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Book Reviews

Houston Cougars in the 1960s, Death Threats, the Veer Offense, and the Game of the Century by Robert D. Jacobus. Texas A&M University Press. Contents. Foreword. Preface. Acknowledgements. Chapters 1-18. Bibliography. Index. Pages: 366. \$30.00.

The Houston of the early 1960s was a vibrant, dynamic place full of entrepreneurs and visionaries. It had become the center of attention for the world when NASA and Mission Control came to town, and thousands of people from around the country came to Houston to live and work. Judge Roy Hofeinz had, largely through his own showmanship and determination, managed to convince community leaders to gamble on the creation of the Houston Astrodome, and thereby had secured a major league sports franchise for the city, the Houston Astros. It was into this environment that the University of Houston brought two more innovators, basketball coach Guy V. Lewis and football coach Bill Yeoman.

In *Houston Cougars in the 1960s*, Robert Jacobus examines the rise of UH sports through the prism of these two innovators. Both coaches realized that the key to successful programs begins with the recruitment of athletes, and both further realized that UH was a tough sell to elite prospects given the fact that sports were a relatively recent addition to UH, and the facilities at the time were woefully inadequate to attract top-flight talent to the Cullen Avenue campus. Lewis, who was considered to be UH's best student athlete up to that point, had a long association with the University, and Yeoman was brought in from Michigan State, where he had been an assistant coach to the legendary Duffy Daugherty. Both men believed that the key to improving their respective programs lie in expanding their pool of recruits, so both men turned to the African-American community. Lewis traveled to Louisiana and secured the services of Don Chaney and Elvin Hayes, while Yeoman signed running back Warren McVea from San Antonio.

It would be these three young men who would integrate UH athletics. Jacobus deftly details the challenges faced by these athletes,

and the support they received from not only the UH coaching staff, but also from their teammates and members of the community. Most of the racial incidents experienced by these athletes came not from UH supporters, but from opponents and their fans, primarily during road games. Despite the numerous racist episodes they had to endure, the players became a close-knit group, and the fortunes of UH sports began to rise. The basketball and football programs achieved national recognition, and UH athletics became viable on a national level. The basketball program in particular joined the ranks of the country's elite programs, a fact which would culminate in what would become known as the "Game of the Century" which pitted number one ranked UCLA under John Wooden against Guy V. Lewis's number two ranked Houston Cougars in 1968 in the Houston Astrodome. UH won the game, and would reach the Final Four for the first time that season.

All three of these African American athletes would go on to enjoy stellar pro careers, Hayes and Chaney in the NBA, and McVea in the NFL. Both Yeoman and Lewis would go on to have lengthy and successful careers coaching at UH. Yeoman became known as the father of the Veer Offense, and Lewis again achieved national recognition with his Phi Slama Jama teams of the 1980s. All in all, Jacobus does a credible job with highlighting the role that UH and these three young men played in the integration of college sports, and in fostering a more inclusive environment in the city of Houston.

Charles Swanlund
Blinn College - Bryan

Riding Lucifer's Line: Ranger Deaths along the Texas-Mexico Border, by Bob Alexander. Foreword by Byron A. Johnson, Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum. University of North Texas Press. Contents. Introduction. Photo Gallery. Chapters 1-24. Afterword. Endnotes. Bibliography. Index. Pages: 404. \$29.95.

No one will argue that any type of law enforcement officer lives a dangerous life, regardless of the geographical place and time, be it during the earliest days of our country or the period of our history

known as the Wild West. The men and women whose duty is to enforce the law may well live in a peaceful community, but when challenged by a law-breaker the individual enforcing the laws is alone, "living and standing and fighting on a bona fide frontier" as historian Alexander states (14). One constant in law enforcement is that the bullet was not made intentionally to kill you, but when fired it may take you down. Any place may become deadly; but all will agree that the Rio Grande historically is a deadly place, where conflict has reigned for centuries and will continue to do so. For nearly two centuries the lawmen most associated with enforcing the law in the southwest are the Texas Rangers; those men wearing the star have killed, but as Alexander narrates, 25 have paid the ultimate price since the beginning of the Frontier Battalion days of 1874.

Alexander's thorough research into the records of the Texas Rangers reveals a deadly fact: in every county which separates Texas and Mexico there has been one or more Rangers killed in action. L.H. McNelly served less than four years as a captain, but after fighting feudists in DeWitt County then was sent to the river to combat cattle thieves riding for Cortina. Near Brownsville on the old Palo Alto Prairie battleground Ranger L.B. "Sonny" Smith lost his life in a deadly confrontation. Cortina lost many of his men, as well as the herd of stolen cattle, driven off from Texas range lands.

In *Lucifer's Line* Alexander produces much more than a listing of those Rangers who lost their lives and the details of their last fight, much more. His introduction (14 pages) is a brief overview of why the Rangers were formed in the early 1820s, how they continued through the Civil War, being replaced by the Texas State Police (1870-1873) and then reinstated with the formation of the Frontier Battalion in 1874. The Frontier Battalion continued until the early twentieth century as the Ranger Force. Alexander then details the lives of the those men who paid the ultimate price, beginning with the men of the Washington County Volunteer Militia under Captain McNelly who considered themselves Rangers as much as those in the official Frontier Battalion. McNelly's only loss was Private L.B. "Sonny" Smith, the youngest Ranger ever who lost his life, through that of Joseph B. Buchanan; their lives are detailed.

Between 1874 and 1921 Alexander narrates the life and death

of those who fell. The Rio Grande separated the borders of the two countries; it was dangerous then and remains so today. Part one details the story of the dozen who were killed in the so-called frontier era; then starting in 1901 with the creation of the Frontier Force (1901-1935) thirteen Rangers lost their lives patrolling the border. The men who died along the river are not well known today. Certainly the name most familiar to lovers of the Texas Ranger history is that of Captain Frank Jones who was killed in a fight with Mexican bandits near El Paso in 1893.

In addition to the down-to-earth writing style Alexander is best-known for illustrating his works with a generous amount of illustrations. The two galleries of photographs add much to our knowledge of not only Texas Ranger history but the problems which plagued the border then and continue to do so today. The problems of 1874 and before continue now in 2016 and will continue to do so - probably as long as there is a river. Only the technology of fighting lawlessness continues; unfortunately there will be more lives lost in combating crime while *Riding Lucifer's Line*.

Chuck Parsons,
Luling, Texas

The Martial Imagination, Cultural Aspects of American Warfare by Jimmy L. Bryan, Jr. Texas A&M University Press. 2013. Contents: Acknowledgements.. Introduction. Parts 1-4. Contributors. Index. Pg. 248. Paperback. \$29.95

Cultural historians expand our understanding of the grand narrative that dominates military history through various lenses of social influence. Jimmy L. Bryan, Jr. attempts this connection in a collection of essays that explore military history through violence, gender, memory, and religion. Twelve scholars from varied backgrounds analyze societal imaginations of military service and present a collection that examines varied moments in time from the Revolutionary War through the War on Terror that profoundly shaped personal, state, and national identities.

Important themes of this collection are explanations of violence and conquest as well as the roles gendered structures of the American military played in shaping both foreign affairs and national identity. John M. Kinder examines American zoos during the Cold War era as military-zoological complexes that shaped not only cultural imagination about foreign policy but also modern day zoo keeping practices. Kathleen Kennedy examines historian Francis Parkman's personal pain and suffering as qualifications for writing an accurate narrative about war and trauma. Jimmy L. Bryan, Jr. provides perhaps the most gripping evaluation of the collection. He examines the Texas Ranger in American lore as a complicated reflection of both explanations for and fears of violence in western expansionism and frontier exceptionalism. James J. Schaefer examines Revolutionary War soldier Charles Lee, seen by British authorities as distasteful and traitorous, despite allowing him certain privileges due to his status of importance and gentility.

Bonnie Miller argues American interpretations of the Mexican-American War of 1846 and the Spanish American War of 1898 relied on narratives that constructed ideologies and images of Latinos that supported military escalation. Texans often justified US intervention in Mexico by portraying Mexican men as inferior beings and a threat to women, much in the same way that Americans portrayed Spaniards in Cuba nearly fifty years later. Belinda Linn Rincón's analysis of Evangelina Cisneros provides a multi-faceted observation of both Cisneros' daring and struggle in the patriotic quest for *Cuba Libre* as well as American publisher Hearst's thirst to portray her, and Cuba, in feminized roles that suggested their need to be rescued and cared for by the masculinity of the American military.

While twentieth-century media portrayed the US Army as multi-cultural and gender inclusive, the fear of a weakened and emasculated military prompted the rhetoric of strength and unity. Jeremy K. Saucier evaluates US Army advertising after the conflict in Vietnam, and illustrates these complexities of the emergence of multiculturalism in the armed forces in the wake of devastating blows to the imagined strength of the white male soldier after the war. Susan Eastman explores how films such as *We Were Soldiers* recast America's war in Vietnam as a "good war" and ultimately helped Americans forget the causes and ultimate consequences of the war in Vietnam. Jonna Eagle

examines the melodrama as a lens through which to view the political imagination of America. From Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show to *Rambo: First Blood*, stories of heroic rescue, struggle, and suffering shaped the narrative of American militarization. Historical entertainment urges audiences to remember military conflicts as examples through which they can process feelings of victimization and threats of violence. However effective examinations of remembrances are, Jason Phillips encourages historians to examine imagined futures through letters and diaries of Civil War soldiers. Timothy J. Cathcart examines the imagination of air militarization as a Christian endeavor. Reaching the sky and delivering unprecedented destruction from the heavens, the Army Air Forces imagined their roles in the military tied to the strength of their religious mission, and pilots viewed the creation of a separate air force as an act of God's will.

In all, these twelve historians weave together a narrative of the American imagination of war that is new, fresh, and relevant to the grand narrative of military history. Though the key essay by Amy S. Greenberg skillfully weaves the importance of cultural analysis of the martial with an excellent evaluation of choices politicians made on the brink of war in 1898 to seemingly forget the Mexican American War of 1848, some essays in the collection meet the focus of this essay and some do not. While this may appear to some as a deterrent from the book's strength, this collection initiates a cultural introduction to military history and as such the subjects of and benefits of such analysis should not bound by chronological or geographical borders. Overall it is an excellent book for cultural and military historians alike, as well as anyone interested in the lore of Texas history and identity.

Cecilia Gowdy-Wygant
Metropolitan State University of Denver
Front Range Community College

In the Governor's Shadow, The True Story of Ma and Pa Ferguson, by Carol O'Keefe Wilson. University of North Texas Press. 2014. Contents: Preface. Illustrations. Acknowledgments. Introduction. Prologue. Chapters 1-25. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pg. 302. Hardcover. \$29.95

Carol O'Keefe Wilson has produced an excellent book on the lives and political careers of James and Miriam Ferguson. The Fergusons dominated Texas politics from 1915 to 1935, and remained politically active until the early 1940s. During those years James Ferguson, who was known as "Farmer Jim" or "Pa" Ferguson, was twice elected governor of Texas. He was impeached during his second term and his wife Miriam, who was known as "Ma" Ferguson, then took up the Ferguson political banner and she was also twice elected to serve as governor of Texas.

Although "Farmer Jim" did own some agricultural land – some of it debt free through Miriam's inheritance – he was principally a businessman, banker and reluctant attorney and in the long run not particularly successful at any of those endeavors. His business ventures were financed by considerable debt and the Fergusons were continually in a cash flow quandary. Through his business dealings he was able to lose even some of the land Miriam inherited. In spite of those and other shortcomings, both the Fergusons were successful at one thing, and that was getting elected as governors of Texas.

Carol O'Keefe Wilson is no fan of the Fergusons. She describes James Ferguson as being "ethically challenged" and for good reasons. These reasons, from questionable banking practices to questionable loans, pardons, political favors, are set forth in detail in Wilson's extensively researched book. This research relies heavily on newspaper accounts, the transcripts of the House of Representatives investigation into James Ferguson's activities while governor and the transcripts of the impeachment trial.

On some occasions it is difficult to tell if Wilson is expressing her opinion or the opinion of her cited source. Another problem is her treatment of Bell County history during the Civil War and Reconstruction periods. In reference to a book written by the Ferguson's daughter, Ouida Ferguson Nalle, Wilson correctly states, "We naturally expect a book written by a family member to hold a bias, and Nalle

delivers liberally on that expectation". Wilson further states that Nalle's book "is dishonest as a comprehensive account by virtue of its critical omissions, errors and distortions". It is a shame Wilson did not recognize some of the same problems in the book by George W. Tyler edited by Charles W. Ramsdell on which she relies for her history of Bell County during the Civil War and especially Reconstruction.

However, the book is not about Bell County history but rather about the Fergusons and in telling that story Wilson does an excellent job. Everyone who is interested in Texas politics in the first half of the twentieth century, or for that matter any period of Texas history, will find this book both entertaining and informative.

Tom Crum
Granbury, Texas

Recollections of a Tejano Life by Timothy Matovina & Jesus F. De La Teja. University of Texas Press. 2013. Contents: Preface. Introduction. Edited Reminiscences. The Memoirs. Unpublished Second Part. Manuscript. Bibliography. Index. Pg. 190. Hardcover. \$55.00

Timothy Matovina and Jesus de la Teja have done an extraordinary job of capturing a snapshot of Tejano life in the 19th century through the lenses of Antonio Menchaca. Menchaca was one of the "veterans of '36," Texas born and a signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence. A hero of the Battle of San Jacinto.

The Introduction provides a look into Menchaca's family and life. A family tree compiled by de la Teja dates the family back to the early 18th century. Menchaca's role in the Texas Revolution, especially at San Jacinto is also discussed by the editors as are other details of the years leading up to the Civil War and later Reconstruction. In 1875 Menchaca was one of many who argued for better treatment of Tejano veterans. Menchaca died in 1879.

Menchaca's reminiscences supported by the editors annotations offer the reader a view into the lives of Tejanos in the 19th century.

Native American problems as well as diseases like the cholera were daily threats. Menchaca remembers the death of Jim Bowie's wife due to cholera as well as the death of Governor Veramendi and his wife. The arrival of Davy Crockett was celebrated with a ball. Details such as the arrival of Juan Seguin with a message from William B. Travis and Menchaca's conversation with Sam Houston and later Santa Ana make the Texas Revolution come alive. Born in 1800 Menchaca lived through the Mexican Independence Movement, the Texas Revolution, the War with Mexico and the Civil War. It is no surprise that Menchaca was proud of his heritage and the history he had lived. Surprisingly although known as a hero of the Texas Revolution he did not speak of his escapades.

Matovina and de la Teja overcame four challenges in editing this work. Firsthand, although difficult to find, the editors discovered a full collection of Menchaca's reminiscences, published in the 1907 work *Passing Show*. The second challenge pitted the James P. Newcomb 1907 version against the 1937 Memoirs published by the Yanaguana Society. With the possibility that there could be material missing from the copies it was difficult to decipher which one resembles the original

Assassination & Commemoration, JFK, Dallas, & The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza by Stephen Fagin. University of Oklahoma Press. 2013. Contents: Illustrations. Foreword. Acknowledgements. Preface. Introduction. Conclusion. Epilogue. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pg. 238. Hardcover. \$29.95

Stephen Fagin has crafted a narrative that is at once an institutional history, an examination of the critical issues in heritage preservation and a primer on the importance of leadership and community engagement in building consensus. As the oral historian for The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza, Fagin brings a rich array of voices together to tell the story of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in Dallas, Texas on November 22, 1963, the roller-coaster of proposals and counter-proposals surrounding a commemorative

project and the parade of personalities that made the creation of the museum a reality in 1989.

Organized into five main chapters that focus on the several roles played by the site in the life of the city and the nation, the book provides context for the events that transformed a warehouse into an international tourist destination and takes the reader on a journey through boardrooms and living rooms to understand the strong emotions on both sides of the debate surrounding the preservation of the site that was for many Dallasites "a physical reminder of the city's darkest memory". (33) Weaving oral histories and archival sources in a conversational style, Fagin allows the reader to listen in on history.

In his introductory remarks, Fagin describes Dealey Plaza as "one of the rare sites, often called "sacred ground," where we can literally point to a specific geographic location and say with some certainty that this is where world history changed." (XXIII) In the decade that followed the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, many Dallasites struggled to deny this power of place. The visionary individuals who championed the preservation of the Texas School Book Depository did so in a field of almost constant public criticism.

With the first concrete step in September 1972 by the Dallas City Council to preserve the building from demolition, public comments suggested "wrecking the old building." (43) This sentiment was repeated over the years from various quarters. According to Fagin, "the arguments on both sides were remarkably straightforward. For many the continued existence of the Texas School Book Depository was nothing more than 'a sad and disquieting reminder of the assassination for which [Dallas] was criticized by many.' For others, it was recognized as a historic site or, at the very least, an artifact that might further embarrass the city by its conspicuous absence from Dealey Plaza." (185, n18)

For many, the watershed moment in understanding the importance of place was touring the sixth floor space. One of original supporters that guided the project through to completion, Lindalyn Adams, described the reaction of Conover Hunt, chief curator and project director for the exhibit: "When Hunt looked out of the sixth floor windows overlooking Dealey Plaza, she said simply, "Someday, this will be a national historic site." Hunt later recalled seeing "a

national/international site that would be preserved in perpetuity, that will change as each generation looks at it and reevaluates it and finds new meaning of its own for it." (62)

The storyline of Stephen Fagin's book is not an explication of the assassination of JFK or a dry retelling of the founding of a museum. Instead, Fagin speaks to our need, those old enough to remember the events of November 22, 1963 and those who have "inherited memory," to understand why we are drawn to the site and what we expect to learn. In his conclusion, Fagin shares a moment of reflection, looking out from the seventh floor window used by Oliver Stone to replicate the sniper's perch: "I saw pockets of individuals milling about below me, reminding me again of the value of the museum's presence and the continuing significance of Dealey Plaza. In light of my research, it also made me think about the human need to contextualize tragic events and renew them into sites of reflection and understanding." (167) Through Fagin's account of the assassination and commemoration of President John F. Kennedy, readers begin to understand that we may not "shrink before a history that will not fade." (94)

Carolyn Spears

Old Stone Fort Museum

Stephen F. Austin State University

LBJ and Grassroots Federalism: Congressman Bob Poage, Race, and Change in Texas, by Robert Harold Duke. Texas A&M University Press, College Station. 2014. Acknowledgments. Introduction. Chapters 1-4. Conclusion. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 248. Hardcover \$45.00.

This is the story of two Democratic stalwarts who cut wide swaths across the political landscape in the mid-twentieth century on their separate—but at critical times also braided—trails from Central Texas to Washington, DC. Bob Poage, the obdurate but venerable legislator and later Congressman, known as Mr. Agriculture, effectively represented the Eleventh Congressional District for

decades from his Waco base, adroitly reflecting the conservative pulse of his constituency. Lyndon B. Johnson, a product of the Hill Country, was more progressive in his approach and more ambitious in his political pursuits, eventually riding his congressional and senatorial service all the way to the White House. Scions of Texas politics tempered in public service during the New Deal era, both men evolved as masters of cooperative federalism, although they brought their own homegrown definitions and personal frames of reference to its pragmatic interpretation. The results ranged from lasting contributions that changed the social fabric of Texas—and the nation—to heated stalemates on matters of civil rights and education, but always within a shared context of mutual respect and an appreciation for integrity of purpose. Clearly, this is the political story of another time and place.

Historian Robert H. Duke presents a compelling analysis of the two trail masters played out against a seemingly disparate set of issues that included flood control along the Brazos watershed, urban renewal, civil rights, and equal access to education. The author eases into the study, carefully, systematically, and dramatically, presenting the key players as products of their unique, but also familiar, cultural environments. His contextual development helps the reader invest in the dynamic political story, but like a mystery conveys suspense about the ultimate outcome for the state and nation. Along the way, Duke presents a grassroots chorus of interesting, but lesser known, characters such as auto dealer and civic servant Jack Kultgen, publisher Harlan Fentress, and community activists Robert Aguilar and Ernest Calderon, each representing unique perspectives on how to leverage government programs for maximum local benefit. This was an era when success was measured in progress for the common good rather than in columnar totals of wins and misses. With its multiple layers and rich political texture, this is a complex story that, perhaps understandably, few historians have ventured to tell before. Thankfully, though, Duke exhibits no trepidation in mining a wide range of resources, including oral histories, to pursue the truth. As the author noted, "Making representative democracy function at the grassroots level required centralized authority—the quintessential irony of the American political culture." (193)

The value of *LBJ and Grassroots Federalism* is multi-fold. It presents a place-based history of two titans of Texas politics and at the same time gives important weight to the grassroots side of the equation. In so doing, it deepens our collective understanding of LBJ's local power, an aspect receiving only surficial treatment in other studies of the president, and reintroduces a somewhat forgotten regional player of unquestioned significance. In the process, it also sheds light on those who strive for significant change at the local level, albeit with little historical recognition. This is a book as unique as its topic and thus makes an important contribution to the field of political history.

Dan K. Utley
Texas State University

Houston Cougars in the 1960s, Death Threats, the Veer Offense, and the Game of the Century by Robert D. Jacobus. Texas A&M University Press. Contents. Foreword. Preface. Acknowledgements. Chapters 1-18. Bibliography. Index. Pages: 366. \$30.00.

The Houston of the early 1960s was a vibrant, dynamic place full of entrepreneurs and visionaries. It had become the center of attention for the world when NASA and Mission Control came to town, and thousands of people from around the country came to Houston to live and work. Judge Roy Hofeinz had, largely through his own showmanship and determination, managed to convince community leaders to gamble on the creation of the Houston Astrodome, and thereby had secured a major league sports franchise for the city, the Houston Astros. It was into this environment that the University of Houston brought two more innovators, basketball coach Guy V. Lewis and football coach Bill Yeoman.

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sell to elite prospects given the fact that sports were a relatively recent addition to UH, and the facilities at the time were woefully inadequate to attract top-flight talent to the Cullen Avenue campus. Lewis, who was considered to be UH's best student athlete up to that point, had a long association with the University, and Yeoman was brought in from Michigan State, where he had been an assistant coach to the legendary Duffy Daugherty. Both men believed that the key to improving their respective programs lie in expanding their pool of recruits, so both men turned to the African-American community. Lewis traveled to Louisiana and secured the services of Don Chaney and Elvin Hayes, while Yeoman signed running back Warren McVea from San Antonio.

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*Charles Swanlund
Blinn College - Bryan*

John P. McGovern, MD, A Lifetime of Stories by Bryant Boutwell. Texas A & M Press. 2014. Contents: Acknowledgements. Introduction. Chapter 1-7. Appendix A-C. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pg. 262. Hardback \$25.00

Author Bryant Boutwell has accomplished the enviable task of providing an interesting, informative, fact-filled chronicle on the life and accomplishments of Dr. John P. McGovern of Houston, Texas in a writing style that also incorporates the remarkable personal qualities of this brilliant physician. This biography is truly an enjoyable read, and I highly recommend it!

The author's deep respect for the major achievements attained by Dr. McGovern during his lifetime is evident throughout the book, expressed from the perspective of a friend who knew him well. Boutwell follows the life of Dr. McGovern from his childhood in Washington, DC to his significant contributions to the Houston medical community, beginning in 1956 when he was 35 years old. His forward-thinking ideas in regard to healthcare initiatives have influenced programs at both the UT Health Science Center at Houston and the UT Medical Branch at Galveston. The book will be especially interesting to Texas historians, who will enjoy the depth and revealing insights as to how the development of the Houston Medical Community came to be.

There is a generous sprinkling of excellent photographs throughout the book, all of which contribute to the narrative as it moves chronologically from chapter to chapter. One image which I found particularly interesting is on page 122, that of Hermann Hospital in 1925 in the foreground, with the large forest behind it that Monroe Dunaway Anderson's foundation "would transform into one of the largest medical centers in the world." (*author's words from photo's caption*)

Although Dr. McGovern gave millions of dollars through his foundation to help people and promote worthy medical causes, he did not want to be called a philanthropist. He remarked, "It's all about feeling good inside. I think everybody's got an empty spot inside, and I call it the God-sized hole that we have to fill. And you can't do that with Caesar's world stuff---money, property, prestige. That doesn't fill the hole. Love does....Love in the sense of deep caring." (*page 171*)

Betty Oglesbee
San Augustine, Texas

EXXON, Transforming Energy, 1973 - 2005 by Joseph A. Pratt with William E. Hale. Austin; The University of Texas Press, 2013. Contents. Forward, Chapters 1 - 9, Epilogue, Notes. Appendix A - D. Pg. 639. Hardcover. \$49.95

This is the fifth book issued dealing with the 125 year history of ExxonMobil Corporation and its predecessors. It is the first of the series not issued by Harvard University Press. Although the book was issued by The University of Texas Press, it bears the imprint of The Briscoe Center for American Studies. ExxonMobil Corporation donated its historical documents to the Briscoe Center in 2003. Once the collection was in the hands of the Briscoe, William E. Hale, then Senior Advisor to ExxonMobil's Public Affairs Department, made the suggestion to Don Carleton, Executive Director of The Dolph Briscoe Center for American Studies, that the center oversee the publication of the next volume in the ongoing history of the firm. Carleton was responsible for the selection of Joseph A. Pratt from the University of Houston's Department of History and Business. Pratt has frequently written on the oil industry and the history of business in general.

This is an important book. It focuses on the management decisions made by Exxon during the period laid out in the title, and to a degree on the individuals who made them. The period in question is one in which tectonic shifts occurred in the petroleum industry, from an era of stable, cheap crude oil prices in which Exxon was the largest refining company in the world, to an era in which crude is not cheap, nor prices stable. Now ExxonMobil Corporation is still the largest petroleum refiner in the world. Further during the period, Exxon and its competitors had to deal with the rise of national oil companies (nationalization), falling profit margins (not unrelated); the rise of environmentalism, all of which led to attempts to diversify the company. This was followed by the collapse of the oil prices in the 1980's and a second rise of crude oil prices in the nineties which lead to survival through acquisition and consolidation.

Pratt deals with all of these issues on the managerial level. Because of his approach, this book is more suited for upper level Business Majors than the general reader. He opens with an excellent introductory chapter, "Transformation, from Exxon to ExxonMobil," telling the reader what he will discuss in the following chapters. He closes with a fine epilogue

"Transformation, from the Past to the Future," that tells the reader what he has covered and points the direction for the future of ExxonMobil Corporation. In between he deals with the disruption of Venezuela, Saudi Arabia, and Iran and others countries which nationalized their oil holdings and, the creation of national oil companies which eventually become not only partners with Exxon, but in many cases competitors as well and the shock of the related increase in crude oil prices. The later leads to an attempt to diversify, in some cases into fields that Exxon had never attempted before. When the price of crude oil collapsed in the 1980's Exxon decided to divest itself of industries outside their core focus, and sold off most of these unrelated businesses, including the most profitable, Friendswood Development Company. When the price of crude shot up again in the 1990's, Exxon again began looking for ways to survive in the industry. Ultimately this led the company to the acquisition of Mobile Corporation. And Pratt leaves no question that this was an acquisition, not a merger despite the new corporate name.

Pratt does a good job of highlighting the successes Exxon and its successor ExxonMobil Corporation, but he does not hide management's failures. Most notable is the chapter dealing with Exxon's attempts to diversify outside its historical focus on petroleum refining. Most were failures, expensive failures at that, and ultimately management decided to return to its historical focus of petroleum refining with the expansion of the companies petro-chemical activities. The one criticism of the book is that Pratt uses a gentle hand when taking Exxon to task for the *Exxon Valdez* disaster. And while Carleton in his forward states that ExxonMobil brought no pressure to bear on him, or Pratt, concerning the book, it is quite obvious who provided the funds to make the book happen.

If you are interested in the petroleum industry or management theory and practices, I recommend this book to you. Most readers who do not have an interest in the petroleum or petro-chemical industries, or a general business management mindset will find little of interest, I am afraid. Nonetheless, the book serves it purpose, and will stand as a strong bridge to the next twenty-five years of ExxonMobil's corporate history.

George Cooper
Lone Star College

Tales of Texas Cooking: Stories and Recipes from the Trans-Pecos to the Piney Woods and the High Plains to the Gulf Prairies, by Frances Brannen Vick. University of North Texas Press. Contents. Preface. Introduction. Stories and Recipes. Pages: 390. \$39.95.

More than a collection of recipes, *Tales of Texas Cooking* is unique. Contributions include personal recollections and are arranged by region. But contrary to most in the field, Editor Frances Vick has used the Vegetational Areas of Texas, as cited by Stephen L. Hatch in *Texas Almanac, 2014-2015*, as her framework. Many recipes, consequently, reflect their physical background. Those from the Piney Woods include the preparation of "Pan-Fried Venison" and "Bear Meat" by Preston Mowbray. Contributors from the Gulf Prairies and Marshes, like Jean Granberry Schnitz, tell not only how to make "Dewberry Cobbler" but also how to find the native bushes. Post Oak Savannah cook Nelda Vick shows how her mother's "Egg Noodles" demanded flour, eggs, and drying fixtures. Contributors like Kenneth W. Davis, from the bountiful Blackland Prairies, stress home canning, while counterpart John W. Wilson celebrates the commercial canning ingredients of "Slang Jang."

Cross Timbers and Prairies writer James Ward Lee refers to the ubiquitous swine of the area with his opening lines: "Kill a hog and take the liver on in the house" (p. 213). The South Texas Plains are commemorated in Riley Froh's "Boiled and Pickled Cow's Tongue," and the Edwards Plateau in Jean Andrew's "Pedernales River Chili." Sparse times in the early settlement of the Rolling Plains resulted in Darlyn Neubauer's "Vinegar Cobbler" recipe, and John R. Erickson's comment on the High Plains, "the Panhandle climate...is wonderful if you want the life and juice sucked out of something," explains his beef jerky discussion (pp. 339-340.)

Interspersed among the chapters are copies of hand-written recipes. These add to the second characteristic of this book, its down-home, country nature. There are certain exceptions; the Flynn's "Burgundy Venison" and "Lion Stew," Meredith E. Abarca's "Hugo's Scalloped Potatoes," and Leon Hale's "New York Café Beef Enchiladas" are a few. But many of the most interesting stories include the process

of catching, killing, cleaning, and cooking chickens, the tradition of having "supper" and "dinner" rather than "lunch," the wide distribution of "poke sallet," and the preparation of hand-cranked ice cream.

The stories accompanying the recipes are as Texan as the meals themselves. R. G. Dean's account of his "Dagwood Bumstead Sandwich" recaptures the comic strip as well as Cemetery Homecomings. Sam Cavazos remembers following the crops as a farm worker as he shares "Leonora's Mexican Rice." Monica Gerlach recalls her experiences in the Texas State Fair's Creative Arts (Cooking) Competition and contributes a prize-winning recipe, "Irish Cream Cheese Bread." Carol Hanson describes the many variations of "Ambrosia" and whether her teetotaler grandmother would have included sherry wine as an ingredient.

Finally, the recipes' wide variety captures the inclusive nature of Texas food. Czech kolaches by Mary Kooch, Cherokee pudding from John Ross, Mexican tamales prepared by Maria Aurora Acosta Apac, Scandinavian lute fish offered by Mrs. Ole J. Hoel, English Hard Sauce by Frances B. Vick, and Cajun jambalaya by Gary and Laura Lavergne are integral to this state's cuisine. African-American dishes are as well, their absence the only problem in this otherwise well-edited and fun-to-read book.

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