

# Review of Texas Books

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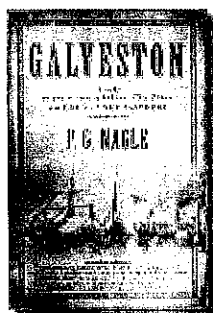
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P.G. Nagle was born and raised fifty miles from Glorieta Pass in the mountain town of Los Alamos, New Mexico and now lives in Albuquerque. Nagle has always had a special love of the outdoors, particularly New Mexico's wilds, where many of her stories are born. Her work has appeared in *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction* and in several anthologies including a tale entitled "The Courtship of Captain Swenk" in the recent *Blue and the Gray Undercover*. Her story "Coyote Ugly" was honored as a finalist for the Theodore Sturgeon Award.

Dr. Max Loges is a professor in the Department of English and Modern Languages at Lamar University. He has published articles on a broad range of subjects including the American Civil War.

## Editors' Choice: *Galveston and Red River* P. G. Nagle



### Confederacy's Saga Continues Review by Max Loges

*Galveston* is a continuation of the adventures of Jamie Russell, a Confederate artillery lieutenant. Prequels to *Galveston* include *The Guns of Valverde* and *Glorieta Pass*, which focus on the Confederacy's attempt to capture the New Mexico Territory. The story is presented from the viewpoints of Jamie, his sister Emma, who is staying with her Aunt May in Galveston while recovering from the death of her fiancé, and Quincy Wheat, a young officer on the Union warship *Harriet Lane*. The climatic scene concerns the Confederacy's attempt to recapture Galveston on January 1, 1863.

P. G. Nagle does an admirable job of presenting history. Her historical references, place names, actions, and description are realistic. Historical characters are accurately portrayed. In instances where her fiction may protrude upon actual history, the events are realistically presented in terms of what could have actually happened.

As literature the book has some problems. Characters tend to be stereotypes. Major Owens is the classic rake but lacks realistic motivation for his pursuit of Emma. *Galveston* also suffers somewhat by being in the middle of Nagle's proposed saga. Jamie suffers pangs of conscience from events that occur before the book opens, but the reader is never told what actually happened. Overall, however, the book is enjoyable.

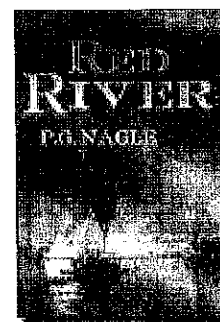
*Red River*, the most recent addition to Nagle's Far Western Civil War Series, is told from the perspectives of Jamie, Nat Wheat, a sailor in

the U. S. Navy's river fleet, and Marie Hawkland, the owner of several plantations near the confluence of the Mississippi and Red rivers. The time frame covered is from early 1863 through late spring 1864.

Like its prequel, *Red River* does a fine job of reporting history. The separate battles and larger campaigns are in keeping with the historical record. The military actions, such as artillery engagements, are described realistically and powerfully, giving readers a sense of what it was really like. Historical characters are portrayed accurately and the geography of the Red River Valley in terms of place names and features of the landscape is realistic.

As literature *Red River* is significantly better than *Galveston*. The plot seems more realistic and less forced. The characters portray a variety of emotion consistent with real human behavior. They also experience significant changes in their opinions and values. This is particularly true of Nat Wheat and Marie Hawkland. In addition, interior conflicts, like Nat's troubled relationship with his father, are handled skillfully.

Nagle also does an admirable job in maintaining the reader's interest in the entire series. While each volume is a story in itself, successive volumes build an overall curiosity about where and how Jamie's story will continue. Also, questions readers may have about incidents in the earlier volumes find plausible answers as the larger story unfolds.



(Continued on page three)

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NAGLE, P. G. *GALVESTON*. NEW YORK: FORGE, 2002. 384 PP. ILLUSTRATIONS. \$24.95 CLOTH. ISBN 0-312-87614-9.

NAGLE, P. G. *RED RIVER*. NEW YORK: FORGE, 2003. 384 PP. ILLUSTRATIONS. \$24.95 CLOTH. ISBN 0-765-30344-2.

## Featured Publisher: *Forge*

Forge Books is an imprint of Tom Doherty Associates and publishes fiction and nonfiction in a wide variety of genres and categories, including works of scholarly significance and leisure reading. Its sister imprint is Tor Books, famous for its science fiction and fantasy books.



## *The Red Zone: Cars, Cows, and Coaches, The Life and Good Times of a Texas Dealmaker* Red McCombs Mickey Herskowitz

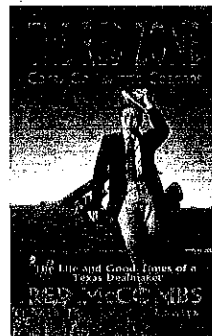
**San Antonio Wheeler-Dealer**  
Review by David Carroll

There are countless deep-pocketed contributors to the University of Texas' expansive endowment. The native of tiny Spur, Texas, Billy Joe "Red" McCombs, has to be among the most prominent. The university even named its business school after him. A large and expressive man, McCombs never met a deal he didn't like, investing in well over 200 companies along the way. The San Antonio resident's self-made fortune came primarily through cattle, oil and gas, car dealerships, broadcasting and sports ownership. But it was cars and sports that combined to totally captivate him. Very early on he understood the fundamental nature of this basic love affair

between the American public and their cars and their star athletes.

Told in a highly readable manner, this autobiography honestly hits all corners of his life experience. He also gives credit to others, detailing important partnerships with car and sports ownership tycoon Charlie Thomas, co-founder of Clear Channel Communications Lowry Mays (Clear Channel is still the largest holding in the McComb portfolio), trusted financial advisor and "consigliere" Gary Woods, and, most importantly, his wife of over 50 years, Charline. People who live as fully as McCombs don't often have time to spend reflecting on "what might have been." The current owner of the NFL's Minnesota Vikings, a two-time owner of the NBA's San Antonio Spurs, and also a former owner of that league's Denver Nuggets, McCombs does harbor regret for one lost ownership opportunity. An untimely hospitalization with hepatitis, worsened by alcohol, prevented the possible acquisition of Major League Baseball's Houston Astros.

The highly respected Mickey Herskowitz, who assisted in the writing of this book, is a longtime Houston newspaper sportswriter who has authored a number of sports books. He also has written books about George W. Bush and, most recently, about his controversial grandfather, Prescott Bush. Indexed and lavishly illustrated with photographs, *The Red Zone* is a satisfying and entertaining look at one of the most prominently successful businessmen in a state filled with larger-than-life figures in commerce. As an interesting side note, the book also contains a foreward from James Michener, one of the very last essays written by him prior to his death.



MCCOMBS, RED, AND MICKEY HERSKOWITZ. *THE RED ZONE: CARS, COWS, AND COACHES*. AUSTIN: EAKIN PRESS, 2002. 240 PP. ILLUSTRATIONS, INDEX. \$24.95 CLOTH. ISBN 1-57168-707-6. 2002008445.

*Red McCombs is a living logo for the Lone Star State—a strapping man with a booming bass voice, a wheeler-dealer who shoots from the hip and asks questions later. He started out at the age of ten, selling peanuts for a nickel a bag to laborers in his hometown of Spur, Texas, and emerged as a millionaire before he was thirty.*

*Mickey Herskowitz is a Texas-based journalist, who has written or co-written more than thirty books, and a nationally known sports columnist for the Houston Chronicle.*

David Carroll has been an academic librarian for over twenty-six years. He earned a B.A. in English from Kansas State University and an M.A. in librarianship from the University of Denver. The son of a former collegiate Sports Information Director, Carroll has followed athletics and sports figures for over forty years.

# *I Would Rather Sleep in Texas*



*Mary Margaret McAllen Amberson, a graduate of the University of Texas at Austin and student of history and anthropology, worked with her father, James A. McAllen, who compiled extensive notes, research, and data on South Texas and Valley history. His mother, Margaret H. McAllen, a former member of the Texas State Historical Association and the Texas Historical Commission, began the book project in 1978.*

Sally Dooley founded *Review of Texas Books* in 1986. A graduate of the University of Texas at Austin, she greatly respects Texas writers and their diversity.

## *I Would Rather Sleep in Texas: A History of the Lower Rio Grande Valley & the People of the Santa Anita Land Grant*

Mary McAllen Amberson  
James A. McAllen  
Margaret H. McAllen

**Rio Grande River and South Texas History**  
Review by Sally Dooley

Meticulously researched and documented, this sprawling saga of the Rio Grande Valley families of the Santa Anita Land Grant covers two centuries of complex Texas, Mexican, and American history. Margaret H. McAllen (1914-1995), a past member of the Texas State Historical Commission, initiated the research. A relative, Mary Margaret McAllen Amberson, graduate of the University of Texas at Austin and a student of history and anthropology, together with her father, rancher James A. McAllen, continued the study to write this present book.

Borderlands are typically places of conflicting cultures, nations, and individuals. The Rio Grande region had the added mix of the river for water and transportation and the inhospitable terrain and climate. Spain granted the land (now northern Hidalgo County) in 1790 to José Manuel Gómez. At Gómez's death, his widow sold some of the land to María Salomé Ballí (born in Mexico in 1828). Salomé began acquiring more of the grant: at the age of twenty-two she bought 3,000 acres for \$650 from the Domínguez family. With her marriage to the Scotsman, John Young, a man twice her age, they bought most of the original land grant. Upon Young's death, she remarried a Scotch-Irish immigrant John McAllen. Various businesses in addition to ranching and the Civil War cotton trade increased their investment. The grant has endured largely intact through an amazing eight generations, while Spanish, Mexican, and Anglo ranchers, riverboat men, Civil War generals, land speculators, and entrepreneurs all wanted to exploit the natural resources. Mexican revolutionaries, the Texas Rangers, and the railroad also played roles.

The authors recount the stories of courageous and determined men and women of these families as they struggled to keep and use the land and the river for their livelihoods. In all "The original colonists and their descendents stemmed the changing tides as their citizenship converted three times over a thirty-year period." It is a story of imagination, violence, perseverance, and endless change.

Maps, drawings and photographs of events and people reveal the extensive research of public, family, and government archives. There are nearly one hundred pages of endnotes, a twenty-page bibliography, and appendixes of cattle brands and Spanish ranching terms. This hefty book will be a marvelous history for scholars' use, and the general reader with interest in the area will find it an entertaining, if detailed, reading experience.

AMBERSON, MARY MARGARET MCALLEN, JAMES A. MCALLEN, AND MARGARET H. MCALLEN. *I WOULD RATHER SLEEP IN TEXAS: A HISTORY OF THE LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY & THE PEOPLE OF THE SANTA ANITA LAND GRANT*. AUSTIN: TEXAS STATE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION, 2003. 665 PP. APPENDIXES, BIBLIOGRAPHY, ILLUSTRATIONS, INDEX, MAPS, NOTES. \$39.95 CLOTH. ISBN 0-87611-186-X. 2002073956.

## *Fishing Yesterday's Gulf Coast* Barney Farley

**Some True Fishing Stories**  
Review by Sally Dooley

Barney Farley was a legendary fishing guide in the first half of the twentieth century in Port Aransas, Texas. Located on the northern end of Mustang Island east of Corpus Christi, Port Aransas was then a small fishing village. At about the time of the Depression, Barney opened a tackle shop and charter service. He guided large groups and was honored to guide President Franklin Roosevelt in 1937. That story is entertaining: Farley, claiming the President's rods and tackle were unsuitable, gave his guest a light rig like his own. The President caught some tarpon and had a great time. Farley, a good writer, narrates other stories of fishing escapades during the time when men oared boats and fish were plentiful. His observations of fish and wildlife habitat are careful, and his

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knowledge of the life cycle of various species of Gulf Coast fish is enormous. Those who fish for sport will gain insight into seasonal fishing tips as he describes ling, jackfish, trout, sharks, and sheephead, among others. As early as the 1960s, Farley realized the need for conservation. He wrote "The Truth about Fishing and How We Can Improve It" about limiting catches and closing the bays to commercial fishing, especially the shrimp trawlers that remove the fishes' food. Sadly, much of what he forecasted has come true, and people have to go out further for fewer fish. Although some measures have been taken to protect fish, much action is needed to restore the bays.

Farley's love of coastal sport fishing is revealed in all these essays, but especially in "I Fished at the End of a Rainbow." Some of these essays and observations were previously published in two small booklets. The manuscript for this book was discovered in the Tarpon Inn in Port Aransas in the late 1990s. Fisher people (there are women, too, who fish) and coast dwellers will delight in those stories while simultaneously realizing the bounty of nature that is diminished by over fishing. The accompanying photographs illustrate Coastal Bend scenes. The foreword by George S. Hawn and the introduction by Larry McEachron add context to Farley's life and work.

FARLEY, BARNEY. *FISHING YESTERDAY'S GULF COAST*. COLLEGE STATION: TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2002. 168 PP. ILLUSTRATIONS. \$22.95 CLOTH. ISBN 1-58544-165-1. 2002001056.

## *The Second Dune* Shelby Hearon

**A Woman's Second Search for Herself**  
Review by Sally Dooley

Texas Christian University's prestigious Texas Tradition Series chose this 1973 novel for reprint because it so well captures the inner struggle of women of the latter part of the twentieth century. Bound by gender roles and societal expectations, Hearon's protagonist, Ellen Marshall, seeks to understand her own life and hopes to help her four-year-old daughter as she matures to recognize the lies

that can shape a woman's life. With subtlety of narration and dialogue, Ellen carefully describes the mistakes she made in conforming to the wishes of her husbands, and yes, of her mother. There is an undercurrent of anger to mothers, in general, who pass on the Word that a female's meaning in life is only in relationship to her husband and children. "My mother was not the best example of how to be a woman, as, through the years unable to get a response from my father, she mulched and pruned in compensation until she grew herself as dwarfed and mannered as a boxwood hedge." As women of the twenty-first century define themselves with both family and work, this thirty-year-old novel resonates as strongly as it did a generation ago.

Hearon, a native Texan who now lives on the East Coast, is the author of fifteen novels all focusing on women's quandaries. Two of her novels won the Texas Institute of Letters award for fiction. A recipient of fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts, her most recent novel is *Ella in Bloom*. An afterword by Dr. James Ward Lee, Texas Tradition Series editor, gives a thoughtful appraisal of her fine work.

HEARON, SHELBY. *THE SECOND DUNE*. FORT WORTH: TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2003. 188 PP. \$17.95 PAPER. ISBN 0-8765-273-5. 2002154064.

## *Seven Choices: Finding Daylight After Loss Shatters Your World* Elizabeth Harper Neeld, Ph.D.

**The Work Grief Requires**  
Review by Sally Dooley

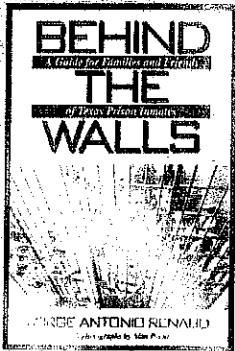
Based on her own heartbreak of suddenly losing her young husband, Elizabeth Harper Neeld reveals a road map through the shock and pain into a new found self, who can begin to love life and others again. With poignant reminiscences of her own bouts with depression and self-doubt, she recounts the advice she was given or searched for that helped her grow in spite of the intense suffering. As she was doing her grief work, she spoke with professional grief counselors,

(Continued on page six)

*Barney Farley was a Port Aransas fishing guide whose memories and stories about fishing the Texas coast were originally written in the 1960s for his family and friends. Their posthumous publication is supported by the Harvey Weill Sportsman Conservationist Award Trust of Corpus Christi.*

*Shelby Hearon lives in Vermont, but she lived in Texas for many years, and her novels are set in the Lone Star State. The Second Dune is the second novel Texas Christian University Press has reprinted. The first was A Prince of a Fellow. The Texas Tradition Series is designed to keep outstanding Texas titles available, after they have gone out of print in their original editions.*

Elizabeth Harper Neeld, previously an English professor at Texas A&M University, now writes and lectures. She lives in Austin with her husband.

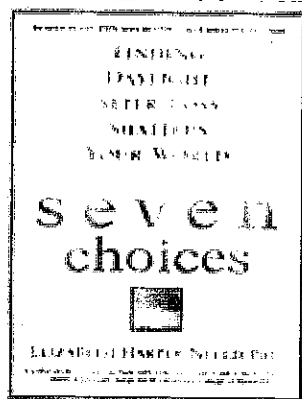


Jorge Antonio Renaud was born in New Mexico and has lived in Texas most of his life. A former copy editor for the *Austin American Statesman* and the *Waco Tribune-Herald*, he is a contributing columnist for *Hispanic Link News Service*. He is also former editor of the *ECHO*, The Texas Prison newspaper. Renaud is serving time for armed robbery and holds a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Sam Houston State University.

(Continued from page five)

people who had endured tragic losses, and read books gaining insight into the stages that a bereaved person must go through. The chapter titles point the way for the journey. Impact: Experiencing the Unthinkable; Second Crisis: Stumbling in the Dark; Observation: Linking Past to Present; The Turn: Turning Into the Wind; Reconstruction: Picking up the Pieces, and Working Through: Finding Solid Ground. And finally: Integration: Daylight. While her experiences parallel those of others who have done the necessary work to become whole with new wisdom and appreciation of life, she also includes examples of how people can get stuck in a stage and never recover from the pain. An addendum to this edition addresses helping children and teenagers deal with loss.

The Directory of Resources at the end points to resources to help one through grief experiences: support groups, web sites, music, arts, journaling, professional therapy, pets, and hobbies. Prayer and meditation and religious books, groups, and music are suggested. The alternative medicine section, which mentions supplements for various psychological feelings, is weak and could be harmful as none of these supplements are FDA approved. Otherwise this is a tremendous resource, simply and clearly written, that all public, college and university libraries should have. It is a book one would want to give to someone who has lost a loved one. Much of this material was seen in the PBS documentary "The Challenge of Grief."



NEELD, ELIZABETH HARPER. *SEVEN CHOICES: FINDING DAYLIGHT AFTER LOSS SHATTERS YOUR WORLD*. NEW YORK: WARNER BOOKS, 2003. 462 PP. BIBLIOGRAPHY, ILLUSTRATIONS, INDEX. \$14.95 PAPER. ISBN 0-446-69050-3. 2003041076.

## *Behind the Walls: A Guide for Families and Friends of Texas Prison Inmates*

Jorge Antonio Renaud

How One Can Help a Prisoner in Texas  
Review by Sally Dooley

Written by a convict presently serving time for armed robbery, this guide will assist friends and families of prisoners to understand Texas criminal justice. Describing the daily life behind walls in succinct chapters, Jorge Renaud details Diagnostic, Living Quarters, Food, Clothing, Work, Medical, Mail, Money, Recreation, Education, Religion, and Visits. His instructions are also brief and practical: don't mail money, food, or clothes; follow dress code for visits; call before visits; and don't bring contraband. The social structure of the entire prison system is examined and the conflicting values discussed. Statistics show that for every inmate who doesn't return to prison, the state saves \$30,000 annually, yet prison, as Renaud points out, depersonalizes the criminal. Renaud's relation of the racism, gangs, violence, and substance abuse in prisons demonstrates how difficult it is to come out of prison with a capacity to live in the "free world." He advises the reader to encourage education for inmates and discusses library privileges, craft shop, vocational training, religious studies and courses for GED, and even university degree opportunities. Practical information about communication with inmates during emergencies, preparing for parole, and how to help parolees stay out of prison is clear. The one advice this author gives is to encourage the prisoner to endeavor to come out with his dignity intact. The subtext of the book chronicles the history of the Texas Department of Corrections under W.J. Estelle that was broken by the famous Ruiz v. Estelle case in 1980 and the subsequent changes by Judge William Wayne Justice. The Texas Department of Criminal Justice resulted. Eight appendixes of related materials, resources and addresses together with a glossary and index complete this comprehensive guide.

RENAUD, JORGE ANTONIO. *BEHIND THE WALLS: A GUIDE FOR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF TEXAS PRISON INMATES*. DENTON: UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS PRESS, 2002. 224 PP. APPENDIXES, GLOSSARY, ILLUSTRATIONS, INDEX. \$14.95 PAPER. ISBN 1-57441-153-5. \$29.95 CLOTH. ISBN 1-57441-152-7. 2002009176.

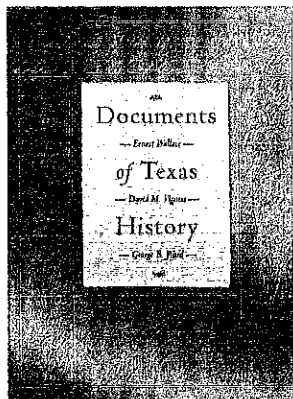
# Documents of Texas History

Ernest Wallace  
David M. Vigness  
George B. Ward

## Read the Original

Review by Sally Dooley

First published in 1963, this original collection of 126 documents integral to Texas history was expanded to 141 and printed in hardcover in 1994. Now ten years later, here is a less expensive paperback reprint. It is a valuable work for libraries and individuals as well because it contains a wide range of documents, ranging from the 1528 narrative of Cabeza de Vaca's travels in Texas to the Warren Commission Report on the Kennedy assassination and concludes with the Dallas Cowboys' 1994 Super Bowl win. Each document excerpt (whether from a rare book, an archive, a periodical, or a government publication) is prefaced by an introduction that gives context about the event or subject. The collection is as varied as Texas' history and peoples: a Weather Bureau report on the Galveston hurricane of 1900; Chief Ten Bears' speech in 1867 at the Council of Medicine Lodge; Lyndon Johnson's speeches about civil rights and Vietnam; Barbara Jordan's keynote address at the 1992 Democratic convention; and the Roe v. Wade decision. It is a fascinating reference for particular information but also a way to see history as lived by the participants.



WALLACE, ERNEST, DAVID M. VIGNESS, AND GEORGE B. WARD, EDS. *DOCUMENTS OF TEXAS HISTORY*. AUSTIN: TEXAS STATE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION, 2002. 337 PP. INDEX. \$24.95 PAPER. ISBN 0-87611-188-6. 94-12996.

# The Great Storm: The Hurricane Diary of J. T. King, Galveston, Texas, 1900

Lisa Rogers

## Typical Teen-Atypical Storm

Review by Dale Farris

Award-winning children's author Rogers (*A Texas Sampler*, *Angel of the Alamo*) adds book two of The Lone Star Journals series (the first was Rogers' *Get Along, Little Dogies*), this time focusing on the harrowing story of the great 1900 hurricane that devastated Galveston.

In this marvelous historical fiction, Rogers writes a lead character, thirteen-year-old J. T. King, who records his experiences in a diary whose entries begin on Sunday, April 8, 1900, progress through his surviving the storm, and end on Friday, April 12, 1900. Because Rogers has researched her subject so thoroughly, she is able to create a protagonist who is strikingly authentic. A historical appendix, complete with photos and maps, will also be useful to young readers and teachers alike in better appreciating this fascinating tale.

More than a century later, the Galveston hurricane of 1900 remains the most devastating storm in American history. Pounding most of the island city to rubble, and claiming 6-8,000 lives, the storm stranded Galveston's stunned populace without a bridge to the mainland. The page-turning frenzy of J. T.'s fight to survive the storm forms the best of the book, but the lively details of what it must have been like to live in Galveston in 1900 at age thirteen will definitely relate to targeted middle school readers.

Before the storm, J. T. shares his life as an active teenager, swimming, riding his bike, and getting into scrapes, with his best friend, Ippy, including an early brush with death when Ippy is attacked by a shark. J. T. sleeps on a cot in the pantry of his grandmother Momsie's boardinghouse, and life on the island at the corner of Q½ and 25th Streets seems as secure as the sturdy old house.

(Continued on page eight)

Ernest Wallace, now deceased, was a fellow and president of the Texas State Historical Association.

David M. Vigness, also deceased, was chairman of history at Texas Tech University.

George B. Ward, author of *Texas history and the American West*, recently retired as assistant director of the Texas State Historical Association and managing editor of the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*.

The Texas State Historical Association continues to publish books of enduring interest to students and residents of the Lone Star State.



*Lisa Waller Rogers has worked as a teacher and an education consultant to publishers. Her first book, *A Texas Sampler: Historical Recollections*, was a finalist for the Texas Institute of Letters Book Publishers of Texas Children's/Young People's Award.*

*Geronimo Treviño III has played Texas dance halls since 1989 and has opened shows for several of the country legends he writes about. He lives in San Antonio and sells Swedish chocolate when he's not performing with his band.*

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* magazine. He is completing a degree in computer information systems.

(Continued from page seven)

When the hurricane hits, after numerous announcements by forecasters not to be alarmed, J. T. weathers the killer storm and records how he and a few others managed to survive. As deafening winds and rain whip the waves thirty feet high, J. T.'s blood chills at those waves pushing ahead of them, "an enormous wall of wreckage, at least three stories tall."

This superb addition to children's literature nicely complements the other solid, historically accurate works about the storm, including the recently popular *Isaac's Storm*, by Erik Larson, *Galveston and the 1900 Storm* by Patricia Bellis Bixel and Elizabeth Hayes Turner, and *Through a Night of Horrors*, by Casey Edward Greene (editor) and Shelly Henley Kelly. Highly recommended for all juvenile collections in all public libraries.

ROGERS, LISA. *THE GREAT STORM: THE HURRICANE DIARY OF J. T. KING, GALVESTON, TEXAS, 1900*. LUBBOCK: TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2002. 192 PP. APPENDIX, ILLUSTRATIONS, MAPS. \$14.50 CLOTH. ISBN 0-89672-478-6. 00-011879.

## *Dance Halls and Last Calls: A History of Texas Country Music* Geronimo Treviño, III

**Texas Dance Halls**  
Review by Dale Farris

In this fascinating look at days long gone in Texas dance halls, author Treviño (musician, Swedish chocolate maker) provides a timely update on the status of 114 vintage Texas dance halls and their communities through the eyes of the musicians who played there.

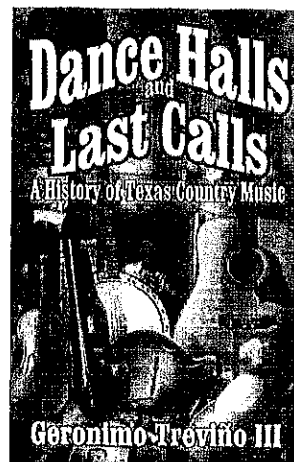
Treviño provides an interesting introductory history of country music that includes the first cowboy singers, the first country music star, the first phonograph recordings, instrument innovations, the original pioneers in radio and TV, and the first million-dollar seller, linking these key events to their ties to these Texas dance halls. The forty-eight-page country music history, alone worth the investment in the book, nicely sets the stage for the brief, thumbnail sketches of the dance halls in which

this history happened, all beginning in the late 1800s with the early European migration to Texas.

The information on each dance hall includes its location, namesake when known, its early establishment, a focus on the style of music that appealed to the community, driving directions, a brief history (when known), and an intriguing black and white photograph of the hall as it stands today.

With the significant national interest and growth in country music, Treviño's work provides an important piece of the history of the dance halls in Texas in which many of today's well-known country music stars got their start. Willie Nelson has said of the importance of these dance halls, "They've supported me for years," and Bob Wills said, "It's a lot of fun to play a dance, jump in your car, drive three, four hundred miles, sleep an hour or two, shave, go play another, drive five, six hundred miles." Floyd Tillman said of the Cabaret in Bandera, after playing there at the age of 85, "I played this hall twenty years ago, and I still love it."

Drawing on an extensive bibliography of sources about country music, its stars and legends, dance halls, as well as on the *Handbook of Texas*, Treviño's work is a definite addition to all public libraries, especially in the communities featured in the book.



TREVIÑO, GERONIMO, III. *DANCE HALLS AND LAST CALLS: A HISTORY OF TEXAS COUNTRY MUSIC*. BLUE RIDGE SUMMIT: REPUBLIC OF TEXAS PRESS, 2002. 273 PP. BIBLIOGRAPHY, ILLUSTRATIONS, INDEX. \$18.95 PAPER. ISBN 1-55622-927-5. 2002000463.



# Defending the Borders: The Texas Rangers 1848-1861

Frederick Wilkins

**Third Volume in Planned Four-Part Series  
on Texas Rangers**

Review by Dale Farris

The third in his critically acclaimed series of Texas Ranger histories, author Wilkins (*The Legend Begins: The Texas Rangers, 1823-1845, The Law Comes to Texas: The Texas Rangers, 1870-1901*) narrates the rarely told story of the rangers during the period 1848-1861. Many of Texas' indomitable historical characters pop up in this vital piece of the story of Texas, including "Rip" Ford, Sam Houston, Henry McCulloch, Ed Burleson, and "Sul" Ross.

Covering the largely neglected period between the close of the Mexican War and the opening of the Civil War, Wilkins adds volume three of his planned 4-volume history of the Texas Rangers, and further establishes his ranking as the Texas Ranger historian capable of carrying on the famed tradition established long ago in Walter Prescott Webb's *The Texas Rangers*.

In this part of Texas history, the state experienced a marked increase in population as Americans move to Texas. Resident Texans joined in the migration, moving from the settled eastern counties to the west. This resulted in a series of frontier settlements in a harsh area that was mostly unknown prior to this population shift. Also during this time, the U.S. inherited the war the Texas Republic had been fighting with the Comanche for over a decade, and the old differences between the Texans and the Mexicans did not vanish when Texas joined the other states.

With these conflicts continuing to simmer and as more people began to move into these hotly contested areas, Texas formed different types of military companies, variously referred to as Minute Men, Mounted Volunteers, or Texas Rangers. These are the nature of the times and the concerns Wilkins focuses on during these years between the wars when the Texas Rangers managed, barely, to defend the frontiers of the state.

Wilkins makes a strident effort to work with as many original source documents as possible, delving deep into muster rolls, correspondence, quartermaster papers, and reports that still exist in the archives of the State Library. Also reviewed were papers from many past Texas governors, and the personal reflections in John Salmon Ford's *Memoirs*, edited and published in *Rip Ford's Texas*. Ford's diary is the only substantial record of any ranger during this time frame that has survived for modern day researchers.

As Wilkins writes of the difficulties in keeping the rangers going during this era, "Fortunately, the lessons from this decade were not ignored completely, and led to the final establishment of a ranger force, in 1874, that was the culmination of all the difficult days and years that had begun in the 1820s."

Wilkins' volume three belongs in all libraries in Texas, along with the prior two volumes, as well as the entire four-volume set when the fourth volume becomes available.

WILKINS, FREDERICK. *DEFENDING THE BORDERS: THE TEXAS RANGERS 1848-1861*. AUSTIN: STATE HOUSE PRESS, 2001. 296 PP. BIBLIOGRAPHY, ILLUSTRATIONS, INDEX, NOTES. \$27.95 CLOTH. ISBN 1-880510-76-6. \$19.95 PAPER. ISBN 1-880510-77-4. 2001031373.

## Savage Frontier: Rangers, Riflemen, and Indian Wars in Texas 1835-1837

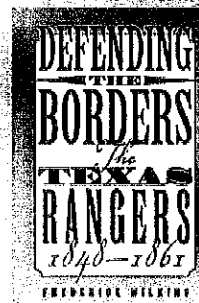
Stephen L. Moore

**Frontier Facts**

Review by Emma B. Hawkins

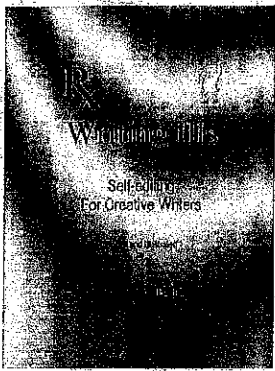
*Savage Frontier* is the first of a two-volume, in-depth study of the first five years of the Texas Rangers. By consulting, as often as possible, first-hand accounts from newspaper articles, diaries and letters; accounts of early historians; memoirs of famous rangers such as George B. Erath and Noah Smithwick; and republic era documents (muster and company pay rolls, casualty lists, service papers, pension papers, claims for reimbursement, etc.), rather than second-hand sources, Moore hopes to set the record straight between fact and folklore surrounding this legendary corps of Indian fighters and peace keepers.

(Continued on page ten)



Frederick Wilkins was born in Dallas, Texas, majored in history at Southern Methodist University, and spent twenty-five years with the U.S. Army's information program. His primary interest has always been the Texas Rangers. Now retired in San Antonio, Wilkins continues to research and write about the history of the Rangers.

Stephen L. Moore, a sixth generation Texas, graduated from Stephen F. Austin State University, where he studied advertising and journalism. He makes his home near Flower Mound, Texas, with his wife and two daughters.



Joan Upton Hall began freelance writing in 1992 following a twenty-eight year stint as a high school English teacher. Once retired, she shifted her focus from editor and cartoonist of *The RRAFT Report* to teaching creative writing classes, conducting workshops, and speaking at writers' conferences, libraries, and civic groups.

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

As a freelance writer, Joan T. Hollier reviews books by Central Texas authors. Her work, also including author features and travel articles, appears regularly in the *Williamson County Sun*.

(Continued from page nine)

Though modeled on the earliest "confirmed" existence of the initial "true" Ranger company founded in 1827, the first Texas Ranger company to be "legally recognized by the provisional government of Texas" was formed on October 17, 1835, under the leadership of Robert Morris Coleman and for the purpose of protecting early Texas settlers from Indian "depredations." Along with old photographs, a few maps, supply lists and muster/pay rolls, in the first volume the author focuses on the early successes and failures of the Texas Rangers from their beginnings, through the Texas Revolution against Mexico, to their dissolution in 1837-38. A lengthy Index (nineteen pages, three columns per page) provides a convenient guide to the multitude of names that might attract readers interested in family genealogy as well as an account of the early years of the fabled Texas Rangers.

MOORE, STEPHEN L. *SAVAGE FRONTIER: RANGERS, RIFLEMEN, AND INDIAN WARS IN TEXAS 1835-1837*. BLUE RIDGE SUMMIT: REPUBLIC OF TEXAS PRESS, 2002. 336 PP. BIBLIOGRAPHY, ILLUSTRATIONS, INDEX, MAPS, NOTES. \$19.95 PAPER, ISBN 1-555622-928-3.

## *RX for Your Writing Ills: Self-editing for Creative Writers* Joan Upton Hall

**Author Prescribes Cures for Writers' Ills**  
Review by Joan T. Hollier

Writers never had it so good. Computers enhance the flow of creative ideas, and technology makes publishing easier. As a result, writers in increasing numbers pass up the traditional agent and editor and turn to self-publishing. However, along the path between idea and published story lurk demons and dragons, diseases and disabilities determined to sabotage the writer and dismay the reader.

Writer/editor Joan Upton Hall offers cures for such maladies in a second edition of her book *RX for Your Writing Ills: Self-editing for Creative Writers*. Hall says, "I wrote the *RX* book for those willing to learn on their own without hiring a freelance editor like me." The new version of *RX* offers revisions

suggested by users of the original book and includes additional aids discovered in the author's work with writers in workshops and classes.

As a reviewer, I read many self-published books that sadly have gone to the publisher without self-editing, without the help of a critique group, or without the services of a competent editor. Hall says, "That's what gives self-published books a bad name. If only the writers would get their work edited by a competent person!" I have seen vast changes in the quality of manuscripts that come through a nonfiction critique group, some that have gone from rough notes to published books with the help of writing comrades. I read the books I review with pen in hand, marking errors. Writers who use this book will surely have fewer errors in their finished manuscripts. Even writer Joan Hall demonstrates that writing is a continuous learning process when she says, "As an English teacher, I thought I knew how to write a novel. To my surprise, learning what today's commercial publishing requires has been like earning another degree."

Author Hall's book is designed to save writers money when they learn to do their own editing. She says, "Most of my clients are surprised and thrilled to find how much better their work reads with a little 'tweaking.' Others back off when they find the cost of editing 'too expensive.'" Her book tells about kinds of editing writers can do themselves and how to cultivate a critique group to help them.

This book is not a rule book. The reader may be mildly reminded of classroom grammar and usage, but the concepts are easily grasped by the most reluctant student of English. Each of the ten chapters addresses a specific problem typically encountered when a writer attempts self-editing. The author uses a low-key approach, injecting humor into her explanations and examples. She illustrates with her own cartoons that lighten up the treatment of writing diseases. Each chapter identifies symptoms, makes a diagnosis and suggests a treatment program. Numerous examples make the problem easier to identify and treat, plus a checklist verifies that the disease is cured.

Hall moves beyond suggestions for writing competent, grammatically-correct prose to include tips for writing dialogue,

(Continued on page eleven)

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describing characters in fiction, and establishing settings. She uses excerpts from her own writing as well as from other writers to offer encouragement, to help preserve a positive attitude and hope for the future.

Major changes and additions show up in the appendix of the book. Besides additional helps for writing dialogue, describing characters, and managing movement of stories through time and space, the book includes many practical aids. Hall provides an example of her record keeping, a sample submission log for tracking manuscripts out to various markets.

Among valuable additions, she puts a guide for synopsis writing and a model for formatting manuscripts, both mazes which writers must negotiate to enter contests and solicit publication. She shows examples of both synopsis and format that actually worked to get writers' works published. She includes examples of her monthly column "Demystifying Writers' Demons" that answer frequently asked questions about grammar, usage, punctuation, and capitalization.

Some items in the appendix point directly to the writer of fiction. She gives clarified explanations of the mechanics for writing dialogue and internal monologue. She warns against "showy" punctuation that is the hallmark of the amateur writer. The appendix concludes with an action-packed list of books Hall has found helpful in developing her editing skills. An index of terms helps the beginning writer unravel the jargon of the trade.

HALL, JOAN UPTON. *RX FOR YOUR WRITING*. ILLS. GEORGETOWN: WORD WRIGHT INTERNATIONAL, 2003. 108 PP. APPENDIX. \$18.00 PAPER. ISBN 193219617X.

AVAILABLE ON-LINE AT BARNES AND NOBLE AND AMAZON.COM

TO CONTACT AUTHOR: P.O. Box 179 HUTTO, TX 78634; JMUHALL@AOL.COM

## *The Texas 36th Division: A History* Bruce L. Brager

**From Peacekeeper to Military**  
Review by Max Loges

After briefly discussing the role of the Texas militia during the Texas War for Independence

and the Civil War, Brager focuses on the documented history of the 36th Division, which he sees as beginning in 1873 with the formation of the Houston Light Guard. He then examines the guard's activities as peacekeepers within the state and as a military unit in World Wars I and II.

The book has many praiseworthy features. It is an accurate, well documented history. Brager uses both primary and secondary sources and frequently incorporates quotations from the journals and letters of those participating in the unit's activities. He also includes maps and photographs of many of the principal actors in his narrative.

The book's main problem is that there is nothing particularly Texas about it. The section covering World War II rarely links anything to Texas. If readers want to find a reference to the contribution made by "the boys from Beaumont" or the "unit from Lubbock," they will have to look elsewhere. The author could have added a great deal of human interest if he had included some information related to how the various units from across the state fit into the overall division. In addition, readers would have enjoyed some biographical information on the division's principal commanders during World Wars I and II. Finally, maps need to be placed near the text that refers to them.

BRAGER, BRUCE L. *THE TEXAS 36TH DIVISION: A HISTORY*. AUSTIN: EAKIN PRESS, 2002. 238 PP. BIBLIOGRAPHY, ILLUSTRATIONS, INDEX, MAPS. \$29.95 CLOTH. ISBN 1-57168-371-2. 99-049866.

## *Phoebe Clappsaddle and the Tumbleweed Gang* Melanie Chrismer

**Dainty, Darling Phoebe Clappsaddle  
Combines Southern Manners with  
Roping Rattlesnakes**

Review by JoAn W. Martin

The Tumbleweed Gang drift into town and try to ruin Phoebe's flame-thrower chili and sabotage her bronco-riding. Their worst embarrassment is losing to a girl. Phoebe realizes these bad guys need to learn some manners, not to mention reading, writing, and arithmetic. She entices them with her hot biscuits, prickly pear marmalade and chili. But she insists they wash

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Bruce Brager holds a degree in political science from George Washington University. His articles have appeared in numerous history and military publications, including *Washington Times* and *National Guard*. He lives in Arlington, Virginia. This is his second book.

Melanie Chrismer is a fifth generation native Houstonian. She and her family live in northwest Houston.

Illustrator Virginia Marsh Roeder has been an advertising artist, graphic designer, and an illustration artist. She is a retired art teacher from St. John's School in Houston.

Both Ms. Chrismer and Ms. Roeder are members of the Houston Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators.

Steve Seskin and Allen Shamblin grew up in Huffman, Texas, and are committed to making the world a kinder, safer, and more supportive place for all kids.

Anita Higman has published books for adults and children. She resides near Houston.

Sylvia Blackley Thompson has over twenty years experience as a book reviewer, historical trip narrator, and lecturer on Texas and Southern history. She lives in Houston.

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.

Andrew Preslar is an award-winning instructor of English at Lamar State College-Orange. He has published critical articles, fiction, and poetry.

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up for supper. Burping in public and picking teeth with a cactus needle are a sharp contrast to Phoebe's curtsying and blowing kisses to the crowd.

Being a descendant of the real Phoebe Clappsaddle gives Melanie Chrismer the edge on demonstrating the protagonist's roping tricks with her pink lasso, and Virginia Roeder's spirited, clever drawings of the sashaying Phoebe and her detailed illustrations offer much to study. Readers can't resist even the evil, smirking Cliffford, Eimo and Eustace, who blow into town one day like a tumbleweed and get caught on a fence. Even the horses have unique expressions.

CHRISMER, MELANIE. *PHOEBE CLAPPSADDLE AND THE TUMBLEWEED GANG*. GRETNA: PELICAN PUBLISHING COMPANY, 2002. ILLUSTRATIONS. 32 PP. \$14.95 CLOTH. ISBN 1-56554-966-X. 2002005317.

## *Don't Laugh At Me* Steve Seskin Allen Shamblin

**Common Sense and Sensitivity**  
Review by JoAn W. Martin

An attractive Reading Rainbow Book, *Don't Laugh At Me* tackles the age-old problem of being bullied. Who has not experienced the frustration of enduring the "put-down?" Preschool children are accustomed to the protected environment of a compassionate family, but too soon they hear derisive remarks about wearing glasses. Wearing braces on one's teeth, even on one's legs offers to bullies a chance to build themselves up by tearing down another person.

An afterword by Peter Yarrow tells us how he discovered the song "Don't Laugh At Me." Over 50% of the schools in Connecticut have launched a program using literature and song "to help children find their common sensitivity to the painful effects of disrespect, intolerance, ridicule, and bullying; actions and exchanges, which, in the hands of adults, become the basis for active racism, war, and other devastating dysfunctional behaviors." Music and words for the song are in the back of the book as well as a CD. A website, [www.dontlaugh.org](http://www.dontlaugh.org) offers

free materials for spreading the message of respect for self and others.

SESKIN, STEVE, AND ALLEN SHAMBLIN. *DON'T LAUGH AT ME*. BERKLEY, TRICYCLE PRESS, 2002. \$16.95 CLOTH. ISBN 1-58246-058-2.

## *A Tribute to Early Texas through the Lens of Master Photographer John R. Blocker* Anita Higman Sylvia B. Thompson

**Backdrop and Foreground**  
Review by Andrew B. Preslar

Even though the title of this beautiful book claims that it is first a tribute to early Texas and second to the camera lens, Higman and Thompson seem even more moved by their obvious love and admiration for the photographer, John Blocker. He considered himself to be an amateur, and he earned his living primarily with his other remarkable gifts. After working for some years as a rancher, he became a machinist for the University of Texas for thirty years, where he was affectionately known as Uncle John. But later in life the lens became the vehicle for refining and sharing his artistic vision of the world, and like all good artists, he worked with the themes and models he knew best and loved most. Not only do the photographs display Blocker's genius for composition, his mastery of balance, design, and light, but they also serve to illustrate the dynamic interplay of past, present, and future that characterizes Texas and captures the imaginations of those who cherish her. Many of the photos are land and waterscapes, but there are others, too—missions, windmills, wagons, ruined stone houses or the Texas capitol seen from inside the UT tower before the clock was installed—and in most of them Texas serves not only as a thing of power, beauty and mythos in her own right but also as a backdrop for the art and artifice of those people whose lives and dreams and deaths and legacies were, and still are, unalterably intertwined with her.

These kinds of books open windows to worlds  
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we can experience no other way, but they often seem a little too slick, the compositions too obviously contrived. This one seems simply genuine and is all the more remarkable as an example of its kind for that. Also it's inexpensive, a not-altogether-incidental consideration in collection development right now. Recommended for Texana and general public collections, and perhaps for high schools offering photography programs.

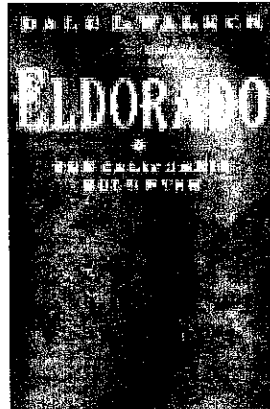
HIGMAN, ANITA, AND SYLVIA B. THOMPSON. A TRIBUTE TO EARLY TEXAS THROUGH THE LENS OF MASTER PHOTOGRAPHER JOHN R. BLOCKER. BLUE RIDGE SUMMIT: REPUBLIC OF TEXAS PRESS, 2002. 256 PP. BIBLIOGRAPHY, ILLUSTRATIONS, INDEX. \$22.95 PAPER. ISBN 1-55622-837-6. 2001031967.

## Eldorado: The California Gold Rush Dale Walker

Leaving Hearth and Home  
Review by Clay Reynolds

This new volume by one of Texas' most successful popular historians adds a third book to his California history series that already includes *Bear Flag Rising* and *Pacific Destiny*. Walker, a Spur Award winner and denizen of El Paso, former director of Texas Western Press, is rapidly becoming a formidable voice for historical accounts of California and the American West. Written with the casual pace and tone of a well-made novel, *Eldorado* details the account of the Gold Rush of '49. Far more than a general historical overview, Walker's volume delves deeply into the details and background of the principal argonauts, who left hearth and home and journeyed across an almost impenetrable wilderness or sailed around the tip of South America to try to find their fortune. Walker bases his discussion primarily on letters, diaries, newspaper accounts, and other documentation from the period. But he salts his mine with stunning and incisive revelations about everything from wagon capacities to dietary deprivations aboard the many ships that set sail for the Golden Gate in the 1850s. Along the way, he paints vivid portraits of key individuals, including not only Sutter, the infamous Swiss whose minor empire was ultimately taken over by rapacious gold-seekers but also such minor

luminaries as the family of John Audobon. He also reveals that those who prospered the most from the gold in "them thar hills" was likely the merchants, card sharps, saloon owners, and prostitutes who offered their wares and services to the prospectors. Although written without footnotes, this is a rich source of information for any doing research in the period, but for even the casual reader, it's an intelligently written and highly entertaining volume.



WALKER, DALE. *ELDORADO: THE CALIFORNIA GOLD RUSH*. NEW YORK: FORGE, 2003. 400 PP. BIBLIOGRAPHY, ILLUSTRATIONS, INDEX, MAPS. \$27.95 CLOTH. ISBN: 0-312-87833-8.

## Literary Fort Worth Judy Alter James Ward Lee

Beyond Stereotype  
Reviewed by: Sandra Gail Teichmann

Literary folks in Fort Worth? You bet. Literary folk mingling with and writing about the mink-laden ladies and the well-heeled gentlemen flocking to the stock show; the swishy women shopping at Neiman-Marcus before lunching at Café Aspen; the intellectuals engaged in discussions of, yes, literature at TCU and Texas Wesleyan; the Merle Haggards, the Willie Nelsons, and the George Straits hanging out at Billy Bob's; the pitchers and first base men throwing hard balls for the Fort Worth Cats; the patrons of the arts supporting the Kimbell and the Amon and the Museum of Modern Art; the children growing up in a growing-up city; the ever-in-the-know folks forecasting and lamenting the weather and the politics; and, not to be forgotten, those, not unlike James Ward Lee himself, who are trying to eat their way through

(Continued on page fourteen)

Dale L. Walker is the recipient of the Year 2000 Owen Award for lifetime achievement in Western history and literature. He is the author of over fifteen books and writes for the *Rocky Mountain News*.

Judy Alter, director of Texas Christian University Press, is the author of several novels, short stories, and nonfiction for young readers.

James Ward Lee is professor emeritus and former chair of the English department and director of the Center for Texas Studies at the University of North Texas. He now serves as acquisitions consultant for Texas Christian University Press.

Clay Reynolds is Professor and Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies at the University of Texas at Dallas. His recent works include *Monuments*, *The Tentmaker*, *Ars Poetica*, and *Threading the Needle*.



Jessie Gunn Stephens has visited gardens all over the world. Her short stories and articles have appeared in such publications as *Women's World*, *Texas Gardener*, *Byline Magazine*, and newspapers across the state. She writes the garden column "In Your Backyard" for the *Sherman-Denison Herald Democrat*. She lives and gardens in Sherman with her husband, Tony.

Sandra Gail Teichmann is the author of *Killing Daddy: A Caprock Story*. She is associate professor of English at West Texas A&M University and has a number of other publications.

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Cattleman's, Massey's, Angelo's, Hedary's, and, saving the best for last, Cousin's for barbecue. Seems excessive, but it's all there in the Queen City of the Prairies.

So there we have the setting and some of the characters. The authors who have written from and about Fort Worth for over a century are as varied in personality and style as the population of Fort Worth itself. I'll begin with one of my favorites, the late Jim Corder, who graces this anthology with a personal essay titled "World War II on Cleckler Street." James Ward Lee gives us, in the "Introduction," a peek at Fort Worth as it is now and then shows us a bit of "Fort Worth in the Sixties." The selection from Larry McMurtry's *Horseman, Pass By* is perhaps one of the best known, but then there is a segment from novelist Clay Reynolds' *A Hundred Years of Heroes* giving factual detail to the event of events in Fort Worth, the Southwestern Exposition and Livestock Show.

A man's town, literarily? No, not quite. Judy Alter not only co-edits this collection, but she also contributes from her special interest in the American West with her short story "Sue Ellen Learns to Dance," which won a number of awards, including a Spur Award from Western Writers of America. Fort Worth native, Betsy Feagan Colquitt, reveals her childhood before the gentrification of the city. Hollace Ava Weiner is represented with an excerpt from her *Jewish Stars in Texas*, and columnist Sheila Taylor Wells details the changes that have taken place to make Fort Worth the city it is today.

All in all this collection is a fine show and homage to a Fort Worth preserved in words by authors writing with passion, insight, and humor.



ALTER, JUDY, AND JAMES WARD LEE, EDs.  
*LITERARY FORT WORTH*. FORT WORTH: TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2002. 414 PP. BIBLIOGRAPHY. \$17.95 PAPER.  
 ISBN 0-87565-253-0. \$26.50 CLOTH.  
 ISBN: 0-87565-260-3. 2001046280.

## Touring Texas Gardens Jessie Gunn Stephens

### Garden Splendor

Review by Sandra Gail Teichmann

Gardens are perhaps one of the most peaceful places left to visit on earth, yet we seldom take the time. In *Touring Texas Gardens*, Jessie Gunn Stephens invites us to stroll through public and some private grounds, some cultivated, some wild in Texas where we can hardly resist the promise of solitude, color, and communion with Mother Nature. The gardens in Texas are many and varied in type from the lush and formal of Houston's Bayou Bend to the dry and educational of El Paso's Xeriscape Demonstration Display Garden. In Austin we might walk through a flowering meadow at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center or fill our senses with rosemary and mint at the It's About Thyme Garden. In Lampasas we might lean down for the scent of an old rose like one of those our great grandmothers tended. In Gladewater, if it were in the springtime, we might drive through the twenty acres of meadows laden with golden daffodils in bloom.

Gardens in the winter can be as or more lovely than in the summer. Stephens recommends: "the bare trunks of ancient crape myrtles" at the Dallas Arboretum, "the splendor of towering pines" in the Pineywoods Native Plant Center at Nacogdoches, as well as the Japanese gardens in Fredericksburg and Fort Worth, for winter beauty.

The possibilities for stepping into the splendor of plants, grasses, and trees are many, and each clearly laid out as to location, hours, type, size, history, best times to visit, and birds to watch for. As Stephens' invitation, commentary, and personal knowledge of Texas Gardens seem to be most genuine, I have now tucked my copy of *Touring Texas Gardens* into my glove compartment in anticipation of my next Texas road trip.

STEPHENS, JESSIE GUNN. *TOURING TEXAS GARDENS*. BLUE RIDGE SUMMIT: REPUBLIC OF TEXAS PRESS, 2003. 270 PP. ILLUSTRATIONS, INDEX. \$18.95 PAPER. 1-55622-934-8. 2002004159.



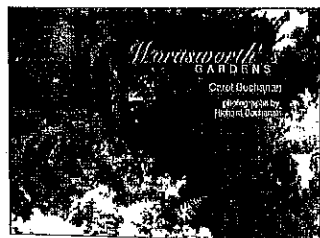
# Wordsworth's Gardens

Carol Buchanan

**Sumptuous Feast  
for Scholars of Romanticism**

Review by Steve Zani

*Wordsworth's Gardens* is an exceedingly well researched look into the material world that surrounded William and Dorothy Wordsworth in their life in the Lake District. The book is rich enough when seen simply as a volume of photography, with pictures taken by the author's husband, Richard Buchanan. It is packed with page after page of natural imagery, including landscapes, cottages and individual flora of the area. But most appealing here is the connection of those photographs to Carol Buchanan's lengthy account of Wordsworth's life in relation to the territory, along with readings of his poetry that are similarly grounded in the circumstances of his life and the landscapes that surrounded him. Virtually all of Wordsworth's major poems, and a good number of less anthologized pieces as well, are touched upon in the work, analyzed in the context of Wordsworth's life during their composition, and accompanied by relevant photographs of the very subjects of his composition. Detailed descriptions of relevant gardens, with full page maps, provide a wealth of information. Scholars interested in authorial intent, or those who pursue New Historical readings of Wordsworth will find this book absolutely essential to understanding his work. Appendices in the rear of the work give detailed information about the botany and geography of the area, as well as giving explicit lists of poems related to the landscapes and gardens that the Wordsworths frequented. In short, this work is an excellent research tool, filled with eminently useful scholarship and extraordinary photographs.



BUCHANAN, CAROL. *WORDSWORTH'S GARDENS*. LUBBOCK: TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2001. 244 PP. APPENDIX, BIBLIOGRAPHY, ILLUSTRATIONS, INDEX, NOTES. \$45.00 CLOTH. ISBN 0-89672-445-X. 00-011136.

# Texas Prisons: The Largest Hotel Chain in Texas

Lon Bennett Glenn

**Testament to the Work Ethic and  
Intelligence of Texas Prison System  
Employees**

Review by Steve Zani

Lon Bennet Glenn's frank and opinionated writing style may put off those looking for an ostensibly objective account of the Texas Prison System, but his perspective and candor provide a singular education into prison life in a system that has undergone radical change in the past several decades—changes not for the better, according to Glenn. This book has the advantage of Glenn's unique involvement in prison life. Beginning first as a guard, he worked his way up the system, eventually becoming a warden and witnessing a great number of administrative and policy changes in the meanwhile. Sometimes historical, sometimes topical, the book moves from subject to subject but always remains interesting. Glenn is opinionated—he is for the death penalty, against educational programs for inmates, and he proclaims in the first fifteen pages that poverty doesn't cause crime. However, his arguments come from both personal experience and balanced logic that is hard to refute. For example, while he thinks that women have no place in contact positions with the male prison populace, it's also true that he thinks men have no place in contact positions with the female convicts. Where the book excels is in Glenn's devotion to finding support and rationale for everything he says. His argument for the death penalty, for one example, is supported by pages of research, personal anecdotes, and the perspective of a man who has spent years watching prisoners who cannot be controlled when they have nothing to lose. The book is highly informative, a useful tool for generating argument and debate about prison reform, and far better written than one would expect from a man who spent his life hanging around the prison populace.

GLENN, LON BENNETT. *TEXAS PRISONS: THE LARGEST HOTEL CHAIN IN TEXAS*. AUSTIN: EAKIN PRESS, 2001. 392 PP. BIBLIOGRAPHY, GLOSSARY, ILLUSTRATIONS, INDEX. \$27.95 PAPER. ISBN 1-57168-522-7.

Carol Buchanan lives in Richmond, Virginia, with her husband Richard. They often visit the Lake District near

Wordsworth's gardens. Carol is also the author of *Brother Crow*, *Sister Corn*, *Traditional American Indian Gardening and The Wildlife Sanctuary Garden*.



Lon Bennett Glenn began his career with the Texas Prison System in 1966, when at age of twenty-one he signed on as prison guard at the Clemens Unit in Brazoria County.

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