



REVIEW OF TEXAS BOOKS



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★ ★ ★ ★ ★ FICTION ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Benner, J.A. **UNCLE COMANCHE**. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1996. 169p. Paperback: \$12.95, ISBN 0-87565-152-6. 95-36530.

In this fast-paced novel for young adult readers, Lawrence Sullivan Ross, a famous early Texas leader, is an eleven-year-old boy on the Texas frontier. He dreams of becoming a soldier, but his austere father has other plans: his favorite son Pete is to continue his studies at a military school while Sul is to quit school and become a farmer. Enraged at this decision and other evidence of his father's unfairness, Sul runs away. Youthful readers will identify with his frustration and his desire to leave and then, in turn, will be entertained by the exciting adventures he has. Uncle Comanche, in reality Sergeant Hanse Mason, a friend of the family, apprehends Sul and gives him much needed understanding, encouragement, and protection as they encounter stealthy Kickapoos, friendly Comanches, and a flash flood. Sul's future education and money-earning employment are decided on at the book's end. San Antonio author and teacher J.A. Benner has produced an excellent novel based on thorough research which will increase readers' awareness of an important historical figure as well as manifest that dreams can come true with determination and perseverance. This is another fine publication in TCU's award-winning Chaparral Book series.

Sally Dooley

Bertrand, Diane Gonzales. **SWEET FIFTEEN**. Houston: Arte Público Press, 1995. 296p. Paperback: \$7.95, ISBN 1-55885-133-X. 94-32656.

Sweet Fifteen, a novel for adolescent girls, concerns the Hispanic tradition of observing a girl's fifteenth birthday with a *quinceañera*, a special coming out party and church recognition. Stephanie will be turning fifteen, but she is only begrudgingly agreeing to the party to please her recently widowed mother. Rita is a young Hispanic seamstress in San Antonio who is hired to make the party dress. She is able to help Stephanie come to terms with her loss and improve her relationship with her grief-stricken mother. Rita, who is struggling as owner, manager, and seamstress of her own small business, is strongly attracted to Stephanie's uncle, Brian. The book reveals the complexities of all these relationships as these women mature. Important too is Brian's understanding of the changing male role as today's Hispanic women show more independence.

Because the plot moves at a glacial pace, impatient adolescent girls may not finish the book, but adult readers can appreciate

the time it takes for these people to solve their problems. Still, fewer and more effective scenes could develop the plot more quickly while maintaining Bertrand's sensitivity. At times her style could be improved upon as in sentences such as "Feeling as she got jabbed by scissors in her stomach, Rita groaned."

Sally Dooley

Bulla, Dale. **MY BROTHER'S A PAIN IN THE BACK SEAT**. Carrollton: New Horizon Press, 1995. 24p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$14.95, ISBN 1-884197-05-1; Paperback: \$6.95, ISBN 1-884197-06-X. 95-92283. (Juvenile)

Dale Bulla's narrative and Gary Laronde's soft watercolor illustrations exactly capture the family dynamics of a vacation which turns into a trip to remember. How many parents have said, "Act your age! You should know better--you're the oldest!"? Dale thinks it is unfair that he should so often be blamed for what pesky younger brother C.J. does. While driving, Dad always requires quiet in the back and no fighting over seats. On this car trip Daddy finally realizes why the quietly reading Dale suddenly yells out. C.J. has pinched him with an alligator clip--twice! Both the father and C.J. learn a lesson that affects all future car travel.

Grandparents will enjoy sharing this book with their grown children as well as grandchildren. The adults will identify with both generations, and the children will enjoy the humor and the surprise ending. Dale Bulla, a former elementary teacher, is now a full-time storyteller and author living in Carrollton, Texas. Gary Laronde has illustrated a number of children's books and lives in Arlington.

Frances M. Ramsey

Cannon, David. **A SECRET PRIZE IN EVERY BOX**. Dallas: Community Justice Foundation of Texas, 1993. 63p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$9.95, ISBN 0-9631028-1-8. (Juvenile)

Based on a true experience, this book features author David Cannon as a young boy who must have the decoder ring that can only be found in a cereal box--a cereal that his mother will not purchase. Reacting to peer pressure, David steals the decoder ring from a cereal box at the grocery store, but his good friend, Bruce, tells David's mother about the stolen ring. David's parents admonish him to return to the store and use his own money to pay the store owner for the box of cereal that contained the special ring. This painful episode of David's is of a contemporary nature, one that can face any youngster. The message to young people is to stand up to peer pressure, make positive decisions, and avoid advice that can be harmful.

The book is written in chapter format, and the subject appeals

to readers in second to fourth grade in sophistication. At the end of the book, there is a list of discussion questions that deals with information about the book as well as personal lessons that can be learned from the book. The illustrations are by Mike Savage. The Community Justice Foundation of Texas publishes other books instructive to young readers about honesty and good citizenship.

Sarah Matheny

Dixon, Walter Clay. *RICHLAND CROSSING: A PORTRAIT OF TEXAS PIONEERS*. Fort Worth: Peppermill Publishing Co., 1994. 386p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Paperback: \$25.00, ISBN 0-9649936-0-0. 94-212378.

Walter Clay Dixon wrote this book with the stated purpose to inform descendants of interesting family stories and legends. Using family letters, a great deal of research, and his own imagination, he compiled a lengthy saga that begins in the 1840s and concludes around the turn-of-the-century. Richland Crossing is in Navarro County near Corsicana where Dixons, Andersons, Barekmans, and Hardins pioneered, but the story includes family members' participation in the California Gold Rush and the Civil War as well. The outlaw John Wesley Hardin was a family member, and his exploits are recounted, supported by letters to his wife. Period photographs illustrate the text. An index makes the book useful to students other than family. The author's attempt to combine fiction with factual documents in his possession sometimes makes for laborious reading. A more skilled novelist's tightened focus on the scenes would have strengthened the narrative. Surely the author's family will enjoy and appreciate his efforts, and scholars of this period in Texas can derive useful information from the history presented here.

Sally Dooley

Garland, Sherry. *CABIN 102*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1995. 243p. Paperback: \$5.00, ISBN 0-15-200662-1. 95-13414.

Entertainment abounds in this intriguing mystery by popular juvenile and young adult author Sherry Garland. Narrated by twelve-year-old Dusty who is visiting his dad and his new step family in Galveston, readers quickly learn Dusty's deepest secret: an earlier experience has rendered him terrified of drowning. Because of his excuses to avoid water sports, he is perceived to be a lying and recalcitrant adolescent. When his step mother wins a Caribbean cruise for the entire family, Dusty's excuses are not acceptable and he must go. Aboard the historic ocean liner, Dusty and his step sisters hear a child sobbing in cabin 102 next door. Dusty asks questions of the steward, investigates on his own, and discovers a mysterious young girl attired in tropical leaves and flowers. Her answers to questions, Dusty's research in history books in the ship library, and the helpful steward reveal the girl to be an Arawak Indian who drowned on a Spanish galleon during a hurricane in 1511. How the girl assists Dusty in overcoming his fear of water and how he helps her return to her native island make for exciting reading for young adolescents. Once Dusty is released from the terrible fear that has bound him, he can reveal to his father his anxiety, and in the telling, their relationship is healed. As a sidelight, in writing this adventure Garland also informs about the Spanish conquest of the Caribbean and customs of the Arawak Indians.

Garland, a Houstonian, is the creative author of *Song of the Buffalo Boy* (Vol. VII, No.3) and *The Silent Storm* (Vol. VIII, No. 3,4), both young adult novels, as well as for *The Lotus Seed* (VIII, No.3,4) a juvenile picture book and story. She knows well the territory children and young adolescents travel, and she expresses their journeys in meaningful ways.

Sally Dooley

Garland, Sherry. *THE SUMMER SANDS*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1995. 27p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$15.00, ISBN 015-282492-8. 94-6978. (Juvenile)

When a brother and sister visit their grandfather at the beach during their summer vacation, they become fascinated with the life and beauty that the sand dunes hold for animals, plants, and people. After a fierce storm, the children are brokenhearted to find that the dunes and the life within those dunes have been destroyed by nature.

This text, beautifully complimented by Robert J. Lee's lifelike watercolor illustrations, describes the life cycle of sand dunes in words that are understandable and interesting to children and adults. Garland's new book is an excellent choice for the home or classroom to help explain what humans can do so that the natural ecology of the dunes continues uninterrupted by man.

Andrea R. Karlin

Gibbons, Reginald. *SWEETBITTER*. Seattle: Broken Moon Press, 1994. 432p. Hardcover: \$21.95, ISBN 0-913089-51-6. 94-71680.

Set in the timber and oil boom days of East Texas, *Sweetbitter* explores the prevailing themes of modern fiction: isolation, identity, spiritual desolation, and the quest for meaning. Reuben Sweetbitter is the half-breed child of a Choctaw mother and a white father about whom he knows nothing. When Reuben is nine, he and his mother strike out for the Nations to find someplace where they can belong; only a few days into the journey she dies. With no meaningful options, Reuben grows up living on his wits for the little he can get. Flashbacks show the reader telling moments of Reuben's history and page-long chapters relate snatches of myth and images of other realities.

The real story begins when Reuben meets Martha Clarke, the beautiful, intelligent, passionate young daughter of Three Rivers' most prominent lawyer. Reuben and Martha fall in love, but their romance is discovered. In a precipitous flight that leaves destruction and fury in its wake, the two flee west into thicket country, moving by night, eating only what Reuben can gather or catch. Finally, Martha can go no further, and they settle in Harriet, Texas; there Martha miraculously encounters Ruth Hagerman, a liberal-minded, wealthy widow who had lived in Three Rivers over a decade earlier and had known Martha's family. Ruth's generosity provides for the two but diminishes Reuben and ultimately renders him superfluous. Reuben and Martha have two children, and the family gains the grudging acceptance of the town, but the lovers never lose their fear of being caught by Martha's family, of Reuben being burned or beaten to death, or of Martha going back into the shame and covert slavery of the patriarchal domination and provincial narrow-mindedness of Three Rivers. The ending of the novel is ambiguous, literally if not thematically.

Sweetbitter is a vehicle for the imagination; the calm, sad voice of the third person narrator reveals compassion, acceptance, wisdom, and an incongruous hope without which the novel might seem absurd. The slow pace creates reader tension that in turn influences meaning, sometimes clarifying and sometimes shattering a literal interpretation of an observation into a dozen figurative fragments of possible meaning. Complex and demanding due to its dense poetic language, this novel is not for everybody; but for those who are willing to give it what it demands, the rewards are considerable.

Reginald Gibbons is a poet and editor of national stature. He was born in Houston and raised in nearby Spring Branch. *Sweetbitter* is his first novel, though surely more will follow.

Andrew Preslar



EDITOR'S CHOICE

González, Jovita, and Eve Raleigh. *CABALLERO: A HISTORICAL NOVEL*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1996. 350p. Bibliography. Hardcover: \$39.95, ISBN 0-89096-701-6; Paperback: \$19.95, ISBN 0-89096-700-8. 95-045525.

At the opening of this novel, Don Santiago de Mendoza y Soría is at the height of his power as the patriarch of Rancho La Palma de Cristo property that his grandfather had claimed in the name of King Ferdinand of Spain in 1748. The story takes place in the years 1846 to 1848, a time of battle over the political and cultural identity of Texas. The authors depict the dilemma that the Hispanic landowners faced as America gained dominance over the state and threatened their way of life, which was based in part on a strict moral code. To the *hidalgo* Don Santiago, the American invaders seem a crude people without the grace of civilization that he so closely guards. However, it is a prominent component of that moral code that contributes to the ultimate ruin of the patriarch. When the pampered and protected youngest daughter encounters a handsome young American in Matamoros, the allure of the forbidden is irrepressible. While the authors are careful to distinguish between the more benevolent Americans and the ruthless factions of Texas Rangers, Don Santiago refuses to see the distinction and alienates himself from everyone in his family who finds affinity with the Americans. The *ranchero's* rigid refusal to accept the new government and the opportunity to remain an influential figure are symbolically sanctioned by the loss of his favorite son.

Equally as intriguing as the novel itself is the story of the recovery of the original manuscript. The introduction by José E. Limón not only traces the research that went into the publication of this novel, but also discusses it in the context of Mexican American literature. Public and academic libraries across Texas will find this novel an important addition to their collections.

Sarah Tusa

Kahn, Sharon. *KACY AND THE SPACE SHUTTLE SECRET*. Austin: Eakin Press, 1996. 103p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$14.95, ISBN 1-57168-025-X. 95-9740.

Eleven-year-old Kacy struggles with her identity and self-esteem in this fast-paced, suspenseful novel set in Houston. Kacy's lack of achievement in schoolwork is offset by her interest in the space program at NASA. With the help of an understanding school counselor, she contacts NASA and begins a science project that will go up in the next space orbit as part of an experiment. Her friendships with a female astronaut and the lab technicians with whom she works increase her self-confidence and excitement about her project. Suddenly the space mission and the project are in jeopardy, requiring Kacy's quick thinking and courage. As many pre-adolescents would fantasize, Kacy succeeds and is honored by her family and school. Black-and-white drawings by Mark Mitchell illustrate the action, and a glossary defines space terminology. Highly readable, this adventure for pre-teens is believable due to the skill and care with which Sharon Kahn wrote the book. She is an Austin resident who reviews books for Compuserve's *Online Today* and presents writing workshops for children.

Sally Dooley

Ketteman, Helen. *GRANDMA'S CAT*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1996. 30p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$14.95, ISBN 0395-73094-5. 95-3281. (Juvenile)

Grandma's Cat is designed to teach a very young child how to play with a cat. It begins with negative examples that show a child trying to play with a cat and doing so incorrectly. Then after a few words of advice and encouragement from Grandma, the child tries a different approach and makes a friend. The text is quite brief, only about 110 words. It uses simple rhymes, "ears/hears; stair/there" in short, often two-word sentences. Neither the child nor the cat is in any way individualized; they don't even have names. The lively, colorful illustrations by Marsha Lynn Winborn appropriately enhance the text. Parents who wish to prepare a young child to meet a cat may find that this book paves the way. It is too narrow in scope to be useful for most libraries.

Jo Harper

Levine, Ellen. *THE TREE THAT WOULD NOT DIE*. New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1995. 30p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$14.95, ISBN 0-590-43724-0. 94-8394. (Juvenile)

"And I grew." With this refrain Ellen Levine views 500 years of Texas history from the perspective of the famed Treaty Oak of Austin. This tranquil tree's eye view of the world is a study in contrasts of the human spirit. "First People" were welcomed as they made peace and organized great hunting parties. Respectful of their neighbor, "They walked softly on the earth around my roots, for they knew I couldn't live without them." So revered was this tree by "First People" that according to legend it served as the site of a famous meeting of Native Americans and Stephen F. Austin. From the agreement the tree became a boundary between Native American hunting grounds and Austin's settlements. It also became known as Treaty Oak. The arrival of new people brought danger and sadness; the settlers did not have the respect for nature of "First People." They cut down many trees to build their homes, but because of the legend, the grand old

oak was spared. When threatened by progress, "... it was the children who saved me. They sent pennies and nickels for the city to buy me." Enshrined, Treaty Oak became a protected landmark and the target of a psychopath. Poisoned in a singular heinous act, the tree laments, "I could not grow!" The outpouring of emotion and effort to save the mighty tree restores the tree's belief in humanity. Beautiful watercolors by Ted Rand help make this a modern classic.

Paul W. Miller

Liles, Maurine Walpole. *WILLER AND THE PINEY WOODS DOCTOR*. Austin: Eakin Press, 1995. 112p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Hardcover: \$14.95, ISBN 1-57168-058-6. 95-30740.

Willer is a twelve-year-old orphan boy living in a small East Texas town at the turn-of-the-century. Taunted by bullies because he doesn't know his own surname, Willer's anger and frustration are complicated by his lack of supervision. Clearly he is headed for trouble with his truancy from school and petty theft. When a piney woods doctor offers Willer room, board, and a job, along with guidance, Willer begins to mature and develops an interest in becoming a doctor himself. The mystery of his lost family is solved too. In spite of some stilted dialogue conveying information about the practice of medicine in early Texas, this novel should interest middle school readers.

Sally Dooley

Lindsey, David. *REQUIEM FOR A GLASS HEART*. New York: Doubleday, 1996. 437p. Hardcover: \$23.95, ISBN 0-385-42312-8. 95-45464.

Fans of David Lindsey, Austin author of a number of high voltage thrillers, may be slightly disappointed in this newest release. Like most of his mysteries, this one is set in Texas, primarily in Houston, although the story begins in Russia with a cold-blooded murder. Meanwhile in Houston, the FBI is aware that an international meeting of crime lords, a Russian, an Italian, and an Asian, is planned for Houston. Krupatin, the heartless Russian, contracts with the breathtakingly beautiful Russian Irina, his enslaved assassin, to make one last hit and then he will set her free. He never reveals his plans until the last moment, so Irina must proceed one step at a time. With matching cunning, the FBI recruits agent Cate Cuevas to go undercover, wired with high tech gear, and infiltrate this secretive and ruthless group. Cate is warned, "The question you have to ask yourself going into this is just how ugly you're willing to get.... Just don't forget who you really are. And don't do anything you won't be able to live with when this thing is over." The outcome of the international meeting then hinges on the relationship Cate and Irina develop as Lindsey carefully teases us with new clues and events.

As a master of the psycho-sexual mystery, Lindsey is recognized for his development of interesting and cruel characters. In this novel, however, he relentlessly tells how evil and cruel are the major characters who personify Satan as though their despicable acts do not speak for themselves. These are mean folks, but his constant reiteration of their malevolence grows tiresome. Optioned by actress/producer Demi Moore for a film, it will undoubtedly earn a "R" rating for its graphic sex and violence.

Lindsey is remembered most recently for *An Absence of Light* (Vol.IX, No.3) and *Mercy* (Vol.V, No.3).

Sally Dooley

McGinnis, Bruce. *REFLECTIONS IN DARK GLASS: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JOHN WESLEY HARDIN*. Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1996. 180p. Hardcover: \$24.95, ISBN 1-57441-008-3. 95-26599.

Bruce McGinnis calls his book "a marriage of fiction and personal essay... a product of imagination". For his imaginative romp, McGinnis works from a pre-1900 "record" written chaotically by Jim Stephens, John Wesley Hardin's sidekick, the author says, and others' reminiscences. For structure, he lines up twenty-three segments, using three voices: Jim Stephens'; Julie Ola Faye's (Hardin's wet nurse); and that of "Anonymous," who omnisciently narrates the story as Hardin's preacher father might have told it.

Each voice responds to the events of May 26, 1874, when Hardin killed Sheriff Charley Webb, and citizens of Comanche vented their wrath by torching their town. But the voices reveal much more than Hardin's blood-lettings, for McGinnis is exploring relationships. All three wish to save John Wesley; all love him while admitting his wrongdoing. Baring themselves, they emerge fully realized characters, while Hardin remains spinning in the vortex of the evil of Reconstruction Texas. As the characters become more than tellers-of-tales, they wrestle with the nature of violence. Jim Stephens attempts to understand whence it originates and how it can be justified. Julie Ola Faye sees love and violence as extremes, flip sides of the same passion. The Reverend, now unleashed from his debt to his son, turns from avoidance of violence to acknowledgment of it within his own heart. Because this book plumbs the nature of violence in search of answers, it transcends its time and challenges readers to question further.

Ernestine Sewell Linck

Medearis, Angela Shelf. *POPPA'S NEW PANTS*. New York: Holiday House, Inc., 1995. 30p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$15.95, ISBN 0-8234-1155-9. 94-20489. (Juvenile)

Readers who are fans of Angela Shelf Medearis will be delighted with her picture-story book *Poppa's New Pants*. Others who are unfamiliar with her books will quickly become fans of her storytelling ability and fans of the beautiful illustrations by John Ward.

George and his Poppa, on a trip to town to buy Grandma Tiny the things she needs for the visit of Big Mama and Aunt Viney, choose a new pair of Sunday pants for Poppa. The only problem is that the pants are way too long. Poppa is sure that Grandma Tiny will be able to hem them in time for church the next day. When Grandma Tiny, Big Mama, and Aunt Viney are each too tired to hem the pants, everyone retires to bed, leaving the pants unhemmed. What happens next results in a night and morning that George is not likely to forget soon. This heartwarming and funny story will bring smiles to all ages who read or listen to it.

Andrea R. Karlin

Storey, Gail Donohue. *GOD'S COUNTRY CLUB*. New York: Persea Books Inc., 1996. 241p. Hardcover: \$21.95, ISBN 0-89255-219-0. 96-14744.

In her first novel, the *Lord's Motel* (Vol.IX, No.2), Storey brought readers Colleen Sweeney, a latter day hippie newly come to Houston from Boston, looking for happiness, which for her is public service and sexual satisfaction. Naive, she finds Mr. Wrong, a kinky director of recreation on a cruise line. In *God's Country Club*, Colleen finds Mr. Right, a physician devoted to emergency service in the county hospital. Their only common ground is obsession with the world's problems. The two are set in apparently intractable patterns, and the plot devolves into their struggles to come to terms with the contraries that threaten them. Gabriel Benedict has been shaped by Peaches, his mother, a typical society matron, to take his place among oil-rich Texans; Colleen is the product of a homeless, drunken father who abandoned his family in Boston's projects. Is it possible for these two to find happiness?

Yes, for this is a fairy tale about the poor little girl with heart of gold chosen by the rich, handsome prince with heart of gold for his wife. Their wedding is a metaphor for the solution to all contraries. Colleen, decked out in a wedding dress from a Houston thrift shop, invites to this elegant affair, (directed by Peaches) her shabby father, a Houston druggie, and her motley collection of friends from the Lord's motel. The lovers accept each other's world uncompromisingly.

Storey is a humorist. Her characters fall into ridiculous situations that evoke hilarious one-liners. In this second novel, the wit is more acerbic as she satirizes Texans and their social environments.

Ernestine Sewell Linck

★★★NONFICTION★★★

BIOGRAPHY

Barnes, Marian E. *BLACK TEXANS: THEY OVERCAME*. Austin: Eakin Press, 1996. 139p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Hardcover: \$15.95, ISBN 1-57168-055-1. 95-30229.

Twenty-one outstanding black Texans are highlighted by author Marian E. Barnes in this important collection for middle and high school readers. She includes many contemporary persons but goes back as far as the Reconstruction period to describe the life of Matthew Gaines, a politician in the Texas Senate who had been a slave before the Civil War. Readers will be inspired by the spunk of aviatrix Bessie Coleman and the cowboy Bill Pickett, creator of bulldogging. Contemporary famous individuals from Texas whose stories are told are Wilhelmina Delco, Phylcia Rashad (who played Bill Cosby's wife on his popular TV series), Mickey Leland, and Barbara Jordan. Popular children's author Angela Shelf Medearis, whose work is reviewed in this publication, is also recognized. Having the biographies arranged chronologically rather than alphabetically would have made them even more meaningful. The author, in what was perhaps a moment of self-indulgence, included her own biography which, while interesting, is not as influential as

the others. Like many of Eakin Press' books, this one needs more careful editing; Barnes' first name is misspelled twice on the book's cover. But taken as a whole, the book points out the determination, perseverance, and strength of character these people demonstrated in spite of the oppression of slavery, the humiliation of segregation, and the hateful prejudice that still continues. This informative volume closes with footnotes, glossary, and bibliography. Undoubtedly this book will be used by many students as a resource for reports on famous black Texans.

Author Marian E. Barnes is a retired public school and university counselor who is a founding member of both the Storytelling Guild of Austin, Texas, and the National Association of Black Storytellers.

Sally Dooley

Harper, Jo. *DEAF SMITH: SCOUT, SPY, AND TEXAS HERO*. Austin: Eakin Press, 1996. 41p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$12.95, ISBN 1-57168-063-2. 95-36580. (Juvenile)

In colloquial and simple language, Houston author Jo Harper recreates the life of Erastus Smith who walked to Texas from Mississippi with his hornless cows and consumption. Erastus was always known as "Deaf" or "El Sordo" in Spanish because he could not hear, but he mastered lip reading in both English and Spanish. With a land grant of 4,000 acres, he settled in Texas with a Mexican wife and four children. In 1825 he helped plan and build the town of Gonzales, but there was not to be peace in Texas. Stephen F. Austin sent Deaf to serve under General Sam Houston. Following orders, Deaf burned Gonzales and scouted for General Houston. After Deaf and six men burned down Vince's Bridge, Santa Anna and his men were trapped and beaten at San Jacinto. Lively black-and-white drawings by Virginia Roeder add more excitement to the narrative. While Harper tells a good story, she also instructs young readers about a lesser known figure in Texas history.

Sally Dooley

Rigler, Lewis C. and Judyth W. Rigler. *IN THE LINE OF DUTY: REFLECTIONS OF A TEXAS RANGER PRIVATE*. 2d ed. Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1995. 184p. Illustrations. Index. Paperback: \$14.95, ISBN 0-929398-99-8. 95-16646.

In this memoir first printed in 1984, Lewis Rigler looks back over his thirty years of service as a Texas Ranger, having retired in 1977. His experiences solving murders and kidnappings and resolving labor disputes make absorbing reading as they parallel social changes in Texas and within the famed law enforcement agency. As a portrait of a Texas Ranger, the book fleshes out a real person within this legendary group. New to this edition is a foreword by Lewis Rigler with his outspoken comments on legalizing drugs and changing hiring practices which require a quota system. Judyth Rigler, his daughter-in-law, is Book Editor of the *San Antonio Express-News*.

Sally Dooley

Williams, Robert H. *JOYFUL TREK: A TEXAN'S TIMES AND TRAVELS*. ed. by Craig Miner. Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 1996. 215p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index.

Hardcover: \$30.00, ISBN 0-89672-356-9. 95-39557.

In this delightful memoir, Robert H. Williams looks back at his joyful trek through life that began with his birth in 1897 in Cross Plains, Texas, and concluded with his death in 1993 at the age of ninety-five. Because Williams was a professional writer and a brilliant, creative individual, his reflections are unusually well written and entertaining to read. Introductory pieces and footnotes by Craig Miner, history professor at Wichita State University, provide background material and amplification of Williams' own writing. (The drawback to the footnotes is that they are not noted in the text, so the reader reaches the bottom of the page to discover more information.) Growing up on a ranch near Abilene, he graduated from Simmons College (now Hardin-Simmons University). He served overseas in the Army Air Force, then in its infancy. Later he studied at the University of Grenoble, France, and, upon returning to the States, at the Graduate School of English at Harvard University. For the bulk of his career, he was a journalist, ghost writer, lecturer, and political analyst. But he was also an Intelligence officer in World War II, a screen writer in California, a family man, a rancher, and an inventor. From this book, the reader is touched by his perseverance and his imaginative ways of overcoming adversity and solving problems. General readers as well as students of this period of history will enjoy this book.

Sally Dooley

Winik, Marion. *FIRST COMES LOVE*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1996. 272p. Hardcover: \$23.00, ISBN 0-679-44572-2. 95-042674.

To lose someone we love is something we all go through at one time or another, but few of us are aware from the beginning of our relationships what the probable end will be, as Marion and Tony did. This couple met at Mardi Gras in New Orleans. He was gay, she was straight. Both were young and loved to party and were rebounding from shattered relationships. Winik writes, "There was a spark of recognition between us." In this heartwarming, at times humorous and often heartbreaking story, Winik describes the events leading her to fall in love with a man who she knew was gay. To Marion, Tony represented the forbidden, the impossible. To be with her he would have to change his whole life, and the idea of someone caring about her that much appealed very deeply to her. To Tony, Marion provided the emotional stability in his life that he was desperately in need of, but what each was actually seeking was the security of unconditional love. Winik comments, "First comes love, then comes marriage . . . then comes the shock called the rest of your life." She candidly describes the series of events that shook their relationship--Tony's diagnosis with full blown AIDS and addiction to painkillers; her betrayal of him with another man; arguments erupting into violence and finally their difficult decision to separate. Through all of these painful conflicts, love and forgiveness give Winik the strength to make the most difficult decision of all--to help Tony to die.

The life of Marion and Tony Winik brings to light all aspects of life: love, joy, pain, tragedy and eventually death. But this story also describes the humaneness of those who care for loved ones with a tragic illness. It describes the guilt a caregiver experiences when eventually he or she begins to feel trapped and alone in a private hell that seems endless. To caregivers who are feeling these same emotions, it will be a relief to know they are not ugly

and self-centered, but simply human--and definitely not alone.

Pamela Brashier

CHRISTIAN LIFE

Kraft, Vickie. *FACING YOUR FEELINGS: MOVING FROM EMOTIONAL BONDAGE TO SPIRITUAL FREEDOM*. Dallas: Word Publishing, 1996. 278p. Paperback: \$12.99, ISBN 0-8499-3857-0. 95-43332.

Vickie Kraft, a Dallas resident, is the author of *The Influential Woman* and *Women Mentoring Women*. A respected Bible teacher, she earned a M.A. from Dallas Theological Seminary in Biblical Studies. She serves as Minister to Women at a Dallas church. From her wealth of experience, she has written this book as a guide for women's spiritual maturity through emotional growth.

Emotional trauma can cause women pain and hinder maturation, especially if women do not learn to face their feelings, Kraft asserts. In eighteen chapters she addresses various uncomfortable feelings: fear, anger, guilt, pride, greed, and loneliness to mention fewer than half the emotions she covers. Each chapter uses a biblical example complemented by a contemporary situation drawn from Kraft's many years of counseling women. The book concludes with the importance of women's friendships and the opportunities Christian friends provide for sharing and encouragement. Accompanying study questions for each chapter at the book's end offer individuals or groups further work and insight. Kraft's book reveals her thorough understanding of Scripture and her ability to apply it to everyday situations to foster healing and spiritual development.

Sally Dooley

CORRESPONDENCE

Perry, Garland. *AN AMERICAN SAGA, WILLIAM GEORGE HUGHES, A PIONEER TEXAS RANCHER*. Boerne: Perry Publications, 1994. 242p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$24.95, ISBN 0-9646196-1-1. 95-75913.

William George "Willy" Hughes was a British immigrant who yearned to make his mark on the vast American frontier. He purchased 160 acres of Kendall County ranch land in 1879 and became a sheep rancher. Just like that. Having been raised in London's high society, he had no agricultural background, yet the idea of failure never entered Willy's thought. He raised Oxfordshire Downs and Merino sheep, along with Angora goats, all of which were newcomers to the Texas southwest. Willy also entered into a horse breeding program in which he bred Arabian horses with Texas cow ponies and wild mustangs in order to procure a better quality, highly trainable riding horse. At the height of his career, he owned just under 7,000 acres and was under contract with the U.S. Cavalry to deliver a consignment of horses to be used by troops in the Spanish-American War. Willy died in a train collision in 1902 when he was only forty-two years of age. In the twenty-three years Willy gave to Texas ranching, the business grew into an empire.

Garland Perry's *An American Saga* includes a great many letters from Hughes to his father, among letters to and from other family members. This book was made possible by Gerald H.

Hughes, Willy's son, who provided the letters, photos, and stories. The thesis-type arrangement of the book does not provide the slick appearance of so many other historical endeavors, but it does showcase Perry's extensive research. Recommended for Southwest Texas collections.

Brenda L. Herbel

EMPLOYMENT TESTS

THE COMPLETE PREPARATION GUIDE: POLICE OFFICER TEXAS. New York: Learning Express, 1996. 320p. Index. Paperback: \$35.00, ISBN 1-57685-003-X. 96-075331.

This book provides basic information concerning entry into law enforcement. While it focuses on major cities in Texas, much of the information is generic and applicable to any job interview. The strength of this guide is that it provides examples of specific skills tests and forms that a person seeking a law enforcement career may encounter. Addresses and phone numbers are also provided for police agencies of the cities represented in this guide. There is an abundance of information about the police life and career possibilities that may aid one in the decision of whether or not to pursue this profession. The guide would have been still more useful if it had included addresses for other police districts in Texas, but it is nevertheless recommended for public libraries and for academic libraries that support a criminal justice curriculum.

Sarah Tusa

FOLKLORE

Adler, David A. **A PICTURE BOOK OF DAVY CROCKETT.** New York: Holiday House, Inc., 1995. 28p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$9.00, ISBN 0-8234-1212-1. 96-20069. (Juvenile)

David Adler's picture book biography of Davy Crockett carefully separates the legend surrounding this folk hero from the real man. The author attributes many of the colorful tall tales about Davy to the frontiersman's own talent and penchant for storytelling. The reader learns that this is one aspect of a multi-faceted personality which makes the truth of Davy Crockett's life as incredible as any tale. Young people will take special interest in the struggles of David's early life. While being one of nine children in a family which moved often was not an unusual circumstance in the late 1700s, some of Davy's other exploits as a youngster could have either built character or broken spirit. He developed much wilderness skill, including his legendary prowess with a long rifle. At age thirteen, Davy ran away from home to spend two years living by his wits and guile. His subsequent reconciliation with his family, education, and marriage to Polly Finley completed the foundation from which his remarkably disparate career was launched. The familiar story of Davy's success as a hunter, soldier, judge, and politician is the stuff of legend. But his opposition to our government's unfair policies toward Native Americans speaks of truly rare insight and courage. Colorful and detailed illustrations by John and Alexandra Wallner underscore the even narrative, making this a welcome addition to Adler's series of picture book biographies.

Paul W. Miller

HISTORY

Bredeson, Carmen. **THE SPINDLETOP GUSHER: THE STORY OF THE TEXAS OIL BOOM.** Brookfield: Millbrook Press, Inc., 1996. 64p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$15.90, ISBN 1-56294-916-0. 95-31485. (Juvenile)

This book, one in a series called *Spotlight on American History*, tells the story of the Lucas Gusher and the discovery of oil at Spindletop Field in Beaumont, Texas, January 10, 1901. The author introduces the principal characters--drillers as well as promoters--and paints a vivid picture of conditions in the oil field and in Beaumont, and shows the roughness of boomtown life as well as the money that was to be made. Vintage photographs of oil field scenes and key people enhance the text. However, the story of Spindletop isn't nearly all that this well-written book contains. Other chapters discuss the role of petroleum throughout history and provide clear explanations of cable tool drilling, rotary drilling, and the refining process. The author also discusses growth of the oil industry and its broader results: increased mobility in American life because the automobile industry had access to cheap fuel all the while increasing dependence on petroleum as resources dwindle. The final chapter recalls Spindletop's fiftieth anniversary celebration in 1951 and the recreation of Gladys City, one of Spindletop's boomtown settlements, for the Bicentennial in 1976. Making the book even more valuable as a resource are a suggested reading list and index. The *Spindletop Gusher* is a must for any school library and is an excellent basic reference on the petroleum industry for adults as well.

Judith Linsley

Frazier, Donald S. **COTTONCLADS! THE BATTLE OF GALVESTON AND THE DEFENSE OF THE TEXAS COAST.** Fort Worth: Ryan Place Publishers, 1996. 144p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Paperback: \$11.95, ISBN 1-886661-09-X. 95-51436.

This paperback is the latest volume in the new series *Civil War Campaigns and Commanders* edited by the distinguished Civil War historian Grady McWhiney. Like the previous works in the series, *Cottonclads!* is an attractively illustrated book written in clear, simple prose that can be read both for pleasure and information. The author, Donald S. Frazier, is a rising star among Civil War scholars, and his previous work *Blood and Treasure: Confederate Empire in the Southwest* (Texas A&M University Press, 1995) received praise from academicians and general readers alike.

In the present work Frazier surveys Texas coastal operations during the Civil War. Emphasis is placed upon the loss and recapture of Galveston by the Confederates in 1862-63. Frazier shows clearly that the initial attack by the Confederates attempting to retake the city on New Year's Day was failing when the courage and audacity of Confederate sharpshooters on the cottonclad steamers *Bayou City* and *Neptune* turned the tide. Once recaptured, Galveston remained in Confederate hands for the rest of the war.

Frazier briefly describes other coastal operations including the raid on Sabine Pass in 1862 and the major effort made by Federal forces in 1863 to move up the Pass. Twenty-three photographs, thirteen superb maps, three appendixes, and an annotated bib-

liography are included in the text. This is a volume that will appeal to all who are interested in the Civil War, no matter what their age, occupation, or educational background.

Ralph A. Wooster

Hall, Linda B. *OIL, BANKS, AND POLITICS: THE UNITED STATES AND POSTREVOLUTIONARY MEXICO, 1917-1924*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995. 224p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$40.00, ISBN 0-292-73092-6; Paperback: \$17.95, ISBN 0-292-73101-9. 94-22408.

The involvement of the United States in its quest for foreign oil, particularly from the Middle East, has not been a phenomenon of recent years. Mexico's oil fields had been the object of considerable attention prior to that country's nationalization of almost all foreign oil holdings in 1938. Linda Hall, author of previous books on aspects of the Mexican Revolution years of 1910-1920, now focuses on the Mexican postrevolutionary period relationships among the oil companies and banks and that nation's oil fields.

The stage was set for conflict when the new Mexican Constitution was promulgated May 1, 1917. At issue was Article 27 which reserved subsoil rights, including mineral rights, for the government. The players on this stage were the oil companies and the banks. The oil companies, having had a friendly relationship for years with the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz, had invested millions in the development of Mexico's oil fields. Now they were faced with a more nationalistic postrevolutionary Mexican government and the question of the effect of Article 27 on their property rights and access to petroleum resources. The other major player, the International Bankers' Committee, held much of Mexico's external debt. They wanted to be sure that they would get payment on the debt. The only way Mexico could pay on the debt was from oil revenues from the recalcitrant oil companies, something that previously had not troubled the companies. Add in the involvement of the American administrations of Woodrow Wilson and Warren Harding and their Mexican counterparts of Venustiano Carranza and Alvaro Obregón and the result was a tangled web of competing personal and national interests. Author Hall does an exceptionally fine job of devoting separate chapters to two "wannabes" who tried to use the situation to attain greater power for themselves and ultimately failed in disgrace: Albert B. Fall, senator and later secretary of the interior under President Harding, and Adolfo de la Huerta, interim Mexican president and later secretary of finance under President Obregón.

The book is very well researched and has a fine bibliography of numerous books, articles, newspapers, and archival papers from various American, Mexican, and British sources. Libraries doing collection development in the oil industry, history, business, and political science will want to add this worthwhile title to their collections.

Jon P. Tritsch

IMAGINARY KINGDOM: TEXAS AS SEEN BY THE RIVERA AND RUBÍ MILITARY EXPEDITIONS, 1727 AND 1767. Edited by Jack Jackson and William C. Foster. 272p. Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1995. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$29.95, ISBN 0-87611-145-2.

95-20131.

Imaginary Kingdom was the name given to Spain's New World frontier because of the vaguely defined boundaries of the far-flung territory and the nearly impossible task of defending it. In an effort to govern and protect its claim, Spain established *presidios* and missions, which proved expensive to operate and, because of their remoteness, difficult to administer. During the eighteenth century two expeditions, the Rivera in 1727 and the Rubí in 1767, traveled through the frontier provinces, including Nuevo Leon, Coahuila, and Texas, to inspect the missions and *presidios* and evaluate their military value and economic efficiency. Their findings and recommendations greatly influenced Spanish policy. This book, containing the diaries of both commanders, is particularly important because the Rivera diary has never been published in English and the Rubí diary only recently was located. The diaries, day-by-day records of terrain, climate, and settlement, are supplemented with three other eighteenth-century documents: two summary descriptions of the lands traveled and Rubí's recommendations from his inspection. The text is made even more usable by extensive historical background and annotations and by illustrations, including eight beautiful (though small) color plates of eighteenth-century maps of Spain's frontier.

Judith Linsley

Kavanagh, Thomas W. *COMANCHE POLITICAL HISTORY: AN ETHNOHISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE, 1706-1875*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996. 586p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$45.00, ISBN 0-8032-2730-2. 96-391.

Comanche Political History is nothing if it's not thorough. Meticulously tracing every conceivable development of this Indian tribe from its anthropological origins to its post-reservation existence, Kavanagh maps out the full and complete history of a people and a way of life that has previously defied both scholarly and casual inquiry.

Supplemented with charts and tables, pronunciation guides and photographs, the book serves better as a reference than as pleasure reading. The prose is dense and the information often overwhelming. The volume covers virtually every conceivable aspect of Indian life with this tribe, makes comparisons to other tribes, and offers a wealth of information for any student interested in knowing more about the Comanches and their way of life.

Clay Reynolds

Warren, Betsy. *MOSES AUSTIN AND STEPHEN F. AUSTIN: A GONE TO TEXAS DUAL BIOGRAPHY*. Dallas: Hendrick-Long Publishing Co., 1996. 64p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$26.95, ISBN 0-937460-96-6. 95-13875. (Juvenile)

For many Texas school children, studying Texas history can be dry and boring, but Betsy Warren has discovered a way to make the heroes of Texas come alive. The story follows the Austin family from its roots in England to their eventual settlement in Texas. Warren relates the events in the lives of the Austin family as they make their way across the American frontier and become the founders of Texas. The illustrations and the timeline in the

margins make the story become more real to the reader. The book's audience is age eight and up. The addition of a bibliography and an index provide a way to discover more about the subject. This book would be an excellent addition to any school or public library.

Karen B. Nichols

Winegarten, Ruthe. **BLACK TEXAS WOMEN: A SOURCE-BOOK.** Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996. 336p. Illustrations. Index. Hardcover: \$55.00, ISBN 0-202-79092-9. Paperback: \$24.95, ISBN 0-292-79100-3. 95-41733.

While Winegarten researched materials for *Black Texas Women: 150 Years of Trial and Triumph* (1995), she realized the significance of the original documents for "new and creative interpretations" by scholars who would follow the path she had blazed so arduously. The first book grew to such size, however, that the publisher delayed printing of the documents as well as fifty biographies, and a timeline until now, 1996. Petitions, probate records, wills, letters, census records, privately held rare documents, sometimes only a few lines long, record the trials of the Free Women of Texas, who attempted to remain in Texas despite a mandate in the 1836 Constitution that no person of African descent could reside in Texas without consent of Congress [the Texas legislature]. There follow documents pertaining to the experiences of black women during slavery in education, churches, clubs, arts, politics, communities, and employment.

Though readers of conscience are aware of the abuses endured by black women, no fiction or interpretation in nonfiction can have the impact of original sources. This is seen in the instances of inhuman cruelty visited upon black women by white women, the black women's attempts at contraception to avoid bringing children into slavery, the injustice when they dared take their grievances to a higher authority, and, more recently, the indignities heaped upon them when they sought education in a professional field or recognition in the arts. The timeline, moving from 1777 to 1995, is an idea that developed from the original research, when Winegarten realized how misleading it is to view black women within the context of a timeline established by the white experience. The timeline revealed patterns not recognized earlier, such as the role of laundering as an economic base and the shift from domestic work as a result of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. No library of Texana is complete without both of these volumes. However, were I to have only one, I would choose this sourcebook for the immediacy of the experiences.

Ernestine Sewell Linck

MUSIC

Carr, Joe, and Alan Munde. **PRAIRIE NIGHTS AND NEON LIGHTS: THE STORY OF COUNTRY MUSIC IN WEST TEXAS.** Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 1995. 243p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$35.00, ISBN 0-89672-349-6. 95-051753.

Authors Carr and Munde (both experienced country music performers) examine the evolution of West Texas country music and discuss the legacy of performers such as Bob Wills, Buddy Holly, Roy Orbison, Ernest Tubb, Eck Robertson, and Jimmie Rodgers. Although they acknowledge the stark, harsh terrain and difficult day-to-day life in West Texas as likely sources of

musical inspiration, the authors focus primarily on the cowboy song and the popularity of dance as the dominant factors shaping the music of West Texas, a region the authors geographically define as the part of the state west of the 100th meridian, with Lubbock as its cultural and commercial center.

The text generally follows a chronological format. Concise biographical details about performers and songwriters alternate with general descriptions of styles and musical influences. Ranch dances, traveling medicine shows, fiddle contests, and amateur talent competitions are cited as interdependent influences on the evolution of West Texas country music from the 1880s to the present.

The emergence of Western Swing in the 1930s is characterized as a hybridization of popular American and regional Southwestern dance music styles as exemplified by the contribution of Bob Wills and Hoyle Nix. The 1940s were typified by "honky-tonk," a loud style of music characterized by a strong beat, associated with drinking and brawling, and popularized by performer Ernest Tubb. The authors also mention the migration of West Texas artists to Nashville. Best known among these are Waylon Jennings, Ben Hall, Billy Walker, Sonny Curtis, Mac Davis, Jeannie C. Riley (of "Harper Valley PTA" fame), the Gatlin Brothers, Tanya Tucker, and Bob Montgomery.

The popularity of rock and roll in the 1950s is attributed to the influence of Elvis Presley's "rockabilly," a combination of honky-tonk, boogie-woogie, and rhythm and blues that shaped the musical styles of Buddy Holly, Roy Orbison, and Sonny Curtis. The musical evolution of Buddy Holly is discussed extensively, including his early duo performances with Bob Montgomery, and Holly's undeniable influence on the Beatles.

The final chapters include descriptions of the "Lubbock Sound," a mixture of country and rock music that has continued to develop from the 1970s through the present. Contemporary West Texas performers Terry Allen, Joe Ely, Lynn Morris, and Jimmie Dale Gilmore are mentioned. Projects and programs initiated to preserve regional traditions are discussed, such as the *West Texas Music Hour*, the *West Texas Opry*, Lubbock's annual Cowboy Symposium and Celebration, and the revival of traditional cowboy music by Buck Ramsey of Amarillo.

Prairie Nights to Neon Lights will be useful to country music fans and scholars of Southwestern popular music and culture. The authors' writing style is erudite yet accessible to a general readership. An annotated discography would be helpful.

Daniel Adams

Oliphant, Dave. **TEXAN JAZZ.** Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996. 481p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Paperback: \$24.95, ISBN 0-292-71096-8. 95-4416.

Texan Jazz is the book about Texans' impact on the world of jazz. Oliphant tells the stories of many well-known jazz artists and in that telling the story of jazz as a movement. Some of the artists covered include Scott Joplin, Buster Smith, Eddie Smith, Sippie Wallace, Charlie Parker, Herschel Evans, and Hot Lips Page. The book details the lives, careers, and recordings of individual artists and the groups in which they performed. One of the few books on this subject, it will serve as an excellent example for other writers. The bibliography provides ample sources for

further research in related subjects, and the index covers persons, places, and titles of songs. *Texan Jazz* is worth purchasing for anyone attracted to jazz. It should be added to music collections at the public and academic levels.

Karen B. Nichols

NATURAL HISTORY

Meinzer, Wyman. *COYOTE*. Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 1995. 128p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Hardcover: \$37.50, ISBN 0-89672-352-6; Paperback: \$19.95, ISBN 0-89672-353-4. 95-31162.

This small, attractive volume covers the coyote's natural history from the basic description (males and females may be distinguished at a distance) to behavior. Meinzer covers such subjects as habits and biology, hunting and predation, home ranges, disease and injury, courtship and denning, vocalizing, and general behavior as well as folklore and misconceptions concerning this species. Well over half of the book consists of outstanding colored photographs by the author of the coyote depicting his life cycle.

Coyote would be useful in public libraries and in the libraries of elementary, middle, and high schools. Even college and university libraries might find a place on their shelves for it. The book is authentic and easy to read. To quote the author in his epilogue: "Coyotes have fascinated humans longer than written history. . . Revered and hated, persecuted and studied, the coyote is an animal whose time has come."

Jed J. Ramsey

SCIENCE

Tant, Carl. *SCIENCE FAIR FOR NON-SCIENTISTS*. Angleton: Biotech Publishing, 1996. 118p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Paperback: \$16.95, ISBN 1-880319-16-0. 96-96352.

What do dancing shoes, superstitions, cooking, advertising, mud, and human behavior have to do with science fair projects? These topics and others can be developed into winning science fair projects by using the scientific method of research which Carl Tant demonstrates in this new publication. Modeled after his top-selling book *Science Fair Spelled W-I-N*, cookbook or step-by-step projects are avoided. Instead, open-ended projects are presented to stimulate thinking and adaptation to individual circumstances. Important information, such as science fair rules, the standard steps of scientific research, how to display the project, and what to expect from the judges, is given to help the participant create a winning science fair project.

All middle and high school students who have to produce a science fair project will find this book extremely helpful. It is suitable for both novices and the more accomplished.

Shirley Brown

SOCIAL LIFE AND CUSTOMS

Hamm, Jim. *ISHI & ELVIS*. Azle: Bois d' Arc Press, 1995. 153p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$19.95, ISBN 0-9645741-0-1.

In lyrical language, Jim Hamm describes his ranch and his quest to kill with a bow and arrow a magnificently large buck deer he observes there. During his pursuit of several years, Hamm ruminates on numerous subjects close to his heart. Foremost are his reverence for his Hill Country acreage and his desire to restore it to what nature first created. He speaks on the flora and fauna there, remarking that the so-called "balance of nature is no balance at all, but a constant ebb and flow." After instructing the reader on the history, both ancient and modern, of bow making, he speaks of Ishi, the only surviving member of a Stone Age tribe, discovered in 1911 in California. Ishi taught and inspired a new interest in hunting game with handmade weapons. Elvis is the name Hamm bestows on the great deer who so obviously is the king of the wildlife on Hamm's property and who skillfully eludes the bowyer until the surprising ending. The reader learns about the natural history of deer, conservation of habitat and wildlife, and the profit hunting provides for landowners. Occasional humor teases a smile from the reader, when Hamm jests that "it's a little-known fact that clumsy Paleolithic flintknappers actually invented cursing." His powerful descriptions of a thunder storm during a brush fire reveal his creativity with language: "Heavy with moisture, the air became still as a cellar, making the sweat stream down our faces. Lighting darted once through the cloud. . . Such a dark flashing cloud behind the smear of smoke was positively primordial, like the beginning of the world."

Not only bow hunters, but conservationists and general readers will enjoy reading this marvelous, small book. Hamm is a writer to watch.

Sally Dooley

Pittman, Blair. *I.C. EASON, KING OF THE DOG PEOPLE*. Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1996. 129p. Illustrations. Index. Hardcover: \$24.95, ISBN 1-57441-021-1. 95-26622.

By spending a great deal of time with I.C. Eason, Blair Pittman captured the spirit of the man in this collection of his tales. The black-and-white photographs enhance the reader's understanding of Eason and his locale. His "kingdom" is within an hour's drive north of Beaumont, and the time is relatively recent. Except for a few geographical and chronological references, however, one might mistakenly assume it was in Appalachia or Georgia's Cracker country in the 1800s. The stories range from colorful ancestral lore about a family incident during the Civil War to a recent encounter with timber interests. Eason was the consummate raconteur with a charming homespun way of keeping the listener interested and on his side regardless of the legalities. Some of the yarns border on the incredible, such as the one during which he claims to have been able to predict unfailingly the sex of any unborn baby on many occasions. The story of I. C.'s and his mother's moonshine experience is a wonderful story as are the other memories he describes of his life with this unique woman.

Times were always tough for these folk and they survived by living off of what the land provided. They did not tolerate "outsiders" well and defended their domain and their way of life stubbornly and aggressively. Although neither Pittman nor

Eason explains the origin of their "Dog People" name, it seems to fit, especially when thought of in the context of the junkyard or Pit Bull varieties.

A.R. Dooley, Jr.

TRAVEL

Parent, Lawrence. **TEXAS SCENIC DRIVES**. Helena: Falcon Press Publishing Co., Inc., 1995. 178p. Illustrations. Paperback: \$14.95, ISBN 1-56044-339-1.

These descriptions of thirty beautiful Texas drives could be useful whether planning a lengthy vacation or a day's outing. The scenic drives are scattered throughout the state and include such places as Guadalupe Pass, Palo Duro Canyon, Enchanted Rock, Rio Grande Valley, and Big Thicket National Preserve. Each entry includes a general depiction and mileage, special attractions, location on a state map, highway numbers, best seasons for enjoying the route, availability of camping and other services, nearby attractions, plus addresses and telephone numbers for more information. Each article includes a narrative of the drive, area geology and history, and local plants and wildlife. Special activities such as fishing, hiking, or river tubing are mentioned. Eight pages of colored photographs and an appended suggested reading list add to the value of this handy travel guide. Designed to aid those who enjoy driving throughout Texas, this book will also be a source for middle and high school students for geographical and geological information and some local history.

Frances M. Ramsey

Contributors

Daniel Adams is Associate Professor of Music and Director of the Fine Arts Resource Center at Texas Southern University in Houston. He is the composer of numerous published musical compositions and the author of several articles and reviews on various topics related to twentieth century music.

Pamela Brashier is a library technical assistant at the Mary & John Gray Library at Lamar University. She has worked at Lamar for fifteen years.

Shirley Brown is a retired teacher. She taught for thirty-one years for the Beaumont Independent School District and has presented science workshops for the Beaumont School District and Region V Education Service Center.

A.R. Dooley, Jr., a Beaumont businessman, is a graduate of the University of Texas at Austin.

Sally Dooley is the founding editor of **REVIEW OF TEXAS BOOKS**.

Jo Harper teaches English at the University of Houston Downtown. She is the author of several children's books including the Book of the Month Club selection **JALOPENO HAL**.

Brenda L. Herbel has completed two B.A.'s and is a graduate student in history at the University of Texas-Permian Basin, where she is employed by the Murry H. Fly Learning Resources Center at Odessa College.

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.

Ernestine Sewell Linck, retired Professor of English at the University of Texas at Arlington, is author of **EATS: A FOLK HISTORY OF TEXAS FOODS** and more recently **HOW THE CIMARRON RIVER GOT ITS NAME AND OTHER STORIES ABOUT COFFEE**.

Judith Linsley is Research Assistant at the McFaddin-Ward House Museum and Education Coordinator at the Tyrrell Historical Library, both in Beaumont. She co-authored **THE MCFADDIN-WARD HOUSE** and articles for the **TEXAS GULF HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL RECORD**.

Sarah Matheny is Assistant Professor in the College of Education and Human Development, Department of Professional Pedagogy, Lamar University.

Paul W. Miller, a fourth grade teacher, is a Lamar University graduate with certification in secondary and elementary education. Currently he is working towards a M.A. in elementary education.

Karen B. Nichols is Assistant Professor and Coordinator of Library Instruction at Lamar University in Beaumont. She has a B.S. in theater and a M.S. in communication from Lamar University, and a M.S. in library science from the University of North Texas in Denton.

Andrew Preslar has degrees from the University of Texas at Austin and Lamar University. He is a poet and short story writer and has taught English at Lamar University since 1983.

Frances M. Ramsey is a retired librarian for the Beaumont ISD. She received her B.S. from Kansas State University and her library certification at Oklahoma State University. She reviews science books for **THE BOOK REPORT**.

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

Clay Reynolds is a freelance writer in Denton. His latest titles are a novel, **FRANKLIN'S CROSSING**, and a history, **A HUNDRED YEARS OF HEROES: A HISTORY OF THE SOUTHWESTERN EXPOSITION AND LIVESTOCK SHOW**, co-authored with Marie-Madeleine Schein.

Jon P. Tritsch is the Serials Cataloger with the Mary and John Gray Library. His M.L.S. is from Emporia State University, and he has a M.A. in American History from Sam Houston State University.

Sarah Tusa is the Serials Acquisitions Librarian at the Mary and John Gray Library of Lamar University. She holds a B.A. from Rice University, a M.A. in German Literature from Trinity University, and the M.L.I.S. from the University of Texas at Austin.

Ralph A. Wooster, Professor of History at Lamar University, is the author of four books, one textbook, and numerous articles in professional journals.

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