

3-2010

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Recommended Citation

(2010) "Book Reviews," *East Texas Historical Journal*: Vol. 48: Iss. 1, Article 14.

Available at: <http://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/ethj/vol48/iss1/14>

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REVIEWS

Latina Legislator: Leticia Van de Putte and the Road to Leadership, by Sharon A. Navarro (Texas A&M University Press, 4354 TAMU, College Station, TX 77843-4354), 2008. Contents. Illustrations. Acknowledgements Introduction. Appendices. Notes. Bibliography. Index. P. 178. \$29.95 Hardcover.

According to Sharon A. Navarro, the definitive act of political involvement in American society lies in a candidate's campaigning for elected office. The struggle for a woman of Mexican American descent to attain this accomplishment requires ambition and skill, qualities not encouraged by their culture. Navarro focuses specifically on the lack of female minority representatives in Texas politics and the importance of race in the development of female leadership ability.

Navarro begins with a brief summary of the Texas political system and the historical development of the state's political culture. Placing Texas in a unique fusion of traditionalistic and individualistic political tendencies, this hybrid provides perfect opportunity for Leticia Van de Putte to ascend to political leadership in Texas politics. Focusing on the barriers a woman must overcome to be elected, Navarro states that southern gender bias that seeks to maintain the elite male dominated legislature, along with Mexican American cultural handicaps, provide significant barriers to the women in politics. Navarro also studies women in United States politics and concluded that in many cases the woman's family is the most oppressive barrier to her political consciousness. Navarro documents Van de Putte's efforts after her election to the State Senate and the influence of her political mentor, Frank Tejada.

Navarro concluded her study of Van de Putte with her critical leadership of the eleven state senators, affiliated with the Democratic Party, during the controversial breaking of quorum and withdraw to Albuquerque during the congressional redistricting dispute. Navarro places significance of Van de Putte's participation during this event and emphasized the strategic importance of her leadership during this crisis.

By examining the political behavior of Latinas through the case study of Leticia Van de Putte, Navarro places her study within the context of Latina experience within the male-dominated politics of the state of Texas. Although Navarro admitted to the lack of quality literature on the experiences of politically minded Latinas, she provides significant historiographical analysis

concerning historians' and political scientists' conclusions that distinctively divides Latinas' experiences from that of Anglo women in Texas politics. By studying a broad collection of sources, Navarro provides a unique perspective on the strength required of women who desire elected office in Texas, which places her study within the broader context of minority studies on political involvement.

Ryan Gullett



Quest for Justice: Louis A. Bedford Jr. and the Struggle for Equal Rights in Texas, by Darwin Payne (Southern Methodist University Press, P.O. Box 750415, Dallas, TX 75275-0415), 2009. Contents. Foreword. Preface. Acknowledgements. Selected bibliography. Index. P. 274. \$22.50 Hardcover.

Presently coming of age is a generation of Americans who have never experienced institutionalized racism. These Americans have never seen signs for colored restrooms or lunch counters. African-Americans of this generation, in particular, have never been subjugated to "colored seating" in theatres or refused service in cabs or elevators reserved for "whites only." Louis A. Bedford, Jr., the protagonist of Darwin Payne's *Quest for Justice*, was not so fortunate. His was one of the generations most burdened by those daily humiliations that are now but painful memories. Born in Dallas in 1926, Bedford would come of age in a separate but equal America that was anything but.

With meticulous detail Payne chronicles Bedford's path from Dallas' segregated schools to the Brooklyn Law School in New York and his return to Dallas where he would eventually become the first African-American judge in Dallas County history. Through Bedford and his Dallas roots, Payne illuminates the challenges faced by African Americans in their struggle for equality. The Supreme Court in 1954 declared via *Brown vs. Board of Education* that the separate but equal doctrine was unconstitutional, and the lives of Americans both black and white were put on a path that would change them forever.

Bedford would experience, sometimes as a participant and sometimes as an eyewitness, protests and sit-ins and legal battles and the eventual victories of African-Americans in their struggle for equality. He witnessed the change Dallas went through as a city after JFK was assassinated in its streets. The last few pages of Payne's biography are dedicated to the numerous honors bestowed upon Bedford by his peers and the young African-American lawyers and students he inspired.

Payne deftly uses Bedford's story as the foundation upon which he

builds a rich and detailed history of the struggle for equality in Dallas, but Bedford himself is a rather passive protagonist. While he was certainly among a group of African-American pioneers in a Dallas legal system long dominated by whites, Bedford often assumed a secondary role within that group. He undoubtedly deserves praise and recognition for his achievements, but there were several instances in which Bedford was presented opportunities to take a leading role, and he elected to remain in the background.

Payne's biography of Bedford is a clever tool for narrowing the focus, and provides a prism through which the narrative is made personal. It is, however, ultimately less compelling than the broader scope of *Quest for Justice*, a history of the Civil Rights Movement in Dallas. *Quest for Justice* is at its most cogent when focused on the daunting challenges faced by African Americans and their eventual triumphs in the face of those challenges. It is critical that our history be preserved for posterity so that we might learn from our mistakes, especially when that history is centered on hate and bigotry. In that regard, Payne's book is successful and important. His meticulous research and attention to detail has produced an illuminating history of one of America's darkest epochs.

Forrest Taylor
San Augustine, Florida



The Wrecking of La Salle's Ship Aimable and the Trial of Claude Aigron, by Robert S. Weddle (University of Texas Press, P.O. Box 7819, Austin, TX 78713-7819), 2009. Contents. List of Illustrations. Preface. Notes. Bibliography. Index. P. 136. \$50.00 Hardcover.

Robert Weddle's latest in a long line of books on the Gulf of Mexico, and his second specifically about René Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle, and one of the ships in his final, ill-fated expedition to Texas, is a quick, fascinating, and multifaceted read. The slim work is equal parts sailing yarn, exploration narrative, courtroom drama, and underwater archaeology; it is enough to interest specialists in several fields, from historians of East Texas to students of the legal system of the Ancien Régime. Weddle utilizes a wealth of published and archival primary sources from several repositories, making particular use of seldom-seen maritime records housed in La Rochelle, France. François Lagarde of the University of Texas offers the first English translations of several documents Weddle presents.

In the first section Weddle quickly and comprehensively recounts

the purpose of La Salle's expedition that landed in Texas in the winter of 1685, centering on the wrecking of the 180-ton armed cargo vessel *Aimable* and the legal battles that followed in France. When Louis XIV refused to give another ship to the expedition, the explorer leased the *Aimable*, owned by Jean Massiot and captained by Claude Aignon, at the last minute. The journey to the New World was fraught with mishaps and disputes, with Captain Aignon even relieving the ship's pilot, one Jacques Zacharie Mengaud, from his duties. After months of travel, the three battered ships of La Salle's expedition reached Pass Cavallo, the entrance to Matagorda Bay, which La Salle mistakenly held was his destination, the mouth of the Mississippi River. On February 20, 1685, two days after the ship *Belle* successfully entered the bay, the *Aimable* ran aground attempting to cross the bar. Some stores were salvaged from the wrecked ship, but many important items were lost to the sea.

La Salle, who had several disputes with Aignon, accused the captain of refusing the aid of a pilot and purposefully wrecking the ship. Aignon, with most of his crew, returned to France with the French naval ship *Joly*. When royal officials read La Salle's report, Aignon was temporarily arrested and imprisoned, while the *Aimable*'s pilot Mengaud and gunner Pierre Georget sued Aignon and the ship's owner Massiot for unpaid wages and damages for lost personal items. The case centered on whether Aignon intentionally grounded his vessel. The trial records, affidavits, and depositions are summarized in Weddle's narrative and reproduced with short commentary in the second part of the book. The official records offer an intriguing window into shipboard politics during the expedition and delineate the complexities of French and maritime law of the seventeenth century. Though documentary evidence concerning the final outcome of the case are missing, the suit against Aignon and Massoit likely failed, as the defense made it appear that plaintiff Mengaud only brought the suit because he was smarting from his dismissal as pilot. In the third section of the book, Weddle recounts the search for the remains of the *Aimable* in the mud underneath the Gulf.

Most importantly, Weddle's informative account of the expedition, *Aimable*'s sinking, and Aignon's trial all highlight La Salle's unfitness for command. La Salle in the records of Aignon's trial and in Weddle's commentary appears petty and incompetent. Weddle at one point states that La Salle "is found wanting to a degree that warrants harsh judgement" (p. 39). This refreshing view hardly resembles the brave adventurer of many accounts. Readers may question the editorial decision to place all

of the primary source texts in a section after Weddle's complete narrative summary of the story instead of weaving them into the narrative or making it a sort of primary source reader. Yet the texts complement the narrative and provide many interesting bits of history. One of the French lawyers, for instance, cited precedents from sources as wide-ranging as Aristotle, the Hanseatic League, and Catalán books on Rhodian law (pp. 68-73). Weddle's latest work is a welcome addition to the corpus on La Salle and the Texas Gulf Coast.

Gene Rhea Tucker

University of Texas at Arlington



Texas Devils: Rangers and Regulators on the Lower Rio Grande, 1846-1861, by Michael L. Collins (University of Oklahoma Press, 2008 Venture Drive, Norman, OK 73069), 2008. Contents. Illustrations. Acknowledgments. Introduction. Notes. Bibliography. Index. P. 316. \$26.95 Hardcover.

Michael Collins's *Texas Devils* tackles the Texas Ranger mythology head-on with his lively book examining the law enforcement organization in the years between the Mexican War and the Civil War. The author begins his study with a brief introduction, arguing that a balanced view of the Rangers has not been forthcoming in the historiography of the Lone Star State. Instead, a sanitized and often reverential view marks the history of the law enforcement unit. Collins thus proceeds to challenge the old orthodoxy, using contemporary accounts and a critical eye to highlight the corrupt and sometimes vicious character of the Rangers who served along the Rio Grande.

A constant theme soon emerges from Collins's work. Whether they were dealing with the Tejano population along the border or engaging in filibustering expeditions, fortune or vengeance, not necessarily freedom or justice, generally motivated the Rangers. According to the author, many viewed them with derision. That is not to say the Rangers were not adept at frontier defense or demonstrated bravery. In fact, Collins highlights these trends, pointing out that even the Spanish-surnamed landowners of south Texas could appreciate the Rangers' ability to provide safety from hostile Native Americans.

While critics may discount *Texas Devils* as a revisionist work, it offers much more than that. Collins's study is well-written and clearly argued, and it succeeds in balancing recent works maintaining

the impeachable character of the Rangers. A particular strength is the author's ability to convey a definite sense of life on the border during the mid nineteenth century, not only in geographic terms, but in a broader cultural sense as well. Readers interested in a more objective view of the Rangers and the cultural conflict in South Texas will surely find Collins's study a welcomed contribution to the field.

Alex Mendoza
University of Texas at Tyler



The Seventh Star of the Confederacy: Texas During the Civil War, by Kenneth W. Howell, editor (University of North Texas Press, 1155 Union Circle #311336, Denton, TX 76203-5017), 2009. Contents. List of Illustrations. List of Maps. Preface. Acknowledgements. List of Contributors. Index. P.348. \$34.95 Hardcover.

The Seventh Star of the Confederacy: Texas During the Civil War offers a unique perspective on the Lone Star State's often neglected role in the Civil War. Edited by Kenneth W. Howell, the anthology represents an attempt "to provide a balance of military, social, and cultural history to explain Texas' involvement in one of the most pivotal moments in American History (vii). Indeed, Howell has achieved his ambitious goal in the production of this excellent anthology. Contributions from many respected historians such as Alwyn Barr, Archie P. McDonald, James M. Smallwood, Ronald Goodwin, and Bruce Glasrud masterfully examine not only the important military engagements relevant to Texas; but also the experiences of African-Americans, Native Americans, Texas politicians, and women during this crucial era in Texas history.

Howell divided the anthology into four parts. In Part One, "An Historical Overview of Texas and the Civil War, Barr and McDonald expertly document Texas role in the Civil war from both a historiographic and general history perspective. Part Two, entitled "The Time for Compromise has Passed," chronicles the root causes of the Civil War and how these events fostered Texas secession from the Union. The third section of the book, "In Sight of My Enemy," provides a fresh examination of the key military engagements relevant to Texas during the war, the Battle of Galveston, the Battle of the Nueces, and the Red River Campaign. With the fourth and final section, Howell successfully fulfills the anthology's mission to provide a reliable military history balanced with political, cultural, and social history of the state during the remarkable Civil War Period.

The editor and contributors involved in the production of *The Seventh Star of the Confederacy* have succeeded in their attempt to provide a balanced study of Texas during the Civil War Era and have made available a remarkable anthology useful to the casual history buff as well as the educator or professional scholar.

John B. Caraway
Clyde, Texas



Class and Race in the Frontier Army: Military Life in the West, 1870-1890, by Kevin Adams (University of Oklahoma Press, 2800 Venture Drive, Norman, OK 73069), 2009. Contents. List Illustrations. Preface and Acknowledgments. Introduction. Conclusion. Notes. Bibliography. Index. P. 276. \$34.95 Hardcover.

Traditional treatments of the army and military life in the American West have focused on the Indian wars that understandably dominated contemporary headlines and have continued to capture the imagination of writers and filmmakers alike. Even generations later, the legends of Custer, Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse, and Geronimo endure as fixtures in the collective American memory. The Indian campaigns—from Red Cloud's War to the Great Sioux Uprising on the Northern Plains, and the Buffalo War on the Southern Plains as well as the Apache conflict on the borderlands of Mexico and southern Arizona—have commanded the attention of historians and their general audience. Simply put, the frontier army during the post Civil War era has been viewed mostly through the twin prisms of military history and biography. Only in recent years have these trends in scholarship been challenged.

In his study, *Class and Race in the Frontier Army*, historian Kevin Adams defies conventional notions and assumptions in bringing the reader a welcomed reassessment of the army in the West. Arguing convincingly that the United States Army as an institution both reflected and reinforced racial divisions as well as class distinctions during the Gilded Age, he skillfully persuades his readers that the military mostly mirrored a nation grappling with the social tensions arising from the new industrial age, tensions that highlighted rank and caste distinctions. In so doing, he emphasizes not the dangers of soldiering but the daily drudgery of a drab military life that, while affording some privilege, comfort and even leisure for the officer corps, brought only low pay, menial tasks, inadequate medical care and poor rations for the enlisted ranks.

Professor Adams presents the case well for an inert military institution resistant to change and one that, by ancient custom and conventional practice, actually exaggerated the great divide between classes and races in American life. Conscious of status, and observant of the gulf separating those who had much from those who shared little of the nation's advancing wealth, the structure of the military hierarchy—the bastions of the “Old Army”—held firm in the face of challenges to the status quo.

Professor Adams should be commended for breaking new ground in what remains still a fertile field of Western American studies, albeit one well traveled by past investigators. He taps a rich trove of primary sources, both published and unpublished, in uncovering evidence supporting his thesis that the race and class distinctions that characterized American society in the Gilded Age also permeated everyday life in the frontier army, while ethnic differences in the ranks did not. Well-crafted, and thoughtfully presented, the book will appeal more to serious scholars than to a broader general audience more interested in wars with the Indians than with social history.

Michael L. Collins
Midwestern State University



Winchester Warriors: Texas Rangers of Company D, 1874-1901, by Bob Alexander (University of North Texas Press, 1155 Union Circle #311336, Denton, TX 76203-5017), 2009. Contents. Preface. Acknowledgments. Endnotes. Bibliography. Index. P. 402. \$29.95 Hardcover.

For decades W.P. Webb's 1935 classic, *The Texas Rangers*, was the last word on the world's most famous law enforcement body. In recent years, however, comprehensive works by Robert M. Utley, Frederick Wilkins, Charles M. Robinson III, and Mike Cox have been published, along with several biographies of noted Ranger captains.

Winchester Warriors offers a new element to this resurgence of research about Texas Rangers. As the subtitle proclaims, this book is a study of the Texas Rangers of Company D, 1874-1901, during the period of the famed Frontier Battalion. Prior to the organization of the Frontier Battalion, Texas Rangers had ridden primarily to defend the frontier against Comanche, Kiowa, and Mexican raiders. The Frontier Battalion, consisting of six companies of seventy-five men each, was created to

continue the battle against the Indian tribes. But within a year, a major military campaign drove the Comanches and Kiowas onto reservations in Indian Territory. The Frontier Battalion companies drastically reduced in size, and the remaining Rangers found themselves increasingly occupied as law enforcement officers.

Ranger companies were headquartered in tent camps located within a few miles of a town, so that a man could be dispatched regularly for the mail. Each camp was placed in a region plagued by rustling or fence cutting or general outlawry. When a region became relatively tame, the camp was packed up and the Ranger company moved to a new trouble spot. Except for captains and lieutenants, Rangers were not permitted to marry. They rode thousands of miles in pursuit of fugitives. Despite lives of hardship and danger, Texas Rangers were poorly paid and, all too often, undersupplied, and there was constant turnover of personnel. Well-known Rangers who were members of Company D included James B. Gillette, Ira Aten, Baz Outlaw, Frank Jones, and John R. Hughes, who rose to command of the company after Captain Jones was slain in a border shootout. In all, eight members of Company D were killed in the line of duty.

The author was a career law enforcement officer, including long service as a special agent with the U.S. Treasury Department. Since his retirement, Bob Alexander has written several award-winning books about frontier outlaws and lawmen. With *Winchester Warriors*, he has elevated the genre to a new level. After a lifetime in law enforcement, Alexander possesses a deep understanding of rank-and-file peace officers and of lawbreakers. In almost every page, the reader finds enlightenment about the development of police methodology or insights about the actions of lawmen or outlaws. Indeed, a remark about a Ranger administrative situation in 1892 could serve as a mission statement for the entire book: "It opens the doorway for stealing a look at one of the subterranean realities of everyday police work – then or now." [p.261]

Winchester Warriors is a tale of adventure and high courage, of drudgery and hardship, of stalwart frontier officers and of men who could not cut the Ranger life. Above all, it is the story of the evolution of Texas Rangers from frontier warriors to respected, often feared police officers. And it is a story told in a lively, enthusiastic, colloquial style that is fitting for a tale of frontier Texas. *Winchester Warriors* is an important addition to any Texana collection.

Bill O'Neal
Panola College

Kiowa Humanity and the Invasion of the State, by Jacki Thompson Rand (University of Nebraska Press, 111 Lincoln Mall, Lincoln, NE 68588-0630), 2009. Contents. Acknowledgements. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. P. 198. \$45.00 Hardcover.

In this theoretically sophisticated and passionately argued book, Jacki Thompson Rand (Choctaw) reinterprets Kiowa culture and their people's responses to the invasion of the United States from 1867 to 1910. According to the author, historians have sanitized U.S. History using terms such as "discovery," "exploration," and "frontier settlement" rather than "colonialism" and "genocide," which she contends more accurately reflect the actual experience of Kiowas and other Native groups during this time period. Offering a case study of how colonialism works, Rand argues Kiowas, like other tribes, are a sovereign people" who adopted strategies to counteract U.S. policies of assimilation and individualism that were rooted in tribalism, which "for Indian people, expressed their social values and humanity" (7, 6). *Kiowa Humanity and the Invasion of the State* is significant because it provides a close examination of the gendered responses of Native people to colonial domination.

Rand divides her study into two topical sections. The first two chapters explore Kiowa culture prior to 1867 and U.S. values and Indian policy from the early nineteenth century to 1910. Moving beyond the limiting stereotype of the relentless warrior, Rand emphasizes Kiowa humanity, gender complementarities, interdependence, and the environmental complexity of their southern plains homeland. Then, in a sobering and damning interpretation of U.S. post-Civil War Indian policy, she controversially maintains that because the goal of civilizing Indians and destroying tribalism through reservations "nearly rendered American Indians within the United States extinct," it constituted "Native genocide on the local level" (34, 35). The next three chapters, which comprise the strongest portion of the book, focus on the responses of Kiowa women and young men to colonialism. Rand shows that when local Indian agents and federal officials began withholding rations to coerce the Kiowas into compliance in the 1860s, young Kiowa men conducted livestock raids for food, as they had done for generations, and on-reservation and off-reservation groups maintained political unity by cooperating with each other until 1873. Finally, the last two chapters demonstrate that, whether through young Kiowa men's artwork at Fort Marion or Kiowa women's beadwork and other labor patterns, Native peoples could still exercise

autonomy in defiance of the state's dominant discourse of assimilation, empire, and colonialism.

One of this book's greatest strengths is its potential utility to scholars interested in patterns of indigenous adaptation to colonial domination. To draw out the Kiowa perspective, Rand relies on a wide range of sources, ranging from government documents and newspapers, which she reads against the grain, to Kiowa ledger drawings, winter counts, and ethnographies, and anthropological and sociological theory. Influenced by Jeffrey Ostler's recent work on the Plains Sioux and Frederick Hoxie's classic study of the Crow, the author's most unique contribution is revealing how Kiowa men and women conducted their own gendered responses to colonialism.

Rand's book suffers from several major limitations, however. First, she tends to romanticize Kiowa pre-reservation culture by looking too exclusively inward and minimizing cultural change. The only Kiowa conflicts with other cultures that Rand highlights prior to 1867 are "conflicts with intruders" (35). Yet, as the recent works of Pekka Hamalainen and Brian DeLay have shown, young Kiowa and Comanche men routinely traveled hundreds of miles into Mexico to raid for Mexican livestock and captives. Although Rand correctly points out that Kiowas viewed stock raiding as a rational and acceptable cultural practice, in no way should that overshadow the perspectives of Mexicans, Anglo-Texans, and other encroaching Euro-Americans who understandably saw such Kiowa acts as thefts, kidnapping, and invasions of their property and territory. These raids were violent and sometimes are best understood as acts of war motivated by vengeance. To say that Indians were usually more interested in resources than in harming settlers may be true in theory, but the reality on the ground, especially from 1846 onward, was vastly different. Second, her comparison of Kiowas to Jews at Auschwitz is overstated. Is attempted cultural genocide, which American Indians did experience as a result of U.S. assimilation policy, the same thing as extermination? Reservation Indians most definitely experienced poverty, hunger, and disease, but Indian agents and army officers never intentionally fried them in ovens.

In spite of these shortcomings, this book is an important contribution to American Indian History and Comparative Colonial Studies. The fact that scholars such as Nancy Shoemaker and Colin Calloway have already incorporated many of her findings into their works demonstrates the wide-ranging importance of Rand's research from

graduate-level collections of colonial theory to undergraduate textbooks.

Matthew Babcock

Stephen F. Austin State University



San Juan Legacy: Life in the Mining Camps, by Duane A. Smith (University of New Mexico Press, 1 University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131-0001), 2009, Contents, Preface, Prologue, Epilogue, Index. P. 163. \$24.95 Softcover.

As I read the prologue to *San Juan Legacy* by Duane A. Smith, immediately I heard the opening lines of the old Saturday morning television serial, *The Lone Ranger*, as we returned to frontier times of yore. Smith writes of a different frontier and a different time, but he certainly achieves his stated goal in recreating the mining towns and society of frontier of Colorado in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This work is not an academic work, nor is it intended to be. Written for non-professionals, it is illustrated with copious black and white photos of both the mining camps themselves and the artifacts of life that were left behind.

The book opens with a brief description of the San Juan Valley, and includes a map of the area, containing the locations of each mining camp and town the author addresses in the text. Smith doesn't provide an adequate description of the physical obstacles the miners faced, an indication that this book targets a rather restricted audience. Anyone not familiar with the mountains of northern New Mexico and southern Colorado will not fully understand the late arrival of railroads and the lack of some of the creature comforts the town folks in Durango, Ouray, Creede, and the other mining camps suffered. Exploring these issues could have broadened the readers' appreciation of the frontier life. Smith discusses the business (booster) community in various towns, establishment of local governments, newspapers, family life—including the experiences of brides new to the territory, schools and schooling, healthcare, the institution of religion in the camps, fraternal organizations, sin in its various forms, and even the importance of baseball. Relying largely on newspapers for source material, Smith does an admirable job in presenting a brief overview of the topics and provides informative accompanying photos.

Is this work pertinent to East Texas? As a brief social history of the Colorado mining camps, probably not. However, it is an overview of rural Americana, applicable to any area with "boom towns," such as those associated with the piney woods lumber industry and the oil industry of

East Texas. In every topic, in every chapter, you can hear the echo of life in East Texas during the period. The individuals involved were quite similar in both areas, just slightly different accents. While the participants in the East Texas lumber boom tended to be mostly local, the oil boom attracted men from all over the country and the world, not unlike the gold fields of Colorado, Nevada, and even California.

This work falls into the class of current local histories aimed at a relatively small market, and that is unfortunate. The book has value well beyond that demographic. The only real criticism I have with Duane Smith's book is that it contains no bibliography, and the photographs are uncredited. Perhaps a brief discussion of additional works for those interested in pursuing further reading might have been included. While the author, in a very broad statement within the prologue, thanks the various museums and historical societies in the area, it would have been helpful to know the source for the pictures.

If the history of mining interests you, with a glimpse of rural America at the turn of the twentieth century, or boomtown life, then read this book. It is concise, well-written and thoroughly enjoyable. I highly recommend it.

George M. Cooper
Lone Star College-Montgomery



The Secret War in El Paso: Mexican Revolutionary Intrigue, 1906-1920, by Charles H. Harris and Louis R. Sadler (University of New Mexico Press, 1 University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131-0001), 2009. Contents. Preface. P. 488. \$37.50 Hardcover.

The constant threat of danger, even death, lurks just across the Rio Grande from El Paso, Texas. Attacks and counter-attacks conducted by the Mexican military and the armed opposition threaten to spill over the international boundary, as weapons flowing from the American side to Ciudad Juarez increase the violence and the likelihood of reverberations in Texas. If this appears to be a report of the current drug wars in northern Mexico, it is not. It is a scene out of the Mexican Revolution on the northern frontier a hundred years ago.

Whether the past offers any lessons for the present is debatable, but Charles H. Harris and Louis R. Sadler certainly provide irony aplenty in the lengthy, but fast-paced, *The Secret War in El Paso*. The history professors emeriti from New Mexico State University, only a short run up

I-10 from El Paso, compare the intrigue at the mountain pass to Berlin and other Eastern European capitals during the Cold War. According to the authors of a series of books and articles on the locale and period, El Paso, within the context of United States neutrality, was crucial to the making and success of the Revolution. No innocent bystander, the border city brimmed with partisans, adventurers, Mexican agents, and homegrown arms dealers eager for glory or profits. In complete symbiosis, Ciudad Juarez acted as a magnet to all revolutionary factions thirsting for access to the willing resources of its sister city.

Mexican specialists, and most El Pasoans, will be familiar with the outlines of this story. Francisco Madero laid grandiose plans in El Paso, Pancho Villa regularly visited for bullets and ice cream, and the remains of Victoriano Huerta and Pascual Orozco rest there to this day. Villa and Orozco brought down the thirty-plus year rule of President Porfirio Diaz at Ciudad Juarez in May, 1911. Correspondents from across the United States reported events for distant and local readerships and El Paso newspapers openly took sides in the Mexican struggle. Journalists such as Timothy Turner wrote of their travels with government and rebel troops and some of the agents mentioned in this book. The authors' emphasis is on the extent of the surveillance and plotting at the pass, drawn from rarely used files of the Bureau of Investigation, forerunner of the F.B.I. The memoranda and correspondence paint a murky and compelling picture of avarice and opportunism, but also of loyalty, patriotism, and bravery. Among the more puzzling items, Villa retained a substantial local following even after the Columbus, New Mexico raid, and arms smuggling, employed by leading businessmen, achieved the status of respectability. The depth of German intrigue exceeded the continuing rumors.

This is not a starter book for uninformed readers. The detailed focus on the matters at hand precludes a broader historical perspective of both El Paso and the Mexican Revolution. Anecdotes of locals whose names now appear on street signs may not resonate east of the Franklin Mountains. Precise addresses and references to past and present sites filled this reviewer with nostalgia, but probably won't play as well in Peoria. There is little to remind of Woodrow Wilson's holy war against Huerta in discussions of arms embargoes. The quantity of participants in overt and covert activities requires concentration, though some accounts beg more reportage. Apparently, the General Juan Andreu Almazan arrested with filibusters is the 1940 P.A.N. presidential candidate who may actually have defeated Manuel Avila Camacho, the official winner. Probably Harris

and Sadler would not have found the rest of the story in the Fort Bliss post returns or the several unmentioned theses and dissertations on the city and the fort, but their absence from the bibliography and end notes is curious. The breezy writing style moves the story along but occasionally draws attention to itself, as in the frequent use of the contraction “who’d” in place of the more conventional subject and verb.

In sum, Harris and Sadler easily meet their goal of demonstrating the importance of the border lands, and particularly El Paso, in the conduct of Mexican revolutionaries and the mountain of intrigue involved in the struggle. Never considered a town of homes and churches, the city at the pass will accrue little public admiration from the disclosures of The Secret War in El Paso, but may add another level of mystique to its traditions of nineteenth century gun slingers and twentieth century rum runners.

Garna L. Christian

University of Houston-Downtown



Rocky Mountain Heartland: Colorado, Montana, and Wyoming in the Twenty Century, by Duane A. Smith (The University of Arizona Press, 355 S. Euclid Avenue Suite 103, Tucson, AZ 85719), 2008. Contents. List of Illustrations. Preface. Prologue. Notes. Suggested Readings. Illustration Credits. Index. P. 305. \$22.95 Softcover.

In *Rocky Mountain Heartland: Colorado, Montana, and Wyoming in the Twenty Century*, preeminent Western historian Duane Smith argues that the vast region stretching along the length of the Rocky Mountains marks “the West of the most modern of American places” and at the same time marks the “West of hallowed traditions and captivating heritage.” These opposing forces of tradition and modernization not only shaped the histories of Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana during the twentieth century, but also provide a greater insight into the emergence of the Modern American West. In ten short chapters, *Rocky Mountain Heartland* broadly chronicles the history of the three states during twentieth century. While Smith uses broad strokes to tell his tale, he successfully provides readers with a deeper understanding of the forces that shaped the region throughout the century by placing them in a larger national context. From the Ludlow Massacre in 1914 to the boom in tourism following World War II, to the growing fight over water between urban and rural regions within each state at the century’s end, Smith articulates how events in each state both reflected the internal struggles between

tradition and modernization while reflecting larger national trends. It is this placing of Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana into a larger context that is the strength of *Rocky Mountain Heartland*. While rather general at times, such an approach underlines the importance of the transformation of this once isolated region and demonstrates the increasingly complex nature of the American West during the twentieth century.

Michael Childers, ABD
University of Nevada, Las Vegas



Jimmy Carter, Human Rights and the National Agenda, by Mary E. Stuckey (Texas A&M University Press, 4354 TAMU, College Station, Texas 77843-4354), 2009. Contents. Acknowledgements. Introduction. Notes. Bibliography. Index. P 197. \$39.95 Hardcover.

Essentially agreeing with the widely held belief that Jimmy Carter was one of the least effective of all modern presidents, author Mary Stuckey argues that the major reason for Carter's difficulties was his poor rhetorical skill. However, she further asserts that the very fact that he was a poor communicator made it possible for him to successfully establish "human rights" as a major national agenda item and further made it possible for his successors to use the "human rights" issue as they pleased. They benefitted from the fact that even though Carter was obsessed with "human rights," he was unable to assign a specific meaning to the term.

Stuckey argues that "human rights" first came to the nation's attention as a result of a combination of factors including public interest, Congressional interest, the "agenda-shaping" power of presidential rhetoric, and President Carter's creation of the "human rights" bureaucracy. Her overall conclusion is that President Carter's incompetence as a communicator and its results provides a brand new way to analyze presidential influence, a technique that focuses primarily on "ambitious incompleteness."

Well, where to begin? Of course, historians do not ignore presidential rhetoric in their analysis of presidential success or failure (think of George W. Bush at one end of the rhetorical spectrum and Franklin Delano Roosevelt at the other), but they place much more emphasis on other factors such as leadership qualities, ability to influence Congress, ability to deal effectively with major problems, ability to react effectively to public opinion and so on. Being a rhetorical wizard is not necessarily required to place an issue on the national agenda. Think,

for example, of Lyndon Baines Johnson and his domestic policy prior to the Vietnam fiasco. So, problem one with Stuckey's argument is that she vastly overstates her case. There is nothing new about rhetorical analysis. A second problem concerns Stuckey's presentation of her case. It is unpleasant to wade through her prose replete as it is with compound complex sentences and the use of terms that can best be described as jargon – words such as ideograph, ethos, and mythos. Of course, these are all legitimate words – see any standard dictionary – but they can also be defined as part of a specialized vocabulary aimed only at members of one's own profession. To this old narrative historian who believes that history is a form of literature and should be written to be read by the general public, Stuckey's prose reads like a doctoral dissertation written to be read by a small committee. Stuckey's thesis is, nevertheless, interesting and maybe even useful in a very narrow sense, but unfortunately her target audience is most likely very small.

Kenneth E. Hendrickson, Jr.
Midwestern State University



Dancing Naked: Memorable Encounters with Unforgettable Texans, by Mary Rogers (TCU Press, P. O. box 298300, Ft. Worth, TX 76129), 2008. Contents. Introduction. Acknowledgements. P. 280. \$18.95 Softcover.

Whether Mary Rogers writes about the rich and famous or the unpretentious, she describes the courage and fortitude that is common to each individual in her collection of interviews.

Rogers' book contains interesting stories about fellow Texans who have accepted sorrow with grace, shown grit, shared heartache and love, or found success in second chances. One might think the book would have a limited appeal because all the stories are set in Texas and are about Texans living mainly in the vicinity of Ft. Worth, but the stories have a universal appeal. An acclaimed journalist for the Fort Worth Star-Telegram for many years, Rogers selects exclusive interviews that include familiar Texas family names including Moncrief, McDavid, Cliburn, Hyder, Wynne, and Bass. Texas ranchers, horse lovers, oil men and women, artists, and industrialists are subjects of these interviews. Her entrée into their private lives is a tribute to her abilities and the trust her subjects place with her.

A master of description and story telling, Rogers develops the interviews into moving stories poignant with almost every aspect of the

human condition to provide truly “unforgettable” reading. The book is divided into eight parts. Each part varies from the others and admirable in its own right, but to me the best is the last—the essays about her own life experiences.

As a native Texan from a pioneering family, I thought I knew a lot about the people in our state, but I learned new, fascinating facts about some remarkable Texans in this book. The most important lesson I came away with, however, is the overall impact of the themes: strength in hardship, courage, and love of friends.

Sarah Jackson
Nacogdoches, Texas



Ten Deadly Texans, by Laurence J. Yadon and Dan Anderson (Pelican Publishing, 1000 Burmaster Street, Gretna, LA 70053), 2009. Contents. Preface. Acknowledgments. Chronology of Significant Events. Outlaw Hideouts, Hangouts, and Locales. Notes. Bibliography. Index. p. 334. \$16.95 Softcover.

During a 100-year period beginning in 1835, tales of robbers, outlaws, rustlers, and murderers touched private fears and captured public interest. Particularly after Reconstruction, violence upon blacks seemed to have become routine for several outlaws with questionable mental health. Violent acts of cold-blooded killing or gunfights in the street were frequently reported, and just as frequently magnified and embellished for newspaper readers across the country.

Ten Deadly Texans focuses on the stories of such men, both familiar and notorious. Based on two other popular histories by the authors, this work is able to go into more depth with the material they collected from a variety of western authors. By narrowing their focus to only ten of the hundreds of outlaws in their earlier work, Yadon and Anderson provide much more detail on this select group. For readers less accustomed with the names and stories, that level of detail can be somewhat difficult to follow. In only the first eight pages of the chapter on Pink Higgins, for example, the authors inserted the names of thirty-eight outlaws and their kin, which made it a challenge to follow the stories of lawlessness and criminality. With its broad cut through one hundred years of Texas social change, readers with a focus on a more narrow time and place will find one or more connections to their interests. A chronology of events and a list of locations where outlaws lived or committed their crimes help

overcome some of those concerns, and will be useful for anyone interested in a particular part of Texas or a specific time period.

Readers with a keen eye for popular western history or a collection of stories on desperadoes, about whom they would like to know more, will be provided with more than sufficient material for further examination and discussion. The rest of us have a ready source for a mighty fine yarn around the campfire.

Gary Pinkerton
Silsbee, Texas



Riding for the Brand: 150 Years of Cowden Ranching, by Michael Pettit (University of Oklahoma Press, 2800 Venture Drive, Norman, OK 73069), 2009. Contents. List of Illustrations. List of Maps. Acknowledgements. Notes. Bibliography. Index. P. 306. \$29.95 Softcover.

On the eve of the United States war with Mexico in 1846, Georgia natives William Hamby and George Franklin Cowden came to Texas as volunteers serving in the United States Army. Following their service and brief relocation to Alabama, the brothers returned to Texas to make lives as ranchers.

A descendant of the Cowden brothers, former rancher and award winning author Michael Pettit offers a unique blend of history and personal experience on the vast 50,000 acre Cowden Ranch. His approach offers the reader a lively representation of west Texas and southeastern New Mexico ranching past and present.

Riding for the Brand tells the more than 150 year history of the Cowden family and the JAL Ranch. Pettit successfully blends administrative and social history, addressing themes that both impact ranching as a business enterprise and individual ranchers and cowboys, Horsemanship, branding, and the hardships of making a life a rancher in West Texas and New Mexico take center stage. Because recent scholarship is spotty, the reader will find the story of modern ranching particularly interesting. By looking at the current state of ranching, Pettit reveals both continuity and change in the lives of cowboys and the industry as a whole.

Pettit utilizes a variety of primary and secondary sources and relays stories handed down in the rich oral tradition of the ranching experience. The flow of the work, however, is disrupted somewhat by alternating chapters of history and travelogue. While both approaches are entertaining and informative, the work would be better served by picking

one or the other.

Both the scholar of ranching history and the casual reader will find something of interest in this work. An informative and entertaining read, *Riding for the Brand* should be on every list of worthwhile books on western ranching.

Damon Kennedy
Midland College



Branding Texas: Performing Culture in the Lone Star State, by Leigh Clemons (University of Texas Press, P.O. Box 7819, Austin, TX 78713), 2008. Contents. Preface. Acknowledgments. Introduction. Notes. Index. P. 173. \$40.00 Hardcover.

In her cogent, insightful, and articulate new book, Leigh Clemons effectively demonstrates how the construction of a unique and prescriptively masculine Texas identity has been consistently communicated and culturally entrenched through public performance, broadly defined and analyzed. By examining theater, museums, monuments, product marketing, television, and film – among other media – Clemons illustrates how the magnification of a nationalist, white male, brazenly independent, and typically larger-than-life stereotype has defined common perceptions of what it means to be a Texan, who does and does not have access to that identity, and what impact the shadow so widely cast by that identity has on the state's relationship with the rest of the country and among Texas residents.

Quite succinctly, this book provides scholars with a unique, valuable, and almost prerequisite tool for contextualizing, framing, and understanding virtually any aspect of modern Texas history. Such a statement may seem bold, but properly understanding Texas politics necessitates an understanding of image formation, communication, and the manipulation of perceptions within public memory. At the same time, the socioeconomic and cultural history of the state is difficult to understand without grasping the dynamic nature of state politics. One might only have wished, therefore, to find a more thorough analysis of how the construction of Texas identity has actually altered the sociopolitical landscape, though chapter five strives after this goal. Certainly, other scholars will undoubtedly draw that connection more deeply in future studies. Perhaps then, part of this book's charm lies in its precision, concision, and focus. Entertaining and most helpful, *Branding Texas*

should certainly find its way onto the shelves of many a Texas historian.

Sean P. Cunningham
Texas Tech University



The Real South: Southern Narrative in the Age of Cultural Reproduction, by Scott Romine (Louisiana State University Press, 3990 West Lakeshore Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70808), 2008. Contents. Notes. Index. P. 284. \$42.50 Hardcover.

In *The Real South*, Scott Romine provides a literary analysis of the production and reproduction of culture in the American South. He investigates the importance of “authenticity” to the southern narrative and argues that the practice of promoting unauthentic “authentic” spaces has contributed to the detachment of southern culture from its roots (if it had any roots to begin with). In chapters on *Gone with the Wind*, travel accounts, black literature, civil rights imagery, and depictions of southern homes, Romine explores the appropriation (what he terms as “use”) of the South by southerners and non-southerners alike. To Romine, the southern narrative provides a cultural terrain for Americans to fight modern battles that are not historical and only relevant in their current context. In his discussion of Tony Horowitz’s *Confederates in the Attic*, for example, Romine describes how “Civil War users” (in this case, Sons of Confederate Veterans) are not actually concerned with the South as a region or with the Civil War as a Lost Cause but employ the images associated with the South and the war in their “contemporary campaigns of political and racial division” (74).

Although Romine’s study offers a synthesis of the theory surrounding literature on the South, it does not present many original concepts. The author borrows heavily from previous studies and offers more evaluation of southern culture than actual analysis of its origins or causes. He often suggests that one version of the South is better than another—that *O Brother Where Art Thou?* might not be real but has more artistic value than the suburban recreations of the Tara plantation. Romine’s ideas regarding the “reterritorialization” of the South and the ambiguous boundaries that define the region are interesting, but tend merely to reconstitute long-held notions regarding the region in new, theoretical terms. The “real South” (and all its permutations) is not that different from the “many Souths” discovered by twentieth-century

historians; Romine simply adds claims to authenticity to the already confusing and convoluted mixture that is southern culture.

Charity Rakestraw
Stephen F. Austin State University



Texas Blues: The Rise of a Contemporary Sound, by Alan Govenar (Texas A&M University Press, 4354 TAMU, College Station, TX 77843-4354), 2008. Contents. Foreword. Acknowledgements. Prologue. Introduction. List of Illustrations. Selected Discography. Selected Bibliography. Index. P. 599. \$40.00 Hardcover.

From Chicago blues festivals to historical markers along Mississippi highways to the statue of Stevie Ray Vaughn in Austin, the story of the blues is firmly written into the fabric of American culture. As increased tourism sweeps across the southern cultural landscape, places like the Mississippi Delta region are utilizing the pull of a ubiquitous blues heritage to come up with new methods of boosting their ailing economies. In a process identifying the origins of American blues, marketers offer a sense of authenticity packaged and sold, as they beckon visitors to 'come see where Robert Johnson sold his soul to the Devil.'

In *Texas Blues: The Rise of a Contemporary Sound*, Alan Govenar acknowledges Johnson's long shadow, but qualifies its primacy with a portrait of Texas musician Blind Lemon Jefferson, "the first guitar-playing bluesman to attract a national audience" (p. 22). Beginning with the life and influence of Jefferson and ending with Stevie Ray Vaughn, Govenar explores the many faces, styles, and influences of blues music in Texas.

Govenar accurately situates the origins of twentieth-century blues within traditions dating back to slavery, which further gathers influences traced to Africa. In 1999, he traveled to Senegal to find the roots of American blues. To his surprise, he discovered wider connections between the living conditions of those in Africa and African Americans in the South, along with expressive forms similar to American country music. This realization sets the tone for *Texas Blues*, displaying the inherent diversity in African American traditions and the cross-pollination of musical and cultural forms. Govenar builds upon the work of modern blues scholars Elijah Wald and Marybeth Hamilton, acknowledging the presence of various folk and commercial strains within the wider field of blues expression.

The most valuable element of Texas Blues is its use of oral history and personal narrative to convey the myriad notions of authenticity held by those who actually play the music. As Robert Johnson's ghost dances mysteriously through the engines of tourism, works like Alan Govenar's Texas Blues help to parse the myths and legends of our icons by anchoring them to the dynamic historical contexts that continue to shape the world of blues.

Brian Dempsey
Middle Tennessee State University



Spare Time in Texas: Recreation and History in the Lone Star State, by David G. McComb (University of Texas Press, P.O. Box 7819, Austin, TX 78713), 2008. Contents. Images. Index. P. 290. \$24.95 Softcover.

Award-winning author David G. McComb has produced his most innovative and thought-provoking book, *Spare Time in Texas*, the first comprehensive study of leisure activities in the Lone Star State. In the opening sentence, McComb recognizes that recreation "is a trivial subject" for many people, who assign far greater importance to work or family. However, leisure time allows people to pursue their true interests. "A person's choice of recreation, therefore, may well be a better measurement of individual character..." proposes McComb on page one. "In larger terms, the recreational preferences of a people reveal the character of the people" (p. 1).

For the next 253 pages, the author explores and verifies this novel proposal, leading the reader away from military generals, politicians, and business leaders, into a world of theaters and stadiums, parks and libraries, zoos and red-light districts. In the course of this exploration of leisure and recreation, McComb brings new perspective to such Texas icons as the Chicken Ranch, the Cotton Bowl, Palo Duro Canyon, Austin's Barton Springs, Galveston's Balinese Room, Houston's Alley Theater, and Big Bend National Park. Alongside Doak Walker, Ben Thompson, Judge Roy Hofheinz, Margo Jones, and other well-known characters, the author introduces a host of less familiar but consequential Texans. Before considering each major subject, such as "The Licit and Illicit," McComb presents insightful essays on the history of "Drinking", "Gambling", and "Prostitution." An essay on the Roman Coliseum precedes the discussion of the Cotton Bowl, the Astrodome, Texas Stadium, and "spare wooden

bleachers for a handful of parents and students.” [p. 71].

Spare Time in Texas is replete with unexpected delights and fresh ideas including a fifty-page photo section, which illustrates the author’s illuminating concepts. Spare Time in Texas is a must for the bookshelf of any reader interested in Texas history or culture.

Bill O’Neal
Carthage, Texas



Dinosaur Highway: A History of Dinosaur Valley State Park, by Laurie E. Jasinski (TCU Press, Box 298300, Ft. Worth, TX 76129), 2008. Contents. Introduction. Acknowledgements. “The Dinosaur Waltz” Notes and Other Trackways. Bibliography. Index. P. 212. \$19.95 Softcover.

In *Dinosaur Highway* Laurie E. Jasinski creates a captivating story, with anecdotes of Somervell County’s history from the time of the Tonkawa Indians to the creation and current management of Dinosaur Valley State Park. Jasinski’s work aims to inform the reader of the significance that one of the state’s historically poorest counties plays in the annals of paleontology.

The story centers on Glen Rose, Texas, located along the banks of the Paluxy River, and the discovery of some mysterious tracks in 1909. Until that time, Glen Rose’s claim to fame was its status as a small resort community known for its many springs. Soon after having been identified, the sauropod and theropod dinosaur tracks provided quite a draw, and quickly became a local pilgrimage. During the Great Depression, some Glen Rose residents attempted to survive the hard times by conducting tours on the private property that enclosed the tracks. A few even sold off chiseled out footprints for income.

The importance of the tracks was soon revealed after paleontologist R.T. Bird came across some of these chiseled out fossil souvenirs that had made their way to New Mexico. From 1938-1940, Bird and his Works Progress Administration crew excavated tracks for the American Museum of Natural History and University of Texas. Most importantly, Bird used the discovery to dispute the popular theory that sauropods did not walk on dry land due to their weight. By the 1960s, the local citizenry began a movement to preserve the tracks for future generations via the National Park Service or Texas Parks and Wildlife. The movement reached a crescendo on October 2, 1970, with the opening of Dinosaur Valley State Park.

Jasinski’s book is well researched, informative, and entertaining.

For primary sources, the author has used newspapers, interviews with residents, the personal papers of R. T. Bird, and county documents. Research also includes the use of secondary materials on archaeology, paleontology, and Texas history for background information. The sources blend together to create an intriguing and informative story for anyone interested in the scientific, historical, or cultural aspects of the subject. Jaskinski also uses numerous pictures and maps to illustrate and greatly enhance the story of Somerville County and Dinosaur Valley State Park.

John Garbutt
Panola College



Neches River User Guide, by Gina Donovan, Creator and Editor, Stephen D. Lange, GIS Specialist, and Adrian F. Van Dellen, River Consultant (Texas A&M University Press, 4354 TAMU, College Station, TX 77843), 2009. Contents. Series Editor's Foreword ix-x. P. 83. \$17.95 Softcover.

Of all the rivers that run through Texas, the Neches River may exhibit more natural beauty and biodiversity along its banks than any other, according to Gina Donovan. In hopes to encourage firsthand study, she has authored the Neches River User Guide, part of the River Books series, providing practically all the information needed for embarking on a journey of river exploration. Donovan is the executive director of the Houston Audubon Society, Co-founder of the East Texas Forest and Wildlife Coalition, and has canoed hundreds of miles of the Neches River.

She begins the Neches River User Guide with an archaeological synopsis and historical background placing the river in the context of Texas history through the mid-twentieth century. In telling the history of the Neches, she attributes the plethora of wildlife and unspoiled wilderness to lessened human presence after the arrival of the railroads and timber industry, which effectively ended the use of the river as means for transportation. New timber industry practices and urbanization in East Texas shifted people out of the Neches River Valley to nearby commercial centers and ultimately pressures on the natural environment subsided leaving the river much the way early settlers would have found it in 1800s.

The real wealth here are the maps and accompanying text that give descriptions of each of the eighteen segments by which Donovan divides over three hundred miles of Neches River into detailed snapshots of what river goers might find around each river bend. The maps are clear and well put together, giving visual representation and GIS coordinates for each of the

various marked points of interest, road intersections, hazards, confluences, and recommended portages, as well as appropriate river access points. The content that accompanies each of the detailed river maps provides pertinent information for paddlers, as well as interesting tidbits into the history of some particularly interesting stretches of the river, adding further texture to the broader history of the Neches that appears earlier in the book.

Places such as the Aldridge Sawmill, which still stands along the Neches's course in the Angelina National Forest near Jasper, provide tangible evidence of past roles the river has played. Other stretches of the river invoke stories that raise a chuckle, as Donovan tells of a local Angelina County bar owner that used his location by the river to his advantage, "John Young Fowler had owned a thriving honky-tonk in Angelina County until the citizens voted that county dry in 1936... [however] the enterprising Fowler built his spirits store out the backdoor of his dance hall just beyond the center line of the river in "wet" Trinity county" (p. 28). Another significant stop along the Neches's banks is the site of Fort Teran, built by the Mexican government around 1830 in an attempt to "stem the flow of American settlers" (p. 36). No physical evidence remains of the fort, but the location is still commemorated by a granite historical marker atop the bluff where the fort is said to have once stood.

This particular work is a much needed contribution to the body of works on the East Texas region, and hopefully will encourage further study into subjects relating to this fascinating waterway. Donovan has done a fabulous job of creating a work of value across disciplines of study, supplying multi-faceted perspective into what otherwise might be a little known natural and cultural resource. Donovan also includes a useful section outlining many of the animals, reptiles, and types of flora that might be encountered along this truly wild natural resource, completing the span of topics from areas of traditional and natural history to heritage tourism to pure recreation. In its compact size, the Neches River User Guide provides the perfect take along guide for canoeists, kayakers, hunters, fishermen, bird watchers, or any outdoors enthusiast.

Chris Elzen
Tyler, Texas



Flying Across America: The Airline Passenger Experience, by Daniel L. Rust (University of Oklahoma Press, 2800 Venture Drive, Norman, OK 73069), 2009. Contents. Acknowledgements. Introductions. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Index. P. 260. \$45.00 Hardcover.

Prior to the late-1940's, commercial airline travel was soundly overshadowed by the large numbers of Americans traveling by rail and by bus. While Americans who did enjoy the sense of excitement and adventure that flying commercially brought them, still others were not swayed by the shorter travel periods and the sheer fun of it. The luxury of trains' with their plush railcars compared more favorably to the rather sparse accommodation of the first commercial airlines. Non-proponents were also quick to point out that rail and bus travel was economically more attractive.

Here, *Flying Across America* treats the reader to a detailed history of trials and tribulations of airline travel. Man's time honored quest to go faster and farther with more efficiency has brought about a group of aviation pioneers who changed our traveling lives forever. Beginning with the history of flying with the mail on Boeing Air Transport, a fascination with this medium of travel awakens. Rust sets out in detail the sparks of interest igniting other aviation professionals to hatch a plan to travel coast-to-coast with people. From wicker seats in noisy aircraft to the appearance of women as stewardesses replacing the men 'couriers' who provided cabin service, further to present day innovations and constraints, the story of the birth of air travel is thoughtfully told and reinforced with pleasing illustrations, pictures and replicas of posters and pamphlet covers. Firsthand accounts of professionals and passengers are included in this overview of the beginnings of air travel and the accompanying changes in the air travel experience. Rust describes the landscapes from above in gathering his notes and research, admirably preparing a story full of beginnings and some endings of giants in the passenger transportation business.

Readers will find it worthwhile to pause and ponder the amazing evolution of this mode of travel that has culminated into the modern day airline and its daily operations and obligations.

Leslie Daniel
Nacogdoches, Texas

Clio's Eye: An Audio-Visual Magazine for the Historian @sfasu.edu is a copy right., on-line journal that reviews films, books, games and music (old and new) that reflect historical themes and concepts. Future articles will vary and may not always deal with Texas or regional history but will represent a spectrum of sources and themes. Professional and amateur writers and scholars are invited to submit manuscripts: c/o Department of History, Clio: P.O. Box 13013 Nacogdoches, Texas 75951. Editorial Board: Dr. Elizabeth D. Malpass, Professor Mary Devine, Mr. Ryan Gullett, project coordinator. The East Texas Journal is pleased to publish selections from Clio's Eye.

An Unfinished Life: Compromise in the New West *by Carol Antill*

The 2005 film, *An Unfinished Life*, based on the Mark Spragg novel and screenplay of the same name, contemporary characters in a western setting. The characters of *An Unfinished Life* confront the very human desire to cast blame rather than wrestle with elusive compromises. It is a tale of loss and forgiveness that revolves around five characters: Einar, an aging rancher; Mitch, his hired hand and best friend; Jean, his estranged daughter-in-law; her 10-year old daughter, Griff; and a displaced grizzly bear. Einar loses his only son, Griffin, in a car accident when Jean falls asleep at the wheel. He manages his grief by saddling his horse and riding to his son's hilltop grave overlooking the ranch, where he talks to a headstone etched with "An Unfinished Life" beneath Griffin's name.

Einar's life is further altered when a grizzly bear attacks Mitch, leaving the ranch hand seriously impaired. Mitch carves deer antlers on good days, and remains bedridden on bad days, what raises the story to a level above the familiar, clichéd family drama is the symbolic and physical presence of the bear.

In the West that existed prior to paved roads and power lines, the grizzly's range met little resistance. Native American tribes viewed the bear with fear and respect; human interaction with bears usually resulted in death for one or the other. In the New West of *An Unfinished Life*, the grizzly bear still commands fear and respect, but interactions between bear and human take unpredictable turns. The grizzly's symbolic role in the film emerges when it contemplates his altered fate; one of the last spirits of the untamed West visibly fades before the public in a 20-foot circular prison. Close-ups of the grizzly after his capture are spare yet effective; the twist of his massive head when he growls and his unblinking stare back at the tourists and townspeople who gawk at him underscore a growing disconnect between humans and nature.

Einar, portrayed by Robert Redford in the first role that acknowledges him as a senior citizen, is a believable curmudgeon, reduced

to a spare, duty-driven existence through his inability to accept the loss of his son. A stubble-faced silhouette in dust-speckled twilight, his first appearance on screen resembles a Rockwell portrait.

As the stoic hired hand, Morgan Freeman infuses his character with world-weary wisdom and easy banter that makes a lifetime friendship between the two aging cowboys reminiscent of mountain men of the Old West. He is the most complex character in the film, whose reclusive existence doesn't diminish his vitality. Mitch actually commits to the ultimate forgiveness when he not only forgives the bear who robbed him of the life he loved above all else, that of a working ranch hand, but takes it one step further with a request that Einar cannot refuse: return the captive bear to its natural setting.

Perhaps the most questionable casting of this film is Jennifer Lopez in the role of Jean. She is a blend of sexual tension and a need to please, which draws men of all types to her. Though Jean's transformation falls far short of an epiphany, the credible range of emotion from Lopez earns her a well-deserved niche in the company of Redford and Freeman.

Spragg's characters are a likeable bunch, but none are as engaging as the irrepressible 11-year old Griff. Becca Gardner portrays Griff, a multi-layered character who shifts emotional gears through subtle body language changes. Gardner pauses between her lines instead of the usual rise and fall in decibels that is accepted too often as good acting.

Undeniable chemistry between Redford and Freeman rescues the film from sentimentality and gives it a powerful statement of loss and forgiveness. Morgan Freeman's portrayal of Mitch is of the caliber for which he earned an Oscar in *Million Dollar Baby*. Another element that lifts this film above average is the location shooting in western landscapes such as New Mexico and British Columbia; such open vistas offer filmmakers unparalleled opportunities for capturing sunsets of pastel glory and tranquility of space. A subtle score enhances the unhurried pacing, allowing drama to unfold in dialogue rather than straight action scenes. Any rural America community such as Tupelo, Mississippi or Chardon, Ohio could be the film's setting, but it is the landscape and mindset of the west and its residents, past and present, that gives the film its essential core and spirit. *An Unfinished Life* is a western whose setting, combined with quality acting, allows its actors to realize a capacity within themselves to change their unfinished lives for the better.

Recommended contemporary western films: *Around the Bend* (2004) *Off the Map* (2003) Suggested Reading: *An Unfinished Life* by Mark Spragg, Random House, 2004; *Where Rivers Change Direction* by Mark Spragg, University of Utah Press, 1999.