

# Review of Texas Books

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Robert Phillips is a John and Rebecca Moores Professor at the University of Houston and literary executor of the American poets Delmore Schwartz and Karl Shapiro. His poetry has won an Award in Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, a Creative Artists' Public Service Award from New York State, and a Pushcart Prize, among others. His collection *Breakdown Lane* was named a Notable Book of the Year by the *New York Times Book Review*.

R. S. Gwynn is Poet in Residence at Lamar University and has taught in the English and Modern Languages department since 1976. He has authored five poetry collections, the most recent of which is *No Word of Farewell: Selected Poems: 1970-2000*. He has also edited several anthologies including *Inside Literature: Reading, Responding, Arguing*, a 2007 collection published by Pearson Longman.

## Editors' Choice:

### *Circumstances Beyond Our Control: Poems*

Robert Phillips

### *Circumstances Beyond Our Control: Poems*

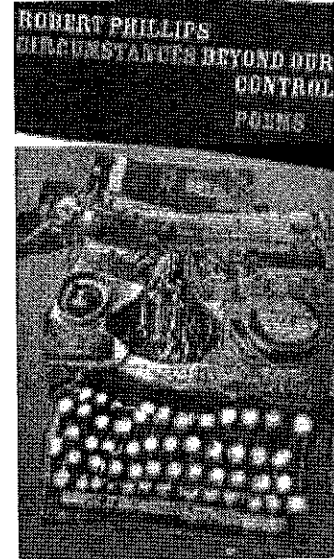
Robert Phillips

#### Wry Wit and Plainspoken Eloquence

Review by R. S. Gwynn

When Robert Phillips left a successful career in advertising to move from New York to teach in the creative writing program at the University of Houston, it was plain that Texas was gaining an original and consistently entertaining poet. What no one could have predicted, though, was that Phillips would so quickly acclimate himself to his new locale. *Circumstances Beyond Our Control*, the poet's seventh collection, contains some wise and wonderful takes on Gulf Coast life, including a dramatic monologue spoken by Wanda Holloway, the Channelview mom who instigated a murder plot against one of her daughter's cheerleading rivals: "If someone snuffs her mother / the night before the big tryouts at school, / that daughter will collapse in a puddle of grief. / I'll take the cheer right out of her leader." Phillips's wit is apparent everywhere in the book, manifesting itself in a variety of forms ranging from a "fugue" of "Famous Last Words" to a "found" mock-villanelle made up of headlines like "War Dims Hope for Peace" to "Vita," an unsparing bit of self-portraiture made up of twenty-eight haiku: "Roughing it, for him, / means turning the electric / blanket down to Five." One senses that a wry smile accompanied the making of these poems, even when they reveal ambition blunted or love meandering off course: "He goes / more or less his way, she goes hers, / strangers on a winding stair." Robert Phillips's plainspoken eloquence provides a tonic for readers who find that much contemporary poetry has little to say to them. In Phillips's poems they can recognize circumstances beyond control that may be like their own.

PHILLIPS, ROBERT. *CIRCUMSTANCES BEYOND OUR CONTROL: POEMS*. BALTIMORE: THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2006. 88 pp. \$16.95 PAPER. ISBN 978-0-8018-8378-1. \$35.00 CLOTH. ISBN 978-0-8018-8376-7. 2005024564.



## Featured Publisher:

### *The Johns Hopkins University Press*

Founded in 1878, The John Hopkins University Press is America's oldest UP and has published more than six thousand titles. Today JHU Press is one of the world's largest university presses, publishing fifty-eight scholarly periodicals and more than two hundred new books each year. Through Project MUSE®, a collaboration with JHU's Milton S. Eisenhower Library at Johns Hopkins, the Press is also a leading online provider of scholarly journals, bringing more than 250 periodicals to the desktops of nine million students, scholars, and others worldwide. In addition, the Press provides order processing, computer service, warehousing, and shipping for other publishing houses. The professional and support staff of the Press totals about 130. The Johns Hopkins University Press continues to uphold the ideal set forth by its founder Daniel Coit Gilman: "It is one of the noblest duties of a university to advance knowledge, and to diffuse it not merely among those who can attend the daily lectures—but far and wide."

## *The Cowboy Way: An Exploration of History & Culture*

Paul H. Carlson, ed.

**A Comprehensive Look at Cowboy Life**  
Review by Dale Farris

Paul H. Carlson, also author of *Deep Time and The Texas High Plains: History and Geology*, edits an informative collection of essays on the fascinating life of the cowboy. In addition to Carlson's two contributed essays, the book contains fourteen additional analyses by historians and history professors, freelance writers, an English professor, museum archivists, reference librarians, and a doctoral student. Carlson's introductory essay on the American cowboy myth and the modern cowboy is followed by equally impressive works on the origin and early use of the term cowboy, vaqueros in the western cattle industry, African-American cowboys, Indian cowboys, the English Earl of Aylesford in the American west, the 1883 cowboy strike, the work clothes of American cowboys, and the relationship between cowboys and sheepherders. There are also essays on stockyards cowboys, cowboy humor, cowboy songs and nature in the late nineteenth century, French cowboys, cowboys of the U.S. cinema, and a summary essay on the reality of today's modern-era cowboy and their brutal, hard way of life.

Each essay is complete with extensive reference notes, indicating the solid, academic research that went into the writing of these impressive essays that reveal the truth behind this American national symbol that is a leading icon of popular culture and usually explored in folklore. The essays can be read in any order, and four that previously appeared in the *West Texas Historical Association Year Book* have been revised for this compilation. The collection represents a combination of historical narrative, synthesis, and analysis, and all touch on how cowboys of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries really lived, including revelations about their food, clothing, and housing, from the more humble, simple aspects of cowboy life, to some of the more dynamic experiences. The various themes of the essays celebrate hard work and bravery and emphasize the excitement and the danger, as well as the mundane events, that

were part of the life of cowboys in the nineteenth century. A major theme is how an enterprise as ephemeral in nature as open range cattle raising continues to fascinate scholars and the general reading public.

The essays also examine older themes in light of modern scholarship and present newer topics that reflect fresh interest and issues. While the collection is of course highly selective and not all-inclusive, the essays succeed in providing a perspective on cowboys that is different from what is generally available. The short, readable essays entertain and inform, resulting in a book that will appeal to a wide audience, including academicians and researchers, as well as literate readers interested in learning about the reality of the life of the American cowboy. As many readers know, cowboys, both real and mythic, have become part of the American epic and this abiding interest has a long history. From these solidly researched essays, readers will learn the truth behind the character type of this knight of the road who with a large hat, tall boots and a big gun, rode into legend and into the history books.

Highly recommended for all university libraries and larger public libraries.

CARLSON, PAUL H., ED. *THE COWBOY WAY: AN EXPLORATION OF HISTORY & CULTURE*. LUBBOCK: TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2006. 236 PP. BIBLIOGRAPHY, INDEX, NOTES. PHOTOS. \$18.95 PAPER. ISBN 0-89672-583-9. \$29.95 CLOTH. ISBN 0-89672-425-5. 99-40584.

## *The Texas Railroad Commission: Understanding Regulation in America to the Mid-Twentieth Century*

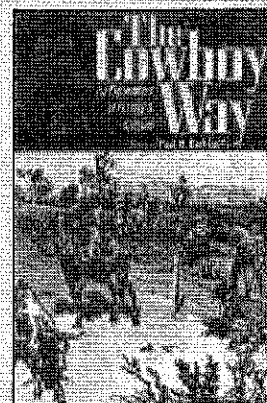
William R. Childs

**The History and Transformation of the TRC**

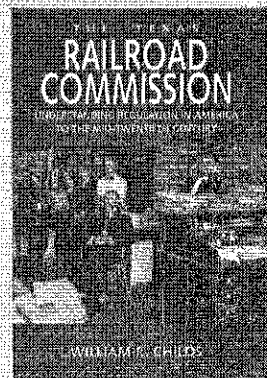
Review by Dale Farris

William R. Childs provides an in-depth study of the Texas Railroad Commission, the nation's

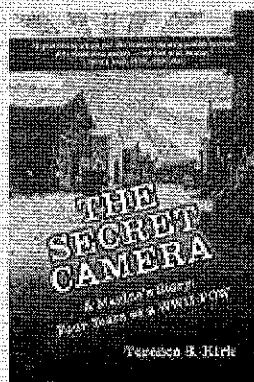
*Continued on page four*



*Paul H. Carlson is professor of history at Texas Tech University. He has published many articles and several books.*



*William R. Childs is an associate professor of history at Ohio State University and holds a Ph.D. from the University of Texas at Austin. He is also the author of Trucking and the Public Interest: The Emergence of Federal Regulation, 1914-1940.*



*Terence Kirk, a retired master gunnery Sergeant, served thirty years in the U.S. Marine Corps, nearly four of which were in a Japanese POW camp. He lives in Walnut Springs, Texas.*

*Continued from page three*

preeminent regulatory commission, through the 1930s. For over a century, one of the most powerful agencies in Texas, along with being one of the least understood, was the Texas Railroad Commission (TRC). Before OPEC ever formed, the TRC was heavily involved in influencing oil prices around the world, as evidenced by the 1986 *Wall Street Journal* statement that "For decades beginning in the 1930s, the agency (the TRC) in its quiet way set world oil prices." The TRC evolved from its 1891 founding to a multi-divisional regulatory commission that oversaw not only railroads but also a number of other industries central to the modern American economy, including petroleum production, natural gas utilities, and motor carriers.

This important study analyzes the history of the TRC from its early days until the mid-twentieth century, and the revelations extend the knowledge of commission-style regulation. Child's focus is on the interplay between business and regulators, between state and national regulatory commissions, and among the three branches of government through the process of what he terms "pragmatic federalism." His purpose is to explore how a railroad commission influenced petroleum production, and the result is a thorough examination of the reasons for the existence of the TRC and how it operates. In addition, readers will learn how over the years the TRC moved beyond its founding purpose to promote and regulate railroads and how it transformed over the decades to take on several other industries, including oil and natural gas pipelines, buses, and trucks. In the process, Childs further broadens the book into a history of regulation in America, particularly the history of commission-style regulation. This larger theme emphasizes the interaction between state and national regulatory commissions, and Childs shows how the TRC was an important participant in the development of "pragmatic federalism."

He ends his history in the mid-twentieth century. By the post-WWII period, the transformation of the TRC from an agency focused on one industry to a multidivisional commission promoting and regulating several industries was complete. This period also marked the high point of American reliance on commission-style regulation and a pragmatically arrived at sharing of state and national regulatory controls. Also, the

discussion on what would later be termed "deregulation" was gaining currency and is another story.

Childs's sage analysis of the TRC is an important contribution to the developing history of the petroleum and natural gas business and is highly recommended for all university libraries.

CHILDS, WILLIAM R. *THE TEXAS RAILROAD COMMISSION: UNDERSTANDING REGULATION IN AMERICA TO THE MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY*. COLLEGE STATION: TEXAS A & M UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2005. 336 PP. INDEX, MAP, NOTES, PHOTOS. \$35.00 CLOTH. ISBN 1-58544-452-9. 2005000437.

## *The Secret Camera: A Marine's Story: Four Years as a WWII POW* Terence Kirk

**Unfailing Courage**  
Review by Dale Farris

Author Terence S. Kirk is a retired Marine Master Gunnery Sergeant and spent almost four years of his total thirty-year U.S. Marine Corp career as a Japanese POW during WWII. In this harrowing story, he reveals the true story of how he and other U.S. soldiers struggled to survive their ordeal as a Japanese POW. As many readers likely know, tens of thousands of American soldiers did not survive capture and imprisonment in the Japanese POW camps, and Kirk brings to life the terrible agony that defined life as a Japanese prisoner in WWII.

Kirk's dramatic story explains what he and other U.S. soldiers had to do to stay alive. With the help of a Japanese interpreter and several Marines, Kirk was able to build a small camera and record the horrible conditions and atrocities he and his fellow soldiers were forced to endure. Readers will be enthralled by Kirk's story of heroism, the unimaginable adversities faced by all the prisoners, his unwavering will to survive, and the construction and use of the camera.

The literature on WWII now overburdens the shelves, but individual soldier accounts and memoirs provide some of the most poignant,

*Continued on page five*

*Continued from page four*  
 stirring tales of the war. Kirk's story provides an important contribution to the understanding of what life was really like for Americans in the horrific conditions of the Japanese POW camps and serves as a tribute to the thousands of Americans who did not make it out of the camps.

Highly recommended for all libraries.

KIRK, TERENCE SUMNER. *THE SECRET CAMERA: A MARINE'S STORY: FOUR YEARS AS A WWII POW*. GUILFORD: THE LYONS PRESS, 2005. 260 PP. PHOTOGRAPHS. \$16.95 PAPER. ISBN 1-59228-826-X.

## *Engineering The World: Stories From the First 75 Years of Texas Instruments* Caleb Pirtle, III.

**The History of Texas Instruments and Its  
 Impact on Modern Microelectronics**  
 Review by Dale Farris

Author Caleb Pirtle provides seventy-five concise vignettes that trace the history of the Dallas-area company Texas Instruments, now known around the world simply as TI. This inside story has been published to coincide with the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of TI.

Pirtle was assisted by the TI Retiree Advisory Council, consisting of fourteen TI retirees with an average of thirty-four years experience with TI and representing a cross-section of experience from all TI's businesses, who worked more than a year researching and editing the material. Pirtle succinctly summarizes the dramatic TI history of innovation in products and technologies, including the history of its famous development of the first commercial silicon transistors, the first electronic hand-held calculators, and of course the story of TI engineer Jack Kilby's historic 1958 invention of the monolithic integrated circuit that created the foundation for the entire field of modern microelectronics.

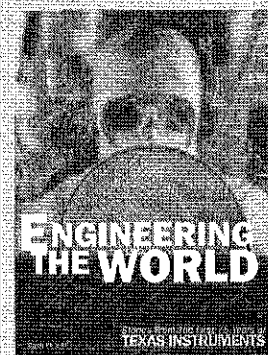
Pirtle begins this lively history with the company's early 1930 beginning as a tiny geophysical exploration company named Geophysical Service, Inc., or GSI, and its working out of the back of a truck in the

oilfields of the Southwest to help search beneath the earth's surface for hidden oil and gas. GSI was the world's first independent geophysical exploration company based on technology called reflection seismography. The company survived the Great Depression to use its capabilities in WWII to produce submarine detection equipment, and it later ignited a revolution in the way oil and gas would be found around the world.

Pirtle continues with stories of the company's ongoing innovation in technologies and its management philosophy, and he includes interesting background on some of TI's more intriguing customer partnerships, including IBM in the 1950s and today's major telecommunications breakthroughs. Pirtle also relates the origin of the name change to TI in 1951 and shows how the company has continued to use progressively more complex signal-processing technology to literally and repeatedly change the world of business. He presents stories that highlight the TI approach to new business opportunities and its investment in international markets, including becoming in 1968 the first foreign semiconductor company to establish manufacturing operations in Japan and the first foreign technology company with wholly-owned operations in India in 1985. It now has manufacturing, design, or sales operations in twenty-five nations. Throughout this fascinating history of this dynamic company, Pirtle shows how TI has continued to maintain its solid roots in the Dallas area as it continues to explore futuristic developments in technology, including real-time digital communications, entertainment, medical services, digital light processing, and radio frequency identification (RFID). The author includes an extensive array of rare color and black and white photographs of many of TI's early products, including the world's first transistor radio, the Regency TR-1, now in the Smithsonian; the first handheld calculator, the TI Cal Tech; the famous TI Speak & Spell learning aids for children; and the first LED watch.

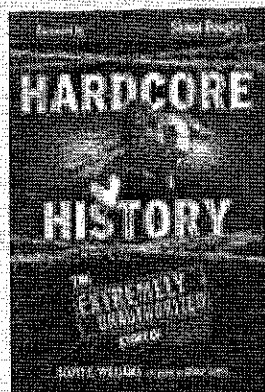
Highly recommended for all university libraries supporting engineering and business curriculum and larger public libraries, especially in the North Texas area.

PIRTLE, CALEB, III. *ENGINEERING THE WORLD: STORIES FROM THE FIRST 75 YEARS OF TEXAS INSTRUMENTS*. DALLAS: SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2005. 272 PP. BIBLIOGRAPHY, INDEX, PHOTOS. \$27.95 CLOTH. ISBN 0-87074-502-6. 2005046412.



*Caleb Pirtle, III, vice president and editorial director for Dockery House Publishing in Dallas, is the award-winning author of more than thirty books. A former travel editor for Southern Living magazine, he has co-written two teleplays for CBS and has written for such publications as Travel & Leisure, Bon Appetit, and Holiday. He's the recipient of a Texas Associated Press Award, Small Press Book Award, and a Discover America Award.*





Scott E. Williams is a criminal justice reporter and an award-winning wrestling columnist for *The Galveston Daily News*. He has written two books on professional wrestling, *Terry Funk: More Than Just Hardcore* and *The Cowboy and the Cross: The Bill Watts Story*.

Roy Spence founded GSD&M, one of the most successful marketing companies in the United States. He grew up attending the First Methodist Church in Brownwood, Texas.

## *Hardcore History: The Extremely Unauthorized Story of ECW* Scott E. Williams

An Inside Look at Eastern Championship Wrestling

Review by Dale Farris

Scott E. Williams has been a wrestling fan for years, and his zeal for this zany form of entertainment clearly shows in this inside look at Eastern Championship Wrestling (ECW). In its height, ECW was a mover and shaker in the unique world of professional wrestling during the 1990's. Readers will learn how World Champion Wrestling (WCW) sought to destroy ECW by draining off its talent, the alleged secret friendship of Vince McMahon, and what ultimately impacted the death of ECW. In addressing these inside issues, readers will better understand these and other ECW mysteries that will, of course, appeal mostly to fans of the dynamic, many times overly melodramatic business of professional wrestling.

Recommended for public libraries.

WILLIAMS, SCOTT E. *HARDCORE HISTORY: THE EXTREMELY UNAUTHORIZED STORY OF ECW*. CHAMPAIGN: SPORTS PUBLISHING, LLC, 2006. 256 PP. PHOTOS. \$24.95 CLOTH. ISBN 1-59670-021-1. 2005035443.

## *The Amazing Faith of Texas: Common Ground on Higher Ground* Roy Spence

A Journey of Faith

Review by Pat Heintzelman

Author Roy Spence, with camera in hand, crisscrossed Texas in a Winnebago to interview Texans of all faiths. He found that although Texans believe and worship in varied ways, most are united as a family of faith. Spence took a crew with him who interviewed various Texans ranging from clergy to cowboys to celebrities. The book asserts that Texans "share an amazing amount of common ground on higher ground."

Color photographs of churches—new and old, Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, non denominational, and others—grace many pages of this enjoyable read. Inspirational quotes, such as St. Ignatius Loyola's, "For those who believe, no explanation is needed. For those who do not believe, no explanation is possible," fit perfectly with the photos and personal stories.

Thought-provoking color photographs of various Texans precede their stories of faith. These personal narratives come from people who identify themselves as mayors, preachers, immigrants, missionaries, humanitarians, cowboys, moms, and entertainers. They claim to be unified by "tolerance and respect of how their fellow Texans practice their individual faiths." Eduardo Salmon, Catholic and World War II veteran, remembers sitting in a foxhole in the Ardennes Forest. He tells of learning respect and tolerance as people of all faiths sat with God in those foxholes. Dash Crofts, Bahá'í and entertainer, echoes this thought as he says, "Religion is for individuals. God is for the whole world." Although a common thread runs through these tales, most are interesting enough to warrant several readings.

The book certainly captures the diversity of Texans, and it certainly allows for contemplative thought. Highly recommended for general readers.



SPENCE, ROY. *THE AMAZING FAITH OF TEXAS: COMMON GROUND ON HIGHER GROUND*. AUSTIN: UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS PRESS, 2006. 160 PP. PHOTOS. \$24.95 CLOTH. ISBN 978-0-9722825-2-9. 2006924026.

# *To Survive and Excel, Southwestern University 1840-2000*

William Burrell Jones

**History of Southwestern by Bill Jones Is a  
Must-Read for Everyone**  
Review by Joan T. Hollier

Historians research and organize written records to help us perceive where we've been, to appreciate where we are, and to enable us to participate as we move ahead. Dr. William Burrell Jones performs an important service to Southwestern University and the Georgetown community in his newly released book, *To Survive and Excel, Southwestern University 1840-2000*. The weighty volume resulting from his scholarly work tells the story of the university, events intertwined with the story of the city of Georgetown and the history of education in Texas.

Dr. Jones brings together written records scattered in libraries, hidden away in archives, and preserved in personal collections or memories. He offers in one volume the story of how Southwestern University originated and grew into the remarkable institution we know today. In a chronological sequence, the writer develops various themes that run through the story.

One thread details leadership from Martin Ruter, who in 1837 offered himself as a missionary to Texas, to Roy Schilling, who completed his service as President in 2000. Ruter gave his life in the harsh conditions of the frontier, but he established a vision for a university. Francis Asbury Mood shared Ruter's vision, devoting his life to melding into one the four schools whose names intertwine in the Southwestern seal. That dream never dims in the sight of future leaders who simply refine and sharpen it, never losing the vision of these courageous men.

Georgetown became the site of the university both men envisioned, and from that point on, the city shares history with the university. Demonstrating uncommon interest in education, citizens had funded the Texas University Company and built a building, hoping to attract a school. From the time Mood located the university in Georgetown, the town and the school have shared a common

history creating another thread that runs through Dr. Jones's story.

Mood left his mark on education in Texas by departing from the concept of the "renaissance man" educated in the classics in favor of the American university system introduced by Thomas Jefferson at the University of Virginia by which schools educate a person for a calling or profession. Dr. Jones traces the evolution of the curriculum offered at Southwestern as the needs of students change over time.

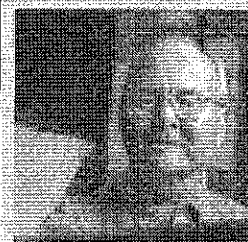
Mood established the purpose of "helping students understand the mind to develop a philosophy of life, to sharpen intellectual tools for ethical decision making rather than to win them to the church." Without the Methodist church, Southwestern would never have survived, but the purpose has never been to evangelize the students. Dr. Jones clarifies the relationship of the church to the university in another continuing theme.

The university encountered problems from competition with other institutions and the controversy over whether a major university may appropriately be located in a small town. Other cities tried to lure the university away from Georgetown; however, Southwestern furnished leaders to the new universities and lost students and professors to them. Dropping the word "Texas" from the name and adopting the name Southwestern University made it easier to get a charter from the State of Texas. Dr. Jones traces the quest for identity that Southwestern refined through interaction with other institutions.

By far the greatest struggle has been to control debt while building an infrastructure and to establish an endowment sufficient to support the academic program. Many chapters of the book dwell on cash flow and extraordinary measures to avoid going under financially. Survival of the school may be credited to the dedication of the faculty during hard times and to faithful alumni as well as community support. Economic security arrives late in the history of Southwestern; most of its years have been marked by financial uncertainty. Knowing the history, the reader will want to ensure that the present prosperity of the university continues as a dominant theme.

The book has 559 double-column pages plus bibliography, notes, and index, and weighs six and one-half pounds. The author keeps the

*Continued on page eight*



*Professor  
Emeritus of  
History, William  
Burrell Jones  
taught at  
Southwestern  
University for  
thirty-five years  
and is a  
Southwestern  
University  
historian.*



For more information regarding the Thinking Ahead campaign, please contact Karen Frugé by email at [frugek@southwestern.edu](mailto:frugek@southwestern.edu) or by phone at 1-800-960-6363, extension 1942.

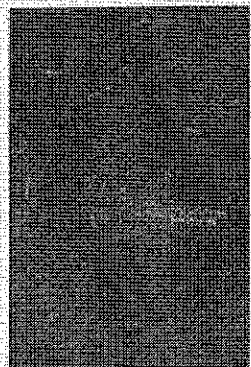
## *Campaign Dates:*

Midland: Feb. 20

Dallas: Mar. 1

Fort Worth: Mar. 2

Amarillo: Apr. 3



Walt McDonald, a former Air Force pilot and Texas Poet Laureate, has published books with Harper & Row and university presses including Notre Dame, Ohio State, Pittsburgh, and Texas Tech, and more than 2,300 poems in journals including *The Atlantic Monthly*, *London Review of Books*, *New York Review of Books*, and *Poetry*. Other books of poetry include *Great Lonely Places of the Texas Plains*, *Caliban in Blue*, *The Digs in Econdido Canyon*, and *Whatever the Wind Delivers: Celebrating West Texas and the Near Southwest*.

*Continued from page seven*

story interesting by using simple and concise language and including human aspects of the history. The book is supremely readable but also serves as a reference book destined to become a classic.

Dr. Jones includes many interesting sidelights like the role of women who shared lives with the university leaders and women devoted to the Woman's Suffrage League and anti-lynching movements, the role of women leaders on the staff, and also women partly or wholly responsible for major contributions to the endowment.

The author answers many questions newcomers may have about less prominent issues. As we become part of the history of the community, the past detailed in this book explains present circumstances and makes our participation in the community more satisfying and meaningful.

The book was funded by the Brown Foundation and published by Southwestern University. As part of the fundraising Thinking Ahead campaign, the university is providing one free copy of the book to current students, alumni, and university donors. Additional copies cost \$50.00 and can be reserved at [www.southwestern.edu/thinkingahead](http://www.southwestern.edu/thinkingahead). Copies may be obtained by calling university relations at (512) 863-1483.

JONES, WILLIAM BURRELL. *TO SURVIVE AND EXCEL, SOUTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY 1840-2000*. GEORGETOWN: GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY, 2006. \$59 PP. BIBLIOGRAPHY, INDEX, NOTES. \$ 50.00 CLOTH. ISBN 0-9670912-4-1. 2006043655.

## *A Thousand Miles of Stars* Walt McDonald

A West Texas Cosmos  
Review by Melissa Hudler

Number twenty-two in a list of twenty-three collections and the 2005 winner of the SPUR Award, *A Thousand Miles of Stars* displays Walt McDonald's untiring ability to create poetry that celebrates and mourns with an elegant rawness. Indeed, this collection speaks of loss, rejuvenation, contentment, love, aging, and aging love. Loss of the familiar grounds

the poems "Our Mother Who Taught Tumbling," "My Brother's Photos before Okinawa," and "Oranges for my Sister When She Was Nine." Quiet recollection of loss ends "Oranges for my Sister":

I never knew why. She was my favorite sister,  
who died while I was in school one noon,  
chewing peanut butter and bread,

sipping canned juice through a straw  
until it was gone, when a teacher leaned down  
and whispered I was needed at home.  
(lines 16-21)

Furthermore, McDonald's war-torn and raw cosmos maintains its harmony through the poet's delicate balancing of opposites. "Rattling Past Ninety" and "Jukebox Nights in Georgia" are two examples of such skill. In these poems, McDonald juxtaposes the ideal with harsh realities. In "Rattling Past Ninety," a fast drive in an old coupe yields to the hard curve of the road that takes the speaker to his military physical. In "Jukebox Nights in Georgia," boys believed Johnny Mathis when he sang that they will "love until the twelfth of never" (5-6), others married their "faithful girls back home" (11), and years later, the speaker rubs his fingers across these friends' names on "a wall in Washington" (16-17).

The hard becoming vulnerable is an image at the heart of some poems in this collection, as well. "Hammering Ice to Slush," "Bulldozing the Outer Banks," and "Turning Sixty-Five on Hardscrabble" are just a few poems in Part Four that illustrate such a transformation, a transformation that leads this collection to a section of poems of loss and contentment set against a backdrop of nature—a background that, in some cases, is quite harsh and ominous.

Finally, the title of this collection encompasses the situation, emotion, and desire in all of the poems. Indeed, one can imagine the speaker of each of these poems looking at the night sky and wondering which star to wish upon or to thank.

McDONALD, WALT. *A THOUSAND MILES OF STARS*. LUBBOCK: TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2004. 80 PP. \$18.95 CLOTH. ISBN 0-89672-538-3. 2004009453.



## *Mama Outside, Mama Inside* Dianna Hutts Aston

### A Children's Tale of Nurturing Babies

Review by Andrea Karlin

Author Dianna Hutts Aston's picture book *Mama Outside, Mama Inside* parallels the preparations of the outside mama (bird) and inside mama (human) as they make preparations and wait for the births of their respective babies. The care of the babies once they have arrived is also shared with the reader. The simple language and delicate, colored illustrations by Susan Gaber work in perfect harmony to tell this very sweet story.



ASTON, DIANNA HUTTS. *MAMA OUTSIDE, MAMA INSIDE*. NEW YORK: HENRY HOLT, 2006. 32 PP. ILLUSTRATIONS. \$15.95 CLOTH. ISBN 0-8050-77716-2. 2005012725.

## *Waiting for Gregory* Kimberly Willis Holt

### Waiting for Playmates

Review by Andrea Karlin

How many children have anxiously awaited the arrival of a new sibling or cousin with the expectation of having an instant playmate only to find that the newborn baby is not yet ready to play? Award winning author Kimberly Willis Holt's picture book *Waiting for Gregory* tells the story of Iris, who is anxious for her cousin Gregory to be born. She asks her parents, grandparents as well as her young and old friends about when Gregory will arrive but no one gives her a satisfactory answer. After months of anticipation, her uncle finally telephones to tell her that Gregory has finally arrived.

Once Iris knows that Gregory has been born,

she thinks about all of the things that she will teach him until she sees him for the first time and realizes that he is an infant and she will have to wait until he gets a bit older and looks forward to her visits.

Award winning artist Gabi Swiatkowska's whimsical paintings introduce the reader to another time and place while beautifully complimenting Holt's timeless text.

HOLT, KIMBERLY WILLIS. *WAITING FOR GREGORY*. NEW YORK: HENRY HOLT, 2006. 32 PP. ILLUSTRATIONS. \$16.95 CLOTH. ISBN 0-8050-7388-4. 2005012860.

## *Crossing Bok Chitto— A Choctaw Tale of Friendship and Freedom* Tim Tingle

### Inspiring Story of Families

### Coming Together

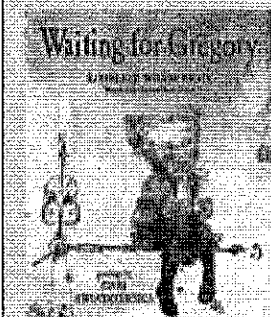
Review by Andrea Karlin

Native American storyteller Tim Tingle retells a captivating story that embodies what one hopes to find in multicultural literature—an excellent tale that gives insight into a culture (in this case more than one) while having universal appeal. Not only does the reader learn about a tribe of Choctaw Indians from Mississippi but also about the plantation culture with slaves before the time of the Civil War. Award winning, Native American artist Jeanne Rorex Bridges' expressive artwork beautifully illustrate the page-turning text. This tale of families that come together from both sides of the Bok Chitto River—each side forbidden to the other—is inspirational and would be an excellent resource in any classroom from third or fourth grade through college.



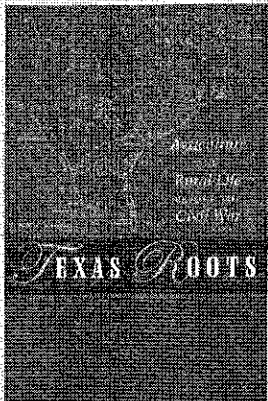
TINGLE, TIM. *CROSSING BOK CHITTO—A CHOCTAW TALE OF FRIENDSHIP AND FREEDOM*. EL PASO: CINCO PUNTOS PRESS, 2006. 40 PP. ILLUSTRATIONS. \$17.95 CLOTH. ISBN 0-938317-77-6.

Dianna Hutts Aston is the author of several picture books, including *On the Day You Were Born*. She lives in rural Texas with her husband and two children.



Kimberly Willis Holt is the author of *My Louisiana Sky*, *When Zachary Beaver Came to Town*, and *Keeper of the Night*. She lives in Amarillo.

Tim Tingle is a popular presenter at storytelling and folklore festivals across America. His first book, *Walking the Choctaw Road*, is a collection of fictional stories based on interviews with Choctaw elders. He also co-authored *Texas Ghost Stories: Fifty Favorites for the Telling*.



C. Allan Jones is director of the Texas Water Resources Institute and lives in College Station.

## *Texas Roots: Agriculture and Rural Life before the Civil War*

C. Allan Jones

### **A Competent History**

Review by Michael J. Matthis

The history of Texas is tied to its agricultural origins, and these in turn derive from the corn-based farming of the Caddo tribe of Indians and the livestock-based ranches of the Spaniards and later the Mexicans who owned the region after their own revolution. Written in a pleasant, if not exactly engaging, style, Jones' book is a straightforward account of agriculture in Texas up to the Civil War, the dangers and difficulties of life on the farm and ranch, the kinds of crops, the types of plows, saddles, bridles, and ropes used on these farms and ranches, and the linguistic origins of words such as lasso (from the Spanish *lazo*) and tank (from *tanque*). Since the tanks on Texas ranches do not resemble anything that we would ordinarily identify as a tank, details such as this can bring illumination to questions that lurk somewhere in the back of our minds but rarely gain clarity until we stumble onto the answer in a book such as this. If anyone is expecting a leisurely stroll through antebellum Texas, be prepared to do some plodding instead. There are lots of facts about how to extract sugar from sugar cane, the acreage of various land barons, and the menus of Mexican farmers. With the exception of an interesting section on the horrors and brutality of slavery, this book is clearly not a page-turner, nor is it meant to be; rather, it is a competent, thorough compendium of facts about the roots of Texas agriculture and deserves therefore a place in our libraries as a tool for those interested in research in this area.

JONES, C. ALLAN. *TEXAS ROOTS: AGRICULTURE AND RURAL LIFE BEFORE THE CIVIL WAR*. COLLEGE STATION: TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2005. 264 PP. BIBLIOGRAPHY, ILLUSTRATIONS, INDEX, MAPS, NOTES. \$19.95 PAPER, ISBN 1-58544-429-4. \$40.00 CLOTH, ISBN 1-58544-418-9. 2004018516.

## *Day Trips From Houston: Getaway Ideas for the Local Traveler*

Carol Barrington

### **How to Kill a Saturday and Get Way With It**

Review by Andrew B. Preslar

It's hard to know what else to say about an eleventh edition, but the fact that this title has shown such longevity testifies to the value of its content to the target market. The book is developed around the activities, attractions and offerings a traveler may find appealing in twenty-three different regional destinations organized by area—northwest, west, southwest, and so forth. The book makes planning family and friend-fun excursions effortless and almost foolproof. For example, if I have a stretch of twelve sunny hours early on a morning in late March, and I get in my little truck with my family and head west on I-10, what are my options? That's day trip two in the West section, titled "Heart of History." I can go to Columbus, Frelsburg, New Ulm, or Cat Spring, and on the way my son can read to me about the history of the region (it was Karankawa country, a fierce tribe labeled by history as cannibals, I read) and about its key geological features (the green, cool, mysterious Colorado River, or the gravel aggregate excavated from this region that was used to build over 90% of Houston's skyscrapers). I can follow the map that introduces each section, and on the way I can see wildflowers like nowhere else in Texas (because it's late March, remember, and these are a lot prettier, showier, thicker than what we would see on the interstate or the median to Highway 71 or 290). When I get to Cat Springs I should make a point to look for the twelve-sided building (the community agricultural center built in 1902), and I can eat at Carol's. If I have a cell phone, I can call ahead to see what's good because the book gives me the area code and phone number. I can wander the back roads (a section in each day trip) and visit an eight-thousand-acre wildlife preserve. Before we all start to get a little road weary, I can take a left on 1094 and go to Sealy where I can access I-10 for a speedy return to Houston, or, if I was to go the slower scenic route, I have three other return routes, each with its own distinguishing features.

*Continued on page eleven*

*Continued from page ten*

Do this twenty-three times, and you have thousands of snapshot memories, enough mini-adventures to last the better part of a boy's adolescence, and a much better idea of the grandeur, culture and heritage of our great state. I think it's a steal for \$14.95, but if I could borrow it for nothing at my local library, that would be even better.

Recommended.

BARRINGTON, CAROL. *DAY TRIPS FROM HOUSTON: GETAWAY IDEAS FOR THE LOCAL TRAVELER*. 11<sup>TH</sup> ED. ED. SYD KEARNEY. GUILFORD: THE GLOBE PEQUOT PRESS, 2006. 288 PP. ILLUSTRATIONS, MAPS. \$14.95 PAPER. ISBN 0-7627-3867-7.

## *Late in the Standoff: Stories and a Novella* Tracy Daugherty

**Tension, Suspension, and Who Draws First:  
Chronicles of Emotional Apnea**  
Review by Andrew B. Preslar

This is Tracy Daugherty's third collection of new and previously published material (his eighth book altogether), and as far as I can tell he hasn't started to repeat himself yet. His material is rooted in the most monumental themes—God, love, death, and truth—and set in the American southwest—the Red River valley, the Permian Basin, eastern Oklahoma, and New Mexico, notably—against the backdrop of the historical and political events of the last sixty years. In someone else's hands that combination of theme and setting could turn into something falsely stark and artificially grandiloquent, but Daugherty has found an authentic voice and speaks calmly in it. The plots and settings are familiar—they could have been written about me, I thought as I read them—but I have seldom, even at my best and in my own head, been able to treat episodes from my own story with the kind of unassuming, self-possessed ingenuous grace his telling achieves. His stories and characters are honest—he is honest, both with us and with his material. The characters we really care about are young, and most of the writers I've seen who attempt to write from the point of view of an eight-year-old, or an eighteen-year-old for that matter, either romanticize the characterizations, treat them with the sort of clinical detachment trauma nurses use when

they know they can't function if they let themselves be fully human, or vacillate between the two. Somehow Daugherty does neither; he achieves the genuine, or at least what has to pass for the genuine in the perception of an adult. The balance between dialogue and commentary is masterful, and the discursive elements in the interstitial spaces are almost transparent. I even like the tasteful way he restrains himself from the gratuitous use of vulgarity, where he could probably get away with it if he wanted to give the reader cheap thrills.

But there's nothing cheap about this book that I could see (not even the binding—very good quality, durable, with an attractive dust jacket and acid-free paper).

The title of this collection, a kind of mixed metaphor, is in fact the only artificial element in the work I noticed (or maybe "consciously artful" would be more accurate), but it does fit insofar as it relates to the depiction of characters reaching points of dynamic tension in the evolution of different kinds of emotional and physical intimacy, where the pushes and pulls on the psyche come into tenuous momentary balance and everything—dialogue, interior monologue, all interaction—stops. In the terrifying and exhilarating electric interval between desire for closeness and fear of rejection, for example, what's a boy to do? Daugherty demonstrates it in "Power Lines," a story about Troy and Janey (and Troy's friend Pat) set in Midland in June of 1968. Troy is an early-adolescent asthmatic with a thing for Janey that he doesn't understand; his mother wakes him up on his birthday (his big gift is a new desk) with the news of Robert F. Kennedy's assassination. Throughout the day we watch the lines of tension develop in the adults, and watch the play of derivative influences on the children. I remember that day; I was Troy's age when Bobby was taken. That's why I can so compellingly testify that in this book Daugherty tells the truth. Excellent judgment.

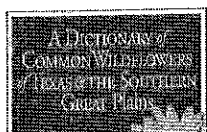
I would recommend *Late in the Standoff* as an addition to either a general or a Texana collection. In fact earlier this week I recommended it to a friend of mine who was recovering from surgery and wanted something fresh and real to read. I had really good things to say about *It Takes a Worried Man*, too

*Continued on page twelve*



*Carol Barrington  
has authored  
numerous guide  
books for The  
Globe Pequot  
Press.*

*Tracy Daugherty  
is the author of  
four novels, two  
other story  
collections, and a  
volume of  
personal essays.  
He has been  
awarded Bread  
Loaf and National  
Endowment for  
the Arts  
fellowships and  
has been a  
Fulbright  
participant. He  
directs the MFA  
Program in  
Creative Writing  
at Oregon State  
University and is  
on the MFA  
faculty at Warren  
Wilson.*



Dr. Joel E. Holloway is a physician in Norman, Oklahoma, in private practice in dermatology. A passionate naturalist, he is the author of *Dictionary of Birds of the United States*. Years of careful research went into preparation of this dictionary of flowering plants.

Amanda Neil is Collections Manager at the Botanic Research Institute of Texas in Fort Worth.

*Continued from page eleven*

(Daugherty's second collection), and I hope to have the chance to offer further commentary as his career unfolds.



DAUGHERTY, TRACY. *LATE IN THE STANDOFF: STORIES AND A NOVELLA*. DALLAS: SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2005. 192 PP. \$22.50 CLOTH, ISBN 0-87074-498-4. 2005045147.

## *A Dictionary of Common Wildflowers of Texas and the Southern Great Plains*

Joel Ellis Holloway, M.D.

Companion to a Field Guide for Texas Wildflower Enthusiasts

Review by Andrew B. Preslar

As the title suggests, this is a reference book, not a book with pretty photos to admire over coffee cake but a book one would use to accomplish work. That does not imply, however, that it has no personality or that the compilation is dry. Even for a person sitting at a desk under florescent lights, the material is absorbing, and when put to its intended use as a companion resource to a good field guide, the book would be invaluable to a serious student, whether academic or amateur. An entry identifies the flower by its two-part Latin species moniker and then by its common name. Etymologies for both Latin and common names follow, with descriptions for each verbal element of each term. Very competent pen-and-ink drawings of both above- and below-ground plant structures are included, one every few pages.

While this may sound like some pretty unsavory fare, consider the interest with which

a student with any degree of mental alacrity would read the description of *Lepidium austrinum*, or Southern Pepperweed.

### SCIENTIFIC NAME

*Lepidium*, the pepperwort, from Greek, λέπιδιον, *lepidion*, used by Discorides to describe the pepperwort, used to treat scurvy + *austrinum*, Latin for southern, for the range in the United States.

### COMMON NAME

Southern, for the range in the United States. Pepperweed, for the fruits, which can be used as a pepper substitute.

Or consider the explanation offered for the names for bush clover.

### SCIENTIFIC NAME

*Lezpedeza*, for Vincente Manuel de Cepedes (late 1780s), the Spanish governor of eastern Florida and a patron of botany. His name was misspelled when the book containing this plant's description was being printed; the Principle of Priority allows the misspelling to stand + *capitata*, Latin for having or forming a head. Reference is to the inflorescence.

These examples are typical and demonstrate the style of delivery as well as suggesting the depth of research with which the text was developed. Entries are alphabetized by Latin name, with cross referencing by common name made possible by the inclusion of an index.

The potential for this book to actually circulate depends on the library's service area or patron profile. The content does lend itself more to technical or academic application than to general interest. Recommended for high schools offering practical botany programs and for public libraries in communities where continuing education courses or amateur botany clubs are extant.

HOLLOWAY, JOEL ELLIS, M.D. *A DICTIONARY OF COMMON WILDFLOWERS OF TEXAS AND THE SOUTHERN GREAT PLAINS*. ED. AMANDA NEIL. FORT WORTH: TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2005. 178 PP. ILLUSTRATIONS, INDEX. \$19.95 PAPER. ISBN 0-87565-309-X. 2005015304.



## *Cat in a Hot Pink Pursuit*

Carole Nelson Douglas

**Midnight Louie at the Teen Queen Reality Show**

Reviews by Frances M. Ramsey

When Lt. Carmen Molina's thirteen-year-old daughter enters a contest for a teen queen reality show, the lieutenant pressures Temple Barr to go under cover as nineteen-year-old Zoë Chloë Ozone to protect her daughter while they spend the time as roomies at the beauty make-over boot camp in a mysterious Reno mansion which has become the teen queen castle. This site of an unsolved murder has hidden cameras and recorders in every room and hidden passages which facilitate strange threatening events.

Temple's black cat, Midnight Louie, follows her to the mansion and manages to lurk about as he flirts with the Divine Yvette and Solongé, the pampered Persian pets of B-film star Miss Savannah Ashleigh. Louie's comments, presented in a different typesetting, help to move the action and identify the players.

Each contestant has appointments with the drama coach, the show's designer, the hair specialist, the makeup artist, the physical trainer, and the dietician. Among the judges are Miss Ashleigh, an Elvis look-alike, and an obnoxious radio talk show host.

Throw into the mix some scary events, three murders, the mystery of the mansion, two romantic interests for Temple, one possible romance for Carmen Molina, and the antics of the felines, and you have an entertaining light reading experience. Who cares about the winners? There are enough loose ends to carry on into the next Midnight Louie adventure.



DOUGLAS, CAROLE NELSON. *CAT IN A HOT PINK PURSUIT*. NEW YORK: FORGE, 2005. 384 PP. \$24.95 CLOTH. ISBN 0-765-31399-5.

## *Cat in a Quicksilver Caper*

Carole Nelson Douglas

**Another Midnight Louie Adventure**

Review by Frances M. Ramsey

Midnight Louie is on the prowl again, with help from his "maybe" daughter Midnight Louise and a new feline friend Miss Squeaker, a refugee from a bad animal shelter. Following *Cat in a Hot Pink Pursuit*, this mystery resolves some of that selection's loose ends and leaves a few more for the next installment in the Midnight Louie series.

Louie's roommate Temple Barr, a public relations freelancer, lands the client of her career in the exhibition of the Russian Czar's treasures at the Millennium Hotel. The safety of the exhibit, which features the bejeweled scepter of Czar Alexander, is threatened by the scheduling of an aerial magician's act overhead. When a mysterious man is found dead, hanging from the magician's bungee cords above the exhibit, and the scepter disappears during a botched performance, many questions must be answered.

Suspects include members of the Russian group with the exhibit, the Cloaked Conjurer, his assistant Shangri-La, Max who has been Temple's main squeeze but mostly absent and evasive lately, Chechen rebels, and the mysterious evil Synth.

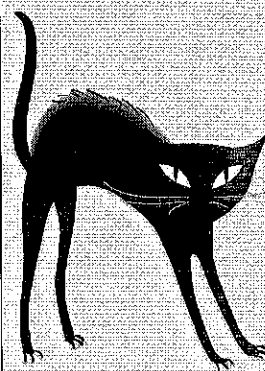
Lt. C. R. Molina is once again tracking Max as her main suspect for stalking and anything else evil she can think of. Throw in secret passages, a visit from Temple's Aunt Kit, and the growing presence of Matt in Temple's life, and you have the expected entertainment from Midnight Louie.



DOUGLAS, CAROLE NELSON. *CAT IN A QUICKSILVER CAPER*. NEW YORK: FORGE, 2006. 384 PP. \$19.95 CLOTH. ISBN 0-765-31400-2.



Carole Nelson Douglas is the recipient of an American Mystery award and has been an Agatha Award nominee. She is a five-time Romance Writers of America finalist and has received several Romantic Times awards in various genres. In addition the Midnight Louie series, she is also author of the historical suspense Irene Adler series. She lives in Fort Worth with her husband Sam and their numerous pets.





## Reviewers

**Dale Farris** has 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*.

**Pat Heintzelman** has a bachelor's degree in history and a master's degree in English from Lamar University, where she has taught as a Lecturer in English and Modern Languages since 2001.

**Joan T. Hollier** writes the travel column, "RV With Me," advance stories for non-profit organizations and features on interesting citizens of Georgetown. Her reviews also appear regularly in the *Williamson County Sun*.

**Melissa Hudler** teaches composition and literature at Lamar University in Beaumont. Her poems have appeared in *Issue*, *Sojourn*, *Concho River Review*, *Southwestern Review*, and *New Texas*.

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

**Michael J. Matthis** holds a Ph.D. in philosophy from Fordham University. He is an assistant professor of philosophy at Lamar University and concentrates his teaching and writing on existentialism and philosophy of art.

**Andrew B. Preslar** is an award-winning instructor of English at Lamar State College—Orange. He has served as contributor and associate editor for *Review of Texas Books* for over a decade. He has published critical articles, fiction, and poetry.

**Frances M. Ramsey** is a retired librarian from the Beaumont ISD. She received her B. S. in zoology from Kansas State University and received her library Certification from Oklahoma State University.

**Steve Zani** has a Ph.D. in comparative literature and teaches in the English and Modern Languages Department at Lamar University. He is co-editor of *Inside Literature: Reading, Responding, Arguing*, a 2007 Pearson Longman anthology.

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