founder's niece, who operated the camp for more than forty years, and Marsha Elmore, who purchased it in 1979 and is still in charge.

The two Waldemar eras are recounted by two other women who also lived with them.

Sue Willett served the camp in various capacities from 1941 to 1988; she describes the early times with appropriate enthusiasm and nostalgia.

Carolyn Wheat has been not only a staff member but the mother and grandmother of campers. Her long-time friendship with Ms. Elmore brings valuable insight to her recital of the camp's development over the past twenty years.

Although the book will appeal primarily to women who attended Waldemar or those progeny who did so (each of the 20,000 campers is listed in the index), it should also attract a broader readership among those interested in Texas and its enduring institutions.

One forms the impression after reading The Waldemar Story that despite a panorama that includes the Great Depression, World War II, integration, the 60's, and other political and social upheavals, camp life remains freeze-framed, with its Kampongs, tribes, Ideal Girls and other innocent enthusiasms.

It is pleasant to imagine that for just a few years, for a few weeks each summer, young girls of means can step into a Time Machine and embrace the sylvan beauty and trouble-free days of the summer camp idyll of long ago.

Tanner Hunt

Yearns, W. Buck, ed. **FROM RICHMOND TO TEXAS: THE 1865 JOURNEY HOME OF CONFEDERATE SENATOR WILLIAMSON S. OLDHAM.** Dayton: Morningside House, 1998. 112p. Illustrations. Index. \$24.95, ISBN 0-89029-231-7.

This small volume, edited and annotated by distinguished Civil War scholar Buck Yearns, should be on the bookshelf of anyone seriously interested in the history of Civil War Texas. Williamson Simpson Oldham of Brenham was one of a handful of southerners who served in all three congresses of the Confederate States of

America. A staunch secessionist and states right advocate, Oldham opposed military conscription in the early days of the war, but as the South faced military defeat, he came to support arming blacks as Confederate soldiers. As the Confederacy collapsed in the spring of 1865, Oldham made his way from the Confederate capital in Richmond back to his home in Texas. The next year Oldham wrote his memoirs describing his experiences as a Confederate senator. These memoirs in manuscript are in the Texas collection at the Barker Center of the University of Texas and have been used by several scholars. Now for the first time approximately one-third of the memoirs, in which Oldham describes his journey home, have been made available in published form. They provide a valuable insight into the condition of the South and its people in the closing days of the war as Oldham describes the collapses of the Confederacy.

Ralph A. Wooster

NATURAL HISTORY

Edwards, Ernest P. *A FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF MEXICO AND ADJACENT AREAS: BELIZE, GUATEMALA, AND EL SALVADOR*. 3rd ed. rev. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998. 209p. Illustrations. Paperback: \$17.95, ISBN 0-292-72091-2. 97-19414.

Of the more than one thousand bird species that regularly inhabit Mexico, nearly half are not found in the United States. All the more reason, then, to purchase a copy of this authoritative, comprehensive and easy-to-use take-along guide if you intend to cross the border. First published in 1972, it has been totally revised and updated for the third edition. Birds ranging from the showy scarlet macaw to the storied quetzal are grouped by family. Each of the 850 listings contains English, Spanish and Latin names, range and habitat information, and identifying characteristics. Color illustrations of each species will help both beginning and experienced birders pin down their sighting. If you plan to watch birds in Mexico, Belize, Guatemala or El Salvador, this is a must-buy.

Mary M. Fisher

PARENTING

Winik, Marion. *THE LUNCH-BOX CHRONICLES: NOTES FROM THE PARENTING UN-*

DERGROUND. New York: Pantheon Books, 1998. 229p. Hardcover: \$22.95, ISBN 0-375-40156-3. 97-26753.

Original, sometimes breezy, often deep, Marion Winik shares her ruminations and experiences on single parenting in this delightfully humorous and thought-provoking book. Here is a mom with whom just about all mothers can identify: "For me, parenting is like dieting. Every day, I wake up filled with resolve and good intentions, perfection in view, and every day I somehow stray from the path. The difference is, with dieting, I usually make it to lunch." The focus of her attention is two precious sons: Hayes, nine-year-old elder brother jock, and Vince, six-and-a-half-years old who "still wears the heart-tuggingly pure expression of one who has not completed the transition from baby to boy." The book takes us through one full day of this family, beginning at 2:45 p.m. when she leaves her home office and picks up the boys at school not knowing whether this will be a pleasant afternoon or the "Awful afternoon with the Devil Brats from Hell." Interspersed with this time line are humorous chapters. One details nuclear family meals when no other adult is present: a yellow dinner consisting of out-of-the-box macaroni and cheese, canned applesauce, and Poppin' Fresh Rolls. Another describes an ongoing battle with the boys' head lice contracted at school. Then after dinner there is bedtime, which all parents know kids can skillfully drag out for hours if allowed, and finally the peaceful night when they are asleep and an exhausted parent has a few minutes for self. This day replicates in the next one when the alarm goes off at 6:15 a.m. and the daily challenge begins anew.

Winik, who was a rebellious young adult, which she chronicled in *Telling* and *First Comes Love*, writes poignantly of her daily struggles to be a good parent. With humor and wisdom she expresses the fears, the anger, the confusion, and the hopes of parents. She speaks of her fervent prayers, to whom she is not sure, and the problems of dating and blending families, but overall her writing brings smiles, knowing nods, and reassurance to those who have been or still are in the front line trenches of guiding children. Winik is also known as a commentator on National Public Radio's "All Things Considered" and for her articles in *Redbook*, *Harper's Bazaar*, and *Parenting*.

Sally Dooley

PICTORIAL WORKS

THE PICTURES OF TEXAS MONTHLY; CELEBRATING TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF AWARD WINNING PHOTOGRAPHY. Austin: Texas Monthly Press, 1998. 160p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$49.95. ISBN 1-55670-705-3. 97-28431.

Leafing through this varied collection of camera art – some in black and white, some in color – reminds one that Texas Monthly is not just Best Barbeque and Bum Steers. In fact, it can be argued that subscribers thumb through Texas Monthly for the photos the way some New Yorker readers scan for the jokes. And for good reason. While Texas Monthly may not have nurtured a stable of writers who measure up to the Benchley-Thurber-White-Updike standard, its photographic contributors comprise a world-class lineup: Richard Avedon, Keith Carter, Annie Liebovitz, Mary Ellen Mark, Helmut Newton, Laura Wilson, and Geoff Winningham, together with a number of lesser-known lights.

Their pictures limn a Texas of vast fields of bluebonnets, of ineffable sunrises-and-sets, of six-man football teams, and of women with big hair done up like a hat. Governor Ann and Lady Bird are in here, and a Mexican prostitute in her underwear.

Insofar as this reader could discover there is little pattern or organizational theme in the presentation of the pictures. Aside from the photographs of famous Texans, many of which suggest a slick fashion magazine layout, the emphasis seems to be on capturing “real” folks in exotic circumstances; i.e. those who by no means fit Texas Monthly's upmarket reader profile: masked Mexican wrestlers; a dog wearing cowboy boots; a convicted nurse-baby killer; a truck stop waitress. Many are posed with the subject (a boy holding a snake, a tattooed white supremacist, a slashing victim, a funeral parlor greeter) facing the camera with a blank expression.

The exotic pictures are nearly always more interesting than those carefully vetted ones depicting self-conscious celebs like Joe Jamail, Mary Kay, Ross Perot, and Oscar and Lynn Sakowitz Wyatt. The mix is about even.

Who would pay \$50 for such a book? Perhaps a Texan purchasing a gift for foreign friends who have never visited the state. A better buy, though, would be to acquire one of the fine collections available by Keith Carter or Laura Wilson or Geoff Winningham, outstanding Texas-based photographic artists who don't

clutter up their books with publicity stills.

Tanner T. Hunt, Jr.

RELIGION

Lucado, Max. JUST LIKE JESUS. Nashville: Word Publishing. 1998. 223p. Hardcover: \$19.99. ISBN 0-8499-1296-2. 98-22587.

Popular San Antonio minister and author of numerous Christian books and studies, Max Lucado has written a new study for individual or group use. His book's theme is simple: “God loves you just the way you are, but he refuses to leave you that way. He wants you to be just like Jesus.” In twelve chapters Lucado focuses on his perception of Jesus' heart as revealed through Scripture, examples, and personal experiences. He explores Jesus' forgiveness, compassion, honesty, and purity. Other chapters discuss different facets of His heart: His listening and God-intoxicated Heart as well as His hunger for worship. The book concludes with thought-provoking questions that ask readers to examine their lives and open themselves to becoming more like Jesus. Max Lucado is the minister at Oak Hills Church of Christ in San Antonio.

Sally Dooley

Wright, Bill. PORTRAITS FROM THE DESERT: BILL WRIGHT'S BIG BEND. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998. 176p. Color Photographs. Duotone. Hardcover: \$40.00, ISBN 0-292-79115-1; Paperback: \$24.95, ISBN 0-292-73116-X.

Having found little to recommend in Bill Wright's previous photo-essays on Texas Indian tribes, I warily undertook Portraits from the Desert. But this new book of intelligent journalism gives dead-on descriptions of some interesting people, made engaging and significant by the wild, empty Big Bend country they inhabit. The text documents change and continuity on both sides of the Rio Grande as a world of pioneer ranchers and miners gives way to culture of industrial tourism centered around Big Bend National Park, made possible initially by the post-WWII explosion of highway/automobile culture, and recently by electronic communication and “distance officing.” Although Wright and some of his interlocutors are concerned that the area will turn into “another Santa Fe,” the sheer distances involved and much greater isolation may be reassuring, not to mention the pure hospitality of the

elegant landscape. Wright's ironic awareness of corresponding changes in himself adds unobtrusive substance to the narrative.

There are a few good photos here, but by and large, I still don't think Wright is a first-class photographer. His subjects often disappear into their context and his jarring compositions, or frequently they are shadowed out by misjudged effects of lighting. But Wright's stories in this book sustain photographs, since the reader can take them as illustration rather than art. It appears that often neither he nor his sitters are comfortable enough with one another for the moment to achieve intimacy. This is mirrored in text, particularly when Wright bewails his lack of Spanish. And it's equally obvious that when he has really gotten his characters talking—a little whiskey seems to help—he can capture the compelling image.

The range of characters is fascinating, from Wright's boyhood pals to hard-bitten old time wranglers and miners. And there are some odd balls, too, such as an ersatz anarcho-communist who manufactures medicine balls in Fort Davis, or the New Age mule breeder who brings his equine stock into the house and later gives a tour by firelight of at Stonehenge-like meditation temple he has built of boulders, naming each rock and urging Wright to hug them. In addition to family vacation trips rafting the big canyons in the national park, Wright reports casual encounters with a Baptist missionary, small town store and cafe owners, and glitzy entrepreneurs of the "new" Big Bend. Three very different times, each poignant, he encounters death. If sometimes he strains for an emotional effect, Wright tells most of this with a droll, well-balanced sense of his own presence. This is a worthy book.

Randall Holdridge

SOCIAL LIFE AND CUSTOMS

Greene, A.C. *A PERSONAL COUNTRY*. Denton, TX: University of North Texas Press, 1992. 350 p. Paperback: \$18.95, ISBN 1-57441-053-9. 79-7410

A.C. Greene's *A Personal Country*, first published in 1969, is available in a new printing with a foreword by Larry L. King and "Some Words" plus an Afterward by the author. "I am a product," he writes, "of [West Texas] in ways obvious and ways intricate." He continues explicitly: "This ability to identify so much with one's place of birth is becoming rare in American culture"(6).

Greene makes clear his purpose. He urges all readers to find out, as he has, "if we are not gifted from the soil whence we sprang, seeded by the people, and watered by the times" (xvi). The book, then, is not autobiography, though he discovers his "self" within its covers; not history, although he includes stories of Lambshead ranch, Fort Griffin, Abilene, and a few other places; not a guidebook, for his West Texas lies within the boundaries of his own experience; not fiction, though his graceful—even emotional—prose when he describes the land and the humor with which he relates his stories as he moves along the arteries of time and place with home folks and friends grab a reader's interest with the same pleasures as a novel may.

True, the book has a little of all the above, but mainly, it is psychological. Greene come to an understanding of the influences that molded him into the man he is, and the major factor in that shaping has been the land. His West Texas endowed him with his sense of values, moral standards, even his ambitions. Following the publication in 1969 of this book, A.C. Greene has been known as Mr. Texas. *A Personal Country* is proof thereof. We are fortunate to have this new printing of a classic work.

Ernestine Linck

Sanderson, Jim. *A WEST TEXAS SOAPBOX*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1998. 123p. Hardcover:\$22.95, ISBN 0-89096-819-5. 97-39446.

Jim Sanderson, award-winning author and presently a professor of English at Lamar University in Beaumont, reflects on his days as English teacher at Odessa College in Odessa, Texas. He needs a soapbox because he defies the culture, education, and prevailing myths he encountered in West Texas. The essays are somewhat autobiographical because as a writer, he constantly makes meaning out of experience. He views West Texas as a conflict of fundamentalist strictures and frontier self-indulgence. Citing Emerson, Mailer, and Whitman, among others, he observes Odessa, a blue-collar town whose city motto is "Odessa is crude". The populace has little use for art, literature, or education and supports family and church (especially Baptist and Church of Christ) values. Yet there is a wild and rowdy lot who drink and whore. They refute arguments with rhetorical questions and quotes from the Bible. As a movie critic for the local newspaper, drinking buddy in the bars, and teacher at the college, Sanderson uses anecdotes

to illustrate his observations about Texas myth, the frontier mentality, and gender roles in West Texas culture. His essay "The Community College 'Philosophy' as Intellectual Pollutant" is certain to gain attention. He was told by the president of O.C. that we are here to "he'pt folks," so intellectual research, reading, and publishing are suspect. "Rather than guiding the community and establishing its standards, the community college panders to its prejudice." On open admissions, student retention, and true education, his voice grows more strident with indignation. Written with passion and a bit of humor, Sanderson gives a vivid picture of the social strata of a small West Texas oil town, where the book will doubtlessly be unpopular. His recent novel *El Camino del Rio*, published by University of New Mexico Press won the 1997 Frank Waters award. His short story "Ladies Man" was read by Larry Hagman in the Art & Letters Live/Texas Bound performance at the Dallas Museum of Art in 1998.

Sally Dooley

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