

Review of Texas Books

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Jesús De La Teja is the author of *San Antonio De Bexar: A Community on New Spain's Northern Frontier* (1995) and the editor of *A Revolution Remembered: The Memoirs and Selected Correspondence of Juan N. Seguin* (1991). He is an associate professor of history at Southwest Texas State University and the book review editor for the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*. Teja is the author of several studies on Spanish colonial and Mexican Texas.

Dale Farris holds a master's degree from the University of Texas at Austin and a bachelor's degree from Lamar University. He is a professional reviewer for *Library Journal*, *Quality Press*, and *Quality Progress* magazines. He is completing a degree in computer information systems.

Editors' Choice:

A Revolution Remembered: The Memoirs and Selected Correspondence of Juan N. Seguin. 2nd Edition

Jesús F. De La Teja, editor

Seguin Reconstituted
Review by Dale Farris

Author De La Teja (*San Antonio De Bexar*) updates his important critical analysis of the memoirs of Juan Nepomuceno Seguin, an enigmatic, famous Tejano, probably most well known because of Jesus S. Trevino's 1979 film *Seguin* and James Stuart Olson's and Randy W. Robert's 2001 book *A Line in the Sand*. Seguin has been the subject of, or a central character in, several historical works, and these works all rely on Seguin's own brief memoirs as a central source of information.

However, these famous, albeit brief memoirs (only thirty-two pages), until now have never been critically analyzed nor annotated, and few other documents concerning Seguin have been published. De La Teja succeeds in overcoming this historical gap, providing a standard in this highly specialized niche of original-source Texana document analysis that will be of great importance to all future Texas historians.

Seguin claims to have originally written the memoirs, which were first published in 1858, in 1842 in response to critics who insisted that he betrayed the Texan cause of 1842. His memoirs also served his own political agenda with his narrow focus on his military and political actions, while adding his sad account of his family's misfortunes during the Texas War of Independence. His intention in publishing his memoirs was to demonstrate his innocence of the allegations of treason, which were never formalized in judicial charges. He portrays himself as a loyal champion of the Texas cause, a patriot whose innocent actions were twisted into treasonous ones by his personal enemies.

De La Teja's purpose is to supplement Seguin's memoirs in more decisive terms and to illustrate the possibilities for original research on early Tejano leaders. The book is not a biography of Seguin (another story yet to

be told), but instead a highly intriguing combination of De La Teja's illuminating essay on Seguin's formative years, "The Making of a Tejano," Seguin's actual memoirs with all the original flavor, and an edited presentation of the memoirs which have been annotated to clarify and correct the text.

Today, Juan N. Seguin is now recognized as not just a hero for Texans of Mexican descent, but for all Texans, because of his unique contribution to Texas history. Appointed to rank of captain by Stephen F. Austin, he escaped the fate of the Alamo defenders when he was ordered to make his way with a plea for reinforcements through the Mexican lines surrounding the Alamo. Commended for his actions at the Battle of San Jacinto, Seguin was promoted by Sam Houston to the command of San Antonio. He collected the ashes of the Alamo defenders, conducted the military burial, and delivered the funeral oration.

This is a superb historical analysis that combines Seguin's rare, 160-year-old original source memoirs with crafted history and expert editorial work. De La Teja has provided a wealth of information for serious historians and a readable and informative account for anyone interested in early Texas and the influence of Mexican Texans.

DE LA TEJA, JESÚS F. ED. *A REVOLUTION REMEMBERED: THE MEMOIRS AND SELECTED CORRESPONDENCE OF JUAN N. SEGUIN*. 2ND EDITION. AUSTIN: TEXAS STATE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION. 2002. 216 PP. APPENDICES, BIBLIOGRAPHY, ILLUSTRATIONS, INDEX. \$19.95 PAPER. ISBN 0-87611-185.



Featured Publisher: *Texas State Historical Association*

A member of the Texas A&M Consortium, the Texas State Historical Association is the oldest learned society in the state. It was founded in 1897 with the mission of fostering the appreciation, understanding, teaching, and publication of the unique and rich history of Texas. The association specializes in the publication and promotion of books of Texas history and Texana.

Sam Houston Is My Hero Judy Alter

**Teenaged Girl Rides to Get Recruits for
Houston's Army**
Review by Stephen Curley

March 1836: The news in Bastrop is bad, real bad. Cat Jennings' father isn't coming back—he died at the Alamo along with the rest of the Texans. There isn't even a body to bury; the Mexicans burned them all. Not only that, but Sam Houston needs fighting men desperately, yet the word hasn't gotten out. Cat's practical way of dealing with her hurt is to get angry, get over it, and then get going.

"Sam Houston is my hero," she tells us. "And some folks think what I did was heroic, but, shucks, I was only doing what had to be done." Spunky as only a 14-year-old girl could be, she waits until her mother cries herself to sleep then saddles a horse and rides off to spread the news. She remembers learning how Paul Revere alerted the colonists to rally against the British—she plans to follow his example.

But her task is fraught with difficulties she had not anticipated. First off, she's a girl riding alone in a man's countryside. After a creepy encounter with the wrong sort of men, she tries to disguise herself—although not very successfully—as a boy. The best part of the novel is on the road. Cat's Texas trail with its scattered farmhouses is like Huck Finn's Mississippi River with its occasional landings. The characters she meets respond to her call-to-arms in different ways. Some are indifferent; some, negative; some, inspired. We believe that this is just how real people must have reacted then, before the story of the Texas

Revolution became the stuff of simplified legend.

What surprises her most is how critical and skeptical many are about Sam Houston. His nickname "Big Drunk," his unconventional Indian dress, and his angry outbursts make it hard to drum up recruits. And those who do join him are tired of retreating and heartsick of his burning towns along the way. Why doesn't he take a stand and fight? Is he an incompetent coward or a brilliant strategist? Finally, she meets him and judges for herself. She joins his camp as they trek toward what will become the Battle of San Jacinto. From the start, she has dedicated herself to revenging her father's death. Now that she sees what battle death actually looks like, she has second thoughts. The psychological interest of the book comes from Cat's gradually maturing judgment about life, love (she has teasing skirmishes with a neighbor boy who also joined Houston), and death. There is no doubt that the historical context is effectively realized, but one wishes that the character of Cat had been fleshed out more. At times, she seems little more than a sounding board for opinions about Sam Houston and the Revolution.

ALTER, JUDY. *SAM HOUSTON IS MY HERO*. FORT WORTH: TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2003. 140 PP. ILLUSTRATIONS. \$11.95 PAPER. ISBN 0-87565-277-8.

Hard Scrabble: Observations on a Patch of Land John Graves

**A Republished Classic: The Wise Old Coot
Writes Like an Angel**
Review by Stephen Curley

Robert Frost once said he had a lover's quarrel with the world. John Graves has a lover's quarrel with the unforgiving and spent patch of Texas badlands that he calls Hard Scrabble. Thank God. It gave us this beautifully written, loose and baggy intellectual travelogue—a great book by a writer worth knowing. And kudos to Southern Methodist University Press for republishing it.

The book is really an anthology of short
(Continued on page four)

Judy Alter has written six adult novels, seven young-adult novels, and a score of non-fiction books for young adults (including the 1998 Sam Houston: A Leader for Texas). In the Afterword, she says she first heard the true account of Cat Jennings from her great grandfather. She worked the story and the added background of the Texas Revolution into a nicely fictionalized coming-of-age story. Alter, a resident of Fort Worth, has won awards from the National Cowboy Hall of Fame, Western Writers of America, and the Texas Institute of Letters.

Stephen Curley holds a Ph.D. from Rice University. He is a professor of English at Texas A&M University at Galveston. He is a frequent contributor to *Review of Texas Books*.

John Graves, mainly a writer of essays and short stories, has but two books to his name: *Goodbye to a River* (1960) and *Hard Scrabble* (1974). They're both gems. Few writers have accomplished so much. In his new afterword to the 2002 edition of *Hard Scrabble*, Graves writes, "I remain fond of this book. It seems to say what I wanted to say." It ought to be required reading for anyone who claims to be an aficionado of Texana and a lover of well-crafted writing. You don't have to be a Texan to see why this book is a classic.

Lloyd M. Daigrepoint is professor of English at Lamar University and co-editor of *Lamar Journal of the Humanities*. His major area of specialization is American Literature. Recent interests include Mark Twain, Edith Wharton, and Larry McMurtry.

(Continued from page three)

pieces, but everything is focused around the natural history and regional history of the place with some extremely relevant irrelevancies thrown in. Listen to a tale, told in rich Texas dialect, of moonshiners and law enforcement. Meet the illegal migrant workers who make farming and ranching economically possible. Eavesdrop on a poignant moment between two wounded marines (Graves was wounded at Saipan during the Second World War).

Hard Scrabble is the setting. Its 380 acres lie ten miles east of the 98th meridian in Texas' Somervell County. Like most land in the American West, it has suffered unkind treatment throughout history by Indians and Anglo settlers because—well, fresh land was always available elsewhere as soon as this scrap got used up. It now faces economic extinction.

John Graves is the character. And what a character. A self-confessed O.F. (old fart), he is trying to treat the land right, maybe eke some profit from it, and leave it at least marginally better when he's through with it and it is through with him. The only ownership worth mentioning, says Graves, isn't on a deed but in your head. In other words, you can't live off the land unless you live intimately with it, persistently on it. That's just what Graves does. It ain't easy. You watch him earn his hard-knock education in bee keeping, stone house building, cedar hacking, goat raising, varmint watching, and the like.

You get the feeling after reading these lovingly detailed descriptions about the work that you could do it too—if you had his patience, his respect for the real world tangible things, his respectful knowledge of nature, and his indefatigable energy. Of course, you can't because you don't. And—wonderfully—that makes the reading of this book all the more entrancing.

And what sentences. Graves writes as if he were inventing syntax. You'll find yourself mightily impressed by unexpectedly precise words, flashy phrases, stunning word order, and pithy profundity. I found myself happy to stop here and there so I could read out loud—just to hear it, and think about it. Graves has been compared to E.B. White and Henry David Thoreau. Had Emily Dickinson written longer prose, she might have sounded something like John Graves.

Toward the end, Graves gets up on his admittedly shaky soapbox to preach about the wisdom of using a light touch when handling abused land. He doesn't anticipate "Amens"—he's too much of two minds about most things to expect that even he can agree with everything he says. He's justifiably cranky at times with what he sees as "sorrowful and wrong" with contemporary society, but he remains unfailingly affable: "I have been barred always from glumness by the rather ridiculous fact that I've liked so many people I've known and have always been so bloody glad to be alive."

If you've read the book already, come back for a second visit. You're older now—and Graves will wow you with his underlying sense of creeping mortality and not going gently into any good night. If you've never read it before, you have an unalloyed treat in store. This "detached and bookish moseyer" will win you over and cause you to become lost in thought and astonishment.

JOHN GRAVES, *HARD SCRABBLE: OBSERVATIONS ON A PATCH OF LAND*. DALLAS: SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2002. 271 PP. \$14.95 PAPER. ISBN 0-87074-474-4/720.

The Callings Henry Chappell

The Called and the Chosen in Frontier Texas
Lloyd M. Daigrepoint

The scene is the grasslands of the Texas Panhandle less than two years before Quanah Parker's attack upon the Adobe Walls trading post and the United States Army's subsequent mission to hunt him down. Inspired by mystical "callings," the aging warrior Cuts Something persuades his people to abandon the reservation near Fort Sill, where government beef allotments are degradingly meager. Among the canyons of West Texas, the self-liberated tribe not only discover one of the few remaining bison herds but also rediscover their Comanche identity—as hunters, warriors, and raiders—and they plan to align themselves with Quanah as the hungry season passes.

Intermittently, the focus of the novel shifts to small groups of white buffalo hunters intent on taking hides for profit and fully aware that they are destroying the last of the great herds. Among these is Logan Fletcher,

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American ingenue—Bible quoting and sexually abstinent son of a Methodist circuit-rider, convinced that he has inherited his father's gift for faith healing and that "God's plan" has brought him to the frontier to earn two dollars a day, notions only vaguely questioned when Fletcher considers the violence of his occupation and of attacks by Kiowa and Comanche warriors. As the paths of Cuts Something and Fletcher inevitably cross, the young *skinner*—suggestively—comes to haunt the Comanche chieftain, his resilience, luck, and naïve convictions bewilderingly emblematic of the white man's inexorability.

Readers of Cooper will appreciate Chappell's ironic juxtaposition of notions spawned by the idea of Manifest Destiny and the cultural and environmental devastation it excused. Readers of Larry McMurtry will appreciate this novel's fascinating attention to details of frontier hardship and savage violence. Like McMurtry, Chappell knows his subject but is not above postmodernist infusion of unexpectedly grotesque developments, as when rape victim and former captive Elizabeth Keltner (whose girlish demeanor beguiles Fletcher into romantic idealization) suddenly castrates a fallen Comanche.

The novel's anticlimactic ending may signify a sequel or may be yet another aspect of postmodernist untowardness. This volume also betrays dire need of responsible proofreading. Numerous are the typographical errors: *woman* for *women* and *vice versa* (145, 220), *trial* for *trail* (217), *past* for *passed* (163), *to* looked (180), and so on. One wonders also if *okay* and *Bring it on!* (159, 169, 209) were really current on the frontier in the 1870s, and the suggestion that one scene strikes Fletcher as "surreal" (160) may be anachronistic as well. Still, readers will find *The Callings* not only readable but for the most part well-written with enough historical detail and excitement to sustain interest and suspend disbelief.



CHAPPELL, HENRY. *THE CALLINGS*. LUBBOCK: TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2002. 245 PP. \$24.95 CLOTH, ISBN 0-89672-494-8. 2002-010537.

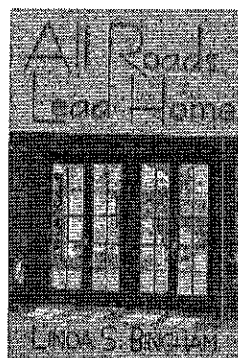
All Roads Lead Home Linda S. Bingham

The Ties That Bind

Review by Sally Dooley

An absorbing story of three different daughters and their mother begins when they gather together in the small East Texas town of Trinity for Christmas. Their mother makes an announcement that serves as a catalyst in each of their lives. Claudia is unemployed in the Houston real estate market and can't say no to Walker, her ex-husband whom she divorced not once, but twice. Carol Ann is a middle aged spiritual hippie, while Mary Catherine is the devoted homemaker in Trinity. This Christmas catches all three daughters and several of their children in grave situations. There are all sorts of suitors, philanderers, and teenagers looking for love in all the wrong places. Mixed in to make a good read are a lonely middle-aged divorced man, a murder, and the death of one husband. The story is ably told, and there is action to keep one turning the pages, but the book falters. Driving the plot is the premise that a forty-three-year-old educated man could fall deeply in love with a nineteen-year-old immature girl, and this wears thin. Some of the characters are developed, but many never achieve a flesh-and-blood reality. At any rate, by the end of the novel, everyone is happy, problems are solved, and all the lovers kiss and make up.

Bingham's previous novel *Born on the Island* showed the kind of excellent novel writing about multi-generational families that she is capable of doing. Unfortunately, this novel doesn't measure up to it.



BINGHAM, LINDA S. *ALL ROADS LEAD HOME*. AUSTIN: EAKIN PRESS, 2003. 305 PP. \$24.95 PAPER. ISBN 1-57168-774-2. 2002156752.

Award winning author Henry Chappell is also the author of *At Home on the Range with a Texas Hunter and Blood Kin: A Haunting Novel of Early Texas*.

Linda Bingham is the author of several novels, including *Born on the Island* and *What the Librarian Heard*.

Sally Dooley, founding editor of *Review of Texas Books*, is a graduate of the University of Texas at Austin. She is a prolific reviewer who greatly respects Texas writers and their diversity.

Julie Lake lives in Austin, Texas. *Galveston's Summer of the Storm* is her first novel.

Jane Gilmore Rushing, now deceased, is the author of six other novels, including *Winds of Blame*, which earned the Texas Literary Award for Fiction. She was a distinguished alumna of Texas Tech University and a member of Texas Institute of Letters.



Galveston's Summer of the Storm Julie Lake

A Historic Gulf Coast Catastrophe
Review by Sally Dooley

This debut novel for juvenile readers provides an entertaining story while describing daily life in Texas at the turn of the century and the deadly 1900 Galveston hurricane. A fourteen-year-old Austin girl, Abby Kate, rides the train to visit her grandmother in Galveston for three weeks. When her brother back home comes down with diphtheria, her visit stretches on into the summer. She misses her home and family, but she enjoys the new activities in Galveston: the cousins, the beach, and new friends. Her adventures and misadventures match those of preadolescent readers. The islanders know a storm is coming, but they are totally unprepared for the magnitude of winds, rains, and tides. It is estimated that around 6,000-8,000 people perished. In particularly vivid scenes, the author uses details to depict the fear, desperation, and utter horror the residents of this port city and Abby Kate experienced. Through the suspenseful narrative, this girl learns to trust herself more, care about others, and still have fun. Julie Lake demonstrates sensitivity to the developmental problems young girls then and now must work through to mature. This is another in the fine Chapparral Book for Young Readers from TCU Press.

LAKE, JULIE. *GALVESTON'S SUMMER OF THE STORM*. FORT WORTH: TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2003. 158 PP. \$16.95 PAPER. ISBN 0-87565-272-7. 2002153609.

Mary Dove Jane Gilmore Rushing

Not Your Usual Western Romance
Review by Sally Dooley

As its eleventh publication, Texas Tech University Press' Double Mountain Books reprints *Mary Dove* as one of its Classic Reissues of the American West. A thoughtful new introduction by Lou Halsell Rodenberger points out the differences in this love story set at the edge of the Texas frontier in the last part of the nineteenth century. Like many of

Rushing's heroines, Mary Dove is a strong woman. She is different in that she grew up in an idyllic setting away from people. This was how her now-deceased father protected her from racial prejudice. When she encounters Red, a cowboy, their love is strong until Red realizes she is a mulatto. Red does not display characteristics of the mythical cowboy; instead he is sensitive and experiences a true moral dilemma. The farm and ranch community surrounding them is violently prejudiced against racial mixing. Rushing's careful handling of miscegenation and the lovers' way of solving the problem is believable, making them true people and not stereotypical western lovers.

When first published by Doubleday in 1974, *Mary Dove* did not enjoy immediate success here although it did win the LeBaron R. Barker, Jr. Fiction Award and was printed into several foreign languages. Looking back on it in a second edition, one can clearly observe that this is Rushing's finest novel. She died in 1997 but left this and six other novels. Because of her ability to depict a sense of place so well and to present characters with which the reader can empathize, Rushing is an important Texas writer. She lived most of her life in West Texas and was a member of the Texas Institute of Letters.

RUSHING, JANE GILMORE. *MARY DOVE*. LUBBOCK: TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2003. 209 PP. \$16.95 PAPER. ISBN 0-89672-503-0. 2002153609.

A Texas Family Time Capsule Ruth Pennebaker

Dallas Morning News Family Life Columnist Shares Her Best Columns
Review by Dale Farris

Dallas Morning News columnist Pennebaker provides a collection of her past *DMN* columns, as well as a few others that appeared in *The New York Times*, *American Way*, *Redbook*, and *Special Reports-Family*. The eighty-three short columns are organized into fourteen thematic chapters that include "In a Family Way," "Pregnancy and Motherhood," "Multiplication and Division," "Marital Relationships," "Men and Women-Women and Men," "Aging-But Forget About the Gracefully Part," "Too Damned Many Growth Experiences," "Moving On,"

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and others on the family-life perspective.

The columns are mostly about family life, human emotions, how we live together, how we love each other, and how we drive each other nuts, all from this author's unique perspective on America and Texas and her one and only peculiar household. With her many years of steady publishing of these humorous heartfelt columns, readers of the *DMN* have come to look forward to the regular Sunday morning pleasure of settling in with author Pennebaker's blend of sharp insight and gentle humor, as she reveals the goings on of her faithful family.

Pennebaker's brief, delightful columns, written in an informal, reader-friendly style, nicely complement the personal family musings genre established by Prudence Mackintosh and will amuse readers interested in maintaining their sense of humor as they sail through the joys of life.

Recommended for all Texas public libraries, especially in North Central Texas.

PENNEBAKER, RUTH. *A TEXAS FAMILY TIME*. CAPSULE PLANO: REPUBLIC OF TEXAS PRESS, 2002. 239 PP. \$16.95 PAPER. ISBN 1-55622-894-5.

Holocaust Survivor: Mike Jacobs's Triumph Over Tragedy Mike Jacobs Ginger Jacobs, editor

**Dallas Holocaust Memorial Center Founder
Shares His Memoir of Surviving the
Holocaust**
Review by Dale Farris

Founder of the Dallas Holocaust Memorial Center, Mike Jacobs was born (Mendel Jakubowicz) in 1925 near the German border in a small Polish town, Konin, about 120 miles from Warsaw, where the Jewish community dated from 1397. Jacobs was a teenager during WWII, and in his memoir he recounts his five years of confinement in ghettos and concentration camps and his current life's work to maintain a memory of the Holocaust in the minds of future generations.

Renowned Jewish historian Simon Dubnow has been said to have challenged his fellow Holocaust survivors to "write and record," a task Jacobs has seriously taken to heart. Jacobs has told his story many times to thousands of people, and he has recorded his testimony on video tape. Now, he records his memoir for readers all over the world.

This powerful, moving story begins with four chapters on Jacobs's early days in Konin, followed by twenty-three chapters on his war years and the post-war years in Germany. The remaining two chapters discuss how he came to live in Dallas and create the Dallas Holocaust Memorial Center.

In addition to explaining how he learned to survive under unbelievably intolerable conditions, Jacobs also teaches about community, helping others, and the peace that comes with time. Readers will naturally be drawn to the gripping story of how Jacobs survived the concentration camp, how he was able to maintain his self respect, and how he learned resistance whenever the opportunity arose, but they will also be equally impressed with his commitment to never letting others forget the horrible truth that is the Jewish Holocaust.

Jacobs relates his memoir of his Holocaust experience through the use of transcribed tapes of his story as told to many audiences, in interviews, and by dictation. His voice in the memoir is presented as the teenager he was during the war years, and his English is somewhat different from that spoken by people born in the U.S. Fortunately for readers, editor Ginger Jacobs (the author's spouse) has retained the integrity of his speech patterns and vocabulary, as well as expressions, further enriching this already moving story.

The author's triumph over evil and tragedy continues to have its effect, and his important story will serve as an inspiration to all readers. Because of Jacobs's key leadership role with the Dallas Holocaust Memorial Center, this title is essential for all Texas libraries.

JACOBS, MIKE. *HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR: MIKE JACOB'S TRIUMPH OVER TRAGEDY*. ED. GINGER JACOBS. AUSTIN: EAKIN PRESS, 2001. 216 PP. APPENDICES, GLOSSARY, ILLUSTRATIONS, INDEX, NOTES. \$19.95 PAPER. ISBN 1-57168-472-7.

Ruth Pennebaker is the author of two humor books and three young adult novels. She has written widely for newspapers, magazines, public television, and radio.

Mike Jacobs continues to speak to students, organizations, churches, and anyone who will listen, and, at this point, has probably reached about 500,000 people. He also aids therapists who work with clients with emotional problems, as well as individuals with emotional difficulties, and he has even achieved success in changing the attitudes of some skinheads and other neonazis who have heard him speak.

George Arnold was born in Missouri but grew up in Texas in the 1950s. He received both his bachelor of journalism and master of arts in communication degrees from the University of Texas at Austin. Since retiring, he and Mary, his wife of almost forty years, live on a small ranch in the Texas Hill Country raising various animals and growing hay.

Cristie Ferguson is the Distance Learning, Reference, and Instructional Librarian at Panola College in Carthage, Texas. She holds a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education with certifications in elementary education, reading, and library resources, as well as a master's degree from Texas A&M at Commerce. She is currently pursuing graduate studies at the University of North Texas School of Library and Informational Sciences.

Growing Up Simple . . . In Texas: An Irreverent Look at Kids in the 1950s George Arnold

Laugh out Loud!

Review by Cristie Ferguson

Those of us born before or after this generation of Texans never had this much fun. George Arnold kindly invites us into the formative years of his life. He shares with us the hilarious escapades he and his friends created as they grew up in the shadow of the state's capital and the University of Texas campus. Along the way, we meet his loving family and the colorful friends he calls the *In-Betweeners* and *Pranksters*. Both titles are well deserved and should be carried as badges of honor. These characters are not your usual juvenile delinquents. On the contrary, they are the high achievers. They are indeed the thought-provoking leaders that just know how to have good clean fun. They shaped each other's lives and in turn have shaped ours whether we knew it or not.

The era described is chronologically documented through sixteen vignettes. Each could be a stand-alone short story. With laugh-out-loud humor, Arnold shares the story of five young overachievers with the time and freedom to be creative while learning life's important lessons. Through the participants' unbelievable hijinks, the reader receives an unfiltered glimpse of life in Texas in the 1950s: a time when kids could be kids and no one expected them to be anything else. This is a generation or half-generation that we could stand to learn a lot from. They tried hard to save the world from itself and contributed to it eagerly. The reader will be left feeling nostalgic for life in simpler times and desiring more irreverence—not to be confused with disrespect. This is an excellent book for any public or academic library. Readers familiar with the Austin area at all will especially find it endearing. From the Foreword to the Epilogue, readers will laugh, cry, and wish for more.

ARNOLD, GEORGE. *GROWING UP SIMPLE . . . IN TEXAS: AN IRREVERENT LOOK AT KIDS IN THE 1950S*. AUSTIN: EAKIN PRESS, 2002. 231 PP. PHOTOGRAPHS. \$22.95 CLOTH. ISBN 1-57168-687-8.

Horned Toad Canyon Joyce Gibson Roach

**Children's Book with Horned Toad Hero a
Delight**

Review by Mary M. Fisher

In this engaging story, a clumsy hawk named Harris, a quick thinking rattlesnake named Buzz, and a brave horned lizard named Tuck share the stage with a cast of animal and human characters on an imaginary Southwestern prairie called Horned Toad Canyon. Joyce Gibson Roach, author of award-winning fiction and non-fiction works on the Southwest, spins a tale of triumph over danger aimed at elementary school age readers. Woven into her lively narrative are facts about horned lizards—such as that they eat red ants and dig themselves under the sand—and Southwest lingo. More information on horned lizards and the language of the Southwest is found at the back of the book. A six page essay, accompanied by a range map, summarizes the animals' habits and natural history. It is followed by a glossary and lists of cowboy, Spanish, and Aztec words used in the text as well as a mini bibliography of books on horned lizards. Noted illustrator Charles Shaw brings the story alive with evocative pen and ink watercolor sketches. The entertaining and edifying book should appeal both to parents and librarians not only in the Southwest, but across the country.

ROACH, JOYCE GIBSON. *HORNED TOAD CANYON*. ALBANY: BRIGHT SKY PRESS, 2003. 46 PP. GLOSSARY, ILLUSTRATIONS. \$17.95 CLOTH. ISBN 1-931721-01-7.

Grit and Glory: Six-Man Football Laura Wilson

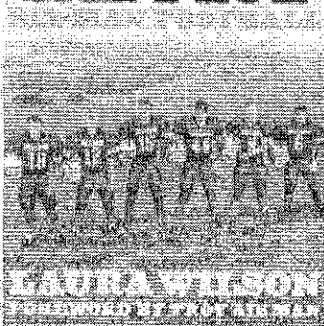
Book Chronicles Under-the-Radar Sport
Review by Mary M. Fisher

In Texas, where football is king, a variant of the state's premier sport flourishes below the radar. Six-man football, invented in 1934 for fewer players on a smaller field, finds favor in small towns across America. In Texas, it flourishes in communities like Cherokee,
(Continued on page nine)

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Guthrie, Cristobal, and Zephyr. Judging from nearly ninety black and white images (including two on the end papers) captured by photographer Laura Wilson, less is definitely as much if not more in terms of excitement, action and drama. Shot between 2001 and 2002 at a dozen and a half small town Texas locations, the photographs depict all the requisite elements for a high school contest save for the bands at half time: cheerleaders, coaches, fans and players. But the rural sense is what sets them apart. For example, one of the most telling of the mostly full page photos depicts a lone player sprinting under an airborne ball in front of what appears to be an oil derrick. Another shows a pair of cheerleaders striking a pose on an Aeromotor windmill. Then there is the pep rally in a downtown reminiscent of *The Last Picture Show*. Noting that playing fields were often crudely lit, Porter notes of her photography, "my style fit the sport—direct and pared down." Her essay detailing, among other things, the rules of the game—in which players play both defense and offense—enhances understanding of both the images and the game. A readable afterword by C.H. Underwood, author of a six-man football coaching book, summarizes the game's history, including the fact that Governor Rick Perry played it in Paint Creek. After reading the essays, perusing the pictures and reading Troy Aikman's foreword, (in which he notes "Nothing can match six-man's speed and excitement"), readers of this engaging book will probably want to head to small town Texas and check out the game for themselves.

GRIT AND GLORY



WILSON, LAURA. *GRIT AND GLORY: SIX-MAN FOOTBALL*. ALBANY: BRIGHT SKY PRESS, 2003. 112 PP. ILLUSTRATIONS. INDEX. \$29.95 CLOTH. ISBN 1-93121-28-9.

Airspeed, Altitude, and a Sense of Humor: The Adventures of a Jet Tanker Pilot

Ronnie Ridley George

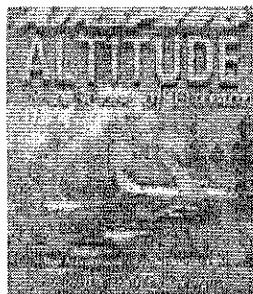
Aerial Jet Tankers and a Job Well Done

Review by Howell H. Gwin, Jr.

One of the often-overlooked areas of America's Cold War deals with the aerial jet tankers which refueled the Strategic Air Command's B-47's and B-52's which formed America's nuclear deterrent force. During the Viet Nam conflict, they made possible the massive bombing missions over Southeast Asia. Since the KC-135 tankers were modified Boeing 707 passenger planes altered to carry 100 tons of jet fuel, flying them was a rare adventure. It can truly be said that these missions were "hours of boredom punctuated with seconds of stark terror."

This book is a roughly chronological journey through Captain George's Air Force career from his ROTC commissioning at Texas Tech through his retirement. Pilot and survival training, refueling missions flown from Alaska, Greenland, and Southeast Asia are described in detail and with a very obvious love for flying in any form.

The book is a welcome addition to the literature of aviation in general, particularly to the time and topic itself. Anybody who has piloted anything at all will recognize and appreciate the attitudes, if not the specific situations. But it is an equally good read for anyone who appreciates skill, dedication, and the satisfaction felt by those who do a difficult job well. It is a worthy addition to any library of high school level or above.



GEORGE, RONNIE RIDLEY. *AIRSPEED, ALTITUDE, AND A SENSE OF HUMOR: THE ADVENTURES OF A JET TANKER PILOT*. AUSTIN: EAKIN PRESS, 2001. 94 PP. ILLUSTRATIONS. \$16.95 PAPER. ISBN 1-57168-497-2.

Laura Wilson is also the author of *Avedon at Work in the American West* (2003), published by the University of Texas Press, and *Telling Lies to Alice*, a novel.

Mary M. Fisher graduated with a master's degree in history from the University of Texas at Austin. She is an award-winning journalist now working as a school administrator and is the author of *Rosita's Bridge*.

Dr. Howell H. Gwin, Jr. is professor of ancient and medieval history at Lamar University. His interests include music, aviation, medical education, and reading fiction.

James Rice is widely acclaimed as the South's leading author and illustrator. His list of published works numbers over fifty books. His other publications include *Capin Night Before Christmas* and *Trail Drive*, among others. He holds degrees in art from the University of Texas and Howard Payne University. Rice currently lives in Hico, Texas.

For those desiring additional Gaston adventures, other titles include *Gaston Goes to Nashville*, *Gaston Goes to the Kentucky Derby*, *Gaston Goes to Texas*, and *Gaston Lays an Offshore Pipeline*.

Dr. Emma B. Hawkins is assistant professor of Medieval English language and literature at Lamar University.

Gaston Drills an Offshore Oil Well

James Rice

The Return of Gaston

Review by Howell Gwin, Jr.

In this book, the green-nosed alligator from Louisiana decides to enter the "awl bidness" by producing an off-shore well. In the course of the endeavor, he must select the best type of off-shore rig and the appropriate location. The drilling begins and just as the well comes in, a hurricane occurs. Gaston, of course, saves the day, the well is a gusher, and Gaston becomes the "richest alligator in Louisiana."

As in the other "Gaston" books, Rice's illustrations are full of personality; the main character has an amazing number of facial expressions. The details of the rigs and machines are accurate, and the procedure of drilling a well is clearly explained. Workers and their activities are well-illustrated. A full glossary aids in understanding the terms used.

This is a good book for libraries which serve an elementary school age clientele. It would also be a nice present for a grandchild who is "not from around here."

RICE, JAMES. *GASTON DRILLS AN OFFSHORE OIL WELL*. GRETNIA: PELICAN PUBLISHING CO., 2002. 40 PP. \$15.95 PAPER. ISBN 1-58980-068-0. 2002003668.

Texas Originals: Peons, Plain People, and Presidents

Jack Maguire

A Texas Mix

Review by Emma Hawkins

Published posthumously, *Texas Originals: Peons, Plain People, and Presidents* by Jack Maguire is comprised of thirty-one brief biographical sketches of noteworthy Texas citizens and a fourteen-page overview of Texas governors. As Maguire's wife reveals in the "Foreword," her husband intended to focus on "some giants in government or industry, some famous or notorious, and other plain folks" (v). Generally limited to six to eight pages each,

and accompanied by black and white photos, often grainy in texture, these sketches offer interesting, even amusing, little-known details about many lesser-known Texans. Chapters are devoted to Joanna Troutman and Sarah Bradley Dodson, the ladies responsible for the design of the Lone Star Flag; John W. Smith, the last messenger from the Alamo; Charles Lindbergh's year of pilot training at the U. S. Air Service Training School at San Antonio; long-time Congressman Sam Rayburn; and, of course, President Lyndon B. Johnson. For entertainment, Maguire includes excerpts on Adah Isaacs Menken, Nacogdoches' version of Lady Godiva; the writer William Sydney Porter, alias O. Henry, Sophia Porter, the Texas parallel to Scarlett O'Hara of *Gone With the Wind* fame; and Joe Newton, the last U. S. train robber. While several of the most notorious characters appear in the chapter on Texas governors, perhaps the most infamous Texans are the subject of the fifth chapter—Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow.

This book provides informative, entertaining and easy reading for those interested in Texas history and/or biography.

MAGUIRE, JACK. *TEXAS ORIGINALS: PEONS, PLAIN PEOPLE, AND PRESIDENTS*. AUSTIN: EAKIN PRESS, 2001. 219 PP. PHOTOGRAPHS. \$21.95 PAPER. ISBN 1-57168-515-4.

Bonnie and Clyde: A Twenty-First Century Update

James R. Knight with Jonathan Davis

Bonnie and Clyde

Review by Emma Hawkins

Although the notorious couple receive only seven pages of attention in Jack Maguire's *Texas Originals*, this entire book is an updated collaboration between James R. Knight and Jonathan Davis dedicated solely to Bonnie Elizabeth Parker and Clyde Chestnut Barrow. The early chapters are based on the notes taken by Davis during interviews with Marie Barrow Scoma (Clyde's youngest sister) and other members of the Barrow family. In addition, Knight researched little-known small town newspaper accounts; reproduced pictures (including prison mug shots and a gruesome
(Continued on page eleven)

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photograph of Bonnie and Clyde's bullet-riddled bodies) furnished by the Dallas Public Library, the Texas Ranger Museum (Waco), and private collectors; included photocopies of personal letters and Bonnie's poems; interviewed surviving eyewitnesses when possible; and consulted recognized authorities. By his own acknowledgment, Knight borrowed "the overall story" from John Neal Phillips, expert on Ralph Fultz, an accomplice of Clyde for a short while.

Knight's version is composed in an easy-to-read, journalistic style employing an 8x10, double-column format (triple column for the Index). The book consists of thirty-eight brief chapters, typically three to five pages in length with the longest being ten pages, an Introduction, an Epilogue and numerous black-and-white pictures. Perhaps the most interesting sections are the Appendices and Epilogue containing abbreviated biographical blurbs on members of the Barrow and Parker families, the gang members of Bonnie and Clyde, and the posse that ambushed and killed the two outlaws, as well as a few other prominent lawmen who were Bonnie-and-Clyde chasers. Appendix Two provides a history of the death car, while another lists the murders attributed to Clyde or his gang members. Appendix Four notes the banks supposedly robbed by Clyde. For Bonnie and Clyde enthusiasts, this book will be an enthralling and detailed read.

KNIGHT, JAMES R. AND JONATHAN DAVIS. *BONNIE AND CLYDE: A TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY UPDATE*. AUSTIN: EAKIN PRESS, 2003. 230 PP. APPENDICES, BIBLIOGRAPHY, INDEX, MUG SHOTS, NOTES, PHOTOGRAPHS. \$29.95 PAPER. ISBN 1-57168-794-7.

The Reluctant Warrior: Former German POW Finds Peace in Texas Heino R. Erichsen

A Former Enemy Becomes a Friend
Review by Martin M. Jacobsen

This autobiography details the impact of World War II on German infantryman Heinrich Erichsen, who was captured by the Allies in North Africa in 1943. He survived combat, worked as an interpreter while imprisoned in U.S. POW camps, was repatriated to Germany

(where he interpreted for the British), emigrated back to the United States, and instituted the Los Niños International Adoption Agency, a family-owned non-profit agency, which ultimately set up headquarters in Houston, Texas. Erichsen's book treats a number of themes. He suggests that the experience of participating in the war became central to his personal development. Erichsen demonstrates how his experiences as a soldier and return to war-torn Germany led him to help find adoptive parents for children from war-torn countries, even adopting some of them himself. His devotion to America strikes a patriotic cord by arguing that even a former POW can find limitless personal, educational, and entrepreneurial opportunities in the United States. Moreover, Erichsen illuminates fatherhood (as son, natural father and adoptive father), the value of education, the importance of family, the benefits of hard work, and the privilege of service to others. This interesting story also offers glimpses of historical events from immigrant eyes. Libraries of all types and sizes should make room for this book.

ERICHSEN, HEINO R. *THE RELUCTANT WARRIOR: FORMER GERMAN POW FINDS PEACE IN TEXAS*. AUSTIN: EAKIN PRESS, 2001. 238 PP. BIBLIOGRAPHY, GLOSSARY, INDEX, MAPS, PHOTOGRAPHS. \$23.95 PAPER. ISBN 1-57168-514-6.

Pajaro Verde/The Green Bird Joe Hayes

A Tale for Everyone
Review by Andrea Karlin

Storyteller Joe Hayes and illustrator Antonio Castro Lopez in collaboration with his son Antonio Castro H. capture the reader's and listeners' attention immediately through text and illustration of this magical tale, *Pajaro Verde/The Green Bird*, from the Land of Enchantment, New Mexico. With text written in English and in Spanish and illustrations that are colorful, detailed and a perfect compliment to the story, the reader and listeners will be drawn in immediately to this unusual folktale of nine sister each of whom has the same number of eyes as her order of birth (the oldest of the nine has nine eyes, the youngest of the nine one). When the sister with two eyes accepts a marriage proposal from a green bird who says that he is an enchanted prince, the other sisters and the

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Joe Hayes is the author of numerous books, including *Watch Out for Clever Women*, *The Day It Snowed*, *Tortillas*, and *Juan Verdades: The Man Who Couldn't Tell a Lie*. Many of Hayes' books are bilingual, offering opportunities for readers to enhance their Spanish / English vocabularies.

Dr. Martin M. Jacobsen, assistant professor of English at West Texas A&M University, won the WTAMU 2001-2002 Excellence in Teaching Award. He is the author of *Transformations of Literacy in Computer-Mediated Communication: Orality, Literacy, Cyberdiscursivity*. He earned his Ph.D. in Discourse Studies at Texas A&M University in 1999.

Andrea Karlin earned a Ph.D. in curriculum and reading instruction at the University of New Mexico and is associate professor of education specializing in children's literature at Lamar University.

Internationally known, Bill Martin, Jr. has published more than three hundred books. He holds a master's and a Ph.D. from Northwestern University.

After illustrating *Brown Bear, Brown Bear*, Eric Carle published seventy-three more books, including his best known work, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*.

Larry Gatlin began his music career on the radio in Abilene, Texas, at the age of six. His brothers joined him in Nashville when they became adults. They recorded a string of number-one records. Now Gatlin is writing children's books.

JoAn W. Martin is a retired teacher from Baytown schools and author of a young adult historical novel, *Yankee Girl*. She has published thirty-five articles and numerous book reviews.

(Continued from page eleven)

mother think Mirabel is mad. The mother forbids her to marry the prince, but Mirabel insists that this is what she is going to do and so it comes to pass. What happens next is the basis of many enduring folktales from around the world—a story with magic, a struggle between good and evil/jealousy, a quest and finally, a happy ending.

This sophisticated tale will appeal to older children and adults alike. It would be an excellent resource in a middle school or high school classroom for use in a literature, as well as Spanish class. In fact, it could be used in an American history class when one studies the Southwest or in an art class as an example of how pictures can enhance and extend a story. But most important, it could be read for the sheer enjoyment of a good story.

HAYES, JOE. *PAJARO VERDE/THE GREEN BIRD*. EL PASO: CINCO PUNTOS PRESS, 2002. 40 PP. ILLUSTRATIONS. \$16.95 CLOTH. ISBN 0-938317-65-2. \$8.95 PAPER. ISBN 0-938317-90-3.

Panda Bear, Panda Bear, What Do You See?
Bill Martin Jr., author
Eric Carle, illustrator

More Bears Abound
Review by Andrea Karlin

Bill Martin Jr.'s and Eric Carle's time honored first collaboration, *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* (and subsequent stories using the same formula) is the model for their 2003 collaboration, *Panda Bear, Panda Bear, What Do You See?* Using the same winning format, this brightly colored, beautifully illustrated book with familiar rhythmic patterns enables readers and listeners alike to be introduced to a variety of endangered species. *Panda Bear, Panda Bear, What Do You See?* will delight young and old alike just as its predecessors have done and continue to do.

MARTIN, BILL JR. *PANDA BEAR, PANDA BEAR, WHAT DO YOU SEE?* NEW YORK: HENRY HOLT, 2003. UNNUMBERED PP. \$15.95 CLOTH. ISBN 0-8050-1758-5.

Boogers & Snot: A Grandfather's Story
Larry Gatlin with Parker

More Than a Song
Review by JoAn W. Martin

What fun! When his three-year-old granddaughter becomes ill with a cold, Larry Gatlin writes a song especially for her. He'd intended to write a Christmas song, but Parker was so sick that he wanted to make her feel better.

The Christmas song took a new direction and came out as "Boogers and Snot Is What I Got." Parker's tears turned into a big smile, and the silly song dried her eyes. Her grandfather even sang the song at church for the Christmas celebration, knowing that everyone had bad colds and at one time or another, all God's kids have had "Boogers and snot"

Ishy (Janie) Gatlin took the photos and added cute little stick figures throughout the book. The song, music, and words are given at the end of the story.

GATLIN, LARRY, WITH PARKER. *BOOGERS AND SNOT: A GRANDFATHER'S STORY*. AUSTIN: EAKIN PRESS, 2004. 24 PP. ILLUSTRATIONS. \$8.95 CLOTH. ISBN 1-57168-820-X.

Wilma Rudolph: Olympic Runner
Jo Harper

Surprise Runner
Review by JoAn W. Martin

As a child, Wilma Rudolph was full of surprises. She surprised the doctor by fighting double pneumonia, scarlet fever, and chicken pox to live instead of dying. Number twenty in a family of twenty-one children, Wilma was painfully shy and did not start to school until second grade. A classmate named Nancy and Mrs. Allison, a teacher, reached out to Wilma and helped her to feel accepted in spite of a brace on her twisted leg. When Wilma was nine years old, she was able to remove her leg brace. By fifth and sixth

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grades, she had learned to fight for her rights. She argued with her parents about separate drinking fountains or giving up her seat on the bus. They tried to teach their children to go along to get along. Because of these experiences, Wilma began to think all white people were wicked.

In seventh grade Wilma fell in love with basketball. In spite of family pressure, she kept practicing, dreaming of success. Coach Temple asked Wilma's father to allow her to leave Clarksville, Tennessee, and her coach, and come to Tennessee State as a sixteen year old, where he could train her in the finer points of running. When he invited her to go to Seattle to participate in the Olympic trials, she agreed excitedly, although she had no idea what the Olympics were.

Wilma continued to be a competitor, even though she had setbacks and made many mistakes. When she met Jackie Robinson, he admired her long scissor-like stride and encouraged her to train hard. She qualified for the 1956 Olympics in Australia. However, Wilma was not satisfied with her performance and went back to basketball. Her high school had a winning season, but Wilma thought everyone expected her to be phenomenal all the time, so she felt like an outcast.

Despite a pregnancy, Wilma finished high school, giving birth to a daughter the summer after graduation. The Olympic hopeful resumed running shortly thereafter, and during her training she began to develop a long scissoring stride that sportswriters described as gazelle-like. Wilma eventually went to Rome for the 1960 Olympics and won three gold medals. However, she continued to deal with jealousy from her teammates and felt ostracized.

Wilma's Olympic achievement broke racial barriers and fought prejudice. In addition, a visit to the Oval Office to visit with President Kennedy gave her an opportunity to break down the barrier against women.

Her life became even more complicated with hundreds of appearances, 200 fan letters a day, and ten marriage proposals a week. After competing against the Soviet Union in Pala Alto, California, she decided to retire at the top of her game. She still made goodwill trips overseas and held several teaching positions,

but continued to be plagued with frustration. She wanted her life to count for more than being a wife and mother. Wilma Rudolph became a symbol of achievement through hard work. She died of brain cancer at age fifty-four on November 12, 1994.

This book is recommended for school and public libraries.

HARPER, JO. *WILMA RUDOLPH: OLYMPIC RUNNER*. NEW YORK: ALADDIN PAPERBACKS, 2004. 192 PP. ILLUSTRATIONS. \$4.99 PAPER. ISBN 0-689-85873-4.

Vangie: The Ghost of the Pines

Ann Fears Crawford

A Big Thicket Ghost Story

Review by Frances M. Ramsey

Thirteen-year-old Annie is sure 1947 will be the worst summer of her life because chicken pox has kept her from going to Camp Windemere with her friends. Instead, she must spend the summer at her grandparents' fish camp on Village Creek with her pesky little brother and two boy cousins. Wise grandparents and handsome, older Josh, who helps with chores and coaches Annie's swimming, make the summer better than she expected.

Josh's older sister Vangie mourns a small son lost in a house fire and wanders the woods like a ghost. On the trail she appears to Annie and her little cousin P.D. who is drawn to the "wady." Vangie reaches out to him before she vanishes. While Annie and cousin Ben are left in charge of the younger boys, P.D. disappears. After frantic searching Annie sees P.D. with Vangie as the forest begins to burn around them. Vangie thrusts the boy toward Annie and disappears into the flames. Annie and P.D. are trapped when she falls, but Josh manages to rescue them.

Besides the mystery of Vangie, the ghost of the pines, this fine novel for ages nine through twelve reveals the trials of growing into a caring, responsible person and appreciating those around one. Highly recommended.

CRAWFORD, ANN FEARS. *VANGIE: THE GHOST OF THE PINES*. AUSTIN: EAKIN PRESS, 2003. 151 PP. \$17.95 CLOTH. ISBN 1-57168-710-6. 2002152443.

Jo Harper wrote Wilma Rudolph as an addition to the Childhood of Famous Americans series. These classics have been praised by parents, teachers, and librarians. With these lively, inspiring, fictionalized biographies -- easily read by children of eight and up -- today's youngster is swept right into history.

In addition to this first novel for young readers, Ann Fears Crawford has written numerous books of history for both adults and young readers; these are listed on page 143 of Vangie. Crawford teaches at Houston Community College and Houston Baptist University.

Elmer Kelton is the author of numerous books, including *Texas Vendetta*. He is a seven-time winner of the Spur Award four-time recipient of the Western Heritage Awards from the National Cowboy Hall of Fame, and was named the Greatest Western Author of All Time by the Western Writers of America. He is also the recipient of the Lone Star Award for Lifetime Achievement.

Diane Gonzales Bertrand's other works include *Sweet Fifteen*, *Lessons of the Game*, and *Trino's Choice*. She is also the author of four bilingual picture books. *Trino's Choice* has been named Best Book of the Year in the young adult category by *Foreword Magazine*. It is the recipient of the Austin Writer's League Teddy Award.

Christmas at the Ranch Elmer Kelton

Christmas Memories

Review by Frances M. Ramsey

This small book will make a beautiful gift or good family reading. The title story describes Christmases in the 1930s and 1940s. If Christmas was spent with grandparents on a primitive ranch without electricity or running water, Kelton's grandfather made chores fun, and his grandmother could make red beans taste almost like dessert. The real pleasure came from being with kin and playing with cousins.

If they stayed on the home ranch for Christmas, his father worked as usual, but his mother saw to it that they went to church, sang carols, and had a tree trimmed with homemade ornaments.

The Best Christmas was in 1944 when he had surprise leave just before deployment to Europe with his tank unit. It was also the worst because he knew what he faced when he returned to be sent to the front. As the war ended he was sent to Austria where he spent Christmas 1945 in the home of the young woman who became his wife. Christmas in Austria describes that experience and the changes they experienced when they returned for Christmas in 1981.

Illustrations by H.C. Zachry and a Foreword by Walt McDonald enhance the pleasure of this nostalgic volume. Highly recommended.

KELTON, ELMER. *CHRISTMAS AT THE RANCH*. ABILENE: MCWHINEY FOUNDATION PRESS, 2003. 63 PP. ILLUSTRATIONS. \$14.95 CLOTH. ISBN 1-893114-88-4. 2003011663.

Trino's Time

Diane Gonzales Bertrand

The Frustrations of Growing up Poor

Review by Frances M. Ramsey

Thirteen-year-old Trino, in this sequel to *Trino's Choice*, faces loneliness, anger, and tentative friendships. His single mother is out of work and often short tempered with Trino and his three younger brothers. When Trino

earns \$20 helping her friend Nick trim trees, she expects that money to go for family expenses. Nick encourages Trino to be responsible and urges his mother to seek a better job.

Trino and Hector become uneasy partners on a school project to make a report on Jose Antonio Navarro, one of two Tejanos who signed the Texas Declaration of Independence. Trino's mother helps him with the ten questions which will make the framework of the report. Encouraged by Lisana, the girl he admires, Trino and his new friends use the university library for their reports. Trino is inspired by a Navarro quote: "*El Tiempo hablara por todo*" (11): Time will speak for everything. When a storm-toppled tree crashes into their trailer home, Trino's family barely escapes to a school shelter. Trino dares to go back into his dangerous wreck of a home to get a few necessities for his family. His new friends come to the shelter to show their concern, and even though his report was lost in the storm, he and Hector can make the oral report from their notes and memory.

Ms. Bertrand is skilled at showing the fluctuations of maturing and what it takes to make one feel he is a person of worth. Highly recommended.

BERTRAND, DIANE GONZALES. *TRINO'S TIME*. HOUSTON: ARTE PUBLICO PRESS, 2001. 171 PP. \$9.95 PAPER. ISBN 1-55885-317-0. \$14.95 CLOTH. ISBN 1-55885-316-2.

Paisano Pete: Snake-Killer Bird

Marilyn Komechak

The Real Roadrunner

Review by Frances M. Ramsey

When Kelly and her father see a roadrunner on their west Texas ranch, she names him Paisano Pete and gains his trust so that she can videotape his activities for her science project. She records his foraging and learns that he likes horned toads and is a skillful killer of snakes.

When Pete mates and feeds and trains his chicks, she is surprised to find that one late hatchling is all white. This bird which lacks the colors to blend into the habitat becomes her

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favorite and gets special care. Kelly names this special pet Starlight. When a snake invades the hen house frightening the hens and stealing eggs, Starlight is put in with the chickens to guard them and get rid of the snake.

While the family is away, a neighbor is asked to deliver some of their hens to a buyer, and Starlight disappears. They find her in a small animal circus, wearing cowboy gear and trained to walk a tight rope to get some corn. Kelly manages to rescue Starlight from the uncaring trainer, but then the bird hears the call of the wild and departs. This is as it should be for the bird, but Kelly is pleased when she hears from friends in Mexico that a "ghost runner" has been sighted. The game warden helps all concerned to know that this is a rare white roadrunner.

This pleasant story for elementary school children includes much information about this unusual bird which really does like to race at twenty miles an hour. Highly recommended for pleasure and for information.

KOMECHAK, MARILYN. *PAISANO PETE, SNAKE KILLER BIRD*. AUSTIN: EAKIN PRESS, 2003. 106 PP. BIBLIOGRAPHY, FAST FACTS, GLOSSARY, ILLUSTRATIONS. \$9.95 PAPER. ISBN 1-57168-770-X. 2002156392.

Exploring the Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail: Highlights of a Birding Mecca Mel White

Highlights of Finding Birds on the Texas Coast

Review by Jed J. Ramsey

Texas has a great many different habitats in which to search for birds, and the Gulf Coast is an outstanding place to look. Knowing this, and wishing to present this opportunity to the public, the Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail has been established. Detailed maps may be obtained to guide bird watchers to the areas where birds may most often be discovered. This author, an expert in the field, goes even further in giving detailed advice as to when to look, step by-step directions on how to find the

exact location, interesting particulars of the locality, and the locations of nature tracts, museums, festivals, etc., in each area.

This is not a novel or story book, but it is the pinnacle of helpful information if you are visiting this area and wish to find the best birding locations there. It would be invaluable to the person planning a vacation on the Texas Gulf Coast if that person also has an interest in the natural avian fauna of the area. This is an excellent guide book to finding the birds on the Texas Gulf Coast.

WHITE, MEL. *EXPLORING THE GREAT TEXAS COASTAL BIRDING TRAIL: HIGHLIGHTS OF A BIRDING MECCA*. GUILFORD: GLOBE PEQUOT PRESS, 2004. 140 PP. MAPS. \$13.95 PAPER. ISBN 0-7627-2712-8.

Adored to Death Dallari Landry

Lawyer, Chemist, Toxicologist
Review by Janet Turk

A corpse in a Mercedes, a coerced confession to murder, local thugs, and a suspicious acting husband are just a few of the obstacles Micki Lane encounters in *Adored to Death*. Micki, formerly a chemist for a crime lab, is now an attorney who is attempting to keep her sanity while juggling an absent husband, a young son, two friends, and Sheriff Roy, a character with whom she appears to have a past. Add to the mix two murders and Micki's being pulled into the investigations by her former position in Liberty's crime lab, and the reader is immediately hooked on the storyline.

Although the novel includes a few too many well-known internet and Cajun jokes, *Adored to Death* offers a fast-paced legal thriller blended with geographical accuracy and an insider's knowledge of both the legal system and forensics. Landry further offers realistic habits, thoughts, and speech patterns of southeast Texas. This novel is sure to delight most readers.

LANDRY, DALLARI. *ADORED TO DEATH*. AUSTIN: EAKIN PRESS, 2003. 216 PP. \$28.95 CLOTH. ISBN 1-57168-797-1. \$21.95 PAPER. ISBN 1-57168-808-0.

Mel White won the 2002 Lowell Thomas Award for best environmental journalism article. His other works include *National Geographic Guide to Birdwatching Sites* and *A Birder's Guide to Arkansas*.

Dallari Landry grew up in the Golden Triangle. She was employed by the Jefferson County Regional Crime Lab and later became a lawyer. She lives in the Texas Hill Country. *Adored to Death* is her second novel.

Frances M. Ramsey is a retired librarian from the Beaumont ISD. She received her bachelor's degree, in zoology from Kansas State University and received her library certification from Oklahoma State University.

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