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WRITING EAST TEXAS HISTORY, 1972-1985

by James H. Conrad

In the spring of 1974, this journal published an annotated bibliography of East Texas histories. The compilers, Gloria Frye and Barbara Edwards, selected books that appeared between 1963 and 1972.¹ Since much new research and interpretation of the East Texas past has been done in the last thirteen years, it is appropriate to present a new survey of the historical literature. Because of the number of works on East Texas, a comprehensive review is impossible; therefore, only the significant, ground breaking secondary sources — both articles and monographies — have been chosen for inclusion. This process of selection is subjective. The definition of what constitutes East Texas is also somewhat subjective. But for purposes of this essay, East Texas is defined as that region of Texas east of the Cross Timbers and Brazos River and extending as far north as the Red River and as far south as the Gulf Coast.

The history of East Texas cannot be understood apart from the geography that nurtured the people, that shaped patterns of settlement and provided forms of livelihood.

The physical environment of East Texas has changed drastically in the past 200 years into a region where few if any part remains unmodified by man. The shift from wilderness and plains to planted fields and pasture lands — which took nearly a century and a half and entailed complex though not always obvious alterations in climate, water supply, plant and animal life — has engaged the attention of historians.

In the last two years, historians have written three books on the history of the interaction of man and land in Texas. In their *Land of Bears and Honey* Joe C. Truett and Daniel W. Lay, native East Texans, provided a thoughtful, though somewhat romantic study of the changes man has made in the natural environment of East Texas over the past 150 years.² Drawing upon reports, diaries, official surveys, and travelers' descriptions of East Texas from the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, Truett and Lay described the unspoiled wilderness, the wildlife, the cause of the eventual destruction of animal life, changing vegetation, and the disappearance of the forests. Robin W. Doughty's *Wildlife and Man in Texas: Environmental Change and Conservation* and Del Weniger's *The Explorers' Texas: The Lands and Waters* presented more systematic approaches to the ecology of Texas but their coverage remained more general and perhaps more superficial.³

A somewhat different approach to man-land relation is an article by Dan L. Flores, published in 1984, that summarizes the results of the Freeman and Custis Expedition of 1806, the first scientific expedition to explore the Red River.⁴ Freeman's descriptions of the Indian villages along

the river and Custis' ethnological and ethnobotanical references, reprinted in a *Jefferson and Southwestern Exploration*, edited by Flores, are a valuable aid in appreciating the ecology and entholgy of the Red River on the eve of Anglo settlement of Northeast Texas. In another study on the ecology of East Texas, geographer Terry G. Jordan examined the microcosm and the prairie in the eastern parts of Texas, openings that farmers often preferred to the wooded areas and that often shaped patterns of settlement in East Texas.⁵

Like Jordan's prairie enclaves scattered across the woodlands of East Texas, the Big Thicket, Caddo Lake, and North Titus County are wilderness and cultural enclaves, anomalies in an industrialized and urbanized countryside. The Thicket and Caddo have been settled since the 1820s, North Titus since 1860s, but their wilderness character persists far more than in any other area in East Texas.

The best bibliographical guide to the voluminous and growing literature on the Big Thicket is Lois William's *The Big Thicket of Texas: A Comprehensive Annotated Bibliography* (1977).⁶ Williams included over 22,000 primary source documents and secondary sources on the history and ecology of the region as well as the conservationist's movement to save the Thicket. In the tradition of Abernethy's *Tales From the Big Thicket*, Campbell and Lynn Loughmiller's *The Big Thicket Legacy*, published in 1977, is a collection of brief life histories with old-time residents of the Thicket.⁷ The focus of the interviews, which are printed verbatim, was man-environment relationship in the Big Thicket area — stories of finding bee trees, tracking wild turkeys, catching alligators alive, or following hounds after bobcats — ways people made a living in the tangled, marshy wilderness. The best recent volume on the history of the Thicket is Howard Peacock's *The Big Thicket of Texas* (1984). Peacock told the entire history of the Big Thicket from the region's geology and ecology, its native Indian inhabitants, the arrival of pioneers, the growth of the lumber industry, the oil field booms, and finally the conservationist's struggle which resulted in the creation of the Big Thicket Preserve in 1974.⁸

Caddo Lake, located in Marion and Harrison counties, has a history as interesting as that of the Big Thicket. Steamboats plied Caddo until the 1880s; there was a freshwater pearl boom around 1909, a flourishing commercial fishing industry and an oil boom in the 1920s, and during prohibition many local residents took up moonshining, setting up their stills in the cypress breaks of the lake. Fred Dahmer, a resident of Caddo Lake and a long-time historian of the region, described the history of the area from the creation of the lake by the Red River Raft to the oil boom and moonshining in a series of well written and witty articles for *The Great Caddo Lake Association Newsletter*.⁹ A more personal account of life on Caddo is *Every Sun That Rises: Wyatt Moore of Caddo Lake*, edited by Thad Sitton and James Conrad, in which Moore recounts his varied career

as boatbuilder, boat operator, raftsman, commercial fisherman, oilfield worker, and professional moonshiner.¹⁰ The editors wrote a brief history of the region and gave a *Foxfire*-type description of bateau boat building on Caddo Lake.

Between the Creek, by Deborah Brown and Katherine Gust, is a rambling, sensitive, almost poetic document on a strip of barely habitable land twenty miles northeast of Mt. Pleasant between the Sulphur River and White Oak Bayou which was occupied by small farmers, tenant farmers, squatters, moonshiners, and hunters after the Civil War. In vignettes and photographs the authors portray the people of this area.¹¹

The Loblolly Book, edited by Thad Sitton, is a collection of all types of folkcraft and folkways of East Texas: moonshining, night planting, hunting wild hogs, home remedies, water witching, and others.¹² All were collected by students at Gary High School, Albany High School, Douglas School, Lockhart Intermediate School, and Carthage Junior College for their *Foxfire*-like magazines.

A somewhat neglected part of the man-land transaction has been the Native American Indian. In two journal articles, Mel Jordan and Howard N. Martin researched the Creek migration through Red River counties and the Indians of Polk County.¹³ The only recent monography on the American Indian in East Texas was produced by Mildred S. Gleason of Jefferson, Texas. Based on an extensive research in the primary sources, Gleason's excellent *Caddo: A Survey of the Caddo Indians in the Northeast Texas* dealt not only with the history of the Caddos but also with their customs, language, and folklore.¹⁴

These books and articles are not exactly the standard historical works; instead, they seek to detail the relationship that people have had to a particular environment, the "man-land" transactions, the many occupations and avocations that human beings bring to the physical environments in which they live and die. They are probably more source documents than scholarly analysis, yet this has been a fertile and productive ground for social historians and folklorists and ethnohistorians.

The Anglo Settlement, Revolutionary, and Republic periods underwent close scrutiny and research by the first generation of professional Texas historians who produced many excellent monographies and biographies. The last twenty to thirty years has not seen any major work on this era, or at least not as many. One exception is a little noticed book, privately printed, by Skipper Steely on Claiborne Wright, the first Anglo-American to settle a family in Northeast Texas permanently.¹⁵ Although invented dialogue distracts from the general scholarly nature of the book, it is thoroughly researched and footnoted. Steely was inspired by the work of Rex Strickland, whose doctoral dissertation on northeast Texas, *Anglo-American Activities in Northeastern Texas, 1803-1843*, remains the standard work on the early history of Northeast Texas. Samuel May Williams

(1795-1858), a prominent Galveston land speculator and business leader, was the subject of a well-documented narrative by Houston instructor and archivist Margaret Sweatt Henson.¹⁶ Archie P. McDonald wrote an informative biography of the hero of the Alamo, *Travis*.¹⁷

Antebellum East Texas has been more fortunate in attracting talented scholars. The works of these historians shared a common theme: concentration of wealth in the hands of the planter class, continuation of the planter-dominated society, and brutality and profitability of slavery. Relying on little used sources such as diaries, letters, and newspapers, historians came to see the antebellum society of East Texas from a new perspective.¹⁸

In the early 1970s, Randolph B. Campbell and Richard G. Lowe produced revealing and sometimes controversial studies of staple crop production, slavery, and political power in East Texas.¹⁹ The authors asked the question, "Who held the wealth and political power in this period?" They concluded that in terms of all important aspects of wealth holding slaveholders dominated and officeholders were generally two to four times richer than the population in general. In 1977, in a book on wealth and power in antebellum Texas that expanded on their previous quantitative research, Campbell and Lowe confirmed a high degree of inequality in the distribution of wealth among the entire free population of antebellum East Texas.²⁰ In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Campbell placed Harrison County under the microscope of statistical analysis and confirmed his earlier research on wealth and political power.²¹

East Texas Slavery came under the scrutiny of these same revisionist historians. In his study of Harrison County, Texas, Campbell found that slavery was both a profitable and expanding institution prior to the Civil War.²² In a series of articles on slavery James Smallwood agreed with Campbell on the profitability of slavery in East Texas, its importance along the coast and rivers of East Texas, and the brutality of slavery.²³ He challenged the thesis that slavery in East Texas left its victims depersonalized, docile "Sambos," concluding that black lives were not entirely prescribed by their society, that slaves and freemen were able to cope with a hostile white society, to think and act in terms that led to survival.²⁴ In *Black Texans: A History of Negroes in Texas, 1528-1971*, Alwyn Barr demonstrated that slavery was depressingly similar in Texas to that in the remainder of the former slave South despite Texas' frontier environment.²⁵ Abigail Curlee, who wrote on antebellum slave plantations in Texas described in less than critical terms the living conditions of East Texas Slaves.²⁶

Campbell, Smallwood, and Barr also continued their research into postwar Reconstruction era. Campbell's study of Harrison County, *A Southern Community in Crisis*, reflected his increasing concern with continuity and conservatism of the Civil War and Reconstruction in East Texas in Harrison County.²⁷ According to Campbell, the era, traumatic as it undoubtedly was, did not cause drastic dislocation among Harrison

County's population. He found that the population persistence, especially among the rich and wealthy and powerful, was remarkably high, reflecting a stable and satisfied population. In short, continuity was a stronger force than change in this community.

In contrast with Campbell, Smallwood and Barr portrayed the period as a time of extraordinary political upheaval and terroristic acts. Smallwood underscored two themes in his book and in numerous articles on Reconstruction: white violence and black striving.²⁸ Blacks' fears of white violence in East Texas was all too real. Terrorist organizations, such as the KKK, killed blacks and unionists to deprive the freedmen of their newly won rights. The complacency of the Democratic Party, the silence of prominent whites, and the vastness of Texas made it impossible for the federal military and state police to protect black life and property in East Texas. Barr confirmed Smallwood's findings.²⁹ According to Barr, in the three years following the Civil War over 450 freemen met violent deaths with over ninety percent of the murders committed by whites.

Smallwood and Barr also stressed the active role of the freedmen in shaping Reconstruction.³⁰ In seeking independence from white authority and control over their lives, blacks organized their own fraternal, benevolent, and self-improvement organizations and churches, and established as many black schools as did Northern religious societies and the Freedmen's Bureau. Like Dunning and Ramsdell — but for different reasons — Smallwood and Barr find little to praise in the federal Reconstruction, feeling that Democrats and Republicans alike sought to exploit and control the blacks, not really help them.

To conclude this section, Campbell supports C. Vann Woodward's view of the conservative nature of Reconstruction while writers such as Smallwood and Barr portray the period as a time of adjustment and violence for blacks. The next generation of research on antebellum and Reconstruction in East Texas will probably see refinement of the current work and new work on the social and cultural history of these periods. Understanding of this crucial era would benefit from more local studies such as Campbell's book on Harrison County.

The farmers revolt occupied another distinct era in East Texas history in which race and class shaped political issues. Starting in Lampassas County in West Texas, the Farmers Alliance, and later the Populist Party, spread quickly to East Texas where it took deep root. Two historians of East Texas populism, Alwyn Barr and Lawrence Goodwyn, viewed populism as a crucial episode in the prolonged historical process of Texas society's adjustment to the Civil War, Reconstruction, and industrialization and urbanization.

In "Populist Dreams and Negro Rights: East Texas as a Case Study," Goodwyn told the story of black disenfranchisement in Grimes County, Texas, that reinstitutionalized the antebellum caste system in altered

form.³¹ Grimes County, located sixty miles north of Houston, had a black-white coalition that had its genesis in Reconstruction and endured until 1900 when it was challenged by a white union party which used terror and violence to disenfranchise the blacks and suppressed white reformers. As long as the blacks retained the right to cast ballots in proportion to their numbers they possessed bargaining power that became particularly meaningful when whites divided their votes over economic issues. Goodwyn devoted considerable space in *Democratic Promise: The Populist Movement in America* to the unique contributions of East Texas to the Alliance and Populist movements.³²

In an article in the *Journal of American History* published in 1980 James Turner challenged Goodwyn's interpretation of the causes that gave rise to the Farmers Alliance and Populism.³³ Using indices of farm property and of social development in East Texas, Turner argued that faith in the establishment of a cooperative commonwealth could not adequately explain the rise of the farmer's revolution, but suggested instead that it was a reaction to the severe social and cultural deprivation and isolation of farmers in certain parts of the state.

In separate monographs on Texas populism, Barr and Donna Barnes covered the entire state, with considerable space devoted to the protest movements in East Texas.³⁴ In *Reconstruction to Reform*, a general history of the period, Barr focused on the ways the political system of Texas changed from 1875-1909 to meet the emerging commercialization, industrialization, and urbanization of the state and the nation. He asserted that the disenfranchisement of blacks allowed white politicians to enter the political arena without the support of machine politics or organizations and gave politicians more freedom to fight over differences based on economics, morality, and personality. In *Farmers in Rebellion*, Donna Barnes ascribes the rise of the Populist Party in Texas to economic hard times experienced by farmers on the frontier.

Although the Populist movement in Texas has been covered in survey fashion, there have been no in-depth case studies done — studies of particular counties in East Texas which had strong Farmer Alliance and Populist movements — and few biographies of East Texas Populist leaders.³⁵ Further research on the "voiceless" thousands who supported the Populist leaders would help historians better identify the true nature of the movement. East Texas offers a particularly good basis for informed speculation not only because populism started in Texas, but because of the rich archival sources on Texas populism.³⁶

The East Texas lumber industry has been the subject of intense research by historians. Typical of the publications on lumbering is a journal article published in 1977 by Thomas Isern and Raymond Wilson on the Thompson Timber interest. Thomas Isern and Raymond Wilson asked the question: "Did native Texas lumber owners' management of their

lumber works differ substantially in ideals and practice from other lumbermen in East Texas?"³⁷ They discovered that the Thompson family managed their firm in the same general fashion as other non-native lumbermen in Texas. The only different from the majority of "foreign" owners was that the Thompson's withdrew from active lumbering before the decline of lumber and that they took an early interest in the conservation movement.

Building on the earlier works by Ruth A. Allen, John M. Collier, and Mary Laswell,³⁸ and based on extensive research, Robert Maxwell has written numerous articles and monographs on logging, saw mills, and forest management in East Texas.³⁹ With Robert D. Barker, Maxwell wrote a definitive study of the lumber industry in East Texas, *The Sawdust Empire: The Texas Lumber Industry 1830-1840* (1983).⁴⁰ In this well-researched book, Maxwell and Barker covered the forests, the early lumber industry, loggers, mill workers, unions, company towns, marketing, managers, mill owners, and the conservationist movement. The authors included over 100 photographs, many never before published. Each chapter of the book might be developed into a separate monograph; certainly the period after 1940 deserves further research and study, something Maxwell and Barker have contemplated doing.

In *Mr. Claude*, Ada Morehead Holland, editor of *No Quitin' Sense*, presented the stark life biography of Claude Kennedy (1869-1960) who worked for over forty years in the East Texas and Louisiana saw mills during the bonanza years of the Texas Lumber Industry.⁴¹ Some oral historians and historians might question the authenticity and accuracy of the book since Kennedy's life story was based on word-of-mouth recall by his children and grandchildren two decades after his death.

Oil drilling and refining has been the other "major" industry of East Texas. Many books have been written on East Texas oil but few are noteworthy for their scholarship or originality.⁴² In *The Last Boom* (1972), James A. Clark told in a popular, journalistic style the story of the East Texas oil discoveries.⁴³ In 1978, James Presley, a newspaper reporter, published another popular anecdotal history of the oil industry in Texas, *Saga of Wealth*, again with heavy emphasis on the early oil discovery in Corsicana, Beaumont, and East Texas oil fields.⁴⁴ Unfortunately these books ignore the enormous influence of the industry on Texas politics and economics, tell little about the local impact of the booms on East Texas, and rely too heavily on secondary sources.

Several biographies of H.L. Hunt, particularly Harry Hurt's *Texas Rich: The Hunt Dynasty from the Early Oil Days Through the Silver Crash*, add to the scholarly knowledge of the development of East Texas oil.⁴⁵ Harry Hurt explained how Hunt moved from being a small entrepreneur to a wealthy oil potentiate, his involvement in the East Texas oil discovery, his relationship with "Dad" Joiner, and the subsequent controversy over martial law and pro-rationing in the oil fields. The best volume on East

Texas oil is Walter Rundell, Jr., *Early Texas Oil: A Photographic History, 1866-1936*.⁴⁶ Rundell, who grew up in a Texas oil town and worked in an oil refinery, selected 328 photographs of gushers, fires, and teeming crowds, photos of early oil men and property owners enriched by oil, pipelines that took the oil to refineries, the oil exchanges that sprung up with the booms, the inevitable jammed streets and trains as well as the tank trucks and filling stations — all drawn from scores of public and private collections in Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and the National Archives in Washington. He prepared a brief but informative narrative to accompany the images in the book.

A bright star on the horizon in the mid-1980s was a video tape on East Texas oil in the 1930s produced and distributed by People's History in Texas. The producers used oral histories and historical photographs to describe the conflict between independent oil producers and major oil companies over the regulations of oil in East Texas during the 1930s.⁴⁷

Most recent histories on oil in East Texas are superficial in nature or lack the careful scholarship and research necessary to enlighten the reader on the impact of oil on the economy of East Texas, the state, the nation. The development of archival sources at the Kilgore Oil Museum, particularly its promising oral history collections, and the rich depositories of papers at some of the oil companies, should encourage new studies on the oil industry in East Texas along lines similar to the scholarship of Roger M. Olien and Diana Davids Olien in their study of five West Texas boomtowns and wildcatters in the Permian Basin.⁴⁸ Other areas related to lumber and oil that should have potential for further investigation are labor unions, pottery, cotton, water conservation, railroads, steel, Gulf Coast commercial fishing, and coal.⁴⁹

Although the historiography of East Texas is diversified, at least one important phase of the history has been relatively overlooked until recently and that has been the urban history of East Texas; however, a profusion of books, many of them lavishly printed and illustrated, and sometimes thoughtful histories of the cities of East Texas, have been produced in the last fifteen years.

Using San Antonio, Galveston, Houston, and Austin as examples, Kenneth W. Wheeler, in *To Wear A City's Crown*, studied the beginning of urban history in Texas to show how these cities developed into urban areas that continued to thrive after the Civil War.⁵⁰ Another different approach to the study of the urban environment was Paul E. Issac's work on municipal reform in Beaumont, 1902-1909.⁵¹ Tracing the course of reform in the city from Spindletop to 1909, Issac discovered municipal reformers followed the trends of other urban progressives and reformers. Opposition to the Beaumont reformers and reforms came from politicians and lawyers who shared some of the reformers' aspirations but objected to centralization of authority on the grounds that it was not democratic. Ironically, all sides — reformers and machine politicians — enthusiastically

worked to disenfranchise blacks, one of the dubious achievements of reform in the city. In a companion article, Bradley R. Rice examined the complex birth of Galveston's plan of city government by commission.⁵²

Urban studies concerned with slavery, black business, and black culture in East Texas cities were penned in the 1970s and early 1980s. In an article on urban slavery in the Southwest, Paul D. Lack surveyed the living conditions of blacks, their clothing, food, and churches in Little Rock, Galveston, Austin, and Shreveport between 1850-1860.⁵³ He argued that Southwestern towns generally produced the same basic social patterns for urban slaves as other Southern urban centers, but not the evidence of decay; rather stability characterized urban slavery in the Southwest. Slaves developed a life relatively free from legal and other disciplinary restraints which most of the bondsmen preferred to rural slavery.

In a study of black businessmen in Houston and Dallas and other Texas cities, William J. Brophy found that black businessmen, though less developed, less experienced, and not as astute businessmen as whites, accomplished a great deal considering the restraints under which they worked.⁵⁴ Like Lack's study, Brophy gives insight into the problems faced by urban ghetto dwelling blacks. Neil Sapper's research into black culture in urban Texas (Houston and Dallas) showed that black artists created authentic black arts and culture for a predominately black Texas audience.⁵⁵

The two large metropolitan centers in East Texas, Dallas and Houston, have received extensive study by historians in the last fifteen years. Since 1973, A.C. Greene has written three scholarly, readable histories of Dallas.⁵⁶ Greene relied on the well-chosen incident, biographical portrait, current information, and personal observation to tell the history of Texas' second largest city. Another type of history of Dallas, *Dallas Rediscovered*, published by the Dallas Historical Society, commemorates in 263 well-produced photographs the commercial and residential development of Dallas in the nineteenth and first three decades of the twentieth century, showing expansion from a medium-sized community into a large urban center. According to the author, "Dallas is explored through its architecture, its system of spatial growth and utilization, and through the developers, land speculators, and urban designers who were so extremely important to the creation of the modern city."⁵⁷ Dallas Public Library Oral Historian Gerald Saxon, editor of *Reminiscences: A Glimpse of Old East Dallas*, explored the history of Old East Dallas from its beginning in the 1880s through its decline after World War II to its present redevelopment in narrative, oral interviews, and historical photographs.⁵⁸

Houston also has been the subject of several historical studies. In 1976, Robert V. Haynes published a history of the Houston Riot of 1917, *A Night of Violence, Houston Riot of 1917*, relying on oral interviews, newspaper court records, government records, and military documents.⁵⁹ Haynes took a sympathetic view of the black soldiers involved in the riot

and placed the blame on ineffective city officials and military officers. In an article published in 1977 on Houston's River Oaks, Charles Orson Cook and Barry J. Kaplan examined the story of the successful efforts of businessmen to rationalize and stabilize order through the formation of the River Oaks section of Houston, using urban planning and centralized community control to create a model of stability, permanence, and beauty within the city of Houston.⁶⁰ Barry J. Kaplan expanding on his research on Houston to suggest that the study of zoning codes offers historians a useful tool in understanding the values, ethos, and fears of Houstonians.⁶¹

The discovery of source materials by urban historians — manuscripts, census schedules, city directories, tax lists — that would have yielded abundant data to social and political mobility, family structure, residential and ecological patterns and social class mobility — inspired Susan Jackson's article "The Move: Social Mobility in Houston."⁶² Looking at mobility in Houston, she described the migration patterns of Houston between 1850-1860: those who already had achieved success remained; the young and unsuccessful tended to leave. These are the same conclusions Campbell researched in his history of Harrison County.

John Davis, director of research at the Institute of Texan Cultures, produced an attractive pictorial history of Houston, *Houston: A Historical Portrait*, with accompanying text, published by Encino Press.⁶³ The best one-volume survey of Houston is David G. McComb's revised, updated edition of *Houston: A History* which described the city's geography, natural resources, technology, population, climate, civil leadership, and causes for growth, in a delightful writing style.⁶⁴ Perhaps a city the size of Houston is too large for a single volume to cover the entire history adequately, but McComb comes close to doing it. Finally, *The Ethnic Groups of Houston* (1984), has chapters on roots and contributions of ten ethnic groups — blacks, Mexican-Americans, Germans, Greeks, Jews, Scandinavians, French, Chinese, Japanese, and Indo-Chinese.⁶⁵

An East Texas city does not need to be large to be important. One of the best books published on East Texas history in the last ten years is *Jefferson: Riverport to the Southwest*, by Fred Tarpley.⁶⁶ More has been written about the city of Jefferson (population 3000) than any other small community in the Southwest and most of it is incorrect. In a model of historical detective work, Tarpley identifies the myths of Jefferson and then proceeds to set the record straight. Tarpley's book should be read along with the brilliant essay by James Tatum in the *Southwest Review*, entitled "The Muse of Jefferson."⁶⁷ Tatum outlined the nature of East Texas community history and what it is and what it should be.

This section on urban historiography would not be complete without some mention of Bill Moyer's PBS show on Marshall, Texas. In it, Moyer struck a careful balance between white and black historical experiences in modern Marshall, while capturing the distinct flavor of this small northeast Texas city.

Several historians have written about the career of Sam Rayburn, at one time one of the most powerful persons in the United States. D. Clayton Brown sought to analyze the sources of Rayburn's successful political career.⁶⁸ In his study of LBJ in *The Path to Power* (1982), Robert Caro compiled an engrossing 15,000-word biography of Rayburn from his beginnings to his association with Johnson.⁶⁹ Anthony Champagne's *Congressman Sam Rayburn* (1984), based on sixty-three personal interviews and extensive library research, examined Rayburn's style, organization, and campaigns in detail.⁷⁰ In the process of collecting material on Rayburn, Champagne uncovered much information about the people, values, and politics of the Fourth Congressional District of East Texas. There is a new biography of Ima Hogg, Texas' Alice Roosevelt Longworth, by Sarah Bernhard, edited by Scott Lubeck.⁷¹ A biography of a different kind is Henry C. Dethloff's history of Texas A&M University. Dethloff's *A Pictorial History of Texas A&M University, 1876-1976* and *A Centennial History of Texas A&M University, 1876-1976* represents the best of those generic histories of East Texas colleges and universities.⁷²

As this survey attempted to illustrate, in the last fifteen years dozens of scholarly studies describe specific aspects of the history of East Texas. The works reflect a wide diversity of topics ranging from native Americans to Reconstruction to the oil and lumber industries. The approaches of the historians are as diverse as the subject matter. Campbell, Maxwell, Tarpley, and other historians provide clear evidence that traditional historical research is still very much alive. The *Land of Bears and Honey*, "Hot Oil Controversy," and *Between the Creeks* demonstrate a new and imaginative approach to the study of East Texas history, stretching the boundaries of what we normally consider historical research. The literature affirms the richness of the East Texas experience and shows that the best history ought to be examined in a way that captures the unique character of East Texas. Nevertheless, these publications have not exhausted the potential for local history research. The field is still fertile: many areas remain unexplored or require a new approach and new interpretation.

NOTES

¹Gloria Frye and Barbara Edwards, "A Decade of Publications, 1963-1973," *East Texas Historical Journal*, (Spring, 1974), XII, pp. 17-22.

²Joe C. Truett and Daniel W. Lay, *Land of Bears and Honey: A Natural History of East Texas* (Austin, 1984).

³Robin W. Doughty, *Wildlife and Man in Texas: Environmental Change and Conservation* (College Station, 1983); Del Weniger, *The Explorers' Texas: The Lands and Waters* (Austin, 1984).

⁴Dan L. Flores, "The Ecology of the Red River in 1806: Peter Custis and Early Southwestern Natural History," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* (July, 1984), LXXXVIII, pp. 1-42; *Jefferson and Southwestern Exploration, The Freeman and Custis Accounts of the Red River Expedition of 1806*, edited by Dan L. Flores (Norman, 1984); for a history of the Red River see Carl Newton Tyson, *The Red River in Southwestern History* (Norman, 1981).

⁴Terry G. Jordan, "Pioneer Evaluation of Vegetation in Frontier Texas," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* (January, 1973), LXXVI, pp. 233-254; see also Terry G. Jordan, *Texas Log Buildings: A Folk Architecture* (Austin, 1978).

⁵Lois Williams, *The Big Thicket of Texas: A Comprehensive Annotated Bibliography* (Arlington, 1977); a bibliographic essay which covers nonfiction and fiction works on the Big Thicket is Lois William Parker, "The Big Thicket in Literature," *East Texas Historical Journal* (Fall, 1972), X, pp. 98-102.

⁶*Big Thicket Legacy*, edited by Campbell and Lynn Loughmiller (Austin, 1977).

⁷Howard Peacock, *The Big Thicket of Texas: America's Ecological Wonder* (Boston, 1984).

⁸Fred Dahmer, "Caddo Was . . .," *Greater Caddo Lake Association Newsletter* (July 1980-April 1981).

⁹Thad Sitton and James Conrad editors, *Every Sun that Rises: Wyatt Moore of Caddo Lake*, (Austin, 1985).

¹⁰Deborah Brown and Katherine Gust, *Between the Creek, Recollections of Northeast Texas*, (Austin, 1976).

¹¹Thad Sitton editor, *The Loblolly Book*, (Austin, 1983).

¹²Howard Martin, "Polk Pelt Indians: Alabamas, Coushattas, Takana, Muskogeas," *East Texas Historical Journal*, (Spring, 1979), XVII, pp. 3-23.

¹³Mildred S. Gleason, *Caddo: A Survey of the Caddo Indian in Northeast Texas and Marion County, 1541-1840* (Jefferson, 1981).

¹⁴Skipper Steely, *Six Months from Tennessee: A Story of the Many Pioneers of Miller County, Arkansas, Based upon the Life of Claiborne Wright* (Wolfe City, 1982).

¹⁵Margaret Sweatt Henson, *Samuel May Williams* (College Station, 1976).

¹⁶Archie P. McDonald, *Travis* (Austin, 1976).

¹⁷*The Slave Narratives of Texas*, edited by Ronnie C. Tyler and Lawrence R. Murphy (Austin, 1974); Bailey, David Thomas, "A Divided Prism: Two Sources of Black Testimony on Slavery," *Journal of Southern History* (August, 1980), XLVI, pp. 381-404; John W. Blassingame, "Using the Testimony of Ex-Slaves: Approaches and Problems," *Journal of Southern History* (November, 1975), XLI, pp. 473-492.

¹⁸Richard G. Lowe and Randolph B. Campbell, "Wealthholding and Political Power in Antebellum Texas Agriculture," *Southwestern Historical Quarter* (April, 1979), LXXXII, pp. 351-378. For a contrasting view on political power see: Ralph A. Wooster, "Democracy on the Frontier: Statehouse and Courthouse in Ante-Bellum Texas," *East Texas Historical Journal* (Fall, 1972), X, pp. 83-97.

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²⁰Randolph B. Campbell, *A Southern Community in Crisis: Harrison County Texas, 1850-1880* (Austin, 1983).

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