
In her first published novel, Cindy Bonner of Corpus Christi tells a love story set in McDade, Texas, in 1883. Lily is an innocent, honest, and hard-working fifteen-year-old, made older by her role as mother of two younger siblings since their mother’s death. Her father fails to notice her emerging womanhood, so that when a notorious young outlaw, Marion Beatty, flirts with her, Lily falls hard for a guy the father and reader know can only mean trouble and heartache for her. The author creates a believable place in time, and the characters act as expected. With Lily’s narration in a simple, unadorned style, the reader understands why Lily would want to be Bonnie to this early-day Clyde. The novel will be enjoyed by females of all ages.

Sally Dooley


There is a charm to this book, but it is not a quality that entirely justifies the effort a reader must invest. The book is all characterization through description and dialogue. There is only the most vestigial plot which recounts the narrator’s loss of innocence (surprise!) and her leaving home. The narrative framework is imaginative enough, devised as a series of letters written by the narrator Elizabeth to her home town, Corpus Christi. The letters circle over memories from different heights, letting the reader see various people and incidents from the narrator’s formative years from different perspectives and in differing levels of detail.

There are insightful observations, like Elizabeth’s recollection of her bisexual uncle Bo looking at his friend Jay, where she says that she “had never seen Bo look at anyone like that except sometimes at Grandma and now and then at me. I don’t know that it was sexual,” she adds, “in the way people usually think about that, although, I guess, in the truest sense it was, only that there was all this feeling in it.” Such a passage illustrates both the inherent strength and weakness of the point of view. There is veracity, but one tires of the forced naïveté.

Andrew B. Preslar


Set in Austin, largely in the capitol building, this whodunit provides a disparate group of characters in an intriguing plot. Wayne the Wagger, a vagrant who often beds down in the building, witnesses the murder of a young cleaning woman. Central to the solution of the crime are the capitol’s Chief Administrator, a lovely widow, and a Texas Ranger. Subplots abound to tighten the tension as the story unfolds. Crider’s witty asides about Texas politics entertain the reader so that the one-dimensional characters can be forgiven.

Bill Crider resides in Alvin and teaches at Alvin Community College. He has written several mysteries and a children’s book, A Vampire Named Fred (Vol.V, No.3).

Sally Dooley


Segoviana is an exercise in metafiction, a conscious “let’s pretend this kind of thing is happening” that relates events surrounding poet/professor Jac Cory’s dogged search for his wife’s purse, stolen while they are on vacation in Segovia in 1997. Cory’s search brings him into brutal contact with power politics as American, Spanish, and Russian operatives tangle over the continuation of American military bases in Spain. As those who know Curtisinger would suspect, however, this is no action yarn but an elaborate allegory of human fall and redemption and the role of imagination in that pilgrimage. Curtisinger’s work is an energetic exercise in religious—but not pietistic—imagination and its power to transform those familiar artistic subjects, love and violence. It offers a prickly reading experience that does not yield itself easily, for Curtisinger plays freely with narrative chronology and traditional character, and at times his fondness for word play seems an affectation. Nevertheless, Segoviana is clearly doing something different, more demanding, and perhaps ultimately more worthwhile than the typical novel sets itself to. You will not easily forget this novel.

Tim Summerlin


Carol Dawson’s first novel is a ghost story whose emphasis
is not shivery effects but rather the tortured souls of four
generations of East Texas women, all members of the
Burnham and Northgate families. Events are primarily
narrated by Sarah Grissom, whose encounter as a lonely
seven-year-old with a ghost in the attic of the Northgate
family home prompts a recital of the family history. In that
process we are introduced to a refined Mississippi bride
thrust into the wilds of East Texas shortly after the Civil War
and to her daughter, Princess Laura, who inherits her
mother’s reserve and distaste for crudity, developing them
into an obsessive "negation," a prim refusal to acknowledge
feeling, spontaneity, intimacy, and the words that express
them. Just how this matriarch’s traits influence her
daughters and granddaughters is told by Dawson with in-
sight and candor. The relevance to her tale of gender roles
and social repression is obvious, but Dawson is too honest
and subtle to permit her novel to become an ideological
diatribe. It is a moving story of human struggle with a
"legacy of dumbness" and the need to relate, a magnificent
accomplishment that merits a wide readership.

Richard Haddaway

EDITOR’S CHOICE


Waco native Irene Beltrán Hernández staked out new terri-

tory in this novel set in New Mexico which concerns a
young woman who is half Navajo and half Mexican
American. How she traverses the line between the two
cultures during several crises in her life is the plot of the
book. The language is simple with a mystical tone that
sometimes approaches the mythical; yet, it is often jux-
taposed with common idioms that are jarring to the reader.
To bring about the plot’s resolution, there are a number of
unbelievable events which make the story more
melodramatic than the author probably intended.
Hernández, who also wrote the novel Across the Great River,
is a Texas writer of promise.

Sally Dooley

Holt, Judd. A PROMISE TO CATIE. Denton: University

Adolescence is hard enough—but what if your first true love
is a ghost? How do you take her home to Mama? Or
convince a reader that a flesh-and-blood boy could become
smitten with such a thing? Judd Holt, in his first novel, tries
hard to pull it off. Billy Griffin, Jr., his fifteen-year-old
protagonist isolated in the 1950s in the North Texas
countryside, comes of age in a farmhouse that was the
previous residence of a teenage girl of a prior generation.
Catie slowly reveals herself, first as a silhouette in the night,
then through the disappearance of small objects. Billy,
initially frightened and then simply mystified, spends much
of his time in search of her identity, working to unravel
the secret of her Depression-era life and early death. In the
process, he falls in love with her, and she with him. The
creative force of their love re-creates her into an almost-
substance. But the more she takes on form, the less believ-
able she becomes. Although the novel contains some
evocative language and several fine character sketches
(notably a black conjure woman), the story eventually sags
into sentimentality.

Clay Reynolds

Seale, Jan Epton. AIRLIFT. Fort Worth: Texas Christian
87565-100-3, 91-42107.

Those familiar with the Texas writing scene know Jan Epton
Seale, but they ordinarily think of her as a poet. (Her work
recently appeared in Texas Poets in Concert with R.S.
Gwynn, Naomi Nye, and William Virgil Davis.) Airlift is her
first collection of short stories. Most of them are about rural
and old(e) people. They have stories to tell or they them-
selves are the stories. Seale’s genius lies in her ability to
penetrate the minds of these elder country statesmen and

Moore, Dulce D. A PLACE IN MIND. Dallas: Baskerville
9627509-9-9. 92-070845.

Every now and then a book comes along which utterly
captures both the sense and personality of a historical
period and the impact events had on the people who lived
them. This is such a book. Dulce D. Moore’s first novel is
an account of the Great Depression in Texas as seen
through the eyes of an eight-year-old girl Mavis, the oldest
of three children. Mavis and her siblings follow their father
Will, an itinerant photographer, as they wander Texas seek-

ing "Luck" in the midst of national economic disaster. Far
from being a mere account of hard times, though, this novel
captures the magic and mystery of love and self-reliance,
fierce determination not to be beholden to anyone—par-


cularly the government—and of the indomitable American
sense of independence. It is, in short, a powerful account
of a time and place that became a major transitional period
in our history, bringing us from the past into the future.
Moore’s style is impeccable. With the exception of oc-
casional long sections of dialogue where it’s often difficult
to discern who’s speaking to whom or, in some cases, about
what, Mavis’ voice is resonant with the tones and idioms of
the thirties. She is a reliable and candid observer, one who
reports the profound pains and petty pleasures of her past
with equal honesty, equal accuracy, and the novel reminds
me of George Sessions Perry’s Hold Autumn in Your Hand.
Never sentimental, the novel evokes the perfect blend of
nostalgia and grace. Highly recommended.

Clay Reynolds
women, and to find a single, poignant point to make about their lives, something that made them the way they are, perhaps the same kind of thing that makes all of us the way we are. The stories all sound the collection's theme: an examination of close, human relationships and the struggle so many folks go through trying to make them conform to prescribed expectations. This is a fine grouping of a poetic writer's prose. As Roland Sodowsky points out in his generous afterword, taken together, the volume demonstrates the innate power of the short story to take us quickly to another world and to leave its impression on our imagination.

Clay Reynolds


Although this novel by award-winning Sandra Scofield will probably be admired tremendously by a number of readers, it is not likely to make the author a national household name. Scofield relies heavily on the tradition of American Naturalism in that she blends the harsh and brutal landscape of far West Texas with a harsh and brutal story of growing up there in the late fifties—a time of drought and innocence. The young boy discovers the emptiness of casual sex while at the same time is finding out that he is no more remarkable or talented than millions of others who have gone before him and failed. Scofield's prose style is beautiful, nearly poetic, and she succeeds in elevating the vast brutality of the alkali and sand in the staked plains to almost lyrical beauty.

Organizational problems in the book are not sufficient to overwhelm what is ultimately a lovely if somewhat old-fashioned story of rites of passage. Her characters are rich and alive, her story is compelling, and I would recommend the book to anyone who thinks that there are no good stories to tell in the rural tradition.

Clay Reynolds


The timeless theme of this beautifully illustrated children's book is that a child is a precious gift who, like a watercolor pony painted by a childish hand, will grow up and leave home in the natural process of life. The colorful illustrations function with the text in moving the story of intergenerational love along, but there are several abrupt jumps which an adult reader would need to point out for the child. Also, there are not enough repetitions of the refrain to make a meaningful story for the intended juvenile audience of this book. Parents will be more appreciative of what the author and the illustrator, Sandra Shields, are attempting to say. Wayne Watson is a contemporary Christian singer and song writer who lives in Cypress, Texas. His song "Watercolor Ponies" is printed at the end of the book, but the recorded version is worded differently than in the book.

Sally Dooley


This volume of outstanding short fiction launches the Texas and Southern Writers Breakthrough Award Series, sponsored by a grant from the Friends of Southern Letters, Texas Review, and Sam Houston State University. Finding favorites among these ten selections is hard, for the collection is well balanced and complements itself nicely. Although the lead-off piece, "Hands," was both moving and provocative, I more particularly liked "The Lover," the tale of a womanizer who finds himself smitten by the plainness of the town librarian. I think the best story is "Windfall," an anecdotal story of two girls, a bobcat, and a car full of curious folks. In spite of the more confusing and somewhat contrived aspects of "The Mole" or "The Taming of Ramona," the whole collection emerges as a fine demonstration of the power of the short story to recreate time, place, and the people who live there with accuracy and poignancy.

Clay Reynolds


Three handsomely produced reprints have been boxed as a set, each volume autographed by the author. In the first volume Lone Hunter, a young Ogala Sioux, longs to graduate from herder of ponies to buffalo hunter. When his pony is stolen by Kiowas, he steals into their camp by night to reclaim his pony and saves his father's party from ambush. In the second book Lone Hunter and his friend, Buffalo Boy, are captured by Cheyenne. With courage and cleverness the boys manage to escape over the mountains during a blizzard to return to their own tribe. War Pony tells the adventures of an outstanding pony as he travels from his home ranch in New Mexico through much of the West, including service as a cavalry horse, capture by various tribes, and finally as a pony with the Lewis and Clark expedition. When his owner, out of gratitude for saving his life, turns him loose at the Mississippi river, he finds his way back to the New Mexico ranch and freedom. Readers in grades four through eight will enjoy these stories as they learn about Indian life and ponies.

Frances M. Ramsey

If you like ghost stories with good ghosts, then you are in luck; Zeno Zeplin's short-chaptered book illustrated by Judy Jones fits the bill. Snowflake, the ghost kitten, teaches the reader or listener the importance of being kind to others, be it animal to animal, human to animal, or human to human. Children should enjoy the justice meted out by Snowflake throughout the story. Written at a second grade level, most primary-aged students will enjoy this ghost tale.

Andrea R. Karlin

POETRY


In a substantial collection of poems, short prose pieces, and black-and-white photographs by Butch Hancock, Bright attempts (with Hancock's considerable help) the most ambitious task an artist can face: that of self-portrayal. The individual pieces are like microscope slides that provide one-dimensional cross-sections of Bright's experience as mother, daughter, wife, lover, woman, artist, victim, and victor. Viewed individually they are snapshots of the soul; in concert they are a collage of passion, pain, longing, and hope. Each selection offers a bonding site for the reader to project himself imaginatively into the art, while providing enough imagistic and poetic structure to control and direct the reader's responses. The book is divided into five sections, not unlike the phases of the grieving process. They focus respectively on anger, love, perception, generation, and hope. The categories are by no means mutually exclusive; the reader circles over the same material several times, viewing the same face or the same rape or the same death from several perspectives, building a vision of something vital and real. No wonder it won the Austin Book Award for 1991.

Andrew B. Preslar


This collection of poems, though it describes a number of AIDS victims, is not written in celebration or condemnation of a gay lifestyle, nor does it stick out a defiant chin or carry a chip on its shoulder. And even though a strong current of sensuality runs through the book, the individual poems are not about sex, nor do the images advertise any particular brand of sexuality. The poems are about lives and deaths characterized by pain and courage. The artistic theory that seems to underlie the poetry is straight from "Preface to Lyrical Ballads," though (some would say happily) the style is not even remotely Wordsworthian. Ciscel eschews formal versification, using the rhythms of the language to make his music. There is nothing to either augment or dilute the passion inherent in the situations portrayed—no rhyme, no metrics, no "poetic" diction used or syntax tortured or license taken with the language we all speak—we see life and death, quiet wisdom and screaming stupidity, unbelievably cruel callousness and equally unbelievable solicitude and compassion, with no trick lighting or cheesecloth filters over the lens. We see ourselves at our best and worst, and that is a sight worth seeing.

Andrew B. Preslar

AUTOMOBILES


Amarillo writers Linda and Jerry Craven have now completed six in their series of children's books dealing with special automobiles. From Ferrari: The Legend to Rolls-Royce: Leader in Luxury, they cover virtually every aspect of superior vehicles. Designed for fourth to eighth graders who don't like to read, these slickly produced, slender volumes are written to capture the attention and imagination of typical pre-adolescent fascination with speed and class on wheels. Lavishly and colorfully illustrated, the cars are described according to appearance and internal workings. These books may be just the ticket for librarians trying to interest youngsters in reading. The easy-to-comprehend text is complemented by a glossary and index, and each book is made especially for a one-sitting read.

Clay Reynolds

BIOGRAPHY


Jeff Guinn, an experienced columnist for the Fort Worth Star-Telegram, teamed up with Bobby Bragan to give an enjoyable overview of free agency baseball. It was a time practically unrecognizable from today's viewpoint: owners parted with money grudgingly; the minor league system was full of talented players; careers were built and sustained through legend in the absence of television's unblinking eye; and until the late forties, the players were exclusively white. Bragan had a perfectly ordinary career as a player in the big leagues, beginning with Philadelphia in 1940, but he absorbed his most valuable lessons playing for the Dodgers and owner Branch Rickey who influenced Bragan's career, from player to minor league coach, to major league manager, to president of the Texas League, to front office executive for Judge Roy Hofheinz's fledgling Houston Colt .45s. The book lacks an index, but each chapter is followed by a "Between Innings" section full of candid reminiscences by Bragan's contemporaries which illuminate a refreshingly colorful time—when baseball was played for its own sake and not to accommodate television, agents, and other factions.
brought to the forefront by today's huge contractual arrangements.

David Carroll


Erich Riesel is a talented ironworker who has forged artful decorative and utilitarian pieces for over half a century in the Hill Country. Never did he make the same article twice; always he was original. Drawing on his days as a Texas cowboy in the Hill Country's rough environment for his motifs, this German immigrant created gates, chandeliers, fireplace screens, balcony railings, and numerous other beautiful objects. The largest display of his work can be seen at the Presbyterian Mo-Ranch Assembly, a conference and retreat center on the Guadalupe river, close to Hunt. Caudace Leslie wrote the informative text, while Diane Hopkins-Hughes took the excellent, crisp black-and-white photographs. This book is a fine record of an artisan's achievements.

Sally Dooley


Years in the researching and the making, this book is partially about Karla Faye Tucker, who killed Jerry Lynn Dean with a pickaxe in Houston in June of 1983. Herein lie all types of details to engage that perverse side of our nature, the part that is fascinaited by the heinous. Furthermore, the setting was researched scrupulously—the reader sees Houston and is either gratified or shocked by the frenzy onto the hot sex/drug scene there—but this is no mere exposé, nor is it one of those grim, plodding pseudopsychologicals, or a defense, or an overdeveloped tabloid article.

It is at least as much about the "why"--the real "why"--as it is about the "what" and the "how." It's about Karla's mother, a hooker and a doper herself, and about making such a figure seem real and about showing how Karla could and did love her. Even more than that, it's an honest description of the author's own process of acceptance of the world on its own terms. Picture a fifty-year-old storyteller whose only experience with drugs was using diet pills to stay alert and confident for exams in college (an experience which scared her away from drugs forever after); can she really understand a twenty-three-year-old hooker-cum-speed freak? Perhaps surprisingly, the answer is a qualified "yes." Somehow she melds the recent death of her own son, himself a walker on the wild side, with the story of Karla and the emotional attachment she develops for the girl, and with a deep breath and with the imagination as a sort of emotional forceps, manages to come (with us watching) to grips with reality.

The book is genuine and engaging, is very well written, and is definitely worth reading.

Andrew B. Preslar


Bill O'Neal provides a fairly comprehensive view of Indian Wars in the West, complete with analyses of military tactics and statistical surveys. Among other startling revelations in his introductory chapters is the point that Texas was possibly the most significant, but not the most sensational, of battlegrounds between Indians and Anglos in the nineteenth century. Over 846 clashes took place in the Lone Star State, and the number of fatalities was equally impressive, however, Texas ranks a poor second in number of Me Jals of Honor given for valiancy in fighting Indians.

The book is not as well produced as it might be. Photographs are often too dark and grainy to make out much detail, and the text is printed so densely as to make reading difficult. There are also a few inconsistencies of dates. The bulk of the book is given over to a "biographical encyclopedia," which details the lives of the notorious and notable Indian fighters. The narrative is far more readable than many of O'Neal's sources (Wilbarger's Indian Depredations in Texas, for example), and none is sugarcoated for the squeamish. Truly, there is not much new material here, but it's handy to have it presented in such an economical and accessible form. Researchers, however, should double check data before citing.

Clay Reynolds


Son of United States President Zachary Taylor and brother-in-law of Confederate President Jefferson Davis, Richard Taylor is better known as the author of his exceedingly well written memoirs Destruction and Reconstruction than he is as a Civil War general. He was educated at Yale University and successful as a Louisiana plantation owner. A reluctant supporter of secession in 1861, he nevertheless became one of the most successful commanders in the Confederate Army. He displayed a rare talent for leadership, first as commander of the Louisiana brigade and later as commander of Louisiana and Texas troops that defeated Nathaniel P. Banks at Mansfield, Louisiana in 1864.

Utilizing Taylor's own published memoirs, official records, private papers, and appropriate secondary sources, the author, a Ph.D. graduate of the University of Texas, has done an outstanding job in describing the life and times of Taylor. Parrish's work will be of special interest to Texas readers for its full coverage of the Red River campaign in which so many Texas military units participated.

Ralph A. Wooster

Using a wealth of sources, both primary and secondary, William Seale wrote a nearly seamless biographical portrait of Margaret Lea Houston, the wife of Texas' famous hero Sam Houston. Small details enrich the descriptive passages so that the reader is drawn back to a turbulent period in Texas history. Students of Sam Houston will gain fresh insights into his role as husband and father, while others will appreciate this study of an educated woman on the frontier. Readers as young as high school can enjoy this entertaining biography, and the notes, bibliography, and index will satisfy the scholar. When Seale, a native Texan, published this biography, it won the Summerfield G. Roberts Award for Texas History in 1971 from the Texas State Historical Association.

Sally Dooley


Readers in grades three through five can learn first hand about one of Texas' greatest heroes, Sam Houston, on this the 200th anniversary of his birth. Wade, a retired elementary librarian, breathes life into history with a well-paced narration and arresting black and red illustrations by Pat Finney. A popular speaker at schools and workshops, Wade serves as Regional Advisor of the Houston chapter of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators. She also wrote David Crockett, Sure He Was Right (Vol.VII, No.3) and other books for young readers.

Sally Dooley


As dense as it is long, this study of Katherine Anne Porter is a thorough account of her many years spent in Mexico and the influence they had on her life and work. Porter arrived in Mexico for the first time in November 1920 to make the country her home. She left in September 1923 and returned from April of 1930 to August of 1931. During the intervening years spent in the U.S., she discussed Mexico in numerous book reviews and depicted it in her fiction and poetry. According to Walsh, Porter's "adventures in Mexico were a form of escape...from the symptoms of her psychic depression...but they gave only temporary relief." Her fiction, he says, became a struggle between the problem of evil and the illusion of Eden, and much of it is based on the conflicts she observed and lived out in Mexico. Walsh details Porter's relationships, her passionate involvement in Mexican politics, the creative eye with which she attempted to "penetrate the Indian psyche," and the manner in which she tried to escape her own despondency by reveling in Mexico's confusion and despair.

Walsh does an excellent job relating Porter's friends, acquaintances, and observations to her short fiction, most importantly "Maria Concepcion," "Flowering Judas," and "Hacienda," a piece on a village and suggestive of all her despair. The book is somewhat tedious due to the myriad places and people that one is asked to follow, yet it is an enlightening account of what seems to have been a darker side of Porter's life.

Sally Lombardo

CRITICISM


This small study of one of Texas' least-often-remembered novelists is number 103 in the fine Boise State University Press series, almost all of whose numbers are devoted to recognized western writers. Although this critical, biographical study is little more than an extended essay, Bob Frye of Texas Christian University does a fine job of relating the career of a writer whose identity with Texas has been obscured. Winston Estes was a native of Quanah, Texas, and the author of six books of fiction. From a discussion of possibly his only novel still in print, Another Part of the House (Vol. III, No. 3) to an analysis of his other works, including his satirical Winston in Wonderland, and his marvelous comedic collection of short stories, A Street Full of People, Frye's approach is one of respect mixed with gently critical analysis. It is an enlightening look at small town fiction in Texas and a study of an author's devotion to a time and place that is now almost forgotten. My only real complaint about the book is that I would like to have had more. Recommended.

Clay Reynolds


O'Neil Ford (1905-1982) was one of Texas' most prominent twentieth-century architects, a Modernist and a National Historic Landmark (the only person ever to receive the honor). Born poor, Ford began to achieve success in the late 1930s, his work on La Villita in San Antonio being a major catalyst. He was the first architect to use the "lift-slab" method of construction. He was also an avid proponent of craftsmanship and of maintaining the integrity of building materials.

Beautifully bound, this large-format book is a lengthy and occasionally tedious read. It provides an extremely detailed account of Ford's early years, developing interest in architecture, education, career, and his feisty and flamboyant personality. The author has also worked in some history of mid-twentieth-century development and cultural life in San Antonio. A catalog of Ford's projects, which is included as
GARDENING


Recognizing that healthy soil depends on a balance of chemistry, biology, and physics, Howard Garrett has written a guide to effective, safe, and natural gardening. He hopes that gardeners will heed his proven advice, because Texas is the most polluted state in the union, and organic gardening can help restore a natural balance. Biodiversity and healthy soil are basic requirements for successful organic gardening, so Garrett's detailed chapters cover soil, native plants and their care, vegetables, and organic solutions to gardening problems such as fertilizing and weed and pest control. Beautiful color photographs illustrate the plants, and clear drawings show to the gardener techniques for preparing, planting, and maintaining soil by employing nature's ways rather than artificial chemical methods. He concludes with a glossary, lists of helpful books, specialty organic growers and suppliers, and a calendar for garden maintenance.

Garrett is a landscape architect and a consultant on organic gardening, bioremediation, and horticulture. Author of Landscape Design . . . Texas Style (Vol.I, No.2), he consistently writes for the novice and experienced gardener in a clear and concise manner.

Sally Dooley


Subtitled More Than 200 Ways to Save Resources (and Money) by Recycling in Your Garden, The Frugal Gardener contains amazing and practical ideas to make use of all household waste. Ingenious recycling in numerous unusual ways benefits the garden. We're talking about common throwaways such as fabric, glass, metal, organic matter, paper, plastic, water, and wood. Although some of the recycling is quite time consuming, only simple tools are required. Natural resources are thus conserved, and waste that might otherwise harm the environment enhances the gardener's productivity. McRae, an Austin author, has written several books on fiber arts, gardening, and other traditional home arts. This is a helpful, clever, and an important guide to use as we run out of space for our landfills.

Sally Dooley


Whether starting with just a few pots of herbs indoors or out, or expanding a garden or border, Sol Meltzer's expert instructions enable the gardener to grow aromatic and tasty herbs to flavor food or accent the home. Meltzer details information for the cultivation of more than ninety different herbs, both familiar and exotic. How to landscape with herbs, control pests, dry and store, and even extract oils are all discussed. Based on twenty-two years' experience, Meltzer's simple instructions, engaging in style, encourage the reader to at least plant a sprig of mint. The guide concludes with a handy chart about herbs and their cultivation, names of herbs in six languages, and a directory of plant sources.

Meltzer has written, taught, and lectured on herbal gardening for years and presently supplies many distinguished Houston restaurants with fresh herbs.

Sally Dooley

GUIDES


Reflecting changes made by the seventy-second Texas legislature, this seventh edition should be in all Texas libraries. Along with an overview of branches of state government and a summary of legislation passed by the regular and summer sessions of 1991, all state agencies are listed with membership and data pertinent to each. This book is a valuable reference for all citizens.

Sally Dooley


Watching wildlife is fast becoming a popular national pastime. Since Texas boasts more vertebrate species and a greater diversity of birds than other states, a guide to viewing wildlife is a welcome addition to the bookshelves of nature lovers. Eighteen public and private groups contributed to the research and development of this handy guide to the ten distinctly different ecological regions of the state. These groups, under the auspices of the Texas Wildlife Viewing Guide Project, plan to erect wildlife viewing signs across the state to mark the 142 sites described here. Author Gary Graham, a conservation biologist with a doctorate in biological sciences, gives helpful viewing tips and describes the wildlife present seasonally. Directions are given to each locale. Stunning color photos of wildlife and helpful maps illustrate the text. Detailed information is given in keyform. This book will surely delight photographers, bird watchers, and those who love the outdoors, and it should also increase
awareness for conservation of natural resources. This is part of the National Watchable Wildlife Program.

Sally Dooley

HISTORY


Black Dixie, a collection of essays on black people in Houston from slavery times to the present, is a superb combination of ethnic and local history. Although as is inevitably the case in collections, where some essays are more useful than others, all are well done. The publication is divided into several parts, each having its own introduction. Consequently, repetition, even to the point of redundancy, does occur, but overall the study is timely, well-written, and characterized by prudent and appropriate historical judgment.

After an opening section which presents a fairly standard discussion of developments in the field of black history and some observations on the state of local history, the editors divide the remainder of the book into three sections. The first considers the nineteenth century, discussing slavery, conditions during Reconstruction, and blacks in politics. The second concentrates on the period between 1900 and 1945, with an emphasis on economic problems but some treatment of social conditions. The third focuses, although not exclusively, on the challenge to segregation and search for civil rights in the twentieth century, particularly after World War II.

Adrian N. Anderson


Although considered "controversial" by many, this account of Santa Anna's 1836 campaign in Texas is traditional in character and does little but support the usual story. Memoirs of Mexican officers in 1836 are fairly abundant, but de la Peña's account is especially useful, for he held no significant position of command. Therefore, he is able to avoid the self-justification and defensiveness of other writers. Further enhancing his work is an ability to write clearly and incisively. None of his views are particularly new, but de la Peña presents them well, and the availability of his work in paperback will be helpful to many Texas historians.

Adrian N. Anderson


The days of the cattle kings of Texas are not over, contrary to popular perception. Dian Malouf's research and photographs prove that they are not, at least in South Texas where she interviewed and photographed thirty-seven contemporary ranchers. This is a fine resource of the cultural, social, and economic history up to the present of the South Texas cattle business and reflects the values held by these families, many of whom were granted the land by Spain. Although all the ranches she researched are working ranches, some derive income from oil and gas, hunters, and exotic game.

Out of Malouf's eighty duotone photographs, a few have compositions and textures so rich that they seem to replicate paintings; however, too many of the photographs are grainy and do little to further our understanding of these people and their environment. Also there are errors in spelling of the names of several well-known people and places. Overall, Malouf is a fine writer whose lyrical prose, undergirded by her interviewing skills, brings out the importance of history and tradition among South Texas ranching families.

Sally Dooley


A colorful and informative historical portrait of San Antonio, the book highlights missions, the Alamo, parks, museums, and the River Walk as well as modern sites such as Sea World. The stunning color photographs by Mark Langford together with the well-written text depict the energy and ambience of one of America's most distinctive cities.

Sally Dooley


Alwin Sörgel was one of a rarely studied group--European immigrants of the nineteenth century who came to America but who didn't remain. In Texas from 1846 until the close of 1847, he published two works; the first was a collection of letters describing his voyage and arrival, and the second was a brief pamphlet offering advice to prospective immigrants. His work was published immediately in German, and its existence has long been known to scholars active in the field; however, this recent translation (1991) and publication makes the material available to a much larger audience.

Sörgel was a perceptive and candid observer; he was an exceptionally talented writer; and he was about as unbiased as anyone could be. He can be frustrating and vague on occasion; for example, he is very critical of the management
of the Adelsverein, but he never quite renders a final verdict on the organization that brought so many Germans to Texas. There is nothing in his writings to explain why he didn’t remain in Texas. He describes the difficult conditions, but he avoids the promoter-type style of writing found in many accounts.

The German-Texas Heritage Society has produced an excellent book. In keeping with earlier efforts, the Society’s publication is attractive, free of significant error, and reasonable in price. The book is in both German and English.

Adrian N. Anderson


The small Texas Panhandle town of Umbarger was the site of an unusual occurrence in the closing days of the Second World War. Seven Italian POWs from the internment camp at nearby Hereford worked for over a month painting murals and carving Renaissance figures for St. Mary’s, the local Catholic church. In this well-researched and thoroughly entertaining account of the Umbarger artist-prisoners, reporter-teacher Donald Mace Williams points out that the Hereford prisoners were fairly well treated until the last days of the war. As evidence of enemy mistreatment of Allied prisoners was revealed, the public demanded the reduction of rations for prisoners in American camps. There was real suffering in Umbarger until church officials convinced the military to correct the situation. Ironically, it was this hunger that contributed to the seven prisoners agreeing to provide their services to brighten and beautify the Umbarger church. In return for their work the artist-prisoners received a good country meal at noon each day. This small volume shows that, on occasion at least, American treatment of prisoners of war was not always as compassionate as we would like to remember.

Ralph A. Wooster

LAW AND LEGISLATION


Texas death legislation of the late 1970s, later amendments to those laws, and the relatively new concept of hospice care for terminally ill patients form the bases of discussion for this thought-provoking book by a professor of philosophy specializing in scientific and biomedical ethics. This work is an interdisciplinary discussion of the questions of the "ultimate human right," the right to die. Connelly examines the law, often using specific case histories of terminally ill patients, from legal, humanitarian, religious, and ethical perspectives. While scholarly in research and presentation, this work is accessible to a general readership. Special features of this publication include a chapter of "Hospice and the Mexican American," forms for the Texas Natural Death Act, information on Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care, and a copy of the Medical Directive suggested by the American Medical Association. Highly recommended for all public libraries.

Andrea Twiss-Brooks

NATURAL RESOURCES


Written by a qualified marine scientist and environmental consultant, this book provides an understandable and readable layperson’s guide to the vast body of technical literature about the Gulf of Mexico. Gore does a fine job of presenting important and sometimes difficult scientific and technical information without slipping into jargon or oversimplifying complex issues. Some subjects covered include original indigenous peoples, geological formations, animal and plant populations, economic resources, and pollution of the Gulf. The text is adequately footnoted, and a detailed index and helpful glossary of terms are included. Suggestions for further reading are presented by subject, with a notation indicating where the work is technical or suited for the general reader. While the information is generally well presented, the poor quality and small size of the photographs with their hard-to-read captions and the occasional typesetting errors detract from the book. Overall this book is an excellent resource.

Andrea Twiss-Brooks

POLITICS


Celia Morris' Storming the Statehouse is a study of the 1990 gubernatorial campaigns of two extraordinary women, Ann Richards of Texas and Dianne Feinstein of California. With strong ties to Texas and national political life, Dr. Morris is a writer, editor, and lecturer who approaches her subject as an astute observer of the increasingly successful women in politics. She weaves a fascinating tale of the back room maneuvering in both campaigns that will draw both interested citizens and academicians to her book, which is based in large part on oral interviews with participants in both campaigns. It is, however, so easy to get caught up in the story that one misses the lessons to be learned for women to succeed in politics. In her last chapter she points out why Richards won and Feinstein lost. Richards had as her strong points experience, education, and ethics, according to Dr. Morris, and in that order. And not just experience, but experience as a fiscal conservative with a fine record as Treasurer of the State of Texas. Her appeal to interest groups was also broader than that of Feinstein, and both of these women became successful fund raisers. But rather
than continue by list of factors relevant to Richards' victory, I refer you to the book and highly recommend it.

JoAnn Styles

SOCIAL LIFE AND CUSTOMS


The edge of America here is the subtropical area of South Texas bordering the Rio Grande and Mexico. The mix of languages, cultures, attitudes, and economies yields a unique blend observed by Maril, a writer and sociologist. His thoughtful essays recount his varied experiences as a teacher at Texas State Technical Institute, Valley public schools, and at the private school he and his wife began. Realizing the poverty and language that bar his students from economic success in the Anglo world, Maril worked tirelessly within and outside of the system to affect change. His concern extended to becoming a foster parent to several youngsters. His caring attitude, sense of humor, and educated insight make this an important contribution to understanding the Valley. Maril is remembered for his previous books: Poorest of Americans, Texas Shrimpers, and Cannibals and Condos (Vol.I, No.3).

Sally Dooley


This book is like many that ought to be kept in print for those interested in the life of twentieth century cowboys in Texas. Even so, twenty bucks is a lot to lay out for about ninety black-and-white photographs of cowboys at work, especially when only a baker's dozen of them are remarkable enough to approach photographic art. Still, John Graves' thoughtful introduction is probably worth the price of the volume, and this visual record of tack, tools, and costume is a valuable research tool.

Clay Reynolds


June Van Cleef is a professor of photography at Collin County Community College in Plano and curator of visual media at the Kimbell Art Museum. Her seventy black-and-white photographs of a vanishing rural community capture her own memories of growing up in Hamilton County in Central Texas. The photos are each accompanied by a short inscription that identifies the people in the scene by name and profession and helps personalize the images. People are shown playing dominoes, dancing, making quilts, and attending funerals, but most are working on ranches. Contrasts are made between their more vital connection with the land and that of the contemporary city-dwellers, who vacation in the country seeking a peaceful retreat from their busy lives. Columnist for the Dallas Morning News Bryan Woolley, also a native of Hamilton County, wrote an ten-page essay of his childhood experiences that precedes the photographs. This book accompanies an exhibition at the Waco Art Center titled "Evidence of Texas."

Lynne Lokensgard

SPORTS


Knowing how to play golf does not insure knowing the all-important etiquette of the game. Heretofore it was unpublished, and many people played golf without being aware of the courtesies seasoned golfers and professionals practiced. Proper clothing, tee times, handling carts and bags, care of the course, and more are all explained in a simple fashion in this handsome publication. A glossary of terms at the end of each chapter defines such golf terms as "birdie," "drop area," and "mulligan." Scoring, tournaments, and friendly betting are also covered so that a beginning player can feel comfortable with experienced players. Barbara Puett, a golf teacher in Austin, has competed and won amateur tournaments at the state and local level. Jim Apfelbaum, also an Austinite, is an active golfer and contributor to periodicals about golf. Because there is presently a booming interest in golf in this country, this is a very practical book to have on library shelves.

Sally Dooley

WILDFLOWERS


Only a Renaissance woman like Jean Andrews could write and illustrate a book such as this with its stunningly beautiful botanical art paired with botanical data which not only the general reader but those with scientific and artistic interests will also appreciate. She pioneered this style in her previous book Peppers: The Domesticated Capsicums (Vol.II, No.2), but this "gathering of flowers" (the definition of florilegium) has wider appeal. The fifty-two wildflowers chosen are all wide-ranging American plants, many of which are found in Texas. The gouache water colors are composite drawings revealing bud, blossom, seed, root, and leaf, all artfully arranged. The text opposite each drawing contains the nomenclature, range, description, bloom period, pollinators, propagation, remarks, entomology, and references. Her remarks are most interesting; derivation of names; uses in folklore, medicine, and as food; and longevity in the garden or vase.

Recognized as a Distinguished Alumnus from both the
University of Texas where she earned her undergraduate degree and the University of North Texas where she received the Ph.D., Andrews wrote and illustrated this work with the cooperation of the National Wildflower Research Center and the Department of Botany at the University of Texas at Austin. A beautiful book! It will be a Book-of-the-Month Club Spring 1993 offering.

Sally Dooley

CORRECTION

In the last issue David Crockett, Sure He Was Right by Mary Wade was incorrectly grouped with fiction. It should have been with nonfiction as a biography.

NOTICE

This is the final issue of Volume VII. Invoices will be sent for Volume VIII which begins in May 1993. Issues Numbers 3 and 4 in 1993 will be combined so that the next volumes will begin and end within each calendar year.

Contributors

Adrian N. Anderson is Professor of History and Head, Department of History at Lamar University-Beaumont. He received his Ph.D. from Texas Tech University and has taught at Lamar University-Beaumont since 1967. He is the co-author of THE LONE STAR STATE.

David Carroll is Coordinator of Cataloging at the Mary and John Gray Library at Lamar University-Beaumont. He received his M.A. in librarianship at the University of Denver.

Jessica Foy is Curator of Collections at the McFaddin-Ward House Museum in Beaumont. She received a M.A. in History Museum Studies from the State University of New York. She is co-author of THE MCPADDIN-WARD HOUSE, a Texas State Historical Association publication.

Richard Haddaway is a copy editor at the FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM. His first novel, OUR ISLAND HOME, was published in 1991.

Andrea R. Karlin earned a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Reading Instruction at the University of New Mexico and is Associate Professor of Education at Lamar University specializing in children's literature.

Lynne Lokensgard earned a Ph.D. at the University of Kansas and has taught art history at Lamar University-Beaumont since 1973.

Sally Lombardo completed her M.A. in English at Lamar University-Beaumont where she has taught English. She writes poetry and short stories.

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

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

Clay Reynolds is a novelist writing full time with three novels and two works of nonfiction to his credit. His most recent is FRANKLIN'S CROSSING.

JoAnn Stiles received a B.A. and M.A. in history from the University of Texas at Austin and is presently Assistant Professor of History at Lamar University-Beaumont. She also serves as Academic Director of Gladys City.

Tim Summerlin is Professor of English and Head of the Department of English and Foreign Languages at Lamar University-Beaumont.

Andrea Twiss-Brooks is a chemistry librarian at the John Crerar Library at the University of Chicago. She earned a M.S. in Library Science at the University of North Texas.

Ralph A. Wooster is the author of four books, one textbook, and numerous articles in professional journals.

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Sally Dooley, Editor
Sally Lombardo and Andrew B. Preslar, Associate Editors
Genny Dupre, Desk Top Publishing
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