Inside This Issue


Sam Houston Is My Hero, Judy Alter

Hard Scrabble, John Graves

The Callings, Henry Chappell

All Roads Lead Home, Linda S. Bingham

Galveston's Summer of the Storm, Julie Lake

Mary Dove, Jane Gilmore Realinhg

A Texas Family Time Capsule, RuthPennebaker

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

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

Horned Toad Canyon, Joyce Gibson Ruzich

Grit and Glory: Six-Man Football, Laura Wilson

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

Gaston Drill's an Offshore Oil Well, James Rice

Texas Originals: Peons, Plain People, and Presidents, Jack Maguire

Bonnie and Clyde: A Twenty-First Century Update, James Knight with Jonathan Davis

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

Pajarito Verde/The Green Bird, Joe Hayes

Panda Bear, Panda Bear, What Do You See?, Bill Martin Jr.

Booeyes and Snout: A Grandfather's Story, Larry Gatlin with Parker

Wilma Rudolph: Olympic Runner, Jo Harper

Vangie: The Ghost of the Pines, Ann Fearn Crawford

Christmas at the Ranch, Elmer Kelton

Trino's Time, Diane Gonzales Bertrand

Paisano Pete: Snake-Killer Bird, Marilyn Konechak

Exploring the Great Texas Coastal Trail: Highlights of a Birding

Adored to Death, Dallari Landry
Editors’ Choice:
A Revolution Remembered: The Memoirs and Selected Correspondence of Juan N. Seguín. 2nd Edition
Jesús F. De La Teja, editor

Seguín Reconstituted
Review by Dale Farris

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

Seguín 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 serve 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 Seguín’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 Seguín (another story yet to be told), but instead a highly intriguing combination of De La Teja’s illuminating essay on Seguín’s formative years, “The Making of a Tejano,” Seguín’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. Seguín 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, Seguín 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 Seguín’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.

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 calls-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 heart sick 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.

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)
(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 try 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 watt 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.

Lloyd M. Daigrepont 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.

The Callings
Henry Chapelle

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

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,
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 hipster, 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.
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 Chapparal Book for Young Readers from TCU Press.

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 reissues 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.

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A Texas Family Time Capsule
Ruth Pennebaker

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


(Continued on page seven)
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.

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

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

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

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.
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.

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 1 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.

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,
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.
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.”

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

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

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 chord 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.

Pajarito 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, Pajarito 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 folk tale 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 (Continued on page twelve)
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.

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."

Isby (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.

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.

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 (Continued on page thirteen)
Review of Texas Books

(Continued from page twelve)

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 scissorsing 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.


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.


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 145 of Vangie. Crawford teaches at Houston Community College and Houston Baptist University.
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.

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 became 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 habla por todo” (11): Time will speak for everything. When a storm-topped 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.

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
(Continued from page fourteen)
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.

Adored to Death
Dallari Landry
Lawyer, Chemist, Toxicologist
Review by Janet Turk

A corpse in a Mercedez, 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.
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