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★ ★ ★ ★ ★ FICTION ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Alter, Judy. *KATIE AND THE RECLUSE*. Lufkin: Ellen C. Temple Publishing, Inc. and Dallas: E-Heart Press, Inc., 1991. 175p. Paperback: \$5.95, ISBN 0-936650-13-3. 90-23695.

Alter has rewarded her young readers ages ten to fifteen with yet another story of charm and adolescent travail. Katie is a young, bored Texas teenager in the 1950s who explores the parallel estrangement both of her parents from each other and of the town dowager from the community. Katie has real-world friends, parents, and problems. How she learns from her experiences is a delightful and comforting exercise which most teenaged girls will share. This is Alter's fifth novel for young readers and would be an excellent choice for any young girl who enjoys a good story.

Cynthia Calvert

Bronwyn, Katherine L. *THE FROGGS OF BARREN BOGG: HOME ON THE BOGG*. Houston: KACEE Publishers, 1991. 43p. Illustrations. Paperback: \$12.95. (Juvenile)

First of a planned series, *The Frogs of Barren Bogg* brings environmental concern to children's literature. Bronwyn delivers colorful prose which, unfortunately, is marred by errors in grammar, tense, and spelling. There are far too many words per page for a young reader to fathom; the storyline as well demands a level of concentration of at least a third grader. Some "politically correct" adults may take offense at the stereotypical female characters who are told "not to worry their pretty green heads" or who bat their eyelashes to divert attention as the hero solves problems. *Home on the Bogg* comes across like an animated cartoon with extraneous silly characters, rhyming conversations, busy scenery and erratic action, all culminating in a "to-be-continued" ending. Bronwyn's story suffers from a lack of straightforward narrative epitomized by a poorly developed main character for whom readers generate little empathy.

Cynthia Calvert

Chandrasekhar, Aruna. *OLIVER AND THE OIL SPILL*. Kansas City: Landmark Editions, Inc., 1991. 29p. Illustrations.

Hardcover: \$12.95, ISBN 0-933849-33-8. 91-3340. (Juvenile)

Houston resident Aruna Chandrasekhar is a nine-year-old student disturbed about the effects of the Alaska oil spill on wildlife. Her sensitive prose and bright drawings depict Oliver, an otter pup, who notices something is wrong with the water: fish and otters are dying, and his oil-saturated fur makes floating difficult. How the Wildlife Rescue Center saves his life is the focus of the book. The importance of protecting the environment is a strong theme, while the story informs and entertains young readers.

That one of their own is the book's author should fascinate the intended audience. For seven years, Landmark Editions has judged, selected, and published three winning students' books spanning elementary school to college. The winners work with Landmark's staff in the production of the book which is marketed nationally. Surely librarians and teachers will use this book to inspire creative writing and illustrating.

Sally Dooley

Freeman, Paul. *SMOKE JUMPERS*. Dallas: Baskerville Publishers, Ltd., 1992. 258p. Hardcover: \$18.00, ISBN 0-9627509-1-3. 91- 077073.

Rob Reynolds, reporter for a twenty-first century newspaper, is the half-brother of a U.S. senator who almost single-handedly drove tobacco out of the country. Rob, however, is a "closet smoker," a man whose two-smokes-a-day habit could, if he's caught by the Air Police, place him where unreformed smokers are sent to die of various smoke-related diseases. Soon the carefree reporter finds himself in the heart of a political conspiracy. This is a rollicking satire, filled with cogent commentary on the silliness of our own time. Freeman, a Dallas first-time novelist, illustrates how an effort to keep from offending anyone eventually leads to a level of forced conformity that will ultimately eliminate everyone's right to free expression and individualism.

Although Reynolds is somewhat overdrawn as reporter-turned-sleuth, and the digressions are distracting, *Smoke Jumpers* is entertaining. Experience as a reporter for the Fort Worth *Star Telegram* and Associated Press makes Freeman an able political observer and social satirist.

Clay Reynolds

Jones, Judy and Zeno Zeplin. *APPLE JACK AND THE*

BIG STORM. NEL-MAR Publishing, 1991. 34p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$8.95, ISBN 1-877740-10-1; Paperback: \$4.95, ISBN 1-877740-11-X. 91-28081. (Juvenile)

This Texas team of author and illustrator have again combined their talents to entertain their loyal following. Thoughtful illustrations accompany this simple horse tale for children ages four to seven. A glossary and detailed acknowledgements lend both charm and credibility to this first of a planned series about a horse called Apple Jack. Young children will quickly show enthusiasm for this well-drawn hero who faces danger to save his master. Jones, an illustrator, and Zeplin, who collaborate for the first time in the writing, communicate beautifully an understanding of children and their literature.

Cynthia Calvert

Karr, Kathleen. OH, THOSE HARPER GIRLS! New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, Inc., 1992. 182p. Hardcover: \$16.00, ISBN 0-374-35609-2.

Karr has written an off-beat tale for girls ten to fifteen-years old. Set in the mid-nineteenth century, this western relates the story of six sisters who strive to save the family ranch. While their adventures are amusing, the first half of the book glorifies immoral and illegal ways of money-making. Their eventual legal acquittal virtually condones their illegal activities. While the author does try to insert soul-searching by some characters, basically this story does not uphold the hard work/just reward ethic but encourages self-indulgence and promotes unrealistic expectations in readers. Although well told, this story is of questionable influence upon impressionable youth.

Cynthia Calvert

Marvin, Isabel R. JOSEFINA AND THE HANGING TREE. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1992. 127p. Paperback: \$9.95, ISBN 0-87565-103-8. 91-34501. (Juvenile)

The author, a Goliad native, based this novel on the Cart War of 1857. Fourteen-year-old Josefina and her friend Maxi are worried about their fathers' safety because other Mexicans who haul freight from the Texas coast at lower rates than Anglo freighters have been captured, tried on phony charges, and hanged on a tree in Goliad's courthouse square. While the fathers are away freighting, the girls help their mothers and dream of a better life. Readers in grades three through six will enjoy the girls' adventures.

When Maxi's father is ambushed and killed by outlaws, the children help Josefina's father find the cash box which was swiftly hidden just before the attack. When Josefina's father leaves to return the money to their employer, he is arrested for stealing the money. Marvin gives a view of a piece of Texas history and an insightful look into prejudice and its consequences. *The Hanging Tree* should make Texas history more personal to individuals and to classes who hear the book read aloud.

Frances M. Ramsey

Portillo y Pacheco, José López. THEY ARE COMING--: THE CONQUEST OF MEXICO. Translated by Beatrice Berler. Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1992. 400p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$34.50, ISBN 0-929398-35-1. 92-3142.

This remarkable "history enlivened by the imagination" presents the fascinating story of Cortés' conquest of Mexico, relating it without the intrusion of the analytical narrator often employed to ruin such tales. It is fiction, yes, but it is history first. Rather than building tension artificially from imagined interpersonal or situational conflicts, López Portillo uses documented historical incidents and personalities and a shifting narrative perspective to recreate the holy dread felt by the Emperor Moctezuma, the intoxicating mixture of fear, greed, and exultation that imbued the Spanish soldiers, and the quiet, crafty responses of the village *cicagues* to these great persons and events. Only the occasional asterisk and the accompanying unobtrusive footnote remind the reader that the book has been painstakingly researched and carefully streamlined. Tribal factionalism, Aztec mythology, and the advantage taken of them by Cortés and his captains are woven into a striking whole that gives one a feel for the magnitude and drama of the events portrayed.

Andrew B. Preslar

Reynolds, Clay. FRANKLIN'S CROSSING. New York: Dutton, 1992. 536p. Hardcover: \$22.00, ISBN 0-525-93365-4. 91-18964.

Clay Reynolds has written about the dark sides of contemporary small Texas towns in *The Vigil* and *Agatite*. In his violent new *Franklin's Crossing* he examines the beginnings of yet another such town, carrying us back to covered-wagon times shortly after the Civil War. His view of pioneer Texas history is unconventional. These pioneers are, on the whole, not a likeable bunch, and the Comanche Indian raiders are by no stretch of the imagination the politically-correct noble primitives of *Dances With Wolves*.

His viewpoint character is a troubled black scout who carries a great deal of emotional baggage from his slave upbringing. Hired to guide the wagon train only because no white scout is available, he seems always in about as much jeopardy from his employers as from the Indians. This is a powerful and gripping story, a far cry from the conventional western. Let the reader be warned that it is also troubling, brutal, and more than occasionally profane.

Elmer Kelton

Rice, James. COWBOY RODEO. Gretna: Pelican Publishing Co., 1992. 32p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$14.95, ISBN 0-88289-903-1. 91-34924. (Juvenile)

Children should find *Cowboy Rodeo*, written and illustrated by James Rice, one of his most appealing books,

The color illustrations draw the reader from page to page with an accurate, short text describing how the contests cowboys participated in for fun developed into rodeos. Readers of some of Rice's other books will recognize Texas Jack, the long-eared jackrabbit, who offers commentary throughout the text. This "colorful Southwestern cowboy vernacular," as the publisher calls it, could trouble teachers, librarians, and parents concerned that the phonemic spelling of words such as "sez" (says), "izn't" (isn't), and "prob'ly" (probably) do not enhance the text and may confuse the reader/speller or reinforce the idea that spelling and pronunciation do not matter. Children may also adopt these spelling and speech patterns because they do not know better.

Andrea R. Karlin

Risenhoover, C.C. *WHITE HEAT*. Dallas: Baskerville Publishers, Ltd., 1992. 362p. Hardcover: \$20.00, ISBN 0-9627509-3-X. 91- 077072.

This fiction by a new Texas press offers a different slant on the standard baseball novel. Like many of this year's baseball titles, *White Heat* focuses on the 1950s and finds its theme in racial matters, but unlike many others, this novel looks at the difficulties encountered by a white player pitching for a black team. Although the major leagues had already been integrated when *White Heat* is set, the South was still resisting the idea that blacks could play the sport at all. Randy Joe Keegan, a "phenom," is recruited by a minor-league Negro team which is barnstorming the South. How he deals with the overt pressures of being the white pitcher carries the novel to a surprising climax.

A Dallas native, Risenhoover is the author of the Matt McCall series as well as nine other novels. He provides an intimate knowledge of small town baseball, Southeast Texas style. Although the novel suffers from some heavy use of dialect, the game sequences are accurate and exciting, and Keegan's dilemma reflects a transitional period in professional sports.

Clay Reynolds

Sachar, Louis. *MONKEY SOUP*. New York: Knopf, 1992. 25p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$12.00, ISBN 0-679-80297-5; Library Binding: ISBN 0-679-90297-X. 91-15858. (Juvenile)

Large, animated, colorful illustrations by Cat Bowman Smith complement the simple, lively, and humorous text of Texas author Louis Sachar's first picture book *Monkey Soup*. While mom makes chicken soup for ailing dad, the young daughter decides to make a soup of her own, with the help of monkey, to help speed dad's recovery. Her soup is less conventional than mom's with imaginative ingredients including monkey. *Monkey Soup* should put big smiles on the faces of the young children who listen to or read this amusing story.

Andrea R. Karlin

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Tolliver, Ruby C. *BOOMER'S KIDS*. Dallas: Hendrick-Long Publishing Co., 1992. 128p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Hardcover: \$14.95, ISBN 0-937460-69-9. 91-36507. (Juvenile)

With the discovery of oil at Spindletop in 1901, "boomers" poured into Beaumont looking for jobs and the opportunity to become wealthy through enterprise and luck. Ruby Tolliver successfully captures the excitement and danger of those days in the oil fields at Gladys City. Written for readers ages ten and above, the story concerns Andy and Ellie, two children of an oil field worker, Luke, who has moved from one boom town to the next hoping to better his family's life. They all hope that Beaumont will be their permanent home and that the children can attend school. Andy and Ellie must begin again to make new friends, but they are scorned as "boomer's kids," and the animosity of several boys finally escalates into a fight with Andy. Andy matures through his experiences and begins to understand that there are positive and negative aspects of various situations.

This is a heartwarming story, one in which the relationships between husband and wife and parents and children are stretched in discord, but the family remains glued together by mutual love and respect. Tolliver's setting and characters reveal careful research of the boom days and a perceptive understanding of youngsters and the dynamics of family life. Gentle black-and-white drawings by Lyle Miller illustrate the text. This absorbing novel should be in every elementary and middle school library as well as all public libraries.

Ruby Tolliver has written nine novels for teens and young adults, and she won the Best Juvenile Award from the Texas Institute of Letters for *Muddy Banks* (Vol. II, No. 3) in 1987. Other titles include *Blind Bess*, *Buddy*, and *Me* (Vol. V, No.2) and *Have Gun-Need Bullets* (Vol. VI, No.3). A native Texan, she presently lives in Conroe.

Sally Dooley

POETRY

Davis, Olga Samples. *A TIME TO BE BORN*. San Antonio: Pecan Grove Press, 1991. 2nd ed. 75p. Paperback: \$10.00, ISBN 1- 877603-09-0.

The offerings, poetic prose and prosy poetry, manage to defy classification without defying the reader's sense of artistic propriety. Clearly inspired by real people and events, the characters that populate the pages of this little book are audacious and authentic, gritty and genuine, generally memorable, and obviously very black; in fact, if there is a negative criticism of the book, it may be that Davis and her characters are perhaps too self-consciously black. A reader from another cultural background may feel somewhat alienated, like he is crashing a party. Still, it's a good party, if one doesn't mind the uncomfortable initial feeling that he doesn't quite belong. He is not made to feel unwelcome once there, at any rate, and the intensity and veracity of the emotion he will experience is worth a bit of discomfiture. The work has meaning beyond ethnicity, and the mind behind the work clearly has alacrity, vitality, humor, and compassion. A review doesn't do it justice; the book must be read.

Andrew B. Preslar

Stanush, Barbara Evans. *STONE GARDEN*. San Antonio: Pecan Grove Press, 1992. 75p. Paperback: \$10.00, ISBN 1-877603-13-9.

For the most part, these poems are nicely done pictures of the poet as observant mother and housewife, but they seldom challenge the reader. Some are set in New York City, some in Texas. As she hangs clothes on the line, she sees cat, lizard, and bird and wonders "whose world this is." She cuts flowers but fails to get them in water right away. They do not wilt because "They love themselves enough." In "Inside Outside," the author tells of a bat that came into the children's room, how she chased it with a broom and out the door. But nothing happens; nothing comes of the incident to excite us with any kind of feeling. It just doesn't come off. It reminds us of how much Richard Wilbur did with his poem about a bird that got into his daughter's room; his is a poem to read over and over, for the incident becomes a vehicle for more than itself. More success for Stanush comes in pieces about a composer, a painter, and in the title poem dedicated to Georgia O'Keeffe where the poet dreams of walking in a desert with the celebrated artist. She says: "Rocks and bones don't change much / They have clean edges / And skulls are symmetry laid bare." She goes on to admit, "If a thing is right it ages well." This poem is right. Stanush, a San Antonio resident and former teacher, wrote *Texans: A Story of Texan Cultures for Young People* and an accompanying *Teacher's Guide* (Vol. IV, No.1).

Violette Newton

★★★ NONFICTION ★★★

ART

Graham, Joe S., ed. *HECHO EN TEJAS: TEXAS-MEXICAN FOLK ARTS AND CRAFTS*. Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1991. 357p. Illustrations.

Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$29.95, ISBN 0-929398-33-5. 91-37628.

The Texas Folklore Society, dedicated to preserving and documenting the cultural heritage of the state, is celebrating its golden anniversary with this volume edited by one of its most respected members, Joe Graham, Professor of Sociology at Texas A&I University and specialist in Texas/Mexican folklore. Fourteen other scholars contribute chapters to complete this in-depth study of regional arts and crafts of the Spanish and Mexican colonists. Material culture rather than folklore is the subject of this book, including sculpture such as paper art, piñatas, wood and stone carvings, musical instruments, religious altarpieces, and cemetery markers. Also discussed are leather braiding, fabric quilting, equestrian artifacts—all nature of man-made objects serving a variety of functional, religious, or artistic needs. Regional styles and customs are identified, and the information is well researched and documented. The volume also includes a bibliography of Texas-Mexican material culture. We are made aware that the first colonists came to Texas without many personal possessions but were rich in skill and creative ingenuity.

Lynne Lokensgard

BIOGRAPHY

Belfiglio, Val. *PRIDE OF THE SOUTHWEST: OUTSTANDING ATHLETES OF THE SOUTHWEST CONFERENCE*. Austin: Eakin Press, 1991. 154p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$14.95, ISBN 0-89015-822-3. 91-4154. (Juvenile)

Mr. Belfiglio's book endeavors to be a source of inspiration for the eight to twelve-year-old set, and it may well be, given that age group's preoccupation with sports figures. If the book succeeds, it does so in spite of the author's hackneyed, formula-ridden writing style. Annoyingly, he insists on bestowing alliterative nicknames to the athletes like the "Dazzling Dynamo." With their cautions to stay in school and say "no" to drugs, the athletes reveal little of what has built their characters. Their "worst experiences" turn out to be getting tripped by opponents and shooting airballs. Surely life will get more trying. Twelve-year-olds deserve better.

The author profiles current or recent athletes participating in seven sports. Baseball is noticeably absent as are representatives from two SWC schools, Baylor and Texas Tech. There is a saving grace. In this, the twentieth anniversary of Title IX federal legislation for athletic opportunity for women in public schools and universities, it is heartening to note that sixteen of the twenty-six subjects are women. That, at least, is inspirational.

David Carroll

Cox, Mike. *THE TEXAS RANGERS: MEN OF ACTION AND VALOR*. Austin: Eakin Press, 1991. 133p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Hardcover: \$14.95, ISBN 0-89015-818-5. 91-16660.

This slight book, directed at late elementary and junior high readers, retells anecdotes of the Texas Rangers from their founding by Stephen F. Austin in 1823 to the present day. The author, Mike Cox, claims that he first heard many of these stories from his grandfather, and the colloquial style gives some credence to this claim. There is evidence of superficial research as well. Cox names some famous Rangers in his tales, including Rip Ford and Frank Hamer, and some famous outlaws, too, such as Bonnie and Clyde and John Wesley Hardin. The book's history, however, is scant and anglocentric. The Indians are savages and Indian women are "squaws." Mexican and bandit are virtually synonymous in Cox's book, and Cox seems to look favorably on law enforcement that gets its man, regardless of legal or constitutional niceties. Obvious lip service to school integration doesn't make the book any better. If ever there was an appropriate young readership for this small volume, that was forty years ago.

Randall Holdridge

Cushman, Ralph B. *JESSE CHISHOLM*. Austin: Eakin Press, 1992. 246p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Hardcover: \$22.95, ISBN 0-89015-826-6. 91-18318.

Almost fifty years in the researching of this book, Ralph B. Cushman's story of Jesse Chisholm represents one of the best efforts this press has made in biographical study of Texas historical figures. What sets this biography apart is possibly the subject itself. Every Texan worth his salt knows that Chisholm blazed his famous trail to western cattle markets, and did so at a time when such a venture was regarded as pure folly. What is not so well known, however, is how much a part Chisholm played in other aspects of Texas history and development.

Well written and thoroughly documented, the book suffers only from mechanical problems. He constantly refers to Chisholm by his first name--an annoying habit that joins one or two other caveats in an otherwise well edited book. Also, in one or two places, he seems more interested in correcting mistakes in legends than in relating historical accuracy; however, the book overall is a worthy addition to any Texan's library. It exposes a personality that had a lot to do with the latter day image of the state, one that Texas is either trying to shake or adopt fully. Recommended.

Clay Reynolds

Flynn, Jean. *LADY: THE STORY OF CLAUDIA ALTA [LADY BIRD] JOHNSON*. Austin: Eakin Press, 1992. 148p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$14.95, ISBN 0-89015-821-5. 91-19321.

In the world of publishing, one type of book that has become rare is the well-written young adult biography. Having written four biographies of Texas heroes, all men, Jean Flynn expands the dimension of her work to include Texas' first First Lady. Born in Karnack, Texas, Lady Bird was interested in environmental matters from a young age.

After she found herself installed in the White House next to her reform-minded husband, she undertook a project of beautification and environmental awareness that had a tremendous influence on our world's maintenance and preservation. Far from being an expose of the now much-assaulted LBJ years, this book presents Lady Bird as a Texas hero of a different type; yet Flynn also presents this astounding personality in a way that shows her human side, her disappointments as well as her triumphs.

This is a sensitive book, extremely well written and thoroughly researched. It goes beyond instructing youthful readers in the necessity of strong values and well-established goals and demonstrates how attention to the most commonplace concerns can result in heroic achievement. Highly recommended.

Clay Reynolds

Manning, Diane. *HILL COUNTRY TEACHER: ORAL HISTORIES FROM THE ONE-ROOM SCHOOL AND BEYOND*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1990. 191p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$19.95, ISBN 0-8057-9102-7. 89-48349.

Oral histories can provide for the ambitious reader a much richer understanding of an era than can a summation of someone else's research. *Hill Country Teacher* provides just such an opportunity. While the focus is on education and teaching in rural Texas from the 1920s to the 1960s, there is also a wealth of information on the rapidly changing social and political environment.

The accounts come from seven women and one man, two of whom are black. The latter provide valuable information on conditions before and after integration. The other six (all women) offer, albeit unwittingly, an evolutionary account of some of the first women to successfully balance career and family. Early in this century, "schoolmarm" was one of the few respectable positions available to women. These women were among the pioneers of the independence, however tenuous, possible for women since. The teaching profession as well as the regard in which it was (and is) held are fundamental in any study of the changing status and roles of American women.

The book is pleasant reading and while some of its histories may seem lengthy, it is never tedious and rarely boring. The author offers her own valuable insights, as well, in the introductions and conclusion.

Catherine M. Preslar

Pickrell, Annie Doom. *PIONEER WOMEN IN TEXAS*. Austin: Steck Co., 1929. Reprint. Austin: State House Press, 1991. 488p. Index. Hardcover: \$29.95, ISBN 0-938349-70-8; Limited slipcased edition: \$60.00, ISBN 0-938349-71-6. 91-24710.

Women's role in the settlement of the West is an important field of study for historians. Among other contributions, women created homes and brought culture to the frontier. This collection of seventy-seven brief biographies of early

Texas women preserves their varied experiences for posterity. Pickrell incorporated material from pioneer women, their friends and families into charming narratives, "approved" by the contributors. Written in a quaint, verbose style, the biographies must be understood for what they are: recollections whose accuracy has not been verified. Read in their entirety, a picture emerges of pioneering women from all social backgrounds raising children, making new homes, and contending with Indians in a raw, rough land. The anecdotes vividly portray the social, economic, and political life in Texas before 1845. An excellent introduction by Ann Fears Crawford, co-author of *Women in Texas*, points out the importance of this collection for presenting women as powerful partners with men in settling the Lone Star state.

Sally Dooley

Ryan, Nolan with Jerry Jenkins. *MIRACLE MAN: NOLAN RYAN, THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY*. Dallas: Word Publishing, 1992. 272p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$22.95, ISBN 0-8499-0945-7. 92-4973.

Easy-going country gentleman? He doesn't mind the image that the media has fabricated of him, but, as the strikeout king himself puts it, "[sometimes] it seems like Nolan Ryan is something besides me." Indeed. This book helps bring to life a picture of a man with dreams, principles, ideals, limitations, and--oh yes--opinions. Lots of those--on everything from the media's reaction to Magic Johnson having AIDS to the lunacy of the handling of the S&L collapses.

Ever wonder how it feels for people to want your autograph? Chapter 12. What was it like to be the first man in baseball to earn a million dollars a year? Chapter 7. Ever cuss the fools in the Astro organization who let a guy like Ryan get away? Chapter 10.

Perhaps what is so refreshing about this book is the earthy and quite readable prose, suitable for young adult and older readers. The loosely organized story, with its share of interesting digressions, describes the life of a hard-working father, imperfect husband, and dutiful and loyal son. If you have ever been captivated by the picture of Nolan Ryan painted of him by others, you need to see how honestly he draws his own image. Really, folks--it ain't art, but it's him.

Andrew B. Preslar

BUSINESS

Perryman, M. Ray. *SURVIVE & CONQUER*. Dallas: Taylor Publishing Co., 1990. 162p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$17.95, ISBN 0-87833-739-3. 90-11317.

The decade of the 1970s was a period of grand economic achievement in Texas, permitting both well-managed and poorly-managed companies to prosper. Self-satisfied contentment existed until the early 1980s when nothing seemed to mesh. *Survive & Conquer* tells the economic story of Texas during those tumultuous times. While Perryman permits himself the luxury of self-indulgence throughout the

book, he succinctly identifies the factors leading to both the economic growth in the 1970s and the subsequent decline in the 1980s. He takes a nontechnical, anecdotal approach to tell his story. The result is an easy-to-understand review of major economic forces during this period. The down side of Perryman's approach is the way his story jumps from one year to the next and back again. From a policy or planning perspective, this book has an understated message that cannot be ignored: namely, that future economic growth cannot be taken for granted by relying on God-given resources. There is a great potential for future growth, but the state must actively nurture expansion of current industries and promote diversification.

Charles S. Hawkins

DESCRIPTION AND TRAVEL

Miller, George Oxford. *TEXAS HILL COUNTRY*. Stillwater: Voyageur Press, 1991. 96p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$21.95, ISBN 0-89658-164-0. 91-13082.

Gorgeous color photographs together with well-expressed prose combine to make a powerful and sensitive argument to preserve and protect one of Texas' most distinct and beautiful regions, its Hill Country. This remote, rugged landscape with a rigorous climate demands a great deal from its inhabitants: flora, fauna, and humans alike. Always there is the heat and the fear of drought, and when violent rainstorms come, flash flood. Natural history mixed with Texas history and Miller's observations reveal a land that now is worth more for suburban development than it is for ranch land. However, unique and often protected species of wildlife flourish here, and Miller devotes considerable space to describing them. The competing rural and urban needs for the underground waters of the aquifer are explained as is the effect of man-made lakes on the coastal estuaries. Miller, an environmental photojournalist, makes an enthusiastic statement about the necessity of preserving this beauty.

Environmentalists, Hill Country urban transplants, and visitors will gain much from reading his text. An index would have increased its reference value. The author is remembered for his previous Texas books including *Texas Parks and Campgrounds*, *Texas Photo Safaris*, and his most recent, *Landscaping with Native Plants of Texas and the Southwest* (Vol. VI, No. 2).

Sally Dooley

ESSAYS

Boller, Paul F., Jr. *MEMOIRS OF AN OBSCURE PROFESSOR AND OTHER ESSAYS*. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1992. 257p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$24.95, ISBN 0-87565-09-X. 91-30356.

The title of this book aptly describes this latest collection of essays and anecdotes by the Lyndon Baines Johnson

Professor Emeritus of American History at Texas Christian University. Each of the ten essay chapters in this work is devoted to a single topic, preceded by a brief introduction by Boller. His first two chapters are semi-autobiographical, dealing with the "obscure professor's" experiences with McCarthyism on the SMU campus and his World War II naval career as a translator of captured Japanese war documents. Most of the other chapters are reprints of a wide range of topics that have appeared in various scholarly periodicals over the years.

Readers of Boller's other books of anecdotes, particularly *Presidential Anecdotes* (1981), will enjoy the chapters on the "Silent Cal" stories about Calvin Coolidge and on Lyndon Johnson's penchant for using quotations in his speeches. Recommended for college and university libraries and for those who like to relax with a book of anecdotes and similar light reading.

Jon P. Tritsch

FINANCE

Avanzini, John. *RAPID DEBT-REDUCTION STRATEGIES--FINANCIAL FREEDOM SERIES, VOLUME II*. Hurst: HIS Publishing Co., 1990. 320p. Paperback: \$12.95, ISBN 1-878605-01-1.

Most of the suggestions outlined in this book for reducing debt are quite sensible; however, the strategy that governs the presentation of the material is questionable. After wading through page after page of redundant figures in the tables of "support information" provided with each section, one can well believe that Avanzini does not exaggerate when he claims that he would "sit up all night with a calculator." The overuse of boldface print (used for adding emphasis in the places where inflection might serve in a sermon), and the references to Scripture (which might lend credence and authority to the advice being given), will appeal to some readers but not to others.

The foundation of the "Master Plan" which the book develops is to tally all debts owed, tally payments due, and pay that much every month, continuing to do so after the debts begin to be resolved. In other words, the "Master Plan" directs the debtor to pay more than the minimum amount due each month, and in the case of mortgage payments, to prepay in order to reduce the total interest that is to accrue. This is, without question, sound financial advice, though the same advice is routinely offered for free from credit counseling services. Further advice directing the reader to "never allow [him]self to grow accustomed to living with debt" is also sound but obvious.

Andrew B. Preslar

FORESTRY

Walker, Laurence C. *THE SOUTHERN FOREST: A CHRONICLE*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991. 322p. Illustrations. Index. Hardcover: \$29.95, ISBN 0-292-77648-9. 91-14285.

The Southern Forest is an excellent history of the area stretching from the Atlantic Coast to eastern Texas and Oklahoma. The author is a knowledgeable historian involved with forestry for forty-five years in forest management, research, education, and consulting. Walker begins by describing the forest as seen through the eyes of early explorers trekking through an unmapped region. He points out the many new species of both plants and trees. A colorful picture is painted of the early logging and milling industries. The last section deals with the fate of the southern forest, describing the damage caused by harvesting of the forests and the steps taken to rebuild them. Topics include reforestation, environmental impact, the growing park system, and the modern-day forester. Although the author writes lovingly about the forest, the book is more for those with a special interest in southern forests.

Gene Burrus III

GUIDES

Huse, Vanessa and Terrie Gonzalez. *30 GREAT ESCAPES IN EAST TEXAS*. Jacksonville: Pinewoods Press, 1991. 176p. Paperback: \$9.95, ISBN 0-790-93427-2.

Breezily written, this nifty guide to East Texas shopping and dining showcases unusual and unique opportunities in thirty small towns. Historical vignettes and points of interest to visit are included. Although many people are familiar with Canton's First Monday Trades Day, many will be unaware of St. McB, a mini shopping mall, and the Alexander Campbell Outlet of women's upscale sportswear located in Grand Saline. Specialty shops and eateries are mentioned and rated for Nacogdoches, Crockett, Mineola, Big Sandy, and other little towns. Tourists, shoppers for antiques, and those who like to lunch will especially enjoy this book. The authors missed by not including a map of the area covered.

Sally Dooley

Miller, Ray. *EYES OF TEXAS SERIES: FORT WORTH, BRAZOS VALLEY*. 2d ed., rev. Houston: Gulf Publishing Co., 1992. 212p. Illustrations. Index. Hardcover: \$22.95, ISBN 0-88415-016-X; Paperback: \$17.95, ISBN 0-88415-005-4. 91-20596.

Armchair travelers, tourists, and young Texas history students will enjoy this simply-written, popular guide, a revision of the 1981 edition. One of a six-volume series, this book describes the history and sights to see in central and north central Texas: forty-three counties in all, including the cities of Dallas, Fort Worth, Waco, Wichita Falls, Temple, Bryan, College Station, and Brenham. Miller divides the region into four areas and includes useful maps. Material is easily accessible with the index. Illustrating each page are numerous excellent black-and-white photographs. Middle school students could use this book for research.

Sally Dooley

Ruff, Ann. **GREAT TEXAS GETAWAYS**. Dallas: Taylor Publishing Co., 1992. 166p. Illustrations. Index. Paperback: \$10.95, ISBN 0-87833-657-5, 91-46566.

Pack your bag! The descriptions of great escapes to well-known and obscure resorts, retreats, and spas will inspire the Texas travel planner. Individuals, couples, and families will find this a handy guide for fifty specialty trips. Because they are situated all across Texas, there is a getaway suitable for everyone: remote cabins, dude ranches, luxurious resorts and conference centers, charming bed and breakfast establishments, and health spas. Brief historical and cultural background is given along with information about accommodations, prices, amenities, and restrictions. "Out-of-the-Ordinary Retreats: Fifteen Texas Treasures" includes little-known float trips, exotica like the penthouse of the Adolphus Hotel, and the unique Texas Dining Train. Ruff is an accomplished travel writer with three other Roadrunner guides from Taylor Publishing to her credit. Her enthusiasm and wanderlust are contagious. Let's go!

Sally Dooley

HISTORY

Baker, D.W.C., ed. **A TEXAS SCRAP-BOOK: MADE UP OF THE HISTORY, BIOGRAPHY, AND MISCELLANY OF TEXAS AND ITS PEOPLE**. New York: A.S. Barnes, 1875. Reprint. Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1991. 727p. Illustrations. Index. Hardcover: \$34.95, ISBN 0-87611-108-8; Paperback: \$25.95, ISBN 0-87611-109-6, 91-23059.

When originally published in 1875, *A Texas Scrap-Book* was a "subscription" book designed to be sold primarily prior to publication to contributors who provided a part of the content. As a subscription book, it was somewhat of a failure, but the approach led to an eclectic collection of biographical sketches, reminiscences, statistical data, and some items defying classification to such an extent that the original editor described them as "miscellany." In terms of literary quality, the original publisher judged some of the contents as "sub-par," and there is no reason to quarrel with his judgment.

However, the book has been a useful source for historians for more than a century. Without an index until recently, it was difficult to use. An index was added in 1984, but there are still problems for the serious historian. Often the sources of the sketches are not given, thus posing some questions with respect to reliability; nonetheless, materials not easily available elsewhere may sometimes be found within the covers of this book. Particularly valuable are the reminiscences; most of the historical sketches concern military affairs; some of the "miscellany" is quite interesting; and most of the poetry is less than inspired.

Adrian N. Anderson

Crouch, Barry. A. **THE FREEDMEN'S BUREAU AND BLACK TEXANS**. Austin: University of Texas Press,

1992. 187p. Illustrations. Index. Hardcover: \$24.95, ISBN 0-292-72475-6, 91-29138.

This is the second major study of the operations of the Freedmen's Bureau in Texas to be published within the past year. The first, William L. Richter's *Overreached on All Sides: The Freedmen's Bureau Administrators in Texas, 1865-1868* (Vol. VI, No.4) was an overall description of activities of the four assistant commissioners and the dozens of subassistants who worked with Texas freedmen as a part of Bureau activities. In this present work, Barry Crouch, who has published numerous studies of the Reconstruction period in Texas history, provides a historiographical appraisal of Bureau activities, profiles of the four Texas assistant commissioners, and three case studies of Bureau activities in Texas. The case studies afford readers an opportunity to see Bureau agents at work in three particularly trying situations: in the Tyler area, the Boston, Texas, region, and in Brazos county. Here Bureau agents encountered the most extreme examples of Southern white determination to thwart Bureau efforts to bring social justice to the freedmen. Both Crouch and Richter point out the numerous difficulties faced by Bureau officials and both credit these officers with laudable objectives. Crouch attributes more success to the Bureau than does Richter, but even he admits to the Bureau's limitations. The volume is well researched and thoroughly documented and provides significant insights into Reconstruction in Texas.

Ralph A. Wooster

Davis, Joe Tom. **HISTORIC TOWNS OF TEXAS**. Austin: Eakin Press, 1992. 269p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$18.95, ISBN 0-89015-824-X, 91-17276.

The first book of a series, Davis' book spotlights seven Texas towns: East and West Columbia, Egypt, Matagorda, Houston, Texana, and Helena. Davis focuses on prominent people such as town founders, builders, and residents, rather than the politics or institutions involved in the making of these communities. Maps and photographs of the individuals are included. The combination of these seemingly unrelated towns serves to satisfy a broad range of interests. From the rise and fall of Helena, "Toughest Town on Earth," to the dubious land promotion scheme that became Houston, the book represents a fundamental point of Texas pride--diversity. The book is suitable for young adult to adult readers. Joe Tom Davis is an instructor of American and Texas history at Wharton County Junior College, and he authored a four-volume series titled *Legendary Texans*.

Brenda L. Herbel

Hafertepe, Kenneth. **A HISTORY OF ASHTON VILLA**. Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1991. 56p. Illustrations. Paperback: \$5.95, ISBN 0-87611-112-6, 91-13918.

Number Five in the Popular History Series, this little book gives an entertaining and well-documented account of

the Galveston mansion, Ashton Villa, and of the Brown family who built it and lived there. Begun in 1859 and completed just before the Civil War, the house was one of the finest in Texas in the popular Italianate style. Several generations occupied the house, and Hafertepe describes their lives and Victorian social customs. In 1927, the family sold it to the Shriners, a fraternal organization. Fortunately, when the Shriners sold the building in 1970, the Galveston Historical Foundation purchased the villa with grants from several organizations. Now restored, it is a popular tourist attraction in Galveston. With its bibliographic references, this book will be of interest to high school and other history students as well as the general reader.

Sally Dooley

Lee, James Ward, et. al., eds. 1941: TEXAS GOES TO WAR. Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1991. 244p. Illustrations. Index. Paperback: \$19.95, ISBN 0-929398-29-7. 91-36090.

As part of the fiftieth anniversary of Pearl Harbor, the University of North Texas hosted a four-day historical, cultural, and literary conference in December 1991. This handsome book is the companion volume to that event. Governor Richards, in her foreword, blends her own memories with some observations on the degree to which Texas was mobilized in several crucial areas--as a site of training bases, as an agricultural breadbasket, as petroleum giant--and how these changes ushered the state from one era to another with amazing rapidity. The essays--some of them by well known Texas writers like Clay Reynolds--are uniformly interesting, and the lavish display of photographs, many of them rarely published, make the book a browser's joy. About the only serious complaint is that a few of the authors--Carolyn Barnes in "The Words & Pictures of War" is one--stray from the subject, apparently forgetting that they were supposed to focus specifically on Texas. The sections on the role of women and minorities in the war effort are particularly informative. Many will favorably compare this book, with its oversize format, to the Time-Life World War II series. 1941: *Texas Goes to War* is a particularly attractive gift to those who lived through one of the state's most important periods. Recommended.

R.S. Gwynn

Samponaro, Frank and Paul J. Vanderwood. WAR SCARE ON THE RIO GRANDE: ROBERT RUNYON'S PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE BORDER CONFLICT, 1913-1916. Austin: Texas State Historical Association and the Barker Texas History Center, 1992. 135p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$29.95, ISBN 0-87611-099-5; Limited edition: \$125.00, ISBN 0-87611-100-2. 91-8124.

This is a beautiful book which will have great appeal to photo buffs and historians of border affairs and the Mexican Revolution, costume and set designers, post card collectors, and novelists. Modeled loosely on the classic *The Wind That*

Swept Mexico, the book offers solid, chronologically arranged historical essays on phases of the revolution in the Brownsville-Matamoros region, which are subsequently illustrated by the photographs of pioneer picture post card maker Robert Runyon, who for more than three decades recorded people and events in the lower Rio Grande Valley. The photo cutlines are exhaustive, and when read alone, provide the simple narrative which the essays elaborate.

Runyon was an entrepreneur as much as he was an artist, and he boldly placed himself at the scene of dangerous or historical events which he knew would result in pictures to interest travelers, newspapers, or the participants. The book's photos are a selection from among the 12,595 Runyon images catalogued and housed at the Barker Texas History Center at the University of Texas. Almost all the pictures are interesting; a number of them are truly masterful. The essays by Samponaro and Vanderwood provide an unusual regional perspective of the vast national revolution for which they have understanding, sympathy, and respect. The text is erudite but entirely readable. Good book!

Randall Holdridge

Warren, Betsy. EXPLORERS IN EARLY TEXAS. Dallas: Hendrick-Long Publishing Co., 1992. 120p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$14.95, ISBN 0-937460-74-5. 91-4187. (Juvenile)

An excellent resource for students ages nine and above, *Explorers in Early Texas* recounts the lives of six Spanish and French men who explored over a period of 250 years the unknown wilderness that became Texas. Beginning in 1519 with the mapping of the Texas coast by Alonso Piñeda, Betsy Warren studies the explorations of Cabeza de Vaca, Francisco Coronado, Robert la Salle, Domingo Terán, and Athanase de Mézières, whose last travels were in 1778. Adventure abounds in these stories of courage and endurance of men against the weather, hostile Indians, starvation, and thirst. For quick reference, an appendix gives dates and names of all known explorations of Texas during this period. Warren's drawings beautifully illustrate the text, and the maps of each explorer's journeys add to students' knowledge of geography and history. A map showing the locations of the various Indian tribes mentioned would be helpful. This text should be in every Texas public, elementary, and middle school library. Warren also wrote and illustrated *Wilderness Walkers: Naturalists in Early Texas* (Vol. II, No.3).

Sally Dooley

Welch, June Rayfield. TELL ME A TEXAS STORY. Dallas: Yellow Rose Press, 1991. 211p. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$17.95, ISBN 0-912854-16-2. 91-65284.

A series of Texas history vignettes taken from the author's radio broadcasts, "Tell Me a Texas Story" enlivens history with color and humor. Coming from a talk radio environment, the stories make it seem as if one were sitting at a family reunion listening to the older members share the

past. June Rayfield Welch is a native Texan, a Texas lawyer and educator, and a radio personality.

The book is divided into sections covering characters, colleges, counties, events, governors, presidents, heroes, legends, and life in Texas. Each piece is brief and succinct and contains a note on the sources of the material. There is also a good bibliography and an excellent table of contents. Teachers will find this volume to be a fine resource to make history more lively and realistic, while students as young as middle school can easily enjoy the book.

Karen B. Nichols

LITERATURE

Roach, Joyce Gibson, ed. *THIS PLACE OF MEMORY: A TEXAS PERSPECTIVE*. Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1992. 161p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Paperback: \$15.95, ISBN 0-929398-32-7. 92-6890.

This collection of works by authentic Texans--some native, some converts--provides both breadth and depth in a pleasurable look at the idea of "place" defined in terms of Texas. The offerings, by such writers as F.E. Abernethy, Judy Alter, Betsy Colquitt, Robert Flynn, Elmer Kelton, James Ward Lee, Lionel Garcia, and Joyce Gibson Roach, examine place from various viewpoints such as: territory, neighborhood, shelter, and ritual. The volume uses a mix of nostalgic memory, scholarly examination, and personal exploration; it presents several genres including essays, poetry, fiction excerpts, photographs, and illustrations. All this material rests between a thoughtful, enticing introduction and a very usable selected annotated bibliography by Robert Compton. The highly mobile society of the United States--even Texas--seems to have adopted the myth that "you cannot go home again." Roach dispels that myth and shows that you can go home again, especially when you have never left--the myth of "Texas as a special place" is a reality in the heart and the mind. She makes good on her claim in the introduction that "*This Place of Memory* is a broad statement for the humanities." The book is highly readable and will have wide audience appeal.

Gary W. Rogers

SOCIAL SCIENCE

Lich, Glen E., ed. *REGIONAL STUDIES: THE INTERPLAY OF LAND AND PEOPLE*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1992. 181p. Hardcover: \$32.50, ISBN 0-89096-477-7. 91-4133.

Regional Studies is a compilation of papers presented at Baylor University's 1987 symposium on the "concepts and applications of regionalism." Divided like Gaul into three parts, each interconnected, this volume provides a stimulating if somewhat esoteric interdisciplinary study of the way people interact with and in the places in which they live. While each essay included develops its own thesis, the collection is unified by some recurrent themes: that regionalism

is a valid field of academic study; that it has significant implications in a variety of different fields of academic endeavor; and that it can be a powerful tool for bringing an artificial order to the natural chaos that the student of the humanities encounters when he observes the world and its people.

The ways in which a region may be defined vary depending on the characteristics used to identify and distinguish it. Language, gender, economic and political features, and culture are all discussed with respect to their efficacy as classifying principles in the context of regional studies. Specific regions are described and their identity as regions validated; definitions for regionalism are offered, and its limitations as a device to aid understanding are discussed. For the thinker interested in the interrelatedness of people and the places in which they live, the book offers a variety of perspectives, some novel and some traditional.

Andrew B. Preslar

SCIENCE

VanCleave, Janice Pratt. *ASTRONOMY FOR EVERY KID: 101 EASY EXPERIMENTS THAT REALLY WORK*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1991. 229p. Illustrations. Index. Paperback: \$10.95, ISBN 0-471-53573-7; Library edition: \$19.89, ISBN 0-471-54285-7. 91-2443. (Juvenile)

With the current concern over the lack of adequate elementary and secondary science education in the United States, VanCleave's *Science for Every Kid* series is a practical, affordable tool for science teachers, as well as a do-it-yourself starting place for curious young scientists ages eight to twelve years old. The experiments are simple, well-explained, require (in most cases) readily available, inexpensive equipment (not every household has two atmospheric temperature thermometers), and demonstrate basic astronomical principles. Each experiment is accompanied by an illustration and expected results are described. Experiments have been safety tested but may require some adult supervision, especially for younger children. A lack of further readings to direct the interested experimenter is the only flaw in this book. Used in tandem with regular astronomy curriculum this omission would be remedied. School and public libraries as well as those serving elementary and secondary programs should acquire this work, along with others in the series. VanCleave is a resident of Otto, Texas, has taught school for twenty-six years, and was the recipient of the Phi Delta Outstanding Teacher of 1982 Award.

Andrea Twiss-Brooks

THEATER

King, Larry L. and Ben Z. Grant. *THE KINGFISH*. Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1992. 73p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$13.95, ISBN 0-87074-324-4; Paperback: \$6.95, ISBN 0-87074-325-2. 91-52778.

Originally produced by Barbara S. Blaine at New Playwrights' Theatre in Washington D.C. in 1979, *The Kingfish* received grand notices and closed almost immediately. The problem, King suggests in his brief but informative introduction, is that many still regard Huey P. Long as more of a menace than a messiah to the populist masses of Louisiana. The play presents Long as the man of the people: a politician who had the unique quality of being able to understand what his state needed and how to get it. But politics is not what this play is about. It's more about a man who found self-justification to be second nature and brutal honesty to be his strength. Most of it is funny, although some of it is poignant and moving as well. It's a well-wrought play and should be staged. SMU Press is to be congratulated for its publication.

Clay Reynolds

REVIEW OF TEXAS BOOKS

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Andrew B. Preslar, Associate Editors
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Andrea R. Karlin earned a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Reading Instruction at the University of New Mexico and is Associate Professor of Education at Lamar University specializing in children's literature.

Elmer Kelton is well known for his Texas-based novels. Two of his novels earned Spur Awards from Western Writers of America: *THE TIME IT NEVER RAINED* and *THE DAY THE COWBOYS QUIT*. His most recent novel was *HONOR AT DAYBREAK*.

Lynne Lokensgard earned a Ph.D. at the University of Kansas and has taught art history at Lamar University-Beaumont since 1973.

Violette Newton, a Poet Laureate of Texas, lives in Beaumont and participates in readings across the state. Her most recent collection published is *ALL TIME IS NOW: POEMS*.

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