
Jeff, an eleven-year-old growing up in a Panhandle orphanage in the 1950s, narrates this poignant episodic tale. His and the other boys' loneliness and dejection are barely kept in check by the desperate and heartfelt hope of being reunited with their families, even after seven to ten years of separation. This Christian "home" offers safe and clean housing centered around church and disciplined daily life where fun and adventure are interpreted as mischief. Beggs creates effective scenes and sensitively portrays characters, yet the anecdotes do not build to an effective climax. The book ends with Jeff's slow realization of the finality of being rejected by parents who are "just passing through" and remain uncommitted to their offspring. Beggs, a Dallas author, won the Greater Dallas Writers Award for this young adult novel.

Sally Dooley


Dawson writes in sweeping fashion that can compel a reader to write out a list of character names and relations, but this intriguing story is worth the trouble. Her narrator, the literally voracious ingester of family tale and family recipe, is an enigma until novel's end when certain revelations clear up the family skeletons relentlessly pursued in the novel. In structure, the work recalls John Irving's A Prayer for Owen Meany, but Dawson's finale is not as incredibly poignant or deterministic. Reclusive Victoria Grace Ransom, the last of the Ransom family of Bernice, Texas, is the 600-pound narrator, metaphor, and interroga-
tive in this highly anticipated second novel. Theorists concerned with the concept of "writing from the body," a prominent tenet of much recent feminist scholarship, have a distinctive opportunity here to consider this idea in the context of a new area of fiction, the very self-aware Southwest regionalism of writers from Texas and neighboring states. Particularly notable is Dawson's flair for character development and for making a fractured and fragmented history read in a leisurely yet suspenseful style. This book will have broad appeal.

Carol Dawson is the author of The Waking Spell. A well-traveled native of the state, she now resides in Mt. Calm, Texas, with her husband and three children.

Robin M. Latimer


Kidnapped from her plantation home in the southern United States in 1865, eleven-year-old Hally is discovered in a load of potatoes on a ship bound for Galveston. The kindly captain protects her on the voyage and takes her into his home as a free servant, where she receives an education and develops her skills as a seamstress and dress designer, a couturiere. Eventually the captain and his wife help her establish a successful business. There is an interesting love story woven into the history of Galveston told from a very personal perspective. Hally is a beautiful, light-skinned black heroine who, in a plucky, resourceful manner, faces prejudice, yellow fever, fire, and a hurricane. Wanda Dionne, former Women's Editor for the Orange Leader, has created a suspenseful volume that will entertain young readers in grades five through ten who are drawn to absorbing history. Black-and-white drawings by J. Kay Wilson illustrate the narrative.

Frances M. Ramsey


I Never Knew Your Name is the poignant reflection of a young boy who realizes the teenager he only watched and admired but never spoke to is the teenager on the television news who committed suicide. The boy remembers the times he saw the teenager shoot baskets alone, feed and care for a stray dog, and feed pigeons on the roof, all the while wondering what made the older boy kill himself. He wishes that they could have been friends.

Presented in picture storybook format, this beautifully written and illustrated book by Sherry Garland and Sheldon Greenberg respectively gives the reader much to think about regarding children's feelings of isolation, sadness, and desperation. Children should not read this alone but with a sensitive adult with whom they can discuss their questions and reactions. This powerful book is another fine effort by Sherry Garland.

Andrea R. Karlin

Kelton, Elmer. MANHUNTERS. New York: Ballantine Books,

Manhunters makes a significant contribution to understanding the cultural clash between Anglos and Mexicans, a problem as relevant today as in the early 1900s in South Texas, Kelton's setting. Chacho Fernandez is the fictional counterpart of Gregorio Cortez, a Mexican fugitive who became a hero to his people. Kelton says "all the fault and bigotry were not on one side... there was blame enough to go around." Chacho Fernandez is unjustly accused of horse theft. An inept translator who accompanies the sheriff to question Chacho causes a misunderstanding that results in the sheriff's death. Chacho runs, eluding the posse, and inadvertently comes to symbolize racial hatred. Kelton has the makings of a formula western, with good guys and bad guys and the anticipated showdown, but he adds a significant twist. Former Texas Ranger Joe Florey comes to admire the fugitive, realizes he is not pursuing a killer, and turns his goal to capturing Chacho and giving him a fair trial.

The propagators of political correctness are encouraged to examine books by authors like Elmer Kelton who write accurately within the context of the times and tell their stories without bias.

Ernestine Sewell Linck


The body of a World War II sergeant is unearthed in the sub-basement of the Crawford County courthouse. Though fifty years have passed since the murder, Sheriff Charles Matthews, recalling his military experience in Vietnam, wants to give the man a soldier's burial. But he needs a name. When the news of the discovery reaches the gossips at the doughnut shop, several senior citizens begin to act in eccentric fashion. They obviously know the soldier's identity but refuse to enlighten the sheriff. Matthews must solve the mystery even though the quietude of the small town would be threatened.

Meredith, a veteran of Panhandle Plains mysteries, has again capitalized on sense of place, focusing here on social modes and mores. Matthews is frustrated as an outsider in small-town Texas, while the seniors' behavior is symptomatic of their need to protect their reputations from a ghost of yesteryear. Comic strife evolves as Matthews becomes entangled with family members, with his associates Meenie, Slim, and Miss Poole, and with the police. Added to her sociological interest, Meredith's ability to generate laughter is apt to net for her a growing readership.

Ernestine Sewell Linck


Calling to mind H.G. Bissinger's nonfictional portrayal of Texas high school football, Friday Night Lights, Priddy's novel races up and down the same familiar turf--small Texas towns with hopes helplessly pinned on secondary school-age male demographics. It occurs to very few of the characters in this well-written soap opera that there might be life anywhere outside of their Friday night autumn rituals. Priddy's troubled but capable protagonist, Coach Bobby Thompson, faces an assortment of challenges: racism emanating from a black/white quarterback controversy, jealous assistant coaches, steroid abuse, overeager alumni boosters, an uneasy relationship with the school board, and an important ethical dilemma in the midst of a championship season. Just in case Coach Thompson doesn't have enough on his plate, his long-suffering and disenfranchised wife, who has career plans of her own on hold, has been seen lunching with his school board nemesis. It was Ross Perot who was once quoted in the Dallas Morning News as saying, "We in Texas have to decide. Do we want our kids to entertain us on Friday nights at football games, or do we want them to be winners for the rest of their lives?" If we had more coaches like Bobby Thompson, Texas might not have to choose. Recommended for mature audiences due to adult language and sexual content.

David Carroll


Sandra Scofield was born and raised in West Texas. Opal on Dry Ground is her fifth novel, following Gringa and Beyond Deserving, which were both award winners, More than Allies, and Walking Dunes (Vol.VII, No.4). In this newest release, set in Lubbock, in the Panhandle of Texas, Scofield writes about a middle-aged grandmother, Opal, who is trying to strike a balance between her own life as a newly-wedded wife and the lives of her two daughters, one of whom has a rebellious adolescent daughter. Scofield's characterization is superb, and her narration skillfully evokes a feeling of sympathy for Opal. A delightful chapter in which Opal meets her ex-mother-in-law clearly illustrates the maternal struggles within her and her efforts to establish equilibrium with her duties as a mother and wife.

This is certainly a fitting addition to Scofield's impressive array of prize-winning fiction. The New York Times Book Review recently recognized Opal on Dry Ground as one of the notable books of fiction in 1994.

Pradeep Lele


The stories in this collection depict disillusionment and spiritual malaise in poignant images. In "Tickler," for example, the teenage protagonist learns the gritty truth about adult sexual relationships. In general, the reference to the "horse latitudes" of the Gulf of Mexico characterizes the mood of these stories, in which characters are compelled to relinquish beliefs and assumptions when confronted with a reality that defies their sense of order. The tensions in Smith's stories arise naturally from the settings in the Southwest and Mexico, especially where cultural expectations collide, as in "Child Guidance" and in the last selection, "Witnesses." Protagonists in these stories find that ideals are molded and colored by circumstance and thus are not
absolute. Characters in these stories suffer when they adhere too rigidly to their own world views.

Letters from the Horse Latitudes is the first collection of short stories by C. W. Smith, who is a recipient of the Dobie-Paisano Creative Writing Fellowship.

Sarah Tusa


Blake, the son of a U.S. senator from Texas, has just been expelled from a Houston school because of his disruptive behavior. While his parents are in Washington D.C. and a housekeeper and chauffeur are in charge of him, he escapes to Boerne, Texas, to his grandfather's goat ranch. There he is loved and accepted for himself by his grandfather, teachers, and classmates. Blake's ranch chores, his care of his orphaned goat Daisy, and his first friendships give him a new sense of confidence and maturity to live the life of the son of a senator and presidential candidate. Ruby Tolliver, well known for her accurate portrayal of young people, authored Have Gun: Need Bullets, Boomer's Kids (Vol.VII, No.2), and Muddy Banks (Vol.II, No.3), which won the Texas Institute of Letters award for best juvenile.

Sally Dooley


Now published in a Spanish edition, this book, which has been called a Hispanic Roots, gives face and voice to the stories of countless Mexicans who have crossed the border seeking economic improvement in the United States. This book is certain to delight both serious and general readers as it sweeps across three generations, revealing the rich history of a people and their almost tribal heritage. Villaseñor insisted that this be seen not as fiction but as true biography of his beloved forebears and their culture. For a review of the English version, Rain of Gold, see Vol.VI, No.3.

Sally Dooley


"Anyone who writes about crime and violence for entertainment must face the moral difficulties inherent in that activity." Walker writes, giving readers a clue to the intensity she has achieved in The Red Scream. We become as involved in the protagonist's moral dilemmas as in solving the crime. The dual interests are interwoven artfully into "virtual reality." Molly, a reporter in Austin, has published a successful "true crime" novel about Louie Bronk, a serial killer on death row. Her instincts are alerted when she is thwarted and threatened at every turn while preparing a follow-up story on Bronk's execution. When Bronk recants his original confession, making her book a lie, her world falls apart. Does she ignore him for her career or does she obey her conscience to pursue truth?

Molly is no flat, stock character. Walker's subplots develop her into a person with whom readers identify: her on-again, off-again affair with her ex-husband, her relationship with her daughter, her emotional fixation with the patriarch Charlie McFarland on whose family this tragedy has fallen, and her determination to be a thoroughly modern liberated woman. Added to this bonus are her graphic descriptions of death. Readers may want to join Molly in her exposure of "the red scream," the cry of the man (or woman) who goes to death in the execution chamber, as they rethink the state's right to legalize capital punishment.

Ernestine Sewell Linck

POETRY


To call Sandra Cisneros' book Loose Woman sassy is equivalent to calling Mount Kilimanjaro a speed bump. With an "in your face" attitude and intense shock value, Cisneros dissect love, family, heritage, John Updike, and the benefits of aging. Her humor and passion are always present in this collection. She draws the reader in with titles like "I Am So Depressed I Feel Like Jumping in the River Behind My House but Won't Because I'm Thirty-Eight and not Eighteen," "Still Life with Potatoes, Pears, and Raw Meat, Rhinestones, Lard, and Horse Hooves," and "You Bring Out the Mexican in Me." One keeps reading, in search of the details behind the tabloid style titles. Cisneros does not disappoint. Sprinkled throughout her poems are metaphors and images filtered through her Hispanic heritage and her feminism that cannot help but produce reactions from her readers. Whatever Cisneros is writing about, she does so with passion, humor, and often rage, but never passivity. In the second stanza of "Las Girlfriends," Cisneros writes: "Girlfriend, I believe in Gandhi. / But some nights nothing says it / quite precise like a Lone Star / cracked on someone's head."

Loose Woman is Sandra Cisneros' second book of poetry. It is an enjoyable, amusing, female- applauded collection of poems, worth reading even if you're a man. The poet lives and writes in San Antonio.

Gayla Chaney


"Bring me the unexpected," says this poet who is so sure of herself that her entire book becomes a fiesta, fast moving and colorful. At times she is with the elderly "who follow the blue lit halls of pain" and at times with ancestors of whom "I know a blood noisy with multitudes." She does crisp portrayals of apples: "Oh Adam / You hadn't a prayer." At times she is a clever old witch cackling nursery rhymes that subtly hide the tale of a bad priest, a child, and a nun. Frederick's brisk, lively style doesn't fool; she is a
wise woman. She remembers the horrible "puff-addered mother" who beat her child and poured red pepper down its throat; hence the book's title. But violence is balanced by beauty when she writes of carrier pigeons who rise on cue in the air, "One host," then compassionately tells of "man with killing skill/ who watched us drop / Felled stars / Splattered out."

At times, reading these pages is like being the rider of "a crazy dark horse" riding headlong into "Fanged wire" and the horse can't be stopped, nor can one stop reading. Frederick is master of the sleek phrase and quick turn of thought, so much so that one has to read and reread to savor what she hands out as she flashes by. No wonder this book won the Austin Book Award of 1993.

Violette Newton


I was born and raised in West Texas, spending the best moments of my childhood camping on the Concho and Llano rivers, riding with my grandfather on his Allis-Chalmers as he plowed the dusty cotton fields, or waiting breathlessly for the final bid on his best Hereford at auction. Nothing could please me more than a collection of poetry that successfully depicts the rare qualities of this land and its people. Like A Horn Through The Heart tries, which probably accounts for its popularity, Nevertheless, the book, at least from an academic perspective, falls somewhat short of accomplishing its lofty goal.

The problem is not that the book fails to address the subject adequately; with seven sections and some ninety-six poems, Jung covers just about every aspect of life in West Texas. Perhaps my difficulty in appreciating Jung's work lies in our different views of aesthetics. Some poems, like "A Red Bird and I," offer imagery that is threadbare: "I saw / A red bird / Fly / Through / The green / Meadow / Into / The sky / In time / I realized / Life is / At best / Seeing / A red bird / In the green / Meadow," Others, like "The Lion," lack significance: "Without words / The lion / Passes his time / Sunning himself / In passive masculinity / Do not disturb him." On the other hand, the book has some well-turned phrases like "The ground / met him / quite suddenly," and some good images like "pot bellied fool" and "articulate eyes." "Like a horn through the heart" isn't bad either. The book has its appeal, and it will have an audience.

Catherine M. Preslar


This collection of poems, twenty-four by Violette Newton and twenty-five by Claire Ottenstein, employs the same mechanisms we have come to associate with these two well-known Texas poets. Both seek to elicit an emotional reaction to a familiar image and to use that reaction to activate the imaginative apparatus. Both poets eschew the elitism of modern highbrow poetry and at the same time avoid the worst excesses of sentimentality often associated with others who write within the Romantic tradition. Though each poet has a clear voice, both share the same theories of art and its purpose, and both display a mastery of traditional poetic forms.

The theme that ties the poems together is the recognition of the value of innocence to the mature adult. Newton's "Barefoot Girl" is a metaphor for vitality and spirituality, and her reactions to the world she is meeting, like those described in "Slicing the Apple," are of awe and joy. The girl in Ottenstein's "The Sand Box" likewise finds a treasure of wonder in the world and uses her five-by-five "kingdom" as a medium of creation and re-creation. Both poets insist that these characteristics of the interpretation of experience are not necessarily lost with innocence—they can be awakened by focusing recollection through the lens of the imagination, and such recollection can be stimulated by poetry. Far from being self-indulgent, these poems are a form of intimate sharing for which a reader who is willing to give them what they require will be rewarded.

Violette Newton of Beaumont is a Poet Laureate of Texas and has been widely published here and abroad. Claire Ottenstein of Houston has been published in numerous anthologies and collections and is active in publishing, editing, and reading her own award-winning work.

Andrew B. Preslar


St. Germain's poems are dense with life, but she is as obsessed with sex as was Plath with death. Even the noun itself, "sex," suffuses the pages where the poems themselves are heavy enough with the physical. Breasts are everywhere, as well as other body parts: the school bus has its "belly stuffed with children" and the prickly pear bears "red fruit like nipples hard bitten and swollen." She sees clouds "sinking into the Andes like a woman into her man." The first part of the book deals with Latin America, its oppressive poverty, the odor of sex, and the terrors of the body, / nightmares of the soul." It reeks of "ruined children, the helpless gods" where the smell of ruin is everywhere, a smell "looking to root itself."

Poems in the latter half of the book are not so ambitious, though there are good things here, as "The Shrimp Peckers" and "Big Fish," which may have origins in Elizabeth Bishop. There is wisdom in some pieces, but some, like "August Fire," seem contrived only to emphasize sexual images. In "Spring," where she sees flowers planted by an old man now dead, she fantasizes about making love to him, and her favorite imagery emerges once more. Such excessive emphasis on the sensual sometimes overshadows the good writing. St. Germain's writing has received several awards including grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Texas Council on the Arts, and the Dobie-Paisano Fellowship. She teaches at the University of Southwestern Louisiana.

Violette Newton
NONFICTION

BIOGRAPHY


The "star" in the title is, of course, the famous Dallas Cowboys team logo. Bates, the secondary and special teams standout, coincidentally wore a look-alike logo at Farragut (TN) High School—a precursor to his eventual career path. Upon graduating from the University of Tennessee in 1983, Bates was invited to try out as a free agent with the Cowboys. Classified as too small and too slow, he beat considerable odds to make the team's active roster as an undrafted rookie. He continues to beat those odds today, playing out his final years for the NFL's minimum wage ($150,000) and for simple pride in accomplishment. Reold with a skillful mixture of humor and pathos by freelancer Butterworth, this autobiography never drags and never dodges the truth. Bates' portrayal of himself is painfully honest, with accounts of collegiate insecurities and professional rookie blunders both on and off the field. When his wife Denise tells him that she hasn't been feeling well, the tunnel-visioned Bates assumes it is because the Cowboys are mired in a losing streak. "What else could it be?" he innocently ponders. Instead, she is pregnant with triplets.

As a longtime veteran, Bates bridges the coaching careers of Tom Landry, Jimmy Johnson, and Barry Switzer. Extremely close in personal philosophy to the religious Landry, Bates nonetheless has managed to adapt to Landry's more secular coaching heirs in "Big D." Bates has an alternate career as a motivational speaker, and this book provides inspirational reading for young people, illustrating quite clearly that hard work, determination, and faith can still be rewarded. Recommended for school and public libraries.

David Carroll


This monograph on Texas regionalist painter Jerry Bywaters (1906-1989) provides a fascinating picture of the people and events that helped shape the cultural climate in Dallas from the 1930s to the present. Its author, an art history professor at Southwest Texas State University, presents information that is interesting and well documented, appeals to the casual reader, and is of value to the serious researcher. The fact that she takes data from previously unpublished materials, such as letters, archival documents, and personal interviews, gives this work an integrity rarely found in books about regional artists.

Bywaters was a leading artist in the state. He worked in a style comparable with the Regionalism of John Stewart Curry, Thomas Hart Benton, or Grant Wood, but he was a major force in Texas art. He painted the American scene, particularly iden-

ifying the distinctly Texas traits found in the land and the character of its people. His scenes range from serious commentary to humorous satires. Depictions of working men in factories or lumber mills bear a strong affinity with the murals of his close friend, Diego Rivera. Bywaters was an art professor at SMU for twenty years, a curator of countless shows in the state, and a writer of monographs and reviews. Between 1933 and 1939, he was the art critic for the Dallas Morning News. From these various arenas he was able to influence Texas artists and lead them out of nineteenth-century provincialism. This book is the first major publication on this central figure in Texas art. It has twenty-four illustrations of the artist's work, ten in color.

Lynne Lokensgaard


Written for young adults, this flattering biography describes the effervescent personality of Liz Carpenter, noted Texas author, journalist, and executive assistant to Lyndon Johnson and chief of staff and press secretary to Lady Bird Johnson. It also is a look at the effect of social, economic, and political forces on her life. Although the preface recounts the assassination of President Kennedy in 1963, the story begins with Carpenter's birth in 1920 into the Sutherland family in Salado, Texas, and follows her education and exciting career as a journalist. Retiring to Austin after being widowed, Carpenter entered a new phase of life as author of the best-selling Ruffles and Flourishes (Vol.VIII,No.1) and Getting Better all the Time (Vol.VIII,No.34), and as an outspoken leader in the feminist movement. Cox's presentation of the lively Carpenter is competent although the opening genealogy is confusing and lengthy. Also, transitions are often non-existent or poor between Cox's snippets of history and Carpenter's story. A glossary completes the book.

Cox is a librarian in the editorial library at the Austin American-Statesman and a writing assistant for Carpenter.

Sally Dooley


In this straightforward autobiography, Gene Hackerman, wife, mother, community volunteer, and cancer survivor, brims over with her love of life and people. Her story centers around her role as wife of Dr. Norman Hackerman, chemistry professor, who became president of the University of Texas at Austin (1963-1970) and then of Rice University in Houston (1970-1985). Her zest for life shines on every page as she cares for loved ones, leads the Girl Scouts, entertains VIPs, and goes through cancer treatment. This is an enjoyable look at an outstanding Texas woman's active life.

Sally Dooley

Jerrold Ladd came from the filthy and crime-ridden projects of West Dallas. His indomitable spirit, fanned by a desire for work and education, enabled his escaping this unbearable ghetto. The youngest of three children whose single mother was addicted to heroin, Ladd was angry, dirty, and frightened by the ubiquitous violence, but he struggled daily to stay alive. In simple but powerful prose, he depicts the brutal life of those trapped and frustrated by poverty and lack of education who often see drugs as their only relief. Although Ladd was obviously bright and a voracious reader, his schooling was sporadic; he often quit to earn money through employment or crime to provide for himself or family members. He was still floundering and working as a runner in a law firm in his early twenties when he discovered The Autobiography of Malcolm X which catalyzed Ladd to a turning point. Besides instilling black pride, the book made him aware that he could not recall one "strong black man" in his life. He dedicated himself to being a living testimony to his people. From that point on, he continued at his job, enrolled in community college again, and began to write about his experiences. Currently he attends college, writes for the Dallas Morning News, and has published in Texas Monthly and Dallas LIFE Magazine. His writing has garnered him several prestigious awards.

His vivid portrayal of this sector of America brings shame and embarrassment to our affluent society. The book offers no panacea for these social problems, but it is the biography of a remarkable survivor. Ladd pleads in the book's last sentence: "We, the black race, need you to stay faithful and strong, and to never give up on us." Redemption is possible.

Sally Dooley


Although he has been dead for 105 years, this year the last have been good for General Ranald Slidell Mackenzie. A brilliant cavalry officer who was largely responsible for the containment and defeat of the Plains Indians, Mackenzie was eclipsed by men of lesser talents, and he has been largely ignored ever since. In the past two years, however, three new biographies, including this one and a reprint, have been published, but Pate's book for young adults is little more than a badly written, badly edited re-hash of other, better biographies. One passage describes the connection of the Union Pacific and Central Pacific Railroads as "iron rails to connect the continent," while another renders the anatomically foggy image of dead horses "frozen with their knees and head and neck on the ground and their hind legs stiffly propped up." On other pages we find "the walrus-mustached Will Shafter" repeated like a mantra and a girl who "threw up her hands for joy." Unfortunately, these are the least problems of this book. Dr. Pate goes to great lengths to be politically correct with the use of "African-Americans" and "Native Americans" while at the same time using less complimentary terms like "half-breed Mexican" and "red men" in the text. Numerous factual errors and a scattering of illustrations depicting such disparate things as cattle raids, a hospital where Mackenzie was never treated, and a few period ink drawings only add to the confusion.

Grant Sisk


Ken Towny is perhaps best known for his 1950s role in investigating and reporting frauds and irregularities in the Texas Veterans Land Program that led to the conviction of Texas Land Commissioner Bascom Giles. For this work he received national honors, including the Pulitzer Prize. This account of his life is a fascinating and superior personal narrative because of its clarity and frankness. The first quarter of the book describes his experiences as a young soldier on Corregidor and his three-year imprisonment by the Japanese in Manchuria. There Towny, an enlisted man from South Texas, was chosen "chow dipper" for the starving men in his barracks, distributing the meager rations. It was both an honor and a trust that he cherished, more than all the professional awards and accolades he later received.

The other three-quarters of the book describe Towny's return to civilian life, his role as reporter and editor of Texas newspapers, his long tenure as press secretary and chief of staff for Senator John Tower, his management of various Republican political campaigns, service as assistant and later deputy director of the U.S. Information Agency during the Nixon-Ford years, and board member of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Anyone interested in the personalities and politics of American and Texas public life in the last four decades will find Towny's account informative and highly entertaining.

Ralph W. Wooster


This is another in the increasing number of books describing the experiences of Texans imprisoned by the Japanese in the Second World War. The author was a young teenager from Wichita Falls who joined the Texas National Guard in the Depression years of the late 1930s. A member of the 2nd Battalion, 131st Field Artillery Regiment, Thompson took part in the Louisiana maneuvers of 1941. His unit was detached from the 36th Division in early autumn and ordered to reinforce the American garrison in the Philippine Islands. While enroute to the Philippines, war broke out with Japan, and Thompson's unit was diverted first to Australia and then to Java. After the collapse of the multi-nation Allied force in the Dutch East Indies, Thompson and his fellow Texans became prisoners of the Japanese. Like thousands of other Allied prisoners of war, the men of the "Lost Battalion," as the unit came to be known, were sent to Burma and Thailand where they worked on the infamous "death railway" the Japanese were building with forced labor in the jungles.

Thompson, who became a journalist after the war, has written a lively and vivid account of his long imprisonment by the Japanese. While Thompson's experiences were similar to those of other prisoners, his work provides meaningful insights into personal courage and human behavior in extremely difficult circumstances. The book will be of particular interest to those of the Second World War generation and their descendants.
DESCRIPTION AND TRAVEL


Today in Saudi Arabia there are green sands lush with wheat crops as a result of the vision of Saudi leaders and the agricultural abilities of Terry Kirk, a Texas farmer. After Kirk settled in the desert twenty-five miles from the closest town, he was joined by his adventurous wife, Martha, a West Texas small-town girl herself, and there they lived and worked absorbing the Arabian way of life for five years. In detailed and entertaining stories, Martha Kirk reveals a nation implementing some Western technological and agricultural advances while at the same time fiercely guarding its people from what most Arabs regard as decadent and corrupting in Western culture. Because the pervading Islamic religion and its police monitor all aspects of life, Mrs. Kirk was forced to lead a double life, veiled in public yet free to jog unveiled and in shorts in the desolate desert. From her perspective, readers gain a contemporary impression of a mysterious people, especially the Bedouins, whom she befriended. Other than a number of noticeable repetitions, the anecdotes are an astonishing, often intimate look at this exotic land and its people. Although the photographs are grainy, they are illustrative nevertheless of people and places, from desert tents to city home interiors. The Kirks now reside again in Texas.

Sally Dooley

DIARIES


Hooray for Linda Aaker for her honesty and dedication in keeping a diary of her journey from young adulthood to midlife. The entries cover sixteen years and reveal a great deal not only about Ms. Aaker, but also about women and their relationships. Who is Linda Aaker? She is a bright lawyer who has made her way in a law firm in Austin, divorced, dated, trekked in Nepal, married her soul mate, and had a child. The book's division into three parts, "Linda," "Bob," and "Will," follows respectively her self-centered youthful reflections, her passionate attraction and marriage to her spouse, and the overwhelming love for the child they create. Her struggles are those now nearly universal for women: career versus marriage and motherhood. The book concludes with lively notes of her participation in the Clinton campaign. Aaker's journals present a woman content in the life she has made while simultaneously mirroring the effects of societal changes during the past several decades.

Sally Dooley

EDUCATION


Anyone who has ever perused The Chronicle of Higher Education has surely gotten a good laugh from Carole Cable's cartoons poking fun at the foibles of university life. At long last, a paperback collection of seven years worth of these cartoons and others by the Austin-based artist has appeared to the delight of her fans. Most of the 124 cartoons are aimed at an audience of professors and students. However, any reader who has ever dealt with such nuisances as committees, bureaucracies, or office politics in any context should appreciate much of this collection. Many of the cartoons treat subjects universal to academics. In one drawing, a sign in a faculty lounge reads: "thank you for not talking about your next book." In another, a student tries to persuade his professor that the Greenhouse Effect has slowed down his dissertation progress. In still another, a registration sign warns about honors courses requiring that students be able to read and write. Cable's humor hits the mark far more often than not, and her drawing is uncommonly fine. The artwork is clear and simple, yet wistfully elegant. Moreover, the drawings in the book are printed fully twice as large as they were published in the Chronicle.

Kenneth Rivers

FOLKLORE


From up and down the Texas Gulf Coast, Docia Williams has compiled the legends and accounts of ghosts and people's encounters with other mysterious spirits or beings spanning several hundred years. Some events are fairly recent; a Nederland businesswoman recounts her experiences in the latter part of the 1980s. Familiar stories abound about Jean Lafitte and buried treasure, the spookily light at Saratoga in the Big Thicket, and the Hispanic folk tale of La Llorona. Other stories are not well known; these Williams has ferreted out of newspaper accounts and personal interviews. She has competently collected and related these stories indicating their sources. No doubt many will enjoy these eerie tales. Williams is the co-author of Spirits of San Antonio and South Texas.

Sally Dooley

GUIDEBOOKS


Amateur rock hound and freelance journalist Melinda Crow has written an informative, easy-to-follow guide to rock collecting in the Lone Star State. She describes seventy-five sites within the five geographic regions into which she divides the state. For each site, she provides a map and directions along with information about the land type, elevation, best season to go, and materials often found. The necessary tools and vehicle needed to reach a site are also mentioned along with nearby accommodations and sights to see. In a simple style, she lucidly describes what to look for in a particular rock and the work needed to find or chisel it
out. Texas, with its diverse geography, offers a wide range of fossils, petrified wood, agate, flint, onyx, and opal for the novice or experienced rock hound. This is a useful guide for an educational hobby that the entire family can enjoy outside.

Sally Dooley


Another entry in the guidebook market, Country Roads of Texas is arranged according to geographic regions which include twelve specific highway routes. The author and her husband traveled each route, noting the beautiful sites and historic landmarks along the way, but it is somewhat annoying that Mrs. Morris frequently mentions that Mr. Morris would not venture down this or that intriguing side road or stop at any advertised attraction. Far too much attention is paid to local restaurants, hotels, and gift shops. Only rave reviews are included for every piece of pie and chicken fried steak sampled by the Morrises. Such glowing reviews smack of commercials, not honest opinion. Black-and-white line drawings by Victoria Sheridan are particularly noteworthy because they are soft and inviting renderings of various Texas scenes. This book offers nothing special that cannot be found in many similar publications, including those given freely by state agencies. The guide is too incomplete to be a must and too breezy to place it above the rest of the current market selections. A well-intentioned but forgettable effort.

Cynthia Calvert

HISTORY


This handsomely designed work for middle and high school readers is of uneven quality. In general, the author, a long-time public school teacher, does a good job describing the role of Texas in the American Civil War. Although the coverage of events is at times superficial, the narrative provides a satisfactory introduction to the contributions Texans made to the Confederate war effort. Three chapters are devoted to post-Civil War events relating to reconstruction and restoration of conservative control. Clear maps and photographs enhance the text.

Regrettably, there are a number of errors: for example, James W. Throckmorton was a member but not president of the secession convention; a special session of the legislature, not Congress, was called to consider secession; Hood's Brigade was not split into two groups with Hood taking charge of all the Texas divisions; Kirby Smith was a professor of mathematics, not president, at the University of the South; and E.R.S. Canby was not the brother-in-law of Henry H. Sibley. The chapters about reconstruction, while avoiding the clichés of the pro-Southern Dunning school, are weak. The author's statements that reconstruction radicals "even promoted the Ku Klux Klan" and that the "ironclad oath was dropped, giving all Southerners the right to vote," illustrate either careless proofreading or ignorance of the facts. These and other errors detract from an otherwise well-written and attractive volume.

Ralph A. Wooster


The name A.C. Greene stands out among Texas historians, and once again Greene has enhanced the study of Texas history with his special touch. 900 Miles on the Butterfield Trail is not the first account of John Butterfield's Overland Mail service, but it is a keen twentieth-century view of Butterfield, the much opposed Southern route, and the events along the route which made history intriguing reading.

Greene traveled the route from St. Louis westward to San Francisco, uncovering new historical documents, incorporating changes in terrain, and correcting falsehoods which had been previously published. The Butterfield Overland Mail was short-lived, lasting only from late 1858 until early 1860, while Butterfield was ousted by Wells Fargo, but in between the mail was late remarkably few times. Greene discusses each little Texas town along the route, describing its historical and present status. Any serious Texas history collection should include this book.

Brenda L. Herbel


On January 1, 1991, forty-two-year-old Joel Gregory joined the legendary W.A. Criswell as pastor of the First Baptist Church, Dallas, a religious empire that sprawls over five-square blocks of downtown Dallas and includes a 900-student K-12 academy, a 300-pupil college, a 500-bed shelter, a radio station, and 30 missions. As Gregory put it, First Baptist, Dallas, is to a Baptist what Rome is to a Catholic, Salt Lake City to a Mormon, or Canterbury to an Anglican. So why did the new pastor, who had obviously coveted "the prize" for a long time, suddenly and unexpectedly resign on September 30, 1992? Gregory's explanation is as fascinating as it is self-serving. He illuminates internal church politics, highlights the difficulty of transferring leadership within megachurches, and ultimately blames Dr. and Mrs. Criswell for his demise. Specifically, Gregory accuses Criswell of reneging on a verbal pledge to retire within a few months, thus creating "an intolerable burden of dysfunctional leadership." Even if written evidence of such an understanding existed, it would be difficult to have much sympathy for Gregory. Seduiced by the allure of fame and power, he traded his "soul" for the "biggest" pulpit in Baptist life, and it is now unbecoming to fault others for the failure of his own judgment. This work will be of interest to students, Baptist or otherwise, of contemporary American religion.

John W. Storey

Mickey Herskowitz, a nationally-recognized sports columnist for the Houston Post and popular biographer, chooses to write about the Sharpstown scandal that shook Texas and national politics. It was "a Texas banking scandal with charges of insurance fraud and political bribes and the exposure of a quiet, lazy system that had existed a hundred years." The scandal hit in 1971 just as Governor Preston Smith was beginning his second term. Before it was over, many people were implicated and affected, including Governor Smith, Speaker of the House Gus Mutscher, Lieutenant Governor Ben Barnes, and former Attorneys General Waggoner Carr and Will Wilson, along with the Texas businessman who gave it its name, Frank Sharp of Houston.

As a brief introduction to this infamous history, this readable book is a good place to start because more of Sharp's story is told and within the context of the Texas political system. Herskowitz doesn't blame Sharp; he very sympathetically explains him. It is certainly more of a defense than Sharp, who died in 1993, received at the time. Herskowitz does not try to exonerate the man, but he does say that Sharp lost almost everything while depositors in his closed bank did not lose a penny. The author concludes with interviews with members of the Dirty Thirty, the thirty members of the House of Representatives who forced a legislative process that brought the illegalities and questionable practices to the public's attention. Written for a broad audience, the book has no footnotes or bibliography, but with Herskowitz's entertaining style and access to many sources, it is interesting reading.

JoAnn Stiles


Using information from Chambers of Commerce, visitors' bureaus, historical societies, and interested individuals, Doris Miller compiles an entertaining array of facts, legends, and statistics that manifest Texas' great diversity and its past. Some amazing facts in Texas history are recounted along with contemporary data. With entries only several sentences long, one can open the book to any page and learn something. The index helps the reader look up specific places or people. A lot of fun to browse.

Sally Dooley


American Southwest historian David Murrah, author of previous histories of West Texas ranching, has done an admirable job in researching the history of the DeVitt family ranch and its lasting impact on the region. The Mallet Ranch history can roughly be divided into two parts: its management under David DeVitt and its progress under the watchful eye of his daughter Christine. Cattle was the main source of income for the ranch during David DeVitt's lifetime. His original investment of $25,000 in 1895 had grown into a million-dollar corporation by his death in 1934. The discovery of oil brought wealth to the ranch while Christine DeVitt was its overseer. Despite her death in 1983, the Mallet Ranch continues to operate today as a viable enterprise. The charitable foundations set up by Christine and other family members continue to benefit individuals and institutions in Lubbock and across the country. In fact, this book was supported by these same foundations through grants to Texas Tech University, where Murrah is director of the University's Southwest Collection.

Ranches are such an integral part of the state's history and culture that there should be little hesitation in adding this work to Texas collections. Libraries looking for West Texas and Panhandle histories would likewise be interested.

Jon P. Tritsch


Professor Tijerina's study of the role of Tejanos in Texas during the period of Mexican rule is primarily an examination of the institutions of Mexican Texas already in place before the arrival of Anglo-American immigrants from the United States. Basing his work on primary and secondary sources, Tijerina describes a wide variety of activities in Mexican Texas, including ranching and farming practices, the organization of local government, education, property rights of women, laws regarding land ownership and water rights, and frontier defense. It is his con-


Confusion among scholars over the linguistic identity of the Jumanos, early South Plains Native Americans who became virtually extinct by the early 1700s, led anthropologist Nancy Parrott Hickerson into a broad ethnohistorical study of the Jumanos. After careful examination of primary accounts of Spanish explorers and colonizers who came to Texas, New Mexico, and northern Mexico, historical records and interpretations, archeological research, and earlier anthropological studies, the author concludes that they were a distinctive tribe who played an important role in the Spanish colonies of the Southwest. They served as traders, spies and scouts, and native militia supporting Spanish troops against hostile Indians. The extension of the Apaches into the heart of Jumano territory in the South Plains divided the Jumanos into northern and southern divisions and can be seen as a major factor in the disappearance of the Jumanos as a distinctive people.

In using extensive historical documentation, Hickerson's study of the Jumanos is unlike many earlier twentieth-century works in American anthropology. Historians as well as anthropologists interested in Native Americans in Texas and Southwestern history should welcome this very scholarly publication. The general reader, however, may be overwhelmed by its wealth of details.

Marion Holt
clusion that the influence of these Tejano practices is reflected in the culture of modern-day Texas to an extent beyond what is generally recognized.

A secondary theme, but one of considerable value, is a description of the role of Tejanos in political affairs. In a succinct analysis of what was a complicated era of Mexican politics, he emphasizes the influence of Tejano leaders on policies and developments in Texas and argues that Texans were usually treated generously and that Tejano efforts were responsible for that generosity. For example, Tejano politicians secured the special exemptions that allowed the continuation of slavery which was prohibited elsewhere. Tijerina is cautious and convincing in presenting his views. Although he may have overstated some of the cultural consequences of Tejano institutions, he avoids some of the more extreme positions of other studies and takes notes of other cultural influences. The book is well written and scholarly with comprehensive sources (although Terry Jordan's Trails to Texas and North American Cattle-Ranching Frontiers are not mentioned in the bibliography).

Adrian N. Anderson

HORTICULTURE


With a shiny green cover and bright green chapter headings, this attractive book should encourage primary grade youngsters to learn about the state tree of Texas. Excellent photographs reveal likenesses of Governor Hogg, who wished for pecan trees to grow statewide, Native Americans, who ate the nuts, and Edmund E. Risien, who created more than twenty new varieties of pecans. The life cycle of pecans and their harvest are illustrated with full-color photographs. Simple recipes follow with the admonition to have an adult supervise any cooking. The book concludes with directions for planting a pecan as a seed. Elementary teachers should enjoy using this good resource in the classroom. A companion teacher's manual with ideas for relating the study of pecans with math, science, and social studies activities is to be published also.

Barbara A. Langham, an Austin author, has written and edited education materials for pre-school teachers.

Sally Dooley

MUSIC


Mr. Shank, now a professor of American Studies at the University of Kansas, seems to know the Austin music scene, where he used to boogie down as a young performer and habitue of Third Coast clubs. Unfortunately, he just has not written interestingly about it. Try grooving on these chapter headings: "Constructing the Musicalized Performance of Texas Identity"; or "The Performance of Signifying Practice"; or "The Commodification of Identity." Dissertation review committees probably require one to write like that, but it does not exactly make the pages sing. Too bad, too, because Mr. Shank obviously has been there, done that: Raul's (for punk), Threadgill's (Jimmie Rodgers yodelers), the Armadillo (cosmic cowboys), and Antone's (for blues). He has seen all the great Austin legends, from Willie to Michael Murphy to Gary P. Nunn to Doug Sahm to the late Stevie Ray Vaughan. And he has gotten up close and personal with such seminal groups as Asleep at the Wheel, the Lost Gonzo Band, the Sex Pistols, and Butthole Surfers.

Mr. Shank has put a lot of thought and time into this book. He has included a bibliography, a list of people he interviewed, an index, and even a handful of photographs. But it's still heavy going. I guess you would have had to have been there.

Tanner T. Hunt, Jr.

SPORTS


The literature of angling divides neatly into two categories, lyrical meditations on the sport like Howell Raines' recent classic, Fly Fishing Through the Midlife Crisis, and the strictly utilitarian tomes beloved by devotees of magazines with blue-collar names like Bassin' or Honey Hole. The present volume definitely belongs with the latter class, though its methodology is much more sophisticated than the "how to chunk a worm" format of most bass fishing articles. As Hope recounts it, he was "not the first person to put a transmitter in a bass...[but] did have the privilege of putting the first transmitter in a bass over seven pounds." What he learns over a ten-year period of tracking the habitats and habits of a cast of fishy characters with names like Wanda and Missy makes for sometimes fascinating reading especially for fishermen who sink thousands of dollars in boats and electronic equipment but do not invest a few hours in learning the ways of their quarry. Hope's methods might prove a bit too intuitive for a scientist, but they are supported by his success as a guide and tournament fisherman. John Hope and Jesse Miller, who did the actual writing, use a specialized vocabulary full of terms like "layered" and "funnel," but each is thoroughly explained, often with the help of diagrams. Because most of the research was conducted on East Texas lakes, the book should prove invaluable to anglers who fish the waters between Dallas and the Louisiana line.

R.S. Gwynn


Printed on durable stock and spiral-bound, this commercial publication supersedes a xeroxed version that has circulated among Texas fishermen since 1987. The introduction includes general information on gamefish species, fishing access, safety tips, fishing techniques, and fly patterns. Each of the short chapters describes in detail proven fishing areas on thirteen Hill Country rivers and also includes information and telephone numbers for area restaurants, motels, and camp sites. One draw-
back of the book is its absence of maps; its river mileages and comments are gauged to *The Roads of Texas*, a well-known atlas that is available in most bookstores. Without this second book, the guide’s directions to fishing areas could prove confusing.

R.S. Gwynn

**TRAVEL**


Promoted as a "wacky new" guide with "hundreds of invaluable travel tips," Never Say "Hi, Jack!" in an Airport misses its informative runway. As the title hints, the book is a pastiche of sophomoric witticisms and jokes in which the authors take pot shots at political correctness, Mother Theresa (their misspelling), Amtrak, the McCarthy Hearings, Alzheimer’s disease, national health care, World War II veterans, and Peruvian goat-herders.

Terry Denton is the president of Main Street Travel in Fort Worth, yet his "sage" advice for air travelers merely repeats what everyone knows about carry-on bags, dangerous aisle seating, tasteless meals, and cramped legroom in coach. In addition to dragging out a statistical analysis of the unlikely probability of dying in an airplane disaster, they embed a useless six-page dictionary of nautical terms for people thinking of a cruise. Does the modern Carnival liner have a crow's nest? Is it really necessary to define "shore excursions"? Need we be told that gratuities lead to better service?

To the book’s detriment, the Dentons get swept up in hyperbole and word games, including chapter titles like "A Room with a Loo" and "Ship Happens." Laboring to be funny, they only sparingly deliver practical advice for vacationers and business people alike.

Joe Nordgren

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