

3-1995

## ETHJ Vol-33 No-1

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VOLUME XXXIII

1995

NUMBER 1

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# EAST TEXAS

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# HISTORICAL JOURNAL

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# EAST TEXAS HISTORICAL JOURNAL

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Volume XXXIII

1995

NUMBER 1

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ALONSO DE LEON:  
PATHFINDER IN EAST TEXAS, 1686-1690

by Donald E. Chipman

The 1680s were a time of crisis for the northern frontier of New Mexico (Colonial Mexico). In New Mexico the decade began with a massive, coordinated revolt involving most of the Pueblo Indians. The Great Revolt of 1680 forced the Spanish to abandon a province held continuously since 1598, and it claimed more than 400 lives. Survivors, well over 2,000 of them, retreated down the Río Grande to El Paso del Río del Norte, transforming it overnight from a way station and missionary outpost along the road to New Mexico proper into a focus of empire. From El Paso the first European settlement within the present boundaries of Texas, Corpus Christi de la Isleta, was established in 1682. Also from El Paso, short-lived missionary endeavors were undertaken at La Junta de los Ríos, the junction of the Río Conchos and Río Grande at modern Presidio, Texas. And early in 1684 a Spanish captain, Juan Domínguez de Mendoza, founded a camp, perhaps to the south of the upper reaches of the Colorado River, where a few Indians were baptized and large numbers of buffalo were slaughtered. In the following year, Domínguez de Mendoza and Father Nicolás López, custodian of the El Paso missions, traveled to Mexico City and strongly urged the occupation of lands they had visited with soldiers and missionaries. Their pleading fell on deaf ears, for that same year the viceroy of New Spain learned of French designs, spearheaded by René Robert Cavelier, Sieur de la Salle, to found a colony on the northern Gulf Coast.

The viceroy of New Spain ordered that all energies be focused on finding the foreign interlopers and extirpating their colony. Response by sea could be carried out most expeditiously, and those efforts were launched early in 1686. To ensure a more thorough search, officials in New Spain also decided to organize a complementary land expedition. Unable to find in their midst a person familiar with lands along the northeastern coast, the search broadened to Nuevo León where a frontiersman was rumored to be experienced in the region of the Río Grande and Río de las Palmas. That person, Alonso DeLeón, the younger, was destined to play a significant role as pathfinder in early Texas history.

De León was born in Cadereyta, Nuevo León, in 1639 or 1640. He was the third son of Alonso De León, the elder, and Josefa González, who had married on September 23, 1635. Doña Josefa later remarked that she entered wedlock at the age of fifteen to seventeen, placing her birth date around 1620. Indirect evidence suggests that the senior De León was born in the first decade of the 1600s, while his Castilian parents, Lorenzo Pérez and Adriana De León, resided in Mexico City. Growing up in the capital with its well-established schools provided rare educational opportunities for Don Alonso. In 1635, the

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year of his marriage, Alonso De León entered the frontier province of Nuevo León. Initially, he was a *ganadero*, a stockman who raised sheep, but he quickly moved into a position of greater influence by accepting an office in the cabildo of Cadereyta. His first military experience came as a captain in the company of Bernardo García de Sepúlveda, and by 1655 he could claim participation in thirty-five campaigns of pacification and discovery. He also had established himself as a man of letters, having written a brief chronicle of the discovery, settlement, and control of Nuevo León. In directing his finished work to an inquisitor of the Holy Office in Mexico City, as well as in the first few chapters of the discourse wherein he displayed both familiarity with Scriptures and a fervent conviction that all men must come to know God as the Universal Creator, Don Alonso displayed an unusual devoutness that had great influence on his son of the same name.<sup>1</sup>

In 1653, under orders of the governor, De León led thirty men eastward toward the Gulf of Mexico. He encountered friendly Indians of differing groups and arrived at the coast in the environs of twenty-four degrees north latitude. That position placed De León at the mouth of the Soto la Marina (the Río de las Palmas of colonial times). The good will of the natives was in striking contrast to their forbearers who consistently opposed Spanish expeditionary forces along the coast and preyed upon shipwreck victims in the sixteenth century. The bad reputation of these coastal groups had prompted Cabeza de Vaca and his companions to veer inland during their mid-1530s trek toward New Spain.<sup>2</sup>

The expedition in 1653 was intended “to discover lands and learn of routes” that might redound to the future benefit of the king of Spain. As a youth of only twelve or thirteen, the younger De León was then in Spain and perhaps missed an opportunity to tag along with his father. Later, he must have heard tales of largely unexplored regions toward the rising sun and the Sea of the North, as the Spanish called the Gulf of Mexico.

At age ten the younger Alonso had been sent to Spain, where he enrolled in school and prepared for a career in the royal navy. The sole information about the young cadet’s experience comes from his father, who journeyed to Spain in 1655 as *procurador* (solicitor) for the governor of Nuevo León. At that time, the senior De León visited his son, then sixteen, at Cádiz, where the teenager assisted in the defense of the port city against an attack by eighty English vessels. By 1660 Don Alonso, the younger, was back in Nuevo León. Over the next two decades, he led a series of entradas that traversed the northeast coast of New Spain as well as the banks of the Río de San Juan.<sup>3</sup>

In 1682 Alonso DeLeón petitioned the viceroy of New Spain for a franchise to work salt deposits along the San Juan River, open trade with neighboring settlements, and search for mines. His efforts won a fifteen-year concession that served to familiarize him with additional lands that adjoined the future Lone Star State.<sup>4</sup> As an entrepreneur, De León must have gained experience in managing sizable numbers of Indian laborers, and he honed his already considerable leadership qualities.

By the 1680s Alonso De León had become a seasoned outdoorsman and successful businessman. Like his father, he was also an extremely devout Roman Catholic and a capable military commander. Thanks to the concern of his father, who probably worried about the absence of schools in a rough frontier province, the younger De León's educational experiences in Spain had made him literate – a gift that he employed to good advantage in writing letters and drafting reports. By adulthood De León had developed confidence in his own judgment, a down-to-earth assessment of Indians, and a penchant for telling the unvarnished truth. The latter is a luxury few men in positions of power and authority can afford, and in the long run would cost him dearly.

Selected by the viceroy to mount an overland search for the French colony, De León's initial reconnaissance was organized in the summer of 1686 from two companies of men formed at Monterrey and Cadereyta. The troop consisted of fifty soldiers, an Indian guide, and a chaplain. It followed the Río de San Juan north and east toward its confluence with the Río Grande. Striking the larger river, Don Alonso followed its right bank to the coast and then turned southward toward the Río de las Palmas. Along the shoreline, De León found flotsam from a wrecked vessel and a flask that he judged to be non-Spanish, but he found no conclusive evidence that Frenchmen had visited the region. Don Alonso then retraced his march to Cadereyta, having spent almost the entire month of July in the field.<sup>5</sup>

De León's second overland expedition set out in February 1687. This effort forded the Río Grande, perhaps at El Cántaro, near the present town of Roma, and followed the left bank to the coast, arriving there on March 20. Ironically, the object of his search, René Robert Cavelier, Sieur de la Salle, had been murdered in East Texas on the previous day. Don Alonso marched up the Texas coast to the environs of Baffin Bay, but again found no evidence of Frenchmen. His second expedition was as fruitless as the first.<sup>6</sup>

Though unaware of La Salle's death and the sorry condition of the surviving colonists on Garcitas Creek, a tributary of Matagorda Bay, Spanish officials understandably were optimistic. Two searches by sea and land had failed to find a single Frenchman. Their optimism was further buoyed by a report from Spain, based on pirated French documents acquired by the Spanish ambassador in London. The communique suggested that the French colony had been racked by disease and dysentery, menaced by Indians, and endangered by lost provisions from its inception. Unfortunately, from the Spanish perspective, this favorable view of matters soon was shattered. Surviving Frenchmen were among the Indian nations of Texas.<sup>7</sup>

These ominous tidings reached Coahuila via two Indians, one of whom claimed to have been "in the very houses of the French." The informant journeyed to mission Caldera, situated to the east of Monclova, to give this report to the resident priest, Father Damián Massanet. At that same time, July 1687, Alonso De León had just been appointed governor of Coahuila and captain of the presidio at Monclova.<sup>8</sup>



Before assuming command of the garrison, De León traveled to mission Caldera. There Father Massanet “made known to him what had passed between the Indians and me.” Don Alonso asked for “some unmistakable signs” that the report was true, and the priest summoned the second Indian, named Juan, who professed knowledge of a white man dwelling among Indians at a *rancheria* (temporary settlement) located some sixty leagues distant. The Indian Juan agreed to travel there in an attempt to bring this person to Caldera. He found the white man, but could not persuade him to call at the mission. Massanet then notified Captain De León of what had transpired.<sup>9</sup>

At the head of a detachment of twelve soldiers, the new governor crossed the Río Grande on May 26, 1688, and after some difficulty found a large settlement of Indians presided over by a naked, aged, and mentally confused Frenchman, Jean Géry. The captive Frenchman, almost certainly a survivor of the La Salle expedition, was apprehended on May 30 and returned to Coahuila on June 6. From there he was sent to Mexico City, where his very presence, not necessarily his mendacious testimony, undermined the viceroy’s optimism and spurred further efforts by land and sea to find the French colony.<sup>10</sup>

On July 23, 1688, the viceroy commissioned Alonso De León as commander of a fourth *entrada*, and sent Jean Géry northward to serve as De León’s guide. Assembling troops from distant presidios, combined with attention to Indian problems, occasioned delays until March 1689. In all, the force totaled 114 men, including Chaplain Damián Massanet, soldiers, mule drivers, servants, and the French prisoner. De León, only recently promoted to the rank of general, was provisioned with eighty-five loads of supplies and presents for Indians.<sup>11</sup>

On April 2 Don Alonso again forded the Río Grande and began a march eastward toward Matagorda Bay. Although De León logged his daily progress, reconstructing his path across Texas largely is guesswork, for his latitude sightings were thrown off by a defective astrolabe.<sup>12</sup>

Jean Géry apparently proved useless as a guide. By De León’s own admission, he relied more and more on a faithful Indian, one of the natives who had brought news of the French settlement to mission Caldera. This person assured the governor “that he knew the country, and that he would bring us where there were some men like ourselves, in a settlement of six or seven houses; [and] that they had wives and children.”<sup>13</sup>

De León’s log entry on Palm Sunday, April 3, 1689, reflected an educated and cautious man. He noted that his tables for computing the vernal equinox were made “before the so-called Gregorian correction” of 1582. By his computation, April 3 corresponded to March 24 in the pre-Gregorian method of determining Easter. And he added the caveat: “It has been necessary to state these facts in explanation, in case it should appear that a mistake has been made because of our lack of modern tables.” How many field commanders would have felt it necessary to document the rationale for determining religious observances in the wilds of seventeenth-century Texas?<sup>14</sup>

En route to Matagorda Bay, De León commented on a dense thicket: “we had to cut a passage into it for almost a league with our cutlasses and axes.” He remarked on great stands of prickly pears and mesquite that impeded progress, and applied names to rivers that remain to this day: the Nueces, the Frio (Sarco), and the Medina. On April 14 De León’s party encountered the first buffaloes they had seen for 100 leagues and killed six of them to supplement their larder.<sup>15</sup>

On April 20, Don Alonso’s sun shot, made east of the river named Our Lady of Guadalupe, placed him, if accurate, a few miles southeast of present Victoria, Texas. Two days later the expedition marched down Garcitas Creek. Shortly before noon, it came upon the ruins of the French settlement. Four years of searching finally had borne results.<sup>16</sup>

Both De León and Massanet recorded a scene of utter devastation. In Father Massanet’s words, “we found six houses, not very large, built with poles plastered with mud, and roofed with buffalo hides, another large house where pigs were fattened, and a wooden fort made from the hulk of a wrecked vessel.” De León added that all of the houses were sacked; chests, bottle cases, and furniture smashed into pieces; more than 200 books torn apart “with their rotten leaves scattered through the patios – all in French.” Among the devastation were three bodies, one with a dress still clinging to the bones. After a funeral mass chanted by Father Massanet, all were interred in a common grave.<sup>17</sup>

French ordnance was much in evidence. De León recorded finding eight pieces of artillery, all of medium bore – four or five pounders – some with broken carriages. There were also iron bars, ship’s nails, and “casks with their heads knocked in and contents spilled out.” In Don Alonso’s view, Fort St. Louis, located by his reckoning 136 leagues above Monclova, contained almost nothing of value.<sup>18</sup>

One day after the discovery of Fort St. Louis, De León, guided by Jean Géry, set out to reconnoiter Matagorda Bay. On April 24 his party viewed the entrance to the bay and saw the remains of one of La Salle’s wrecked vessels. In a nearby abandoned Indian village the explorers found a book in French and other items, which suggested that the former residents had participated in the final attack on La Salle’s colony. Satisfied that there was nothing further to report, De León began the march back to the main camp on Garcitas Creek.<sup>19</sup>

On the outward trek to Matagorda Bay, De León routinely questioned Indians about their knowledge of Frenchmen. He learned on April 16 that four white men occupied a nearby *rancheria*, but investigation revealed nothing but an abandoned camp. Indians near the site, however, knew of the Frenchmen and reported that they had gone on horseback to visit Tejas Indians. De León ordered a letter composed in French and dispatched it to the men by Indian carriers.<sup>20</sup>

The actual letter is not extant, but De León summarized its contents in a report. He told the Frenchmen that he had been informed of the death of their

fellow Christians at the hands of coastal Indians, and he invited them to return to civilization. A postscript was added in Latin in case any of the four might be a religious person. It, too, exhorted the survivors to surrender themselves. In hopes of contacting the men, De León promised to wait in the area for several days.<sup>21</sup>

Upon reaching the camp at Garcitas Creek, he found waiting a reply to the letter he had dispatched to the land of the Tejas. Two Frenchmen, Jean L'Archevêque and Jacques Grollet, agreed to accept his invitation and surrender themselves. Traveling northward for approximately sixty-five miles, a detachment of soldiers followed an Indian guide and encountered the two white men on the Colorado River in the Smithville-La Grange area. Also present were eight Tejas Indians and a chieftain. From interrogation of the Indians, De León and Massanet learned secondhand information about the rich lands of the Hasinai Confederacy. For Massanet this intelligence fired his missionary zeal, and through an interpreter he urged the chieftain and his people to accept Christianity. Father Damián also promised to bring priests like himself to their land, and that "I would be there in the following year, at the time of sowing corn." Again in Massanet's words, the chieftain "seemed well pleased, and I was still more so, seeing the harvest to be reaped among the many souls in those lands who know not God."<sup>22</sup> The report of De León was not so euphoric.

Under questioning, L'Archevêque and Grollet gave an account of the final throes of La Salle's colony at Fort St. Louis. Initially, a smallpox epidemic may have claimed the lives of more than 100 people. The survivors, finding themselves without a strong leader and divided by internal squabbles, paid little heed to the possibility of Indian treachery. Many of them, in fact, believed that they were on good terms with natives of the region. However, at Christmas time in 1688 five Indians had approached the settlement and entered the most remote house on the pretext of imparting some important news. More Indians then appeared under the same pretext and began to embrace other members of the colony. These friendly gestures diverted attention from another party of natives who surreptitiously approached along the bed of a creek. Suddenly, an attack by warriors armed with sharp weapons and clubs killed all of the adults, including three religious persons, and the sacking of the houses followed.<sup>23</sup>

An eyewitness account, given a few years later by a youthful survivor, added graphic details to the massacre. Jean-Baptiste Talon saw his mother slain before his eyes. He reported that Indian women, moved by consideration for the children, had carried several youngsters to their village. Unfortunately, they could not save a three-month old infant – the first European child born in Texas. Its mother died first, and then the baby's life ended at the hands of a Karankawa warrior who "dashed [its head] against a tree while holding it by a foot."<sup>24</sup>

A few men, including L'Archevêque and Grollet, had been off among the Tejas and were spared the general carnage. Later, four of them, having heard

news of the attack, returned to Fort St. Louis and buried fourteen of their companions. They also exploded approximately 100 barrels of powder to prevent its falling into the hands of Indians or foreigners. L'Archevêque and Grollet concluded their testimony by informing De León that the settlement had been supplied with firearms, swords, chalices, and a large collection of books with rare bindings.<sup>25</sup>

De León incorporated comments made by the Tejas chieftain into his report, and those remarks likewise served to heighten interest in East Texas. The Indian leader, who was admittedly a long distance from his own country, related that in the past "*una mujer*" had visited his ancestors and imparted religious instruction to them. In response to her teachings, the Tejas had effected religious accessories, such as a chapel – its interior illuminated by a perpetual flame fed by deer fat – an altar, images of saints, and a cross. These appearances of Christianity would be interpreted in Mexico City as further evidence of miraculous visitations among Texas Indians by María Jesús de Agreda, the Spanish nun known as the legendary "Lady in Blue."<sup>26</sup>

Without firsthand observation, De León recorded that the Indians lived in nine settlements of wooden houses, and that they had a governmental organization similar to culturally advanced Indians of New Spain. The Tejas chieftain also reported that his people sowed abundant crops of corn, beans, pumpkins, watermelons, and cantaloupe. Finally, Don Alonso noted that the Tejas leader expressed interest in receiving religious instruction for his people; and he informed the viceroy that his companion, Father Massanet, as well as his brethren of the College of Santa Cruz in Querétaro, would volunteer their services gladly if missions were authorized among the Tejas.<sup>27</sup>

De León's diary and a letter to the viceroy, along with L'Archevêque and Grollet, were dispatched to Mexico City in the custody of Francisco Martínez, who had served as interpreter for the Frenchmen. Martínez arrived in the capital late in June or early in July where interrogation of the two captives began immediately. News of La Salle's death and the failure of his colony created a renewed air of optimism and quickened religious fervor. Indeed, the viceroy and his advisers viewed the disaster at Fort St. Louis as additional proof of God's "divine aid and favor."<sup>28</sup>

The viceroy submitted Father Massanet's suggestions for missionizing the Tejas to an advisory council, and that body likewise saw the failed La Salle episode as evidence of divine intervention. The junta recommended that Father Damián's proposal be accepted, and it ordered De León to file a report outlining suggestions about how to convert the Tejas.

In compliance with his orders, Governor De León drafted a report on August 12, 1689, that reflected his years of experience among frontier natives. Had his suggestions been accepted, the subsequent problems in East Texas might have been avoided. Don Alonso urged the construction of a series of presidios to bridge the gap between the Coahuila settlements and the proposed new mission field. Military outposts should be positioned on the Río Grande,

the Frio, and the Guadalupe, he argued, and a fourth garrison should be located at the mission site itself.<sup>29</sup> This sensible suggestion was ignored, primarily because officials in Mexico City operated on a limited budget and because they believed that a substantial military presence among the Tejas would impede spreading the Gospel.

Still, the matter of French intrusion into Spanish realms could not be ignored, especially in light of the War of the League of Augsburg (1689-1697) – known in the English North American colonies as King William's War – which again pitted France against Spain. Although resisting the notion of converting natives in an atmosphere of military might, officials in New Spain authorized De León to choose a sufficient number of soldiers to prevent further incursions of Frenchmen into Spanish possessions. Their objectives, in the words of one crown official, were "to destroy and flatten all vestiges that remained of the French nation and to extend the reach and favorable influence [of Spain] over all Indians from Coahuila to Texas." But the size of De León's military contingent, 100 men, would become a sore point with Father Massanet, who insisted that the governor was intent on arrogating personal and military ambitions over peaceful missionary goals. This issue sparked strained relations between the two, and it did not augur well for Alonso De León. He would suffer for the unpardonable sin of being right about the absolute necessity of military support for missionary endeavors. Nonetheless, in the capital "the projected enterprise was viewed almost wholly as religious rather than military in nature."<sup>30</sup>

To implement the conversion of the Tejas, royal officials in New Spain assigned responsibility to the Franciscan college at Querétaro and gave Massanet control over most aspects of it. In all, the college selected six priests for the Texas mission field. That number included Father Francisco Hidalgo, who would become the greatest champion of Franciscan missions in East Texas.

Early in 1690, the six friars made final preparations for their trip north toward Texas. Arriving in Coahuila, they experienced a delay because soldiers assigned to De León's command from other provinces had not yet arrived. On March 26 the expedition departed Monclova without waiting longer for the still absent troops.<sup>31</sup>

En route the main expedition was overtaken on March 30 by an assigned company of men from Nuevo León, and it crossed the Río Grande on April 6. The combined force forded the Río Nueces on April 9 and the Río Frio on the following day. On April 13 De León encountered Indians who knew of a Frenchman who had visited other nearby natives. Further investigation came upon a large encampment, where the Spanish commander distributed gifts of tobacco and biscuits in exchange for information. Don Alonso learned that two Frenchmen had been on the far bank of the Guadalupe River, and as proof of their presence, one Indian carried a French musket.<sup>32</sup>

On April 18 a detachment from the company spent part of the day looking for 126 horses that had stampeded during the previous night. The search proved fruitless, for the guide soon lost his way. De León, with a full

complement of men again intact, crossed the Medina River on the following day and proceeded toward the Guadalupe. On April 25, at the head of twenty troops, he again set out to reconnoiter the Matagorda Bay area and inspect the remains of Fort St. Louis. Arriving at the colony the following day, and "having ascertained from its form that it was as before," De León noted that "we burned the wooden fort."<sup>33</sup>

On that same day, April 26, De León made another trek toward the bay of Espíritu Santo, as the Spanish then called Matagorda Bay. From a distance he made an observation that would cast doubts on his judgement. Near the mouth of the San Marcos River, in Don Alonso's words, "we recognized in the bay what were apparently two buoys ... indicating the same channel." Lacking a canoe to investigate further and unable to find Indians "from whom to obtain information," De León could only report his suspicions to the viceroy. His failure to determine the nature of the objects, coupled with mounting friction between himself and Father Massanet, damaged his reputation.<sup>34</sup>

On the final day of April 1690, additional troops from presidios in Nueva Vizcaya, operating under express orders of the viceroy of New Spain, overtook De León and swelled the ranks of his soldiery. And at that juncture the commander bent his efforts toward finding "some Indians who could guide us and inform us whether there were any Frenchmen in these regions."<sup>35</sup>

Using gifts such as biscuits, handkerchiefs, tobacco, razors, and knives as inducements, De León succeeded in luring an Indian into his presence. The man informed the commander that he was a Tejas and that he would be willing to summon the governor of his people, "among whom were some Frenchmen." De León gave the Indian a horse and promised to await the result of his mission. Unfortunately, the Indian soon "returned to inform me that his horse had run away from him."<sup>36</sup>

On the next day, May 6, De León somewhat cynically noted that this same Indian, "greedy for the gift, told me that if I would give him another horse he would go to summon the governor of the Tejas and that he would leave his wife and a brother-in-law of his to guide us. So I sent him on this day." During the man's absence, Don Alonso received the first concrete news that there were indeed French youths among the Indian nations.<sup>37</sup>

Choosing eight soldiers and an Indian interpreter, Don Alonso marched nine leagues and then passed "through a forest of oaks and grape-vines [for] another five leagues." He discovered Peirre Talon, then age fourteen, near the edge of a wood. Two days later, on the morning of April 12, he rescued another French youth of twenty years named Pierre Meunier.<sup>38</sup>

Over the next ten days, De León followed a path described as northeast or northeast-by-north. As he entered the western edge of Tejas settlements, Don Alonso remarked on planted fields of corn and beans and commented that the Indians "had very clean houses and high beds in which to sleep." On May 22 he passed through groves of live oak and pines, passed "hills where there are veins of black and red stone," and finally arrived at "a valley thickly settled

with houses of Tejas Indians." Adjoining the houses were bounteous fields of corn, beans, pumpkins, and watermelons.<sup>39</sup>

About half-a-mile distant from the first valley, De León and company came upon a second valley, also thickly populated by Tejas Indians. There he met the Indian governor, who informed the commander that his house was nearby. And to that settlement, in De León's words, "we gave the name San Francisco de los Tejas." That afternoon, Don Alonso called at the governor's house where he was received by the man's mother, his wife, a daughter, and many other people. The host then brought forth "a bench on which to seat me and ... [gave] me a luncheon of corn tamales and atole, all very clean."<sup>40</sup>

Over the next several days De León and Father Massanet searched for a site on which to found the first Spanish mission in East Texas. During that time Don Alonso conferred a staff with a cross and the title of governor on the high Tejas official, whom the Spaniards would call "Bernardino." De León especially enjoined the Indian governor and his people to have respect for the priests, and commanded him to "make all his families attend Christian teaching, in order that they might be instructed in the affairs of our holy Catholic faith so that later they might be baptized and become Christians."<sup>41</sup>

Mission San Francisco de los Tejas and a residence for the padres took shape over a five-day period from May 27 to May 31. Upon completion of the work, De León gave possession of the mission to Father Massanet. Mass, with the Indian governor and his people in attendance, was celebrated there for the first time on June 1.<sup>42</sup>

While among the Tejas, De León learned that four Frenchmen had visited their villages recently. The Indian governor claimed that he had refused to receive them, for he professed friendship to the Spaniards, then en route to East Texas. The Frenchmen were undoubtedly members of Henri de Tonti's expedition, which had descended from Fort Saint-Louis on the Illinois River in 1689 to look for survivors of La Salle's colony. One of the men, described by the Indians as having only one hand, was almost certainly Tonti himself. Having been rebuffed by the Tejas, the Frenchmen had withdrawn eastward toward the Mississippi River. Don Alonso made no attempt to pursue the retreating Frenchmen, believing that the mission as an intelligence gathering outpost could monitor their activities.<sup>43</sup>

On the day the mission was completed, De León began preparations for the return march to Coahuila. He proposed that fifty soldiers be left to guard the mission, but this suggestion was opposed unequivocally by Massanet, who would accept only three soldiers to remain with an equal number of priests. Before leaving the mission, Massanet secured a promise from the Indian governor that he would not mistreat the resident friars. Unfortunately, subsequent events revealed the hollowness of that pledge. In reality, as Franciscan historian Lino Gómez Canedo has observed, "the experienced and reasonable Alonso De León knew Indians much better than the visionary and impetuous Massanet."<sup>44</sup>

As De León's command reached the Guadalupe River, Don Alonso learned of additional French children living as captives among the Indians. He detached a small force from his troops and once again descended toward the coast. The thought of Christian children living among the heathen weighed heavily on the commander, and he was determined to rescue them at all cost.

For three days De León sought information about the exact location of the children, visiting one *rancheria* after another and distributing presents along the way. On June 21 he came upon Indians who held Marie Madelaine and Robert Talon – their faces and bodies covered with tattoos and paint in the manner of most Texas tribes. Terms of ransom for the girl, sixteen, and the boy, not yet six, were discussed, agreed upon, and paid. It seems, however, that De León had been overly eager in his bargaining, for it quickly occurred to the Indians that they had undervalued their human cargo. To De León's disgust, they then came to him "with a thousand impertinencies, begging of us all the horses, and even the clothing which we wore upon our backs." While wrangling continued, a third child of undetermined age, Lucien Talon, arrived in the possession of other Indians, and again De León was showered with impertinence by natives, brandishing bows and arrows and "begging exorbitant things." Demands soon turned to threats when the Indians insisted that they "would have to shoot and kill us all." In De León's words: "Their saying this and beginning to shoot were simultaneous, whereupon we attacked them, and, having killed four [Indians] and wounded others, they retreated." Don Alonso's actions, well justified in his own mind, drew harsh criticism from Father Massanet, who insisted that lack of discipline among the soldiers had provoked a clash that unnecessarily cost the lives of four people. It was yet another example of discord between the two men.<sup>45</sup>

After rejoining the main body of his troops at the Guadalupe River, De León marched without incident to the Río Grande. Arriving there on July 4, he found the river swollen by flood waters. For eight days his command waited for the current to subside, and during that time Don Alonso drafted his account of the expeditions. He once again painted a highly complimentary portrait of East Texas and its Indian inhabitants. Aside from the Tejas, he noted that to the east and northeast of those settlements were villages of the Kadohadachos, who also raised abundant crops and managed their food supply to last throughout the year. But the most ominous part of his report cautioned that Frenchmen were likely to mount challenges to the Spanish outpost in East Texas. He also noted that intelligence from coastal Indians suggested that a ship, presumably French, had stopped to pick up firewood and fresh water. To avert disaster, De León again urged the founding of permanent Spanish outposts – specifically, on the Guadalupe River and at Matagorda Bay. Don Alonso also requested that additional friars be sent to spread the faith among the infidel natives, and he recounted his recovery of five young survivors from La Salle's colony. Captain Gregorio de Salinas Varona, second in command on the expedition, accompanied by Pierre Meunier, carried the governor's reports to Mexico City. On July 12, 1690, Alonso De León left Texas for the last time and returned to Monclova.<sup>46</sup>



In September 1690 Father Damián Massanet filed a separate report with the viceroy. The padre requested fourteen priests and seven lay brothers for the Texas mission fields, and he supported De León's recommendation for settlements on the Guadalupe and at Matagorda. As for the Tejas, Massanet requested neither soldiers nor a presidio. Instead, he urged the recruitment of civilian craftsmen to build living quarters and chapels. Finally, Massanet suggested that Hispanicized Indian children in New Spain be sent to Texas to grow up there and mingle with the Tejas under the supervision and instruction of priests – all low-budget items that received a favorable reading by officials in Mexico City.<sup>47</sup>

Massanet's proposal was endorsed by the crown agent on October 10 and confirmed by the *Junta de Hacienda* (treasury) on November 16. Officials in the capital, however, deemed a military settlement on the Guadalupe to be premature, and in any event an expense that had to be approved in Spain by the king and the Royal Council of the Indies. Unless requested by the padres, no additional soldiers would be sent to Texas. Viceregal authorities did approve Massanet's request for eight missions in Texas – three among the Tejas, including San Francisco de los Tejas, four among the Kadohadachos, and one for tribes along the Guadalupe River. The fourteen priests and seven lay brothers proposed by Father Damián were likewise approved.<sup>48</sup>

De León did not fare so well. The suspected buoys near the mouth of San Marcos were of particular concern to the viceroy. He closely questioned Salinas Varona and Pierre Meunier about the suspicious objects. Salinas defended De León against charges that he had been remiss in not investigating the precise nature of the objects, for the commander did not have a boat or canoe. Nevertheless, the chief executive took immediate steps to outfit a sea expedition to Matagorda Bay. The expense of that undertaking, which disclosed that the suspected buoys were only upended logs embedded in silt, created still another black mark on the record of Alonso De León.<sup>49</sup>

As plans were laid in Mexico City for a new entrada into Texas, the viceroy and an advisory junta quickly removed De León from consideration as commander. It was suggested diplomatically that his continued presence in Coahuila was essential to the security of the province. In reality, Don Alonso had fallen into disfavor. He was blamed for not removing all traces of French occupation at Matagorda Bay, he was the target of Father Massanet's frequent complaints, and his frank and honest nature often offended governmental officials in the distant capital. A new governor for the province of Texas, Domingo Terán de los Ríos, received appointment on January 23, 1691. Within two months, Alonso De León died in Coahuila.<sup>50</sup>

In all, between 1686 and 1690, Alonso De León carried out five land expeditions, four of which entered Texas. His contributions in reconnoitering the land, naming rivers, gathering intelligence on Indian groups to the north of the Río Grande, and founding the first Spanish mission in Texas are often not fully appreciated in Texas history. His compassion for the French youths, who had witnessed the slaughter of their mother and other adults at Fort St. Louis

and who were otherwise condemned to live out their life among pagan Indians, touched his soul. De León also injected unwanted realism into the euphoria that surrounded the first mission in East Texas. Long before others would acknowledge it, he recognized that unsecured missions on a distant frontier in Texas invited failure and potential disaster. He stands unchallenged as the most able and dedicated soldier-administrator of early Spanish Texas and Coahuila.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>*Historia de Nuevo León con noticias sobre Coahuila, Texas y Nuevo Mexico, escrita en el siglo XVII por el Cap. Alonso de Leon, Juan Bautista Chapu y el Gral. Fernando Sanchez de Zamora* (Monterrey, 1961), pp. XVIII-XXIII. 3-15. Alonso De León, the elder, studied Latin, rhetoric, and philosophy under Jesuit instructors at the Real y Máximo Colegio de San Ildefonso de México.

<sup>2</sup>Carlos E. Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas* (7 vols.; Austin, 1936-1958), 1, pp. 210-211; Donald E. Chipman, "In Search of Cabeza de Vaca's Route across Texas: An Historiographical Survey," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, 91 (October 1987), pp. 144-146. Castañeda consistently misidentified the Río de las Palmas of colonial times as the Río Grande.

<sup>3</sup>*Historia de Nuevo León*, pp. XXVII, 140; Roberts S. Weddle, *Wilderness Manhunt: The Spanish Search for La Salle* (Austin, 1973), pp. 54-55.

<sup>4</sup>Weddle, *Wilderness Manhunt*, p. 55.

<sup>5</sup>*Historia de Nuevo León*, pp. 194-202.

<sup>6</sup>*Historia de Nuevo León*, pp. 202-204; Weddle, *Wilderness Manhunt*, pp. 64-65.

<sup>7</sup>Letter from Ambassador Pedro Ronquillo to the King (August 9, 1686), Archivo General de Indias (AGI), México 616. Associated with the expeditions led by Alonso De León were two others by land and a total of five by sea, all sent in search of La Salle's colony. For details, see Weddle, *Wilderness Manhunt*, pp. 44-158, *passim*.

<sup>8</sup>Letter of Fray Damián Massanet to Don Carlos de Sigüenza, in *Spanish Exploration in the Southwest, 1542-1706*, edited by Herbert E. Bolton (Reprint; New York, 1963), p. 355.

<sup>9</sup>Letter of Fray Damián Massanet, pp. 355-356.

<sup>10</sup>Letter of Fray Damián Massanet, pp. 356-357; Weddle, *Wilderness Manhunt*, pp. 138-147.

<sup>11</sup>*Historia de Nuevo León*, pp. 209-210.

<sup>12</sup>See map of Alonso De León Expedition, 1689, AGI. Mapas y Planos, México 86. Reproduced in Donald E. Chipman, *Spanish Texas, 1519-1821* (Austin, 1992), p. 82.

<sup>13</sup>Itinerary of the De León Expedition of 1689, in *Spanish Exploration in the Southwest*, p. 390.

<sup>14</sup>Itinerary of the Expedition of 1689, pp. 390-391.

<sup>15</sup>Itinerary of the Expedition of 1689, pp. 391-394.

<sup>16</sup>Itinerary of the Expedition of 1689, p. 394. De León indicated that a statue or painting of Our Lady of Guadalupe had been brought along as the expedition's protectress and that a likeness of her appeared on the royal standard. The location of La Salle's Fort St. Louis has been identified beyond reasonable doubt. It was at the Keeran Site on Garcitas Creek, Victoria Country, precisely at the place indicated by Herbert E. Bolton in 1915. See Kathleen Gilmore, "La Salle's Fort St. Louis in Texas," *Bulletin of the Texas Archeological Society*, 55 (1984), pp. 61-72.

<sup>17</sup>Letter of Fray Damián Massanet, p. 362; Itinerary of the Expedition of 1689, p. 398.

<sup>18</sup>Itinerary of the Expedition of 1689, pp. 398-399.

<sup>19</sup>Itinerary of the Expedition of 1689, pp. 399-401. Because Jean Géry demonstrated specific knowledge of the terrain and physical features associated with Fort St. Louis and served as De León's guide in the reconnoitering of Matagorda Bay, it seems probable that he was a member of La Salle's colony.

<sup>20</sup>Itinerary of the Expedition of 1689, pp. 395-396.

<sup>21</sup>Itinerary of the Expedition of 1689, p. 396.

<sup>22</sup>*Carta de Alonso De León al Virrey, dándole cuenta de su jornada a la Bahía del Espíritu Santo, donde hallaron destruida la colonia de los franceses* (May 16, 1689), in *Primeras exploraciones y poblamiento de Texas (1686-1694)*, edited by Lino Gómez Canedo (Monterrey, 1968), pp. 114-115; letter of Fray Damián Massanet, p. 364.

<sup>23</sup>Itinerary of the Expedition of 1689, p. 403; Robert S. Weddle, "The Talon Interrogations: A Rare Perspective," in *Three Primary Documents: La Salle, the Mississippi, and the Gulf*, edited by Robert S. Weddle, Mary Christine Morkovsky, and Patricia Galloway (College Station, 1987), p. 216. Verification of the epidemic is lacking. Jean L'Archevêque later retracted his account of its occurrence.

<sup>24</sup>"Voyage to the Mississippi through the Gulf of Mexico," in Weddle, *Three Primary Documents*, p. 237. During the Domingo Terán de los Ríos expedition of 1691, Jean-Baptiste Talon and Eustache Bréman were recovered from Indians by Captain Francisco Martínez.

<sup>25</sup>Itinerary of the expedition of 1689, p. 403.

<sup>26</sup>*Carta de Alonso De León* (May 16, 1688), p. 114. For treatment of María Jesús de Agreda's alleged bilocations at the Franciscan convent of Agreda and among Texas Indians, see Carlos E. Castañeda, "The Woman in Blue," *The Age of Mary; and Exclusively Marian Magazine*, The Mystical City of God Issue (January-February 1958), pp. 22-24 and Castañeda, *Catholic Heritage*, 1: 195-203. For a critical biography of Sister María, see Thomas D. Kendrick, *Mary of A'Greda: The Life and Legend of a Spanish Nun* (London, 1967).

<sup>27</sup>*Carta de Alonso De León* (May 16, 1689), pp. 114-115.

<sup>28</sup>William E. Dunn, *Spanish and French Rivalry in the Gulf Region of the United States, 1678-1702: The Beginnings of Texas and Pensacola* (Austin, 1917), pp. 110-111.

<sup>29</sup>*Carta de Alonso De León al Virrey exponiendo sus planes sobre el poblamiento de Texas* (August 12, 1689), in *Primeras exploraciones*, pp. 123-129.

<sup>30</sup>Report of the Fiscal de Hacienda to the Viceroy (November 30, 1716), Archivo del Ministerio de Hacienda (Madrid), Tomo XXVII, 1st quotation; Dunn, *Rivalry*, pp. 116-117; Weddle, *Wilderness Manhunt*, pp. 207-209, 2nd quotation on p. 207.

<sup>31</sup>Father Francisco Hidalgo did not accompany the De León – Massanet expedition of 1690. He and a second priest remained at mission San Salvador de la Caldera. See *Primeras exploraciones*, p. xvii.

<sup>32</sup>Itinerary of the De León Expedition of 1690, pp. 406-407. See map of Alonso De León Expedition of 1690, AGI, Mapas y Planos, México 88. Reproduced in Chipman, *Spanish Texas*, p. 90.

<sup>33</sup>Diary of Alonso De León (1690), AGI, México 617. The fort was allegedly burned by Massanet, but De León recorded that "we burned the fort" in his entry for April 26.

<sup>34</sup>Itinerary of the Expedition of 1690, p. 409.

<sup>35</sup>Itinerary of the Expedition of 1690, p. 410.

<sup>36</sup>Itinerary of the Expedition of 1690, p. 411.

<sup>37</sup>Itinerary of the Expedition of 1690, pp. 411-412.

<sup>38</sup>Itinerary of the Expedition of 1690, pp. 411-412; Weddle, "The Talon Interrogations," p. 215.

<sup>39</sup>Itinerary of the Expedition of 1690, pp. 414-415. Watermelons were not indigenous to the Americas, but the seeds of European crops were often popular trade items among Native Americans who lived in lands beyond Spanish control.

<sup>40</sup>*Diario del general Alonso De León en su entrada a Texas desde Coahuila* (March 26 to July 11, 1690), in *Primeras exploraciones*, p. 144.

<sup>41</sup>Itinerary of the Expedition of 1690, p. 416.

<sup>42</sup>Itinerary of the Expedition of 1690, pp. 417-418. The site of the first Spanish mission in East Texas has not been confirmed by archaeological evidence. Its likely location was near present-day Augusta, Texas, in northeastern Houston County. A commemorative site near Weches, Texas, was established in 1936 on the occasion of the Centennial of the Texas Republic.

<sup>43</sup>Weddle, *Wilderness Manhunt*, pp. 210-211.

<sup>44</sup>*Primeras exploraciones*, pp. xviii-xix. The three priests left in East Texas were Miguel Fontcuberta, Francisco Casañas de Jesús María, and Antonio Bordoy.

<sup>45</sup>Weddle, "The Talon Interrogations," pp. 215; Itinerary of the Expedition of 1690, pp. 420-421, quotations; Weddle, *Wilderness Manhunt*, pp. 211-212. The Indians who held the French youths have not been definitely identified.

<sup>46</sup>*Alonso De León informa al virrey sobre su nueva visita a la Bahía del Espíritu Santo y la Fundación de San Francisco de los Tejas* (July 14, 1960), in *Primeras exploraciones*, pp. 153-158.

<sup>47</sup>*Carta del padre mazanet al Conde de Galve, informándole sobre su viaje a Texas y exponiendo sus ideas sobre su población e incremento de las misiones* (September 1690), in *Primeras exploraciones*, pp. 159-165.

<sup>48</sup>Castañeda, *Catholic Heritage*, 1: 360-361.

<sup>49</sup>Testimony of Efforts to Remove Buoys (January 24, 1691), AGI, Mexico 619. Discovery of a map drawn in 1691 by Manuel Joseph de Cárdenas allowed Bolton to establish the site of Fort St. Louis. See Herbert E. Bolton, "The Location of La Salle's Colony on the Gulf of Mexico," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 2 (September 1915), pp. 165-182. See Map of Manuel Joseph de Cardenas, 1691, AGI, Mapas y Planos, Mexico 89. Reproduced in Chipman, *Spanish Texas*, p. 95.

<sup>50</sup>*Primeras exploraciones*, pp. xxi-xxii; Castañeda, *Catholic Heritage*, p. 362.

**SPANISH LOUISIANA LAND POLICY: ANTECEDENT TO THE  
ANGLO-AMERICAN COLONIZATION OF EAST TEXAS,  
1769-1821**

*by Light Townsend Cummins*

Land hunger played an important, if not unique role in the westward expansion of the United States from the era of the American Revolution to the closing of the frontier late in the nineteenth century. Historians of the United States from the time of Frederick Jackson Turner in the 1890s to the present have understood the overwhelming influence that the desire for land has worked on the nation's development. Much of the historical literature regarding this phenomenon, however, suffers from an historiographical deficiency because it is written from the national perspective of the United States. There is a tendency on the part of some frontier historians to approach the expansion of the United States as if the Anglo-American pioneers moved westward into a territorial vacuum.<sup>1</sup>

Such was not the case historically and especially so in considering the Anglo-American settlement of Texas in the 1820s. The westward movement of Anglo-Americans into East Texas was a continuation of an earlier migration into Spanish Louisiana and the Mississippi Valley.<sup>2</sup> Historians of colonial New Spain and the hispanic frontier of North America, of course, always realized this historical truism, and much of their work reflects this relatively more sophisticated understanding of the process.<sup>3</sup> History written from the perspective of the Spanish frontier in North America clearly shows that Spain manifested consistent land policies throughout her vast colonial region which, late in the eighteenth century, ran from Florida westward to California.<sup>4</sup>

This fact gives rise to an essential question largely ignored by historians of Texas; namely, was Spanish colonial land policy in Louisiana itself a major contributing factor to the westward movement of the United States into Texas during the 1820s? Surprisingly, no historian has systematically examined the land policies implemented by the Spanish governors of Louisiana as motivations for the later decrees which permitted Anglo-American settlement in Texas. This essay compares the land policies of three pivotal Spanish administrators: Alejandro O'Reilly, who implemented the basic land policies in Louisiana which Spain thereafter would follow in Texas; Esteban Miró, the governor of Louisiana whose land decrees set in motion the first large influx of Anglo-Americans into the lower Mississippi Valley and Gulf coast during the 1780s and 1790s; and Manuel Gayoso de Lemos, whose Louisiana Land Decree of 1797 became a model for Texas Governor Antonio María Martínez, whose dealings with Moses and Stephen F. Austin began the *empresario* era in Texas.<sup>5</sup> This essay will show that all three Louisiana administrators followed similar policies which brought similar results. These policies were first implemented in Spanish Louisiana, starting with a decree of General O'Reilly in 1770. Further refinements provided by Louisiana Governors Miró and

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Gayoso set into common practice the procedures later followed in Spanish Texas. In a larger sense, Spanish Louisiana land law and the legal methods by which ownership of land holdings evolved to individuals served as a direct contribution factor to encouraging the westward movement of Anglo-American settlers. Hence, Spanish colonial land policy as first implemented in Louisiana had a direct impact on the Anglo-American settlement of East Texas.

Alejandro O'Reilly began the process. He is best remembered to history as the stalwart Spanish general who firmly established Spanish control in New Orleans in 1769, just over a year after the revolt which drove Antonio Ulloa from power after Louisiana's transfer from French to Spanish sovereignty following the Seven Year's War.<sup>6</sup> Born in County Meath, Ireland, in 1723, O'Reilly had emigrated to Spain as a small child with his Roman Catholic family. He enlisted in military service, served in the Hibernian regiment, and earned many distinctions during his military career, including the undying admiration of his monarch, King Charles III, whose life he had saved during a riot in Madrid in 1766. O'Reilly embarked upon a career of service in the Indies early in the 1760s when he helped restore Spanish control at Havana after the British occupation.<sup>7</sup> The general was chosen to reestablish Spanish government in New Orleans in 1769. He arrived there on July 24 in command of over 2,000 troops. Although never the governor of Louisiana by appointment, O'Reilly spent almost two years in the province while he successfully planted the flag of Spain firmly in the lower Mississippi River Valley.<sup>8</sup> "He reorganized the governmental structure of the colony along Spanish lines," as one historian has noted, "created a Cabildo for New Orleans, instituted the Spanish legal system, extended Louisiana's trade to Cuba and certain Iberian ports, established a militia, organized military defenses, set guidelines for relations with the Indians of the area, and promulgated regulations for awarding land grants."<sup>9</sup>

It was in this latter activity that O'Reilly might have had the greatest lasting impact on the hispanic frontier in North America. His land regulations of 1770 changed the nature of Spanish land holding in the northeastern provinces of New Spain. Previously, land policy in New Spain had rested on historic Castillian influences which were based on the granting of land by the king for certain traditional reasons, none of which assumed the purpose of such grants was to devolve public land to private ownership for economic reasons. Instead, based on the provisions of *Siete Partidas* and the *Levas de Toro*, Spanish monarchs for almost three centuries had awarded grants of lands to royal subjects in the concept that land was a reward for royal service or for merit.<sup>10</sup> The *adelantado* and *encomienda* grants of sixteenth-century New Spain rested on such assumptions. By the seventeenth century, the legal classification of the various categories of land in New Spain also reflected the assumption that private ownership of land was tied to the personal beneficence of the monarch for actual or potential merits and services rendered by the grantee.<sup>11</sup>

By the mid-eighteenth century, the need to settle the northern frontier of new Spain made for a radical change in policy. Starting with the frontier settlement of Canary Islanders in Texas during the 1730s, land policy began to reflect a new motivation: attracting individual inhabitants by the promise of household-based grants made to family units. The formal agreement of a potential settler to inhabit the land granted by the monarch was itself deemed a sufficient enough service for the crown to warrant the grant. This became policy in 1754 when royal instructions to the viceroy of New Spain implemented new regulations which had greater similarity to methods employed in British America than to earlier practices in the Spanish Indies.<sup>12</sup> Basic decisions regarding land law were transferred from Spain to regional commanders in the Indies. In particular, the power to make and confirm grants of land was settled directly on Spanish governors, who now had the power to set policy in keeping with the needs of their districts.<sup>13</sup> In many cases, the ultimate purpose of the grant became the giving of land as an inducement for settlement by individual holders.

General O'Reilly used the regulations of 1754 as the basis for a policy of land granting that would be repeated at important junctures during the remaining decades of Spanish colonial control in Louisiana and Texas. On February 18, 1770, General O'Reilly issued a formal proclamation outlining the procedures and regulations to be followed in granting land to settlers in Louisiana.<sup>14</sup> This proclamation did something no previous Spanish land decree had done. It attempted to blend the Spanish legal system into that of another nation: France. This was a necessity because grants of land already had been made by the French in Louisiana. As the general himself noted, the decree came as a result of "diverse complaints and petitions, which have been addressed to us by the inhabitants of Opelousas, Attacapas, Natchitoches, and other places of this province, joined to the knowledge we have acquired of the local concerns, culture, and means of the inhabitants." For such reasons, the expressed purpose of O'Reilly's decree was a "new regulation which should fix the extent of the grants which should hereafter be made."<sup>15</sup>

The twelve provisions of O'Reilly's decree became a model for all subsequent decrees issued by Spanish administrators along the hispanic frontier of North America, including Texas. Among its important and new features was the fact that grants of land would be made to heads of households based on the size of the family unit. As well, O'Reilly provided for a relatively easy method of survey and grant registration, and required that grantees make improvements on their land to obtain permanent title. The general even anticipated the role which livestock raising would play. "All cattle shall be branded by the proprietors," the decree noted, "and those who shall not have branded them at the age of eighteenth months cannot thereafter claim a property therein."<sup>16</sup> Taken as a whole, O'Reilly's decrees put Spanish administrators at the provincial level in the land office business for the first time, a role they would continue for decades thereafter. Although O'Reilly did not have Anglo-American settlers in mind when he wrote his decree, its

provisions represented a liberality of land granting that would not be seen in the United States until the Homestead Act of the 1860s. It is little wonder, then, that the Louisiana Land Decree of 1770 would eventually attract the attention of Anglo-American settlers as they pushed westward into the Mississippi Valley. This was so because grants of land in Spanish Louisiana, under the provisions of this decree, would be free of cost financially, while public lands in the United States in the decades after the American Revolution had to be purchased.

If Alejandro O'Reilly was the author of Spain's land granting policy for the final decades of the northern frontier in New Spain, Louisiana governor Esteban Miró became the first administrator to use it for attracting large numbers of Anglo-Americans into the region. Miró, who had a long career in the Indies, had a basic understanding of land as an inducement to settlement.<sup>17</sup> Born in Catalonia in 1744, he had served in the Zamora regiment early in the 1760s, then came to New Spain in 1762 where he saw service in the Corona Regiment until his transfer to O'Reilly's Algerian command in 1775. He came to Louisiana in 1778 as the commander of the Fixed Louisiana Regiment, serving as aide-de-camp to governor Bernardo de Gálvez. Miró became governor of Louisiana on January 20, 1782, and served in that position until 1791, when he was replaced by the Baron de Carondelet.<sup>18</sup>

Starting in the mid-1780s, Miró faced the problem of integrating into Spanish Louisiana large numbers of Anglo-Americans who had resided prior to the American Revolution in the former British province of West Florida, captured by General Bernardo de Gálvez. Now a part of Spanish Louisiana, Miró turned to the O'Reilly land regulations as a mechanism for including these residents in his province. In so doing, he embarked on a plan which would make possible the continued residence of Anglo-American landowners on their British-era holdings and, at the same time, provided a foundation upon which later Anglo-American settlement would occur. Spain, anxious to populate the territorially-expanded province of Louisiana with colonists, already had experienced difficulty inducing Iberian immigrants to the lower Mississippi Valley. This was due to financial problems in underwriting a trans-Atlantic migration of Spanish subjects and the unwillingness on the part of individual hispanic colonists to relocate in Louisiana, which many of them saw as an isolated, economically backward, and undesirable place of potential residence. Hence, Louisiana needed loyal settlers who might come from any acceptable quarter. Anglo-Americans, under the proper circumstances, would meet this need. Such a realization prompted a proposal from Governor Miró in 1785 which permitted British-era residents to retain their holdings. They could become loyal Spanish subjects by taking an oath of allegiance to the King of Spain and adopting Roman Catholicism as their publicly-professed religion. Implementation of this plan began during the spring of 1786. Miró created two parishes that covered the former British Natchez District. Each parish received a priest, a military commandant, and a detachment of troops for the protection of the parish.<sup>19</sup>



The Anglo-American settlement of Louisiana accelerated as this policy was quickly applied to new settlers who wished to enter the province as permanent residents. Such efforts were hurried along by the ambitious schemes of Pierre Wouves d'Arges, a Frenchman who had fought in the American Revolution. D'Arges appeared at the Spanish court in 1787 as the author of a scheme to import approximately 1,500 Anglo-American settlers into Louisiana as a loyal buffer zone population. Although d'Arges offered his proposals as his own ideas, they were in fact those of Governor Miró, with whom he had discussed the proposal during a visit to New Orleans the previous year. The Frenchman argued that Anglo-American settlers would be a defensive force and an economic boon to Louisiana.<sup>20</sup> As one historian noted, Spain "reasoned that the colonists, assured of their property and free commerce, would adhere to a government that dispensed such advantages."<sup>21</sup> Hence, a royal order of February 18, 1787 revised O'Reilly's land decree of 1770 to meet the needs of this defensive settlement of Anglo-Americans.<sup>22</sup>

Although d'Arges' plan brought no settlers into Spanish Louisiana, Estevan Miró adopted the royal order of 1787 into a successful land-grant policy that brought hundreds of Anglo-Americans into the province during the following decade. Miró's decree of April 20, 1789, which implemented the loyal order, made clear the requirements by which immigrants could receive land grants in Louisiana. "They will not be molested on religious matters," he noted, "although no other public worship will be permitted to be publicly exercised than that of the Roman Catholic Church."<sup>23</sup> Most importantly, he ordered that "land will be granted gratis to them at their arrival in proportion of the hands, or faculties each Family should have." The governor guaranteed that each settler would be able to bring his personal property into Louisiana free of duty or taxation. Finally, grants of land would be made to settlers on "the condition they shall at the same time take the due oath of allegiance & bound themselves only to take up arms in defense of this Province against Whatsoever enemy who could attempt to invade it."<sup>24</sup>

The Baron de Carondelet, Miró's successor as governor of Louisiana, continued this policy. Within a few weeks of becoming governor, the Baron recommended to his superiors in Spain that additional Anglo-Americans be encouraged to migrate to the province. He felt that these new settlers should be enticed by liberal commercial policies and a great degree of religious toleration, in addition to being given free lands. In an effort to accelerate this process, Carondelet turned for the first time to *empresarios*, or land agents, as a way to encourage additional immigration.<sup>25</sup> In the mid-1790s, he supported the unsuccessful colonization project of the Frenchman, the Marquis of Mason Rouge, whose grants reflected the policies first implemented by General O'Reilly. Other immigration agents followed, including Joseph Piernas, Luis de Vilemont, William Murray, the Baron de Bastrop, George Morgan, and Moses Austin. All of this activity caused Thomas Jefferson to remark: "I wish a hundred thousand of our inhabitants would accept the invitation. It may be the means of delivering to us peaceably what may otherwise cost a war."<sup>26</sup>

The closing years of Spanish control in Louisiana therefore witnessed the final codification of the land policy which would, in the next generation, provide for the settlement of Texas in the 1820s. Little difference can be found between the instructions of 1797 for the settling of Anglo-Americans in Louisiana and the provisions for the grants later made to Moses and Stephen F. Austin. The 1797 Louisiana instructions, issued by Governor Manuel Gayoso de Lemos in 1797, required that all grantees be Roman Catholic in faith: "Those who do not conform to this rule," the promulgation noted, "are not to be admitted." Grants would be made to family units, while unmarried individuals had to receive special exemptions. Each head of family would receive 200 arpents of land, while an additional fifty would be added for each dependent. Gayoso's instructions also provided that "immediately on the arrival of a new settler the oath of fidelity shall be required of him." Provision also was made for the importation of slaves, provided they were "lawfully and wholly the property of the emigrant."<sup>27</sup>

The Louisiana Purchase of 1803 averted the need for the potential war feared by Thomas Jefferson, but the Anglo-American migration which started in Spanish Louisiana continued into Texas during the first decades of the nineteenth century. After almost two decades of filibustering from the United States, Martinez, governor of Texas early in the 1820s, moved to permit an orderly Anglo-American migration into Texas. In so doing, he adopted the land granting policies and the legal stipulations which had originated earlier in Spanish Louisiana. A native of Jaen in Spain, Martinez had a distinguished career of military service which began in 1785. Like Miró a generation before, Martinez also had served in the Zamora regiment. A highly decorated military hero, Martinez became governor of Spanish Texas in March 1817.<sup>28</sup> By late in the 1810s, the problems of filibustering had worked a subtle change in Spanish Texas. Administrators were willing to look with greater favor upon the potential settlement of any groups who would maintain loyalty to the Spanish king. It was at this time that Moses Austin appeared at San Antonio. The story of his success is well-known.

Austin, a former resident of the St. Louis area of Spanish Louisiana, already had received a Spanish land grant in the 1790s from the government at New Orleans.<sup>29</sup> He knew the basic legal system to be employed in such matters. In his initial contact with Martinez, Austin had little success until the intervention of Filipe de Neri, better-known by his fabricated noble title as the Baron de Bastrop. Neri, or Bastrop, also had earlier experience with Spanish Louisiana land grants, having received title to a huge grant early in the 1790s.<sup>30</sup> Bastrop interceded with Martinez on Austin's behalf, with the result that the governor made a generous grant to the Anglo-American. On January 17, 1821, Moses Austin received permission to settle 300 families in a 200,000 square mile area. This grant, approved by Joaquin de Arredondo as the political chief of the *Provincias Internas* at Monterrey, contained specific qualifications that the settler should meet:

Therefore, if to the first and principal requisite of being catholics, or agreeing to become so, before entering the Spanish territory, they also add that of accrediting their good character and habits, as is offered in said petition: and taking the necessary oath, to be obedient in all things to the government; to take up arms in its defense against all kinds of enemies; and to be faithful to the King; and to observe the political constitution of the Spanish monarchy; the most flattering hopes may be formed, that the said province will receive an important augmentation, in agriculture, industry, and arts, by the new emigrants; who will introduce them ... .<sup>31</sup>

The untimely death of Moses Austin on June 10, 1821, saw this grant devolve to his son, Stephen F. Austin. As heir, he went to San Antonio late in the summer of 1821, where he had conferences with Governor Martínez.<sup>32</sup> Young Austin secured from the governor a renewal of the colonization contract given earlier to his father. Thus began the legal Anglo-American settlement of Spanish Texas.<sup>33</sup> Although the independence of Mexico would bring Martínez's land policy to a quick end late in 1821, the basic outlines continued under the colonization laws of Augustine de Iturbide and the government later instituted by the Constitution of 1824.<sup>34</sup> By their content, these Mexican decrees also showed the Louisiana influence of the O'Reilly decree of 1770, Miró's policies of the late 1780s, and Gayoso's regulation of 1797.

These Spanish land policies favored Anglo-American expansion because of their rather unique accommodations to the needs of the westward moving settlers from the United States. The fifty years between the land decrees of Alejandro O'Reilly and the Austin colonization contracts negotiated by Antonio María Martínez were ones of overwhelming change all along the northern frontier of colonial New Spain. Governmental reorganization, economic dislocations, revolutionary movements, and the westward press of the Anglo-American frontier became historical hallmarks of great change during this era. One rather remarkable constant, however, remained almost unchanged across the course of these turbulent years: Spanish land-grant policy. A liberal policy of granting two hundred arpents of land to heads of households, an only nominal requirement of Roman Catholicism, the requirement for minimum improvements on the land grant, and the taking of a loyalty oath constituted the main requirements for settlement. Contrasted to this was the fact that land in the United States had to be purchased by the holder. These Spanish policies favored Anglo-American expansion because of their rather unique accommodations to the needs of westward moving settlers from the United States. Given this observation, the historian may be tempted to note that Spanish Louisiana land policy was a motivating factor, if not an outright cause, of the Anglo-American westward movement, rather than a reaction to it. As such, it resulted in the arrival of Anglo-American settlers in East Texas during the 1820s.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Ray Allen Billington, *Westward Expansion: A History of the American Frontier*, (New York, 1974), pp. 15-23.

<sup>2</sup>Light T. Cummins, "The English Frontier," in *Comparative Frontier History*, edited by José Sanchez. (Albuquerque, 1992), p. 134. Cummins, "Texas Under Spain and Mexico," in *A Guide to the History of Texas*, edited by Cummins and Alvin A. Bailey, (Westport, CT, 1987), pp. 1-6. For background on the Anglo-American settlement of Spanish Louisiana as a prelude to expansion into Texas, see, Mattie Austin Hatcher, *The Opening of Texas to Foreign Settlement, 1810-1821*, (Austin, 1927); Hatcher, "The Louisiana Background of the Colonization of Texas, 1763-1803," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 24 (Spring 1921), pp. 169-195; William S. Coker, "The Bruins and the Formulation of Spanish Immigration Policy in the Old Southwest, 1787-1804," in *The Spanish in the Mississippi Valley*, pp. 61-71.

<sup>3</sup>Donald Worchester, "The Significance of the Spanish Borderlands to the United States," in *New Spain's Far Northern Frontier: Essays on Spain in the American West, 1540-1821*, edited by David J. Weber, (Albuquerque, 1979), pp. 1-16.

<sup>4</sup>The best recent example of this viewpoint may be seen in David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, (New Haven, 1992), Weber discusses a common land policy and notes that "Spanish officials also adopted an innovative immigration policy for its most endangered border provinces." p. 280.

<sup>5</sup>Early work noting the similarity of Louisiana and Texas land policy was undertaken by Mattie Austin Hatcher in the 1920s, although little has been done by scholars since. See Hatcher, *The Opening of Texas to Foreign Settlement, 1801-1821*. More recent work on the Louisiana-Texas connection, although not in the area of analyzing land policy, may be seen in Odie B. Faulk, "The Penetration of Foreigners and Foreign Ideas into Spanish East Texas, 1793-1816," *East Texas Historical Journal*, 2 (October 1964), 87-98.

<sup>6</sup>Bibanio Torres Ramirez, *Alejandro O'Reilly en las indias*, (Seville, Spain, 1973); José Montero de Pedro, *Españoles en Nueva Orleans y Luisiana*, (Madrid, 1979), pp. 25-30; David Ker Texada, *O'Reilly and the New Orleans Rebels*, (Lafayette, LA, 1970), pp. 35-52.

<sup>7</sup>Jack D. L. Holmes, "Alexander O'Reilly, Colonial Governor, 1769-1770," in *The Louisiana Governors*, edited by Joseph G. Dawson III, (Baton Rouge, 1990), pp. 49-52.

<sup>8</sup>Light T. Cummins, *Spanish Observers and the American Revolution*, (Baton Rouge, 1992), p. 13.

<sup>9</sup>*Spanish Observers*, p. 14.

<sup>10</sup>Guillermo F. Margadant S., "Mexican Colonial Land Law," in *Spanish and Mexican Land Grants and the Law*, edited by Malcolm Ebricht, (Manhattan, Kan., 1989), pp. 85-95.

<sup>11</sup>"Mexican Colonial Land Law," p. 87.

<sup>12</sup>"Royal Regulation of 1754," No. 4. *American State Papers: Public Lands V* (Washington, D.C.: Gales and Seaton, 1860), pp. 655-657.

<sup>13</sup>"Royal Regulation of 1754," p. 655.

<sup>14</sup>"Regulation of O'Reilly," No. 26. *American State Papers: Public Lands V*, pp. 729-30.

<sup>15</sup>"Regulation of O'Reilly," p. 729.

<sup>16</sup>"Regulation of O'Reilly," p. 730.

<sup>17</sup>Caroline Burson, *The Governorship of Don Esteban Miró* (New Orleans, 1940).

<sup>18</sup>Montero de Pedro, *Españoles en Nueva Orleans y Luisiana*, pp. 44-50, Gilbert C. Din. "Esteban Rodriguez Miró," *The Louisiana Governors*, pp. 61-64.

<sup>19</sup>Gilbert C. Din, "The Immigration Policy of Governor Esteban Miró in Spanish Louisiana," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, 73 (October 1969), pp. 157-58. Miró's colonization plans are also detailed in Light T. Cummins, "An Enduring Community: Anglo-American Settlers at Colonial Natchez and in the Felicianas, 1764-1810," *Journal of Mississippi History*, 55 (May 1993), pp. 133-154.

<sup>20</sup>Din, "The Immigration Plans of Governor Esteban Miró," pp. 160-61.

<sup>21</sup>"The Immigration Plans of Governor Miró." p. 160.

<sup>22</sup>Royal Order, August 23, 1787, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección del Estado, Legajo 3889. This legajo contains most of the correspondence dealing with Miró's land policies in the 1780s.

<sup>23</sup>"Miró's offer to the Western Americans, April 20, 1789," in Lawrence A. Kinnard, ed., *Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 1765-1794*, Part II. Vol. III of *Annual Report of the American Historical Association, 1945*, pp. 270-71.

<sup>24</sup>Gilbert D. Din. "Spain's Immigration Policy in Louisiana and the American Penetration, 1792-1803," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, 76 (January 1973), p. 255.

<sup>25</sup>"Spain's Immigration Policy in Louisiana," pp. 257-58.

<sup>26</sup>Light T. Cummins "Colonial Louisiana," in *Louisiana: A History*, 2nd edition, edited by Bennet H. Wall, (Chicago, 1992), p. 57.

<sup>27</sup>"Instructions of Gayoso for the administration of posts and the distribution of lands," No. 26, *American State Papers: Public Lands V*, pp. 730-31.

<sup>28</sup>Odie B. Faulk, *The Last Years of Spanish Texas, 1778-1821* (London and the Hague, 1964), pp. 36-37.

<sup>29</sup>David Gracy, *Moses Austin: His Life*, (San Antonio, 1987), pp. 93-94.

<sup>30</sup>*Moses Austin*, pp. 210-02.

<sup>31</sup>Antonio Martinez to Moses Austin, February 8, 1821, in *Establishing a Colony*, edited by David Gracy, (Austin, 1970), pp. 33-34.

<sup>32</sup>Eugene C. Barker, *The Life of Stephen F. Austin: Founder of Texas, 1793-1836: A Chapter in the Westward Movement of the Anglo-American People*, (Nashville, 1925), pp. 43-57.

<sup>33</sup>*The Life of Stephen F. Austin*, p. 55.

<sup>34</sup>Thomas L. Miller, *The Public Lands of Texas, 1519-1970*, (Norman, 1972), pp. 15-20.

**PROSTITUTION IN TEXAS: FROM THE 1830s TO THE 1960s**

*by David C. Humphrey*

Prostitution has long been a feature of the Texas social landscape, yet it has received slight attention from historians of the Lone Star State. There are no statewide studies. Little has been written about prostitution in Texas either prior to the Civil War or since the First World War. Much of what has been written is scattered widely in works on individual cities and towns. The historical overview of prostitution that follows, based on a variety of primary sources and an extensive survey of secondary literature, seeks to summarize what is known about the history of prostitution in Texas and to provide a point of departure for further exploration.

Antebellum Texans were by no means unacquainted with prostitution as a social phenomenon and as a municipal issue. In 1817, when Texas was still a Spanish province, nine prostitutes were expelled from San Fernando de Bexar (San Antonio). Hispanic prostitutes resided in San Antonio from its early days under Texas rule. Anglo prostitutes joined them during the 1840s and 1850s, and by 1865 both groups were entrenched.<sup>1</sup> Galveston had prostitutes from its beginning in the 1830s, while the city of Houston was barely three years old when, in 1839, a local newspaper decried the town's houses of ill fame. The next year the Harris County Commissioners' Court went so far as to provide for the licensing of Houston's brothels.<sup>2</sup> General Zachary Taylor's army attracted prostitutes during its eight-month stay in the Corpus Christi area prior to invading Mexico in 1846, and in 1850 an observer noted that the newly-incorporated town of Brownsville was "infected with lewd and abandoned women" who kept "dens of corruption." Indianola and Jefferson, on the other hand, survived their first years relatively free of prostitution, but during the 1850s an influx of prostitutes spurred both towns to pass ordinances suppressing bawdy houses.<sup>3</sup> Prostitution was thus not an uncommon phenomenon in antebellum Texas, but neither was it rampant. In many communities it was either unknown or occurred on such a small scale that little public notice was taken.<sup>4</sup>

From the Civil War to World War I, especially during the four decades from 1870 to 1910, prostitution flourished in Texas and in other parts of the United States. Each of Texas' eight largest cities developed at least one vice district encompassing several city blocks – Austin's "Guy Town", Dallas' "Frogtown" and "Boggy Bayou," El Paso's Utah Street reservation, Fort Worth's "Hell's Half Acre," Galveston's Postoffice Street district, Houston's "Happy Hollow," San Antonio's "District," and Waco's "Two Street." Usually located within a few blocks of the downtown business district and the railroad depot, each vice zone featured saloons, gambling resorts, and prostitutes who worked mainly in bawdy houses and shack-like cribs but also in dance halls and variety theatres. Charging from \$.25 to \$3 and sometimes up to \$5, prostitutes attracted local residents from all walks of life and an array of visitors that, while

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varying from town to town, generally embraced sizable numbers of cowboys, farm hands, other laborers, ranchers, businessmen, conventioners, soldiers, politicians, students, gamblers, and drifters. In El Paso and San Antonio and undoubtedly in other cities, some prostitutes had pimps, but brothel prostitutes were managed and protected primarily by madams.<sup>5</sup>

Prostitution also became common on the Texas frontier following the Civil War, thriving at army forts, cow towns, railroad towns, and other gathering points. From late in the 1860s to the 1880s, soldiers stationed at military posts in West Texas and along the Mexican border generated a lively commerce in prostitution. Camp laundresses sometimes doubled as prostitutes, while prostitutes also congregated at the sordid settlements that sprang up near army posts, such as Saint Angela across the Concho River from Fort Concho, Jacksboro adjacent to Fort Richardson, and "the Flat" below Fort Griffin.<sup>6</sup> Elsewhere in West Texas the spread of prostitution reflected the burgeoning ranching industry and the expanding railroad network. The construction of the Texas and Pacific Railroad precipitated the founding of Abilene, Colorado, and Big Spring, three ranching centers whose saloons, gambling dens, and prostitutes attracted cowhands and other West Texans from throughout the region. In the Panhandle during the 1880s the boisterous but short-lived cattle towns of Tascosa and Mobeetie drew innumerable cowboys to their respective vice districts, "Hog Town" and "Feather Hill," while during the 1890s Amarillo became a major cattle shipping center and home to a wide open red-light district.<sup>7</sup>

Prostitution flourished in fast growing communities elsewhere in Texas between 1870 and 1910. In Denison, Texarkana, Palestine, and Laredo, an upsurge in prostitution accompanied the economic boom in each town triggered by the coming of the railroad during the 1870s and 1880s.<sup>8</sup> Thriving Corsicana had several brothels in the 1880s but its two largest, built during the 1890s, prospered by virtue of their location in the heart of the newly-discovered Corsicana Oil Field.<sup>9</sup> In Beaumont, Gladys City (near Spindletop), Humble, and the Big Thicket hamlets of Sour Lake, Saratoga, and Batson, Texas' first major oil boom attracted a swarm of prostitutes during the initial decade of the twentieth century. Catering primarily to oil field workers, some 200 prostitutes crowded into Batson alone at the peak of the boom, many of them working in bawdy houses on the town's main street.<sup>10</sup> When thousands of army and national guard troops mobilized along the U.S.-Mexican border in 1916 following Pancho Villa's raids, prostitution mushroomed in Texas border towns from Brownsville to El Paso.<sup>11</sup> Prostitution was not, on the other hand, uncommon in more stable communities after the turn of the century, among them Greenville and LaGrange.<sup>12</sup>

The managers of Texas brothels late in the nineteenth and early in the twentieth centuries included a good many well-known madams – Austin's Blanche Dumont, Fort Worth's Mary Porter, and El Paso's Alice Abbott – but most prostitutes labored in relative obscurity. Ranging in age from the teens to the sixties but with an average age in the twenties, prostitutes who worked in

Texas were frequently on the go, prompted to move by the cyclical and seasonal fortunes of Texas towns and by recurrent surges of anti-vice activity. Some worked part-time while holding other jobs or engaged intermittently in prostitution when money was short.<sup>13</sup> At any one time, several of Texas' larger cities probably had more than 100 prostitutes each during the 1880s and at least two to three times that number by 1910. Reliable figures are not easy to establish, due to the transience of prostitutes, their illicit work, undercounting by census-takers, inflated estimates by anti-prostitution groups, and variations in the definition of what constituted prostitution. More than 150 prostitutes marched en masse to an El Paso city council meeting in 1886, while in 1913 a grand jury investigating prostitution in the city's Utah Street district reported finding 367 prostitutes. Austin had at least 100 prostitutes during May and June of 1880, while 239 prostitutes lived in Houston's vice district when federal census-takers made their rounds in 1910. According to a local anti-prostitution group, San Antonio had 630 "immoral women" in its vice district in 1915 and many more outside it.<sup>14</sup>

Both Anglo and black women figured prominently among Texas prostitutes. In Austin half or more of the prostitutes during the 1880s and 1890s were Anglos, most of them U.S.-born, while about two-fifths were blacks and some seven percent Hispanics. In 1887 a Fort Worth newspaper estimated that blacks composed more than half the prostitutes in Hell's Half Acre. The rest were mostly Anglos. In Houston in 1917, sixty percent of the women who headed households of prostitutes in the vice reservation were Anglo, thirty-five percent black, and five percent Hispanic.<sup>15</sup> Hispanic prostitutes were more common in San Antonio, El Paso, and Laredo, at army forts in West Texas, and generally in communities closer to the Mexican border.<sup>16</sup> Anglo and black prostitutes lived and worked near each other in vice reservations, but race had a significant bearing on how the districts operated. Anglos predominated in brothels while blacks predominated in cribs. Most bawdy houses maintained color separation among their inmates, and Anglo houses refused, as a rule, to accommodate black men. On the other hand, it was not unknown for black women to keep white inmates, and many white men patronized black as well as white prostitutes.<sup>17</sup>

The life of Texas prostitutes was difficult. While prostitution paid comparatively well in an era when women's job opportunities were limited and low-paying, few prostitutes achieved upward economic mobility. Most were poor or not far from it and owned little personal property. Their economic prospects deteriorated rapidly as they aged. If some may have found the life easy or exciting, most were beset by the ever-present threats of violence, venereal disease, and harassment by city officials. Many prostitutes used drugs such as opium, morphine, and cocaine, not uncommonly to commit suicide. A considerable number probably left the trade after a few years, taking menial jobs or possibly marrying or moving in with relatives.<sup>18</sup>

Many Texas communities routinely passed ordinances outlawing prostitution during the nineteenth century but paid only sporadic attention to



them, influenced as their leaders were by the conventional wisdom that prostitution was ineradicable and therefore might as well be controlled. Community officials also had a keen appreciation of the hefty fines and rents prostitutes paid and the legions of male consumers they lured to town. Towns thus condoned prostitution under certain conditions. Prostitutes in larger cities were expected to work within vice districts or else risk arrest and were to maintain fairly low profiles, such as by not streetwalking and by staying out of “respectable” parts of town. As part of the accommodation, prostitutes in many cities – Amarillo, Colorado, El Paso, Fort Worth, Galveston, Houston – acquiesced in regular assessments of fines that enriched public coffers and private pockets. In every major Texas city, prostitutes operated outside vice district boundaries but usually in smaller numbers.<sup>19</sup>

While all of Texas’ larger cities established *de facto* vice zones, Waco, El Paso, Dallas, and Houston also experimented with legal ones. Waco licensed brothels during the 1870s, dropped the procedure early in the 1880s, and then enacted ordinances by 1889 that not only provided for licensing of prostitutes and bawdy houses and required medical examinations but also explicitly legalized prostitution within a precisely defined district. The system lasted about a dozen years. By the turn of the century Waco’s Two Street district, located just a block from City Hall and the business district, boasted twenty-four legal brothels.<sup>20</sup> El Paso legally defined its vice district in 1890 and the next year mandated medical inspections and registration of prostitutes with the police, a scheme that apparently operated with some success into the twentieth century.<sup>21</sup> In 1907 the Texas legislature enacted a statute that recognized the legal authority of cities to establish municipal vice districts while giving citizens the right to bring suit against bawdy houses not located in such districts. Dallas and Houston promptly created official vice reservations by proscribing prostitution outside their boundaries. Houston’s reservation lasted from 1908 to 1917, Dallas’ until 1914. Dallas required health department examinations.<sup>22</sup>

Despite the accommodation with prostitution in many towns between 1870 and 1910, the era also was marked by periodic outbursts of anti-prostitution fervor. Often leading the way were crusading ministers, reform-minded politicians, women’s church groups, and angry citizens provoked by the encroachment of prostitution upon their neighborhoods. The cleanup campaigns had some striking short term successes – in San Antonio in 1868, Fort Worth in 1889, and El Paso in 1904 – but within a year the momentarily quiescent vice zones in each city were booming again.<sup>23</sup> While anti-prostitution forces could claim some modest achievements prior to 1910, such as the elimination of prostitution in some smaller communities and the founding of rescue homes for prostitutes in Fort Worth, Dallas, San Antonio, and other towns, the reformers’ success in eliminating prostitution in larger cities had been nil.<sup>24</sup>

From 1911 to 1915 anti-prostitution groups in Texas waged a more sustained and successful campaign as part of a national moral crusade by Progressive reformers to eliminate prostitution’s most visible form, the red-

light district. Ministerial groups in most of Texas' larger cities and in smaller towns such as Corsicana mobilized against "segregated vice" (a term commonly applied to red-light districts), unleashing a torrent of words warning Texans about the perils of white slavery and venereal disease. Joining the churchmen at the forefront of the movement were civic groups such as El Paso's Committee of 10 and the Law Enforcement League of San Antonio and political reformers such as Austin's Mayor A. P. Wooldridge, but no Texas city went so far as to establish a municipal vice commission like those set up at the time by twenty-seven other U.S. cities. The anti-prostitution forces succeeded in shutting down vice districts in Dallas, Austin, and Amarillo by 1914. Segregated vice in San Antonio, El Paso, and other cities took some punishing verbal, political, and judicial blows but survived the assault. Entrenched political groups, the police, many businessmen, and liquor and vice interests backed the reservations, contending that their elimination would only make matters worse by dispersing prostitutes into residential and other parts of towns beyond the control of the police.<sup>25</sup>

In 1917 anti-prostitution crusaders gained a powerful ally in the U.S. War Department. Expressing both Progressivism's moral zeal and its commitment to social hygiene, Secretary of War Newton Baker ordered that American soldiers training for World War I be protected from prostitution and venereal disease. The doughboys must be "fit to fight." To Texas cities that already had substantial military camps – El Paso, San Antonio, and Galveston – and those that wanted them – Fort Worth, Waco, and Houston – the War Department minced no words: close your vice districts and enforce anti-prostitution laws or suffer the consequences. Local civic and ministerial groups, seizing the opportunity to cripple protected vice, put pressure on city and county officials. So did the newly formed Texas Women's Anti-Vice Committee and local women's organizations. Politicians and businessmen noted that protected vice suddenly had become an economic liability rather than an economic asset. Between March and August 1917, Fort Worth, Houston, El Paso, Galveston, San Antonio, and Waco officially shut down their vice districts and stepped up arrests of prostitutes. New federal and Texas laws during 1917 and 1918 mandated prostitution-free zones around military camps, local venereal disease clinics, and detention of women suspected of venereal infection. Women's groups set up "camp mother" committees to provide clean entertainment for soldiers. The cumulative effect of these measures was to reduce prostitution temporarily in the larger cities but not to eliminate it. Many prostitutes moved on, but others stayed or relocated within or nearby the same communities. Law enforcement was erratic. The situation in El Paso remained so unsatisfactory that Secretary Baker refused to build the new army training center for which the city had been selected earlier.<sup>26</sup>

World War I was barely over when prostitution entered a new phase marked by the persistence of red-light districts and traditional bawdy houses and also by the increasing significance of other forms of prostitution. During the 1920s and 1930s it became more common for prostitutes to work in hotels,

apartments, and rooming houses and to communicate with customers by telephone. The "call girl" system had the added advantage of making police detection difficult in an era when some cities were less tolerant of prostitution. Prostitutes also adapted to the automobile, cruising the streets for clients, arranging with taxi drivers to supply customers, and working in roadhouses located just outside the city limits.<sup>27</sup>

The Progressive era's assault on segregated vice notwithstanding, red-light districts still operated in a variety of Texas' cities and towns during the 1920s and 1930s, among them Beaumont, Borger, Corpus Christi, Corsicana, Dallas, El Paso, Galveston, San Angelo, and San Antonio.<sup>28</sup> Galveston's came closest to the classic turn-of-the century segregated district. Its wartime closing only a momentary phenomenon, the venerable Postoffice Street district had more than fifty Anglo brothels and at least two Hispanic brothels in 1929, housing more than 300 prostitutes. One hundred fifty to 200 black prostitutes worked in houses and cribs on adjacent streets and in the alleys. City officials, the police, leading citizens, the newspapers, and even some clergymen offered the traditional defense that a vice district provided the best way to handle an irrepressible urban problem. Another 300 to 400 prostitutes toiled more precariously outside the district, giving Galveston a total of 800 to 900 prostitutes in 1929.<sup>29</sup>

San Antonio's vice district, in contrast, exhibited the deterioration that beset many such districts nationally between the two world wars. Higher-priced prostitutes abandoned the district to operate as call girls in hotels. Many of the larger brothels closed down. Wretched slum housing proliferated in the district and the surrounding neighborhood. Violence and petty crime escalated, particularly with the demise of the unofficial but powerful committee of madams, pimps, saloon keepers, and others that had enforced its own version of order in the district during the first quarter of the century. The Depression brought additional women into the trade, drove down prices, and left many prostitutes on the edge of survival. By late in the 1930s, hundreds of low-priced prostitutes, charging from \$.25 to \$1.50, walked the streets and solicited from their jerry-built, one-room cribs. City officials openly tolerated the district during most of the interwar period but exercised little effective control over it. In the city as a whole in 1939 there were at least 2,000 prostitutes. Roughly forty percent were Hispanics, with Anglos probably composing a similar percentage. Black, Chinese, Japanese, American Indian, and Filipino women made up the rest.<sup>30</sup>

Prostitution took a different form in Austin, where the red-light district had closed for good in 1913. Unhappy with the free-wheeling activity of some prostitutes, city officials instituted an unofficial system for Anglo prostitutes during the 1930s that required them to register with the police, live with four or five other prostitutes in one of several downtown hotels located on lower Congress Avenue, and abide by a set of strictly enforced rules that barred pimps and forbade streetwalking or even appearing on the city streets after noon. Black prostitutes operated much more freely on the east side of town,

but the police knew their identities and restricted them to East Austin. Austin had few Hispanic prostitutes. While prostitution in the Texas capital thus survived the closing of the red-light district, it re-emerged on a much smaller scale. Overall, prostitution in Texas' older cities during the 1920s and 1930s was marked by a far greater variation from town to town than had been the case between 1870 and 1910.<sup>31</sup>

Prostitution reached its most frenetic pace during the interwar years in the many oil boom towns. Thronged with single men earning relatively high wages, towns such as Borger in the Panhandle, Wink and McCamey in West Texas, and Kilgore in East Texas attracted dozens of prostitutes who moved with the tide of workers from one oil boom town to another, working in brothels, rooming houses, hotels, saloons, dance halls, and shacks. While Wink had about forty-five prostitutes, Borger had 300 when law officers raided the town in 1929. Prostitutes also found a ready supply of customers in established oil cities such as Wichita Falls, Corsicana, and Midland.<sup>32</sup>

Itinerancy did not characterize the lives of oil-circuit prostitutes alone. Hardly unusual was the career of twenty-one year old May Belle Ash from Dallas, who revealed when interviewed at a Galveston brothel in 1929 that she had operated in the leading hotels of most of Texas' larger cities during the previous four years. If business was good, the hotel management tolerant, and the city interesting, she had stayed put; if not, she moved on.<sup>33</sup> Many other prostitutes moved frequently within a single city. A Mexican-born El Paso prostitute entered the trade in 1920 by operating independently for a year in a small hotel. Then she worked for five months in a modest-sized brothel, saved enough money to open a house of her own, and catered to hundreds of soldiers from nearby Fort Bliss before the police closed her down in 1923. Next she rented a small crib, where her business boomed on soldiers' paydays. Shut down once again by the city, she opened a six-room house that lasted for five years, until 1929, when the police closed it. She and her husband promptly started the "Silver Dollar," a one-story place with ten or twelve crib-like rooms that survived for most of the 1930s despite numerous police raids and closings.<sup>34</sup>

Many other prostitutes no doubt aspired to the same success, but few achieved it, although prostitution continues to pay competitively well for many women. Higher-priced prostitutes charged in the \$3 to \$5 range, but even a lower-priced crib prostitute in San Antonio earned more from a single customer a day than from steady work at hand sewing or pecan shelling. The road to prosperity was littered with many obstacles, however. Many towns engaged in erratic but heavy-handed law enforcement that disrupted business, with police raids far more frequent and less predictable than prior to 1910. During the Depression desperate women flooded the market at a time when men had less money to spend. LaGrange's best known madam started accepting chickens instead of cash during the 1930s – and thus the infamous Chicken Ranch got its name. The high cost of doing business cut heavily into income. Prostitutes working in brothels and hotels routinely turned over half or so of their earnings to madams and hotel managers or paid steep room and

board charges or some combination of the two. Pricier women felt compelled to invest in stylish clothes and beauty treatments to keep up with the competition. Pimps, who became far more common during the interwar years, also took a hefty cut. By providing customers, protection against unruly clients and the police, and emotional support, pimps carved out a role for themselves that many prostitutes had done without in the age of the semi-official segregated district. Despite these many hurdles, some prostitutes still made good money over short periods of time.<sup>35</sup>

If prostitution provided mixed financial rewards for prostitutes, it was viewed by many political officials and prominent citizens as good for business generally. When Dallas realized that Fort Worth was siphoning off many tourists who might otherwise attend Dallas' Texas Centennial celebration in 1936, city leaders responded by converting Dallas into an "open city." Within a month the City Health Officer issued 2,400 "health cards" to purported prostitutes. Officials of many cities justified toleration with familiar arguments. It was the only practical way to cope with prostitution, claimed the police chiefs of Galveston, Corpus Christi, and El Paso. Cities and towns clamped down intermittently on prostitution when it became outwardly offensive or occurred outside a "Zone of Tolerance" or when its association with bootlegging and other criminal activities prompted police intervention or when anti-prostitution groups created a stir, but there was little Progressive era-type crusading to eliminate the "Social Evil." Some cities required regular venereal disease examinations and kept prostitution racially segregated, but even those policies were pursued erratically.<sup>36</sup>

Late in the 1930s several Texas communities stepped up their efforts to deal with prostitution and venereal disease by opening municipal VD clinics and, in the case of El Paso and San Antonio, launching highly publicized anti-prostitution campaigns.<sup>37</sup> It took World War II, however, to generate a massive attack on prostitution, much as had World War I. Alarmed that venereal disease threatened the fitness of America's fighting forces, the War and Navy departments once again took dead aim at prostitution near military bases. So did the newly created Division of Social Protection, a civilian federal agency headed by crime-fighter Eliot Ness, while Congress did its part by making prostitution near military bases a federal offense.<sup>38</sup>

When local base commanders asked Texas towns to crack down on prostitution, usually threatening to put uncooperative communities off limits, many towns acquiesced, including Austin, Beaumont, Corpus Christi, El Paso, Galveston, and San Antonio. Austin permanently shut down its hotel system for Anglo prostitutes, while prostitution in San Antonio was "cut to a very low ebb," according to a series of studies made during the war. Nevertheless, prostitutes endured in Texas cities, finding as the war progressed that local officials were unable or unwilling to put them out of business entirely. Galveston's anti-prostitution efforts proved especially erratic. Despite frequent police roundups of prostitutes, the town had eleven "lavish" houses of prostitution in 1943 and a "myriad of less pretentious ones," observed the

Galveston *Daily News*. Amarillo officials even persuaded the Army to let them keep the town's brothels open and handle the VD problem through regulation.<sup>39</sup>

The end of World War II brought a resurgence of prostitution in many Texas communities, but the imprint of its nineteenth century past became more faint than ever during the decade from 1945 to 1955. Openly tolerated red-light districts virtually disappeared. So did cribs, while traditional bawdy houses, another mainstay of the segregated district, grew increasingly atypical even while persisting longer in Texas than in most other parts of the country. Many Texas prostitutes operated in hotels (especially "second-rate" hotels), motels, tourist courts, massage parlors, cafes, taverns, and barrooms. Pimps played a dominant role in the lives of many prostitutes, while hotel porters, bellhops, and taxicab drivers conducted a brisk business procuring customers. As had long been the case, Texas prostitutes were frequently on the move, often driven out of towns by police crackdowns. Word spread rapidly about which towns were closed and which open.<sup>40</sup> When city officials sought to close San Antonio and Houston in 1952, pimps made the rounds of other Texas cities looking for soft spots. Some pimps and madams rotated prostitutes among Texas cities in order to have fresh recruits.<sup>41</sup>

For decades the many army posts in Texas had provided an abundant supply of customers for prostitutes. World War II, followed by the onset of the Cold War, vastly expanded the U.S. military presence in Texas. In addition to sizable army installations such as Fort Bliss, Fort Sam Houston, and Fort Hood, Texas had twenty-seven major Air Force bases and five naval air stations by 1953, the majority of which dated from the 1940s.<sup>42</sup> Growing numbers of military personnel contributed significantly to the persistence of prostitution in many Texas communities. Such was not the case in Texas cities on the Mexican border, however, despite the fact that soldiers at Fort Bliss traditionally accounted for much of El Paso's flourishing trade in prostitution. Military personnel stationed as far away as San Antonio and Corpus Christi continued to head for the border during the 1940s and 1950s, but military and civilian customers alike flocked to the flourishing red-light districts across the Rio Grande – in Ciudad Juarez, Nuevo Laredo, Reynosa, and Matamoros – making it an easier task to curtail prostitution in El Paso, Laredo, and Brownsville.<sup>43</sup>

Elsewhere in Texas during the decade from 1945 to 1955 the extent of prostitution varied from town to town and fluctuated markedly within individual communities. While Dallas officials tolerated prostitution at a moderate level, Houston authorities successfully instituted a policy of repression during the early 1950s. So did officials in Corpus Christi, Harlingen, Amarillo, and Lubbock between 1951 and 1954, the latter two towns reversing long-term policies condoning prostitution. Some cities, such as Port Arthur, played a "hide and seek" game with anti-prostitution critics, cleaning up during periods of bad publicity but relaxing their vigilance as soon as interest subsided – "accordion cities," they were called.<sup>44</sup>

By far the two most infamous centers of prostitution in Texas during the post-war years were San Antonio and Galveston. The American Social

Hygiene Association, a national anti-prostitution organization that conducted regular covert investigations of prostitution in U.S. communities and privately lobbied local officials to back repression, grew so disgusted with the “wide-open scale” of prostitution in San Antonio that in 1949 it went public with its survey results – to no avail. The next year a national magazine, drawing on the association’s findings, singled out San Antonio, Galveston, and Canton, Ohio, as “particularly notorious” exceptions to the nation-wide decline of the “old-fashioned brothel.” Nonetheless, the 1950s saw a shift toward repression in San Antonio, climaxed in 1955 by the election of a slate of “good government” officials who vigorously enforced the laws against prostitution.<sup>45</sup>

Cleaning up Galveston proved a good deal more difficult. “If God couldn’t stop prostitution, why should I?” declared Galveston’s mayor, who held the post from 1947 to 1955. The mayor wanted Galveston wide open, and so did his allies and supporters, among them the city’s powerful racketeers, the graft-ridden police department, and much of the citizenry, who believed that Galveston’s economy depended on maintaining its reputation for wide-open gambling, drinking, and prostitution. “To be respectable in Galveston you have to support prostitution,” remarked one religious leader. The mayor put it more crudely: some 2,000 seamen visited the city daily, he stated, and they did not come to town to go to church. Local anti-prostitution activists found it difficult to build the kind of support needed to dislodge the “web of corruption” that controlled the town. While a citizens’ committee achieved some modest gains, even managing to get the decades-old Post Office Street district closed for a while, in 1955 a representative of the American Social Hygiene Association branded Galveston the “worst spot in the nation as far as prostitution is concerned.”<sup>46</sup>

Galveston presented anti-prostitution forces with their most difficult challenge in Texas during the post-war years, but in few Texas towns was their job an easy one. Travis County’s district attorney patiently explained to one anti-prostitution lobbyist in 1949 that efforts to close two popular brothels near Austin would inevitably prove futile given the “high position” of the customers; furthermore, the state capital that did not offer such entertainment to visiting politicians and other dignitaries was not measuring up to the hospitality that was a long-established Texas tradition. Police chiefs and other city officials across Texas offered a variety of reasons for not attacking prostitution more effectively when pressured by civic and religious leaders, newspaper editors, representatives from nearby military bases, and the American Social Hygiene Association. The most common explanation was a shortage of policemen, a problem aggravated in some towns by rapid expansion. Some chiefs pleaded difficulty getting convictions or complained of weak county law enforcement, resulting in unchecked vice operations just beyond the city limits. Often underlying ineffective law enforcement were strong political pressures to go easy on vice, payoffs to policemen by vice interests, and faint public support for repression.<sup>47</sup>

Nevertheless proponents of repression made headway during the 1950s. They publicized flagrant conditions, generated public concern, and joined forces with cooperative political and law enforcement officials, including a number of police chiefs who backed repression. Their most glaring failure was Galveston, but in 1957 the newly-elected state attorney general, Will Wilson, the former crime-busting district attorney of Dallas County, took up their cause. Using private investigators, court injunctions, search warrants, and indictments, the attorney general's office broke the back of Galveston's racketeers. Legal and media pressure forced many brothels to close and set the volume of prostitution on a downward course that continued into the 1960s.<sup>48</sup> Wilson's office also pressed local law enforcement officials into curbing prostitution in Big Spring, Quero, Texarkana, and Victoria. Even the Travis County brothels that the district attorney had declined to take on in 1949 were closed, but LaGrange's venerable Chicken Ranch proved untouchable. In 1960 the Texas legislature stole some of Wilson's thunder when Speaker of the House Waggoner Carr, Wilson's major opponent in his re-election bid in 1960, appointed a House General Investigating Committee that itself launched an investigation into vice and organized crime in Texas. Jefferson County and its two leading cities, Beaumont and Port Arthur, became primary targets. Televised hearings revealed that gambling, prostitution, liquor law violations, and narcotics traffic operated openly and with immunity from law enforcement. A thorough house cleaning ensued.<sup>49</sup>

Amarillo's chief of police commented in 1951 that he favored repression but that the job would never be done. The head of the Houston Police Department's Morals Division compared prostitution to weeds springing up first one place and then another and requiring constant attention. Prostitution remained a seemingly never-ending law enforcement problem for police officials at the opening of the 1960s, yet the fact that it was such a problem reflected an increased commitment to curbing it, not an increase in prostitution itself. The volume of prostitution in 1960 was lower than it had been in 1950 and was substantially below the level of the interwar years. "Flagrant prostitution" – to use a term employed by the American Social Hygiene Association – had become comparatively uncommon.<sup>50</sup> Few city officials contended any longer that segregated districts were an acceptable way to deal with prostitution and venereal disease.

Yet prostitution was far from moribund. During the 1960s and 1970s city officials hardly expected to extinguish it, given their limited legal tools, scarce resources, and escalating burden of other crime. Instead they sought to keep prostitution in check, focusing on its publicly offensive dimensions and its ties to other criminal activity. Sometimes, as in Dallas in the mid-1970s, the police resources committed to fighting prostitution were so inadequate and prostitutes themselves so aggressive that prostitution flourished on a scale reminiscent of an earlier age. Public demand for repression remained erratic. While brazen streetwalkers on downtown streets and massage parlors located near residential areas generated calls for repression on the part of those affected, sustained and widespread anti-prostitution sentiment was rare.<sup>51</sup>



Prostitution thus remained an integral if less pronounced and less openly accepted part of the Texas social landscape.

By the 1960s prostitution in Texas had undergone many changes since the 1830s, yet also had retained marked continuity with its nineteenth century past. In this and other respects, its evolution in Texas paralleled the historical development of prostitution nationally. Anti-prostitution movements in Texas, for example, grew for the most part out of national anti-prostitution campaigns – among them those of the Progressives, the Federal government in the first and second world wars, and the American Social Hygiene Association during the 1950s. Similarly, the targets of their attacks, such as the semi-official segregated district, reflected national patterns in the organization of prostitution. Yet, prostitution in Texas was hardly without its regional variations. The red-light district, with its traditional bawdy houses, for instance, seems to have become more deeply entrenched and more resistant to attack in Texas than in many other parts of the country, as reflected in its legalization in several Texas cities and especially in the extent to which it survived the Progressive era. By the 1950s the vice districts in San Antonio and Galveston had become rare relics of a bygone age. Nor was prostitution's development in Texas unaffected by many of those features that have given Texas history a distinctive flavor – the cattle kingdom of the nineteenth century, the oil booms of the twentieth century, the continuous presence of military troops and bases, and long-standing racial and ethnic divisions among the citizenry. From the 1830s to the 1960s the history of prostitution in Texas thus provides testimony not only to the substantial changes prostitution has undergone while persisting as a seemingly irremedial public policy issue but also to the blend of national and the regional strains in Texas life.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Antonio Martinez's list of expatriated women, Aug. 24, 1817, microfilm frame #0338, General Archives Series, Bexar Archives (Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin; cited hereafter as CAH); Jose Francisco de la Barreda y Cos to Antonio Martinez, Sept. 6, 1817, microfilm frame #0500, *ibid*; Anne M. Butler, *Daughters of Joy, Sisters of Misery: Prostitutes in the American West, 1865-1900* (Chicago, 1985), p. 4; Anne M. Butler, "The Frontier Press and Prostitution: A Study of San Antonio, Tombstone, Cheyenne" (M.A. thesis, Univ. of Maryland, 1975), p. 22.

<sup>2</sup>David G. McComb, *Galveston: A History* (Austin, 1986), p. 151; David G. McComb, *Houston: A History* (Austin, 1981), p. 47; Geoffrey Gay, "No Passion for Prudery: Morals Enforcement In Nineteenth Century Houston" (M.A. thesis, Rice Univ., 1977), pp. 48-49.

<sup>3</sup>Bill Walraven, *Corpus Christi: The History of a Texas Seaport* (Woodland Hills, Cal., 1982), pp. 42-43; New Orleans *Daily True Delta*, Aug. 6, 1850, quoted in Caleb Coker, ed., *The News from Brownsville: Helen Chapman's Letters from the Texas Military Frontier, 1848-1852* (Austin, 1992), p. 376; Fred Tarpley, *Jefferson: Riverport to the Southwest* (Austin, 1983), p. 65; Brownson Malsch, *Indianola: The Mother of Western Texas* (Austin, 1988), p. 95.

<sup>4</sup>This generalization is based on an extensive examination of town and country histories and other sources on antebellum Texas.

<sup>5</sup>David C. Humphrey, "Prostitution and Public Policy in Austin, Texas, 1870-1915," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* (cited hereafter as *SHQ*), LXXXVI (April 1983), pp. 473-497; William L. McDonald, *Dallas Rediscovered: A Photographic Chronicle of Urban Expansion*,

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<sup>15</sup>Humphrey, "Prostitution," pp. 489-492; Selcer, "Fort Worth," pp. 74-75; Mackey, *Red Lights*, p. 385n24.

<sup>16</sup>Butler, *Daughters*, pp. 4-5, 142; *Blue Book*, p. 27; Exner, "Prostitution on Mexican Border," pp. 208-211; U. S. Twelfth Census (1900), El Paso County, Texas, Population Schedules, El Paso, Ward #2, Supervisor's District #5, Enumeration District #19, Sheets #21, #22, #25, #27, #30 (cited hereafter as El Paso Population Schedules, 1900) (microfilm; CAH); Green, *Dancing*, pp. 62, 71; Arnoldo De Leon, *They Called Them Greasers: Anglo Attitudes Toward Mexicans in Texas, 1821-1900* (Austin, 1983), pp. 45-48.

<sup>17</sup>Humphrey, "Prostitution," pp. 489-495; Selcer, "Fort Worth," pp. 74-75; Mackey, *Red Lights*, pp. 324, 327, 339-340; Frost, *Gentlemen's Club*, pp. 64, 156; Waco and El Paso Population Schedules, 1900; Robert V. Haynes, "The Houston Mutiny and Riot of 1917," *SHQ*, LXXVI (April 1973), pp. 420-421; J.T. Upchurch, *Traps for Girls and Those Who Set Them: An Address to Men Only* (5th ed.: Arlington, Tex., 1908) pp. 33-34.

<sup>18</sup>Butler, *Daughters*, pp. 15, 27, 42-44, 51, 54-55, 67-68, 151-152, 154; Hobson, *Uneasy Virtue*, pp. 86-87, 94-109; Rosen, *Lost Sisterhood*, pp. 97-100, 144-143; Selcer, *Hell's Half Acre*, pp. 150-151; Selcer, "Fort Worth," pp. 75-82, 84; Frost, *Gentlemen's Club*, pp. 31, 79, 87, 151; Sonnichsen, *Pass of North*, pp. 282-283; Enstam, "Frontier Woman," p. 24; Humphrey, "Prostitution," pp. 487-492; Exner, "Prostitution on Mexican Border," pp. 208-211.

<sup>19</sup>Crudington, "Amarillo's 'Red Light' District"; Humphrey, "Prostitution," pp. 480, 486, 494-495, 511; Holden, "Law and Lawlessness," p. 201; Jones and Richardson, "Colorado City," p. 49; *Charter and Ordinances of the City of Dallas, Texas* (Dallas, 1884), p. 125; Frost, *Gentlemen's Club*, pp. 22-23, 25-27, 35-36, 77-79, 92, 94, 97-98, 101-102, 106-107, 120, 123, 124, 143, 145, 148-150, 152, 155-156, 160, 174-175, 179-180, 182-183, 188; Sonnichsen, *Pass of the North*, pp. 277-278; Selcer, *Hell's Half Acre*, pp. 87-90, 110-112, 141-142, 154, 157-160; Tatum, *Conquest or Failure?*, p. 126; *The Character and Revised Ordinances of the City of Fort Worth* (Fort Worth, 1907), p. 247; Gay, "No Passion for Prudery," pp. 54-55, 62-63, 70n47; Mackey, *Red Lights*, pp. 292, 316, 361-362, 384n17, 406; Galveston *Tri-Weekly News*, Feb. 3, 1871; McComb, *Galveston*, p. 109; Cartwright, *Galveston*, p. 205; Butler, *Daughters*, p. 5; Davenport, "The District," p. 55; Davis, "Harlots," pp. 90-91; Aimee Harris Johnson, "Prostitution in Waco, 1889-1917" (M. A. thesis, Baylor Univ., 1990), pp. 40-41.

<sup>20</sup>Davis, "Harlots," pp. 87-92; Johnson, "Prostitution in Waco," pp. 67-78; Waco bawdy house register (Texas Collection, Baylor University); J. T. Upchurch, *Traps for Girls and Those Who Set Them: An Address to Men Only* (3rd ed., Dallas, 1904), preface, p. 19; Upchurch, *Traps for Girls* (5th ed.), preface, pp. 11-12, 22-23, 45; Sanborn Map Collection, Waco: 1893, sheets #2

and #3, and 1899, sheets #2 and #3. See the third edition of Upchurch's *Traps for Girls* for evidence that Waco stopped licensing prostitutes by 1904 at the latest.

<sup>21</sup>Frost, *Gentlemen's Club*, pp. 76-80, 189-190.

<sup>22</sup>Mackey, *Red Lights*, pp. 293-296, 320-321, 404-408; *The Code of the City of Dallas, Texas* (Dallas, 1911) pp. 183-184; McDonald, *Dallas*, p. 169.

<sup>23</sup>Butler, "Frontier Press," pp. 23-27; Selcer, "Fort Worth," p. 83; Selcer, *Hell's Half Acre*, pp. 203, 217; Frost, *Gentlemen's Club*, pp. 80, 88-89, 92-94, 117-119, 125-126, 145-150, 157-160; Isaac, "Moral Reform," pp. 414, 417, 424-426; Humphrey, "Prostitution," pp. 483-484, 501; Houston, *Chronicle*, March 6, 1908; Upchurch, *Traps for Girls*, 5th ed., *passim*; Enstam, "Frontier Woman," p. 23; John L. McCarty, *Maverick Town: The Story of Old Tascosa* (Norman, 1946), p. 100.

<sup>24</sup>Harrison, *History of Greenville*, pp. 392-395; Holden, "Law and Lawlessness," pp. 200-201; Selcer, *Hell's Half Acre*, pp. 219-221; Elizabeth York Enstam, "Virginia K. Johnson: A Second Chance for the "Wayward,"" *Heritage News* (Summer 1985), pp. 6-7; Donald E. Everett, *San Antonio: The Flavor of its Past, 1845-1898* (San Antonio, 1975), p. 103; *Baptist Standard* (Dallas), Oct. 16, 1913; Johnson, "Prostitution in Waco," p. 36.

<sup>25</sup>Humphrey, "Prostitution," pp. 501-514; Connelly, *Response to Prostitution*, pp. 11-18; Tatum, *Conquest or Failure?* pp. 125-139; San Antonio *Light*, Nov. 3, 1913; Austin, *Church News*, Nov. 7, 1913; *Baptist Standard* (Dallas), Aug. 21, Sept. 25, 1913; *Texas Christian Advocate* (Dallas), Aug. 28, Oct. 9, Nov. 6, 1913; J. T. Upchurch, *The Unchained Demon, And, The Tribute Dallas, Texas, Pays to Vice* (Arlington, Tex., 1912), *passim*; *Dallas Morning News*, Sept. 22, Nov. 4, 1913; *Home and State* (Dallas), Aug. 2, Oct. 4, 1913; McDonald, *Dallas*, p. 169; Frost, *Gentlemen's Club*, pp. 174-192; Sonnichsen, *Pass of North*, pp. 375-377; Houston *Daily Post*, Nov. 20, 1913; *Daily Texan* (Austin), Nov. 22, 1913; Crudington, "Amarillo's 'Red Light' District"; "San Antonio Closes District," pp. 629-630; Mackey, *Red Lights*, pp. 301-309, 314-316; Waco *Times Herald*, Sept. 8, Oct. 12, 1913; De Leon, *San Angelenos*, pp. 43-44.

<sup>26</sup>David J. Pivar, "Cleansing the Nation: The War on Prostitution, 1917-21," *Prologue*, XXVIII (Spring 1980), pp. 30-33; "Zones of Safety: Texas Cantonment Cities Made Safe for Health and Decency," *The Survey*, XXXVIII (July 14, 1917), pp. 349-350; Connelly, *Response to Prostitution*, pp. 136-150; Hobson, *Uneasy Virtue*, pp. 167, 176-181; Fosdick, *Chronicle*, pp. 145-147; Austin *American*, May 30, July 15, 1917; William E. Jary, Jr., ed., *Camp Bowie, Fort Worth, 1917-18: An Illustrated History of the 36th Division In The First World War* (Fort Worth, 1975), pp. 4, 19; Garna L. Christian, "Newton Baker's War on El Paso Vice," *RRVHR*, V (Spring 1980), pp. 55-67; Frost, *Gentlemen's Club*, pp. 194-196; Granville Price, "A Sociological Study of a Segregated District" (M.A. thesis, Univ. of Texas at Austin, 1930), pp. 63-70, 78; McComb, *Galveston*, pp. 152-155; Cartwright, *Galveston*, pp. 205-206; Mackey, *Red Lights*, pp. 353-379, 392; San Antonio *Express*, June 1, 3, 5, 6, 11, 12, 17, 18, 1917; Blackwelder, *Women of Depression*, p. 154; Davis, "Harlots," pp. 92-93; Waco *Times Herald*, June 11, Aug. 6, 10, 17, 1917.

<sup>27</sup>Connelly, *Response to Prostitution*, pp. 26, 153; Rosen, *Lost Sisterhood*, pp. 32-33; Hobson, *Uneasy Virtue*, pp. 156-158, 163-164; Humphrey, "Prostitution," p. 514; Blackwelder, *Women of Depression*, p. 155; James R. Ward, "Establishing Law and Order in the Oil Fields: The 1924 Ranger Raids in Navarro County, Texas," *Texana*, VIII (No. 1, 1970), p. 43; Price, "Sociological Study," pp. 25-29, 44; Walter Clarke, Report on El Paso, March 17-18, 1930, folder 109:10, American Social Health Association Records (cited hereafter as ASHAR) (Social Welfare History Archives, University of Minnesota Libraries); Frost, *Gentlemen's Club*, pp. 209, 217; Roger M. Olien and Diana Davids Olien, *Life in the Oil Fields* (Austin, 1986), p. 220; Ray Vaughn, "A Study of Professional Prostitution as a Criminal Behavior System" (M. A. thesis, Univ. of Texas at Austin, 1965), pp. 19, 68, 83.

<sup>28</sup>Linsley and Rienstra, *Beaumont*, p. 114; Whitcomb Allen, Report on Beaumont, Feb. 6-8, 1951, folder 110:3, ASHAR; Olien and Olien, *Life in Oil Fields*, p. 214; Bob Ramsdell, "Some Virtue and Some Vice Trailed Taylor's Troops," *Corpus Christi Caller Centennial Journey* (Corpus Christi, 1983), p. 102; Gerald Lynch, *Roughnecks, Drillers, and Tool Pushers: Thirty-*

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<sup>29</sup>Price, "Sociological Study," pp. 7-8, 11-12, 14, 16-21, 53, 72-84.

<sup>30</sup>Blackwelder, *Women of Depression*, pp. 152-161; Ralph Maitland, "San Antonio: the Shame of Texas," *Forum and Century*, CII (Aug. 1939), pp. 54-55; Davenport, "The District," pp. 51-55; Richard A. Garcia, *Rise of the Mexican American Middle Class: San Antonio, 1929-1941* (College Station, 1991), p. 40; Clarke, Report on San Antonio, Dec. 8, 1933, folder 109:10, ASHAR.

<sup>31</sup>Humphrey, "Prostitution," p. 514; Robert B. Laws to D.C.H., May 21, June 5, July 16, 1980, interviews; Robert B. Laws and Anna Belle Laws to Janet G. Humphrey, March 13, 1991, interview.

<sup>32</sup>Olien and Olien, *Life in the Oil Fields*, pp. 213-224; Roger M. Olien and Diana Davids Olien, *Oil Booms: Social Change in Five Texas Towns* (Lincoln, 1982), pp. 127-142; Ward, "Establishing Law," pp. 38-43; Lynch, *Roughnecks*, pp., 23-27; Paul F. Lambert and Kenny A. Franks, eds., *Voices from the Oil Fields* (Norman, 1984), pp. 150-155; Robert A. Calvert and Arnoldo De Leon, *The History of Texas* (Arlington Heights, Ill., 1990), p. 295.

<sup>33</sup>Price, "Sociological Study," pp. 42-45.

<sup>34</sup>Frost, *Gentlemen's Club*, pp. 203-207.

<sup>35</sup>Price, "Sociological Study," pp. 12-13, 25-27, 37-38; Blackwelder, *Women of Depression*, pp. 153, 156; Frost, *Gentlemen's Club*, pp. 199-236; Robert B. Laws to D.C.H., June 5, 1980, interview; Olien and Olien, *Life in the Oil Fields*, pp. 213-219; Ward, "Establishing Law," pp. 39-46; Hutson, *Chicken Ranch*, pp. 54-55; Saxon and Summerville, "Chicken Ranch," pp. 36-37; Hobson, *Uneasy Virtue*, pp. 163-164; Rosen, *Lost Sisterhood*, p. 33; Charles Winick and Paul M. Kinsie, *The Lively Commerce: Prostitution in the United States* (Chicago, 1971), pp. 109-120.

<sup>36</sup>Kenneth B. Ragsdale, *Centennial '36: The Year America Discovered Texas* (College Station, 1987), pp. 287-288; Price, "Sociological Study," pp. 31-32, 72-84; Robert B. Laws to D.C.H., June 5, 1980, interview; Ramsdell, "Some Virtue," p. 102; Frost, *Gentlemen's Club*, pp. 199-238, 214; Davenport, "The District," p. 55; Olien and Olien, *Oil Booms*, pp. 131-132; Ward, "Establishing Law," pp. 38-43; Connelley, *Response to Prostitution*, pp. 14, 153; Maitland, "San Antonio," pp. 54-55; Blackwelder, *Women of Depression*, pp. 154-159; McComb, *Galveston*, p. 157; Clarke, Report Dec. 7-10, 1933, folder 109:10, ASHAR.

<sup>37</sup>"Annual Report, City Health Department, Austin, Texas, 1940" (CAH); McComb, *Galveston*, p. 157; Frost, *Gentlemen's Club*, pp. 221-227; Blackwelder, *Women of Depression*, pp. 152, 153-154, 161; Pat Rooney and Esther Sweeney, Report on San Antonio, June 7, 1946, folder 109:11, ASHAR; Ramsdell, "Some Virtue," p. 102.

<sup>38</sup>Winick and Kinsie, *Lively Commerce*, pp. 253-257.

<sup>39</sup>Austin *American*, May 9, 1942; Austin *Statesman*, May 13, 1942; Robert B. Laws to D.C.H., June 5, 1980, interview; "Prostitution Almost Nil Within Austin," May 19, 1951, folder 110:3, ASHAR; Linsley and Rienstra, *Beaumont*, p. 114; Allen, Report on Beaumont, Feb. 6-8, 1951, folder 110:3, ASHAR; Ramsdell, "Some Virtue," p. 102; Allen, Report on Corpus Christi, Dec. 10, 1948, folder 109:11, ASHAR; Frost, *Gentlemen's Club*, pp. 239-253; McComb, *Galveston*, pp. 157-158; *Galveston Daily News*, Jan. 9, 1943; Rooney and Sweeney, Report on San Antonio, June 7, 1946, folder 109:11, ASHAR; Davenport, "The District," pp. 55; Albert Curtis, *Fabulous San Antonio* (San Antonio, 1955), p. 39; Allen, Report on Amarillo, Jan. 15-18, 1951, folder 110:3, ASHAR.

<sup>40</sup>Allen, Report on Fort Worth, Mar. 27-28, 1953, folder 110:5, ASHAR; Frost, *Gentlemen's Club*, p. 261; Winick and Kinsie, *Lively Commerce*, pp. 162-163; Vaughn, "Professional Prostitution," pp. 137, 150-152, 157-158, 160, 164, 166. The statements in this and the next six paragraphs are based largely on a close examination of hundreds of field reports on Texas cities by representatives of the American Social Hygiene Association, 1946-1956. See folders 106:3, 109:10-109:11, and 110:1-110:8, ASHAR.

<sup>41</sup>Allen, Report on Amarillo, April 23-25, 1952, folder 110:4, ASHAR; Robert B. Laws to D.C.H., June 5, 1980, interview; Robert B. Laws and Anna Belle Laws to Janet G. Humphrey, March 13, 1991, interview.

<sup>42</sup>*Texas Almanac, 1954-1955: The Encyclopedia of Texas* (Dallas, 1953), pp. 279-82.

<sup>43</sup>Folder (L15:2,) "International Activities, Mexican Border Cities, 1947-51," *passim*. ASHAR; Raymond Sanford, Report on Brownsville, Feb. 4-March 19, 1952, and Report on Laredo, March 20-April 7, 1952, folder 110:4, ASHAR; Slutes, Report on El Paso, Aug. 1949, folder 110:1, ASHAR; Allen, Report on El Paso, Mar. 12-14, 1951, folder 110:3, ASHAR; Allen, Report on San Antonio, June 20, 1952, folder 110:4, ASHAR; Allen, Report on El Paso, Jan. 6-7-9, 1953, folder 110:5, ASHAR; Frost, *Gentlemen's Club*, pp. 260-261, 268-269, 288-289.

<sup>44</sup>W. Allen and R.D. Warfield, Report on Port Arthur, Dec. 13, 1951, folder 110:3, and Allen and Warfield, Report on Dallas, Dec. 9-10, 1951, folder 110:3, ASHAR. See also note 40.

<sup>45</sup>Allen, News Release, ca. Nov. 1949, folder 110:1, ASHAR; E. Conroy to S. Lang, Oct. 6, Oct. 31, 1950, folder 106:3, ASHAR; Allen, Report on San Antonio, June 25, 1951, folder 110:3, ASHAR; Allen, Report on San Antonio, April 17-25, 1953, folder 110:4, ASHAR; Slutes, Reports on San Antonio, Aug. 3-6, Sept. 27-30, 1954, Sept. 1-Nov. 15, 1955, folder 110:6, ASHAR; Slutes, Report on San Antonio, May 5-Dec. 31, 1956, folder 110:7, ASHAR.

<sup>46</sup>Cartwright, *Galveston*, pp. 246-247, 249-255; McComb, *Galveston*, p. 158; Sanford, Reports on Galveston, Feb. 2, 5-6, 6, 23, 1949, folder 110:1, ASHAR; Allen, Report on Galveston, June 20-29, 1950, folder 110:2, ASHAR; Allen, Report on Galveston, June 21-22, 1951, folder 110:3, ASHAR; Allen, Report on Galveston, Feb. 7-8, Mar. 13, 1952, folder 110:4, ASHAR; Slutes, Report on Galveston, July 1-9, 1953, folder 110:5, ASHAR (see folder 110:5 for Slutes' frequent, detailed, very informative field reports on Galveston during 1953); Slutes, Filed Report on Galveston, Jan. 21-22, June 30-July 1, 1954, folder 110:6; Fort Worth *Evening Star Telegram*, May 25, 1955, folder 110:8, ASHAR; Slutes, Report on Galveston, Mar. 5-6, 1956, folder 110:8, ASHAR.

<sup>47</sup>Slutes, Report on Southern Region, Dec. 1-2, 6-8, 1949, folder 110:1 ASHAR. See also note 40.

<sup>48</sup>Cartwright, *Galveston*, pp. 255-61; Austin *American*, May 1, 1958, "Wilson, Will." Vertical File (CAH); Slutes, Reports on Galveston, Dec. 14, 1956, Oct. 23-30, 1957, Mar. 24, 1960, News Release, Aug. 8, 1957, folder 110:8, ASHAR; Slutes, Report on Texas, Nov. 6-Dec. 23, 1959, folder 110:7, ASHAR. See also note 40.

<sup>49</sup>Slutes, Reports on Texas, Nov. 25, Dec. 19, 1958, Nov. 6-Dec. 23, 1959, folder 110:7, ASHAR; Slutes, Reports on Galveston, Mar. 24, Apr. 14, 1960, folder 106:8, ASHAR; Austin, *American-Statesman*, Jan. 23, 1961; "James, Rep. Tom," Vertical File (CAH); Linsley and Rienstra, *Beaumont*, pp. 114-117.

<sup>50</sup>Allen, Report on Amarillo, Aug. 10, 1951, folder 110:3, ASHAR; Allen, Report on Southern Region, April 15-28, 1949, folder 110:1, ASHAR; "For AM Release," ca. Nov. 1955, folder 110:8, ASHAR.

<sup>51</sup>See, for example, Dallas *Morning News*, June 23, 1974; Austin *American-Statesman*, Nov. 23, 24, 25, 1975, April 9, Sept. 9, 23, 1980, July 5, 1981, Sept. 20, 1984, Mar. 25, 30, 1985; *River City Sun*, Sept. 1, 1978.

## NACOGDOCHES AS A HEALTH RESORT? THE STORY OF AQUA VITAE PARK

by Joe E. Ericson

Before America's entrance into World War I, two enterprising Nacogdoches, Texas, residents developed a plan to make that old East Texas town into a health resort, a spa to rival Marlin and Mineral Wells. The impetus for their notion of a privately owned, public park operated for a profit and for recreation for the public came from "Uncle" Charlie Bird, "a well known Negro round town."<sup>1</sup>

Early in 1908 Bird purchased a piece of land on the west side of LaNana Creek, south of the road later known as East Main Street and then a few blocks from downtown. When purchased, the plot of land had little value; containing only one or two houses, it was used primarily as pasture. Moving his wife to the spot in September 1908 with the intention of making it his homestead, Charlie Bird dug a well on the property to provide water for his home.

When water began to flow in his well, Bird learned that the liquid had a "particular taste and effect" that rendered it unpalatable to drink. Demonstrating a great deal of resourcefulness, the old man began to peddle the water around town, especially to the sick and afflicted.

About a year after he acquired the land, Bird "conceived the idea of disposing of his property" and approached Robert Lindsey and June C. Harris, local businessmen involved in dry goods, real estate, cotton buying, newspaper publishing, and a variety of other commercial activities. After consulting other local residents, Lindsey and Harris decided to organize a stock company, purchase the land, and exploit its location and resources.

The property acquired was described by the *Daily Sentinel* as "about seven hundred feet fronting on [East] Main Street and running back toward Hayward Mill taking in about fourteen acres. The east line meanders along the LaNana Creek, south line being partly formed by that stream."<sup>2</sup> As the promoters planned to improve the area and turn it into a public park, work to clear the site began almost immediately. Among the first changes was to straighten the bed of LaNana Creek to improve drainage.

By the end of the first week in April 1909, a large work crew had finished many of the planned improvements. In just four weeks, workmen converted a fourteen-acre piece of swampland, in places even a marsh, into "a scene of real pleasure, instead of an eyesore as it formerly was."<sup>3</sup>

The land acquired by the stock company fronted on East Main Street (El Camino Real or the Old San Antonio Road) west of LaNana Creek for some 700 feet; its boundary followed the creek; its western line extended approximately 870 feet south; and its south line was formed partly by the stream itself. In the center of the new public park was located the mineral

wells that were its principal attraction.

Dr. Joseph E. Mayfield, a local physician, suggested the name given to the park and its mineral water, Aqua Vitae (Water of Life), in keeping with an ancient Nacogdoches Indian tradition that nearby was a life-giving spring. After surveying the park just prior to its official opening, the local editor penned this glowing description:

A high solid wall fence had been built entirely around the resort, excepting along the line of the LaNana and the front. A net wire fence is built along the front ... The whole of the fourteen acres have been leveled and shaped ... In the center of the entrance fence is a vehicle gate, while between the city approach side and that gate is a pedestrian entrance. A wide driveway, some twenty or twenty-five feet, runs from the entrance to the farther side of the park, on each side of which, toward the front, [is] a broad, well planned site in grass lawns. On either side of the driveways hedges has been planted, while along the board walk built from the pedestrian gate, are two rows of growing cape jasmine plants. Nearer the center of the park, flower beds have been laid.<sup>1</sup>

By that time two wells had been dug, a large pavilion erected over Well No. 1, a high curb for the same well laid down, a pump installed, and other facilities provided for dispensing the “cool, sparkling liquid, the Aqua Vitae, destined to place this city in the topnotch niche as a health resort.”<sup>2</sup> Similar installations were planned for additional wells.

South of the wells, hitching posts were provided for those who were conveyed to the park in horse-drawn vehicles. Scattered around the wells and over the remainder of the grounds were seats and swings for the comfort of visitors. A picnic grove with running water, grassy plots, and more swings were featured.

Samples of the water from all three wells (the third having been completed by July 1909) were submitted to a national government chemist for analysis. The report indicated that the well water contained significant amounts of calcium, magnesium, and sodium carbonate; calcium, magnesium, and sodium sulphate; and magnesium and sodium chloride. The carbonates were alleged to increase metabolism, dissolve uric acid, and soothe urinary tract irritation; and the sulfates and chlorides were thought to be useful as tonic and laxative.

Eleven prominent Nacogdoches area physicians announced on April 7, 1909 that they took great pleasure in informing all “who are seeking after health” that Aqua Vitae was a “very effective stimulant to all the excretory organs.” They further testified that the mineral water “is one of the best, if not THE BEST alkaline purgative we have ever seen. Its antacid properties also render it very valuable in certain stomach troubles.”<sup>3</sup>

Lindsey and Harris announced that there would be no entrance fee and the entire grounds were at the disposal of the public from 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. daily. Income to the park’s investors – now known as the Aqua Vitae Park Company – would come from the sale of the mineral waters. Half gallons were



priced at ten cents and gallons at fifteen cents, while a case of twelve half gallons could be purchased for \$1.50. In addition, coupon books could be obtained at all drug stores and at the wells. Books for fifty drinks sold for \$1.00 and those for 100 drinks for \$2.00. Mrs. A. V. Muller was placed in charge of Well No. 1 for the sale of water at the park.

Management, investors, and the local news media were all highly optimistic about this ambitious venture. The local editor predicted, with pardonable exaggeration:

The opportunities for making Nacogdoches a famous resort are great, and much capital has been put at the command of the management for the making. This city and section is certainly a proper locality for a health resort and the climate and other extremely gratifying features places it above and beyond any other resort that can be mentioned.<sup>7</sup>

He also suggested that the city's historical sites would "add lustre to the brilliant opportunities now existing," and stated positively that "there is little doubt that a pleasure and health resort here would soon be the leading one in the state."

The editor further prophesied that "neither money nor pains will be spared in making this city and this pretty place" a spot around which thousands of people would congregate for improved health and greater enjoyment of life. Such was the general level of expectations on April 28, 1909, when the Aqua Vitae Park formally opened.

Opening day plans called for invitations to be extended to prominent railroad officials, including those of the Southern Pacific, Santa Fe, and Cotton Belt. Railroads were invited to run special trains with discounted rates for the day. A Reception Committee composed of twenty-four of the community's leading citizens, headed by banker E.A. Blount, an Entertainment Committee of twenty prominent residents of Nacogdoches, headed by businessman H.H. Cooper, and a Committee on Grounds of four, headed by developer Robert Lindsey, prepared for opening day. A day-long program began with a concert by the thirty-piece Elks Band of Nacogdoches at 11:30 a.m. on the public square and ended with a second band concert at 9:00 p.m. at the Nacogdoches Opera House on East Main Street.

The program featured a welcoming address by the Honorable S.W. Blount, speaking on behalf of Mayor W.U. Perkins; a major address entitled, "The Neglected Opportunities of East Texas," by Professor H.P. Attwater, industrial agent for the Sunset Central Railroad; and a dedicatory address by Judge James I. Perkins. Approximately 120 Confederate veterans turned out to lead the march from the public square eastward to the Aqua Vitae Park. The *Daily Sentinel* reported that a crowd estimated at from 3,500 to 5,000 persons attended the ceremonies in spite of "a downpour of rain" the previous night and showers the morning of opening day.<sup>8</sup>

For the Park to be a financial success and for the city to become a major health resort, Lindsey and Harris, along with other company leaders, realized that additional improvements would have to be made at the site. They

envisioned a total of four wells, but apparently only three were drilled. By early May the company announced that a bottling plant and shipping house would be erected to package the water for shipping to customers throughout the region; LaNana Creek would be straightened and a bathing pool and wading pool created just west of the wells; and a band stand built so regular concerts could be held.

Company managers also signed a contract for the construction of a scenic miniature railway and eight four-room cottages on the eastern side of the driveway. They also expected to contract for the erection of a bowling alley in the not too distant future.

In mid-June railroad officials issued an ultimatum and a challenge to the Park Company and the Nacogdoches community. They offered to bring passengers to the city and the park for one and one-third fare, round trip, as they had to established resorts such as Hot Springs, Mineral Wells, and Marlin. Their cooperation was contingent, however, upon the community and the company meeting stipulated conditions: ample hotel and boarding facilities to accommodate the visitors; attractive features for amusement, comfort, and pastime; adequate auditorium facilities; sufficient bath house arrangements; and judicious advertising. Cost of the new auditorium to seat at least 500 people was estimated at between \$2,000 and \$2,500, and cost of advertising placed at approximately \$500 per month.

What happened at this point is a good example of the almost total absence of progressive business attitudes among the people of Southern agrarian communities. On June 16, 1909, a Soliciting Committee composed of R.E. Davis, H.T. Mast, and E.H. Blount was selected to secure funds for the new auditorium and other projected improvements in the city and at the park.<sup>9</sup> Solicitors assured prospective contributors that "no games or operas will be permitted at the Auditorium on Sunday, nor will any sort of gambling be allowed in said building at any time."<sup>10</sup>

After a period of about four weeks during which the community did not respond to the appeal voiced by the park's proprietors and other investors and to the railroad's prediction of failure if the fund raising failed, on July 30, 1909, Lindsey and Harris announced that they were transferring the water company to Houston and abandoning the park project. Robert Lindsey moved to Houston to open the firm's office for the sale of real estate and Aqua Vitae water. A complete bottling plant for the water was projected at the Nacogdoches site from which the bottled water would be shipped by rail in carload lots to Houston for further distribution.

June C. Harris, who remained in Nacogdoches to supervise operations, pinpointed the reason for the failure of the park project:

We hate to leave Nacogdoches, and still believe that this city and her people have let pass a brilliant opportunity when no effort to push this enterprise was made. Had the people shown a disposition to help us, we intended to lease the Orton pasture [to the east] for an artificial lake, boat house, bath houses, drive ways through the plot to the canyons and stock

it with park animals. A natural health resort Nacogdoches is, with these wonderful attractions for the summer tourists, and the fact that the railroads had promised to put five hundred people a day here next season, make it still more regrettable. But it can't be helped and we are compelled to go where we can have co-operation in another way, if not in the way we desired.<sup>11</sup>

Editor Giles Haltom underscored the disappointment of the park's promoters in a September 1910 editorial in which he sharply castigated the lack of community support, asking rhetorically, "When will the people of Nacogdoches lay aside their 'opposition' and get together for the advancement and improvement and progress of this city and section?"<sup>12</sup> He left his question unanswered but strongly suggested that they had not been willing to do so for Aqua Vitae.

Nearly a year after Lindsey and Harris and the Aqua Vitae Company abandoned the park, the *Daily Sentinel* reported that the grounds were covered by weeds and grass but that the improvements were still there – seats, swings, pavilions, band stand, flower beds, and green lawn – the water was still available, and that the private investors were still willing to operate their enterprise. All that was lacking was popular support.<sup>13</sup>

Local people "loved the park and its splendid trees, excellent driveways, and other features." They came and went at leisure, reveling in the beauties of the place. When the park's management sought to expand the scope of operations, however, those same people expected the original investors to shoulder the entire cost. The investors had more than \$8,000 tied up and were receiving a good return from the bottling and shipment of the waters, but the bottling operation did little to stimulate the local economy.

E.A. Blount, a prominent local figure, in a letter to the editor in the *Daily Sentinel*, offered a compromise: "[I]t would be a wise and popular move ... for the city to buy that portion of the Aqua Vitae property known as the Jule Smith tract and use it as a public park, being so close in and also being near the wells it would always be a popular resort and should be owned by the city and kept in good condition for the public."<sup>14</sup> Blount's suggestion apparently generated little or no public interest.

To better exploit the waters themselves, the Aqua Vitae Mineral Water Company laid a pipe line from a spring on J.G. Orton's property to bring water to the site. An abandoned Negro church building on the grounds was utilized as a storage house. Well No. 1 was enlarged to eight feet in diameter and lined with cement, new pumps installed, and bottling apparatus put in place.

Early in 1911 Robert Lindsey became the sole owner of the Aqua Vitae properties. He announced that sale of the mineral water would continue but that sales at the wells would be handled by one man at the park between the hours of 8:00 and 6:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday. Orders, he said, could be placed for home delivery. Local and out-of-town drug stores would handle retail sales, while bottling and shipment to the distribution center in Houston would not be materially changed.<sup>15</sup>

By the time of America's entrance in World War I, all mention of Aqua Vitae mineral waters had disappeared from the local newspaper. Presumably the war and declining sales spelled the demise of the promising enterprise.

Despite abandonment by the Aqua Vitae Company, the park did not cease to be utilized by the local community nearly that early. Charles Lee Hill, who moved to Nacogdoches with his family in 1920, attended a speech delivered in the park in 1926 by former governor James E. Ferguson on behalf of his wife, Miriam A. Ferguson, during her gubernatorial campaign. He also recalled attending a band concert there performed by the Allen Academy Band.<sup>16</sup>

Later, probably when Hill was a student in Nacogdoches High School or Stephen F. Austin State College, "the park settled into its final decay..., lost in a tangle of plants, weeds, [and] fallen trees."<sup>17</sup> Still later, the frontage along East Main Street was sold and a variety of business establishments erected.

Acknowledging that turn-of-the-century small Southern agrarian communities (as Nacogdoches undoubtedly was) had limited quantities of fluid capital and that their philosophical bent made them reluctant to gamble what capital they possessed, the collapse of the Aqua Vitae Park project was an excellent example of an opportunity lost. Development of mineral water spas in Mineral Wells by 1897 and in Marlin by 1900 demonstrated the significant economic impact that could be generated by this type of enterprise.<sup>18</sup> Another opportunity of this magnitude did not arise in Nacogdoches until the State of Texas began searching for a site for a regional normal college in East Texas a decade later.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Daily Sentinel, April 8, 1909.

<sup>2</sup>Daily Sentinel, April 8, 1909.

<sup>3</sup>Daily Sentinel, April 8, 1909.

<sup>4</sup>Daily Sentinel, April 8, 1909.

<sup>5</sup>Daily Sentinel, April 8, 1909.

<sup>6</sup>Daily Sentinel, April 7, 1909. The local physicians were F.T. Ford, A.A. Nelson, J.E. Mayfield, C.H. Rulfs, F.R. Tucker, R.P. Lockey, W.I.M. Smith, E.D. Williams, G.S. Barham, J.H. Reagan, and W.H. Campbell.

<sup>7</sup>Daily Sentinel, April 8, 1909.

<sup>8</sup>Daily Sentinel, April 28, 1909.

<sup>9</sup>Daily Sentinel, June 29, 1909.

<sup>10</sup>Daily Sentinel, June 29, 1909.

<sup>11</sup>Daily Sentinel, July 30, 1909.

<sup>12</sup>Daily Sentinel, September 1, 1910.

<sup>13</sup>Daily Sentinel, May 12, 1910.

<sup>14</sup>Daily Sentinel, May 13, 1910.

<sup>15</sup>Daily Sentinel, January 17, 1911.

<sup>16</sup>Letter to the Editor, Daily Sentinel, October 30, 1992.

<sup>17</sup>Charles Lee Hill to Joe E. Ericson, November 27, 1992.

<sup>18</sup>Mineral water wells had been opened in 1891 in both Mineral Wells and Marlin, and the highly publicized Crazy Water well was drilled at Mineral Wells in 1885.

**SWEET SUCCESS:  
THE DEBUT OF THE KILGORE COLLEGE RANGERETTES**

*by Dan K. Utley and Virginia Long*

As a symbol of Texas popular culture, the Kilgore College Rangerettes can hold their own against the likes of the Dallas Cowboys, Willie Nelson, the Cadillac Ranch, and J.R. Ewing. Perhaps no group from the Lone Star State is as universally recognizable as the Rangerettes, the most celebrated women's drill team in America. For over a half century, the group has served as an ambassador corps for their institution, performing at numerous collegiate and professional sporting events, before dignitaries and political leaders on several continents, and in a wide variety of state and national festivals, parades, and celebrations. Although the group debuted amidst fanfare, fireworks, and promise, such successes were beyond the dreams of the girls and the school officials responsible for its creation.

Kilgore Junior College began as the result of educational efforts directly related to the boom era of the East Texas Oil Field. In the mid-1930s, Kilgore school superintendent W.L. Dodson proposed the formation of a junior college to be administered by the district. Although the junior college movement began late in the nineteenth century as a progressive educational reform, the concept continued to develop and gain in popularity decades later. In Kilgore, Dodson found the requisite financial and progressive resources to support his plan for a local institution of higher learning.<sup>1</sup>

The Kilgore school board, comprised of many of the city's most dynamic and successful business leaders, authorized the proposal and then worked aggressively to make it a reality. Their efforts, begun during the depths of a worldwide economic depression, were viewed as folly by some and as visionary by others. The 1930s were not considered ideal years to establish a college or to incur the sizable debt required for such an undertaking, even in an area of some commercial promise. A spokesman for the prestigious Carnegie Foundation noted during the depression years that "Shrinking educational endowments, reductions in tuition, and a scarcity of new bequests contribute to the financial dilemma which threatens the existence of many colleges and universities."<sup>2</sup>

The early success of the Kilgore plan was due in large part to the work of Basil Earl Master, the man Dodson selected to direct formation of the new system. A native of Hunt County, Masters had studied at Baylor, Yale, and The University of Texas. He became a college administrator at Greenville in 1917, when he was named president of Burlison College, a Baptist institution. Considered a leader in the junior college movement in the Southwest, Masters was instrumental in founding schools in Paris and Amarillo before joining the

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Kilgore project. Under his direction as administrator, curriculum planner, and public relations leader, Kilgore Junior College opened in the fall of 1935.<sup>3</sup>

Dean Masters advocated a strong curriculum based on the needs and interests of the community. He also believed in, and strongly supported, extra-curricular activities that helped develop the complete student. Two of his favorite organizations were the football team and the band, both established soon after the school opened. A promoter, Masters hoped the school's academic and athletic achievements, along with a strongly-developed sense of pride and spirit, would attract new students and ensure future financial support.

In 1937, Dean Masters devised a plan for a new spirit organization called the Ranger Sweethearts. He selected teacher Vivian Breland to head the group, since she was the only teacher with a free class period. Masters' goal was for the Sweethearts to complement the band and football programs, similar to the spirit clubs and pep squads then popular in secondary schools. The group, comprised of sixteen girls dressed in gray and blue uniforms designed by his wife, Carrie Masters, participated with the band at football games. Their routines, however, reflected inadequate planning and a lack of formal training. The Sweethearts participated in other school activities, such as selling yearbooks and promoting the school during a good-will tour of East Texas, but they never generated the enthusiasm and spirit Masters had envisioned. The organization was discontinued in 1938.<sup>4</sup>

Despite his experience with the Sweethearts experiment, Masters tried again in 1939. This time he chose a new leader, Miss Gussie Nell Davis. Reared in Farmersville, in Collin County, Davis had attended the College of Industrial Arts at Denton, now Texas Woman's University. At her mother's insistence she entered as a music major, but soon changed to physical education. The women's athletic programs of the time were quite limited, with emphasis on games rather than conditioning or life sports. One particular aspect of the program she enjoyed most combined her interests in music and physical training:

I love the physical activity, particularly the dance. Of course, in those days some girls were not allowed to dance; so, the classes were called 'folk games,' or 'rhythms,' or some such evasive title, but I knew it was for me.<sup>5</sup>

Gussie Nell Davis followed her work in Denton with a master's degree in physical education from the University of Southern California. She returned to Texas as a teacher with the Greenville school district. Where she taught girls' P.E. and sponsored a pep squad known as the Flaming Flashes. Influenced by baton twirling and by such drum-and-bugle organizations as one sponsored by Lutch Stark of Orange, Davis introduced elements of both into her pep squad routines at football games:

The band would play a piece, then we'd play a piece. Then there was one or two we could play together, like *Semper Fidelis*. And then after we played that piece, and we had marched around, then we went and put our

drums and bugles down and we picked up our batons, and we came back, and then we twirled.<sup>6</sup>

Time restraints precluded special dance numbers, but occasionally she would have the girls insert a small “kick” as they marched across the field.

From Greenville, Gussie Nell Davis joined Dean Masters at Kilgore Junior College. Hired in the middle of the fall term of 1939, she taught general physical education classes while developing plans for Masters’ special spirit organization. Although the idea was his initially, the dean offered few specifics. Relying instead on his instructor’s talent and creativity, he provided three general objectives: to recruit more girls (the college then had a boy-to-girl ratio of six to one); to provide a level of physical education more in line with that of the boys’ programs; and to produce a football half-time show that would entertain fans, generate spirit, and promote the school.<sup>7</sup> Davis recalled there was little elaboration beyond those points:

When I saw Mr. Masters, I said, ‘Well, what would you like for me to do?’ I said, ‘Do you want a drum and bugle corps?’ ‘Over my dead body!’ he said, and fell back in his chair. And I said, ‘Well, you want a twirling group?’ ‘No, I don’t want a twirling group.’ I said, ‘What do you want?’ He said, ‘Hmpf, that’s why I hired you.’<sup>8</sup>

After weeks of worry and indecision, Gussie Nell Davis decided to develop a drill team of precision dancers. While the idea was unique, it also afforded the instructor a release for her life-long dream of dancing on stage. As she noted, “I couldn’t dance in Farmersville, because you got put out of any church if you danced ... I said, ‘I’m going to put a line of girls out on that field and they’re going to dance, and it’s going to be me.’”<sup>9</sup> Using the team name of Rangers, a historical reference to the role Texas Rangers played in law enforcement during the early days of the East Texas Oil Field, Davis called her organization the Rangerettes.

Determined to succeed, but still somewhat unsure of how the college and the community would receive the new dance-drill team, Davis confided in few people about her plans. One of her early confidants was Earl Ford, Jr., then an art student at Kilgore Junior College and later an architect in New York. Davis enlisted Ford’s talents to design a colorful uniform based on a Texas Ranger motif. Although there were later changes in the size of the hat and the length of the skirt, Ford’s design was the prototype of the distinctive red, white, and blue outfit that is the organization’s trademark. The tri-color palette he selected only added to the uniform’s appeal, given the patriotic zeal of the pre-war era.<sup>10</sup>

During the summer of 1940, Davis worked to secure suppliers for the various elements of the Rangerette uniform. “The skirt was made in Dallas, and I think the blouse was made in Fort Worth, and the boots were made in Chicago and sent down. The hat was made in Dallas at that time, and the gauntlets and belt were made in Wichita Falls.” The first girl to model the uniform was Davis’ teenage niece, Betty Dickens, of Greenville.<sup>11</sup>

Another of Davis' early collaborators was Kilgore businessman Liggett N. Crim, a successful oilman, theatre owner, and civic leader. A showman at heart, Crim became the Rangerette's official sponsor. He also volunteered the services of his theatre manager, Knox Lamb, who was known for his elaborate movie promotional "sets." Lamb's first assignment was to design a special fireworks display for the group's debut.<sup>12</sup>

After months of preparation, planning, and speculation, the Rangerettes premiered on the evening of September 19, 1940, at the football game between Kilgore College and Daniel Baker College of Brownwood. A large crowd filled Kilgore Athletic Stadium, drawn by the team's winning tradition and by the local newspaper's promise of a unique halftime event:

Tonight's football season opener also will mark the first performance of the Kilgore College Rangerettes, 53 girls who specialize in precision marching. Their costumes will include short skirts, white boots, arm gauntlets and cowboy hats.<sup>13</sup>

A separate article provided additional details:

A colorful display will grace tonight's gridiron menu as the college presents the Rangerettes of '40, a group of lovely local lassies who'll be introduced at the half with a fanfare of bursting bombs and sky-streaking fireworks.

The side attraction promises to be the most colorful and sensational in the history of the school, rivaling Tyler's Rose Festival and other pigskin productions which tend to add something to the straight game of football.<sup>14</sup>

The Rangerette's debut lived up to the advance billing. Local journalist George Short reported the event the following day:

'How'd you like to come out of a blackout and be ambushed by that battalion,' one wisacre (sic) quipped in the pressbox last night as the Rangerettes of 1940, presented one of the most dazzling between-halves shows ever seen in East Texas... The presentation was stunningly beautiful.

Starting with a 'blackout' that was penetrated by a pin-wheel board spelling 'Rangerettes' and scores of overhead bombs that burst like thunder and then scattered stardust throughout the moonlit sky, the lights came on revealing the red, white and blue clad lovelies. They pirouetted, pranced and danced in perfect unison, colorful in movement and attire.

We're sure that the guy (who) wrote some years back that 'A thing of beauty is a joy forever' would have been content to curl up and die had he witnessed last night's show.<sup>15</sup>

Short added, in the "politically incorrect" prose of the day:

To L.N. Crim goes the thanks for the scintillating sky display and to Gussie Nell Davis goes the credit for training these young 'oomphies'. When football comes with any more attractive side dishes, we'd like to be on hand.<sup>16</sup>

Al Eason, in his history of Kilgore, provided another account of the event:



A hush as before a summer storm fell over the huge crowd who sat with bated breath. Then, as they had time to recover their wits, and as the realization that this group of girls was a local product seeped into the consciousness of the crowd, wave upon wave of hoarse acclaim rocked the stadium. The Rangerettes were a resounding success.<sup>17</sup>

For Gussie Nell Davis, however, success was not guaranteed until she had word from both Mr. Crim and Dean Masters that the group could participate in the next game, scheduled the following week in Louisiana. Since neither man was privy to the details of the half-time routine, and thus had not given prior approval, Davis had some reason for concern. She kept the girls in the gymnasium until half-time, when buses took them to the field. When the lights went out, the girls moved to the center of the stadium, and Knox Lamb lit the massive fireworks display that spelled Rangerettes in blazing script.

Well, when it burned out, the lights came on, there we were, and everybody's mouth flew open, and it was utter silence, what seemed like to me for a half hour. I'm sure it lasted all of two seconds. And then they started clapping. Then the band played, and we started our routine, and of course, it was a very simple routine, but it was some drilling to some extent and some kicking, but of course, not like we do now ... Well, after we got through, there was a standing ovation. And when it was over, Mr. Crim turned to me and said, 'Well, we'll go to Monroe next week.'<sup>18</sup>

With that simple acknowledgement of a job well done, the organization became a permanent program of the college.

Over the ensuing years, the Kilgore College Rangerettes evolved from a half-time spirit organization into good-will ambassadors for their community, their school, and their state. Even in the war years, when the college temporarily discontinued football, the group continued to perform throughout East Texas. As their fame grew outside their region, so did their impact on the Texas image. Their success influenced the formation of similar groups and provided a standard of excellence. Their routines, a combination of popular dance, military precision, and a Rockette's review, helped broaden concepts of dance and of physical education for women. What began as a college administrator's idea to promote his institution and to provide additional school spirit took on new significance under the direction of a young physical education teacher with a vision. Building on her community's record of success and on a program of innovation, perseverance, and hard work, Gussie Nell Davis created an educational concept and an organization known worldwide as one of the great cultural resources of Texas.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Doris Bolt and Bonnie Durning, *A History of Kilgore College, 1935-1981* (Kilgore, 1981), pp. 30-31.

<sup>2</sup>Doris Bolt and Bonnie Durning, *A History of Kilgore College*, p. 33.

<sup>3</sup>*Kilgore News Herald*, December 26, 1975, pp. 1 and 16.

<sup>4</sup>Doris Bolt and Bonnie Durning, *A History of Kilgore College*, p. 88.

<sup>5</sup>Gussie Nell Davis biographical sketch. Papers submitted to the Governor's Commission for Women in support of nomination to the Texas Women's Hall of Fame, September 1989.

<sup>6</sup>Gussie Nell Davis, oral interview with Dan K. Utley, in association with the Baylor University for oral history, May 10-11, 1993.

<sup>7</sup>Al Eason, *Boom Town: Kilgore, Texas* (Kilgore, n.d.), pp. 62-63.

<sup>8</sup>Gussie Nell Davis, oral interview with Dan K. Utley, May 10-11, 1993.

<sup>9</sup>Gussie Nell Davis, oral interview with Dan K. Utley, May 10-11, 1993.

<sup>10</sup>Al Eason, *Boom Town: Kilgore, Texas*, pp. 62-63.

<sup>11</sup>Gussie Nell Davis, oral interview with Dan K. Utley, May 10-11, 1993.

<sup>12</sup>Al Eason, *Boom Town: Kilgore, Texas*, p. 63; *Kilgore News Herald*, February 3, 1989, p. 1; Gussie Nell Davis, oral interview with Dan K. Utley, May 10-11, 1993.

<sup>13</sup>*Kilgore Herald*, September 19, 1940, n.p.

<sup>14</sup>*Kilgore Herald*, September 19, 1940, n.p.

<sup>15</sup>*Kilgore Herald*, September 20, 1940, n.p.

<sup>16</sup>*Kilgore Herald*, September 20, 1940, n.p.

<sup>17</sup>Al Eason, *Boom Town: Kilgore, Texas*, p. 63.

<sup>18</sup>Gussie Nell Davis, oral interview with Dan K. Utley, May 10-11, 1993.

## SHAY DINKY IN THE PINES

by *Kenneth Morgan*

The old timers say if you have ever seen a Shay locomotive thrashing its way up a steep, piney woods grade and pulling three or four cars heavily loaded with virgin pine logs, you will remember the sight as long as you live. The little engine with three sets of cylinders, crankshaft, and gear box mounted on the right, and the boiler off center to the left, lacked beauty when compared with the bigger, more powerful piston-and-rod main-line engines, but its performance and durability was never questioned. Some of these little work-horses of the timber industry still brought in log trains after three or four decades of service.

Ephraim Shay, a white-pine lumberman in Michigan, was responsible for the design of the locomotive. He first took his plans to the Lima Locomotive Works in Ohio in 1880 where the design and specifications were drawn up. In the course of more than sixty years, the company turned out about 2700 of these steam-powered engines. On a flat, level surface they could pull a long string of loaded cars. Several inches of slack, built into the couplings between the cars, enabled the engine to start the first car to rolling; then the second car, third car, and so on, until the whole string was in motion. However, in hilly country they could move only three or four loaded cars because their light weight allowed the wheels to spin on the track.

Many of the Shay locomotives found their way into East Texas late in the 1800s and early in the 1900s during the great logging bonanza instituted by such men as Simon Wiess, Alexander Gilmer, David R. Wingate, Henry J. Lutcher, G. Bedell Moore, John Henry Kirby, Joseph H. Kurth, and Thomas L.L. Temple.

John Henry Kirby built his Gulf, Beaumont, and Kansas City Railway from Beaumont to Roganville in 1895, then in 1902, under the name Gulf, Beaumont, and Great Northern, extended this line northward through the magnificent longleaf pine forest to Jasper and San Augustine. A year later it was extended to Center.

Main lines branched off the railroad at various points to enable the big lumber company to cut and transport the prime timber to their mills efficiently. One such main line left the railroad at a point between Roganville and Jasper and extended westward, crossing the Spring Hill Road approximately seven miles south of Jasper, near the double-pen, split-log house of my great-great-grandfather, David Dunn, and just to the north of the Dunn-Olds Cemetery, known later as Olds Cemetery. The line continued westward with spur lines branching off approximately every half mile or so into the company's holdings. These tram lines were hurriedly constructed with little grading and without benefit of a built-up road bed. The cross-ties, usually oak or pine, were laid flat on the ground by the steel gang, with many crooks and turns to

miss obstructions along the way. Then came the sections of rail, laid and spiked precisely four feet, eight and one-half inches wide and connected together with bolted splice bars. Kirby did not use narrow-gauge rails (three feet wide), on his spurs and main lines. Any rolling stock that could move on the trams also could travel on the main railroad.

The steel gang, usually consisting of twelve black men, had their quota of spur line to lay each day. The work was difficult and required much strength and teamwork. They sang together to set the pace or rhythm of their work and perhaps to relieve the drudgery of their repetitious tasks. Normally two men would drive the steel railroad spikes together, alternating their blows with nine-pound hammers. After eight rails had been picked up and laid on a new spur by each man in the twelve-man gang, their day's work was completed and they could sit and relax until the train took them home in the evening to the mill town or logging front.

My mother, Dollie Olds Morgan, remembered the steel gangs well. As an eight-year-old girl, she and her family traveled by wagon to a logging front near Manning in Angelina County, Texas, where her father, Amy Olds, took a job as mule tender and blacksmith for the Carter-Kelly Lumber Company. On one occasion she saw a black man break his leg while attempting to jump on the cowcatcher of a moving train that was taking the work crews home in the evening. She will never forget his screams of agony when the large bone snapped between his knee and ankle.

Early in the 1900s steam skidders and loaders came into use on the tram lines of East Texas, relieving the mule and ox teams of some of their hardest tasks. It still fell the lot of these beasts of burden to drag big logs from places out of reach of the 800 foot cables played out from power-driven drums on the steam skidder. Many mules, oxen, and a few men were crippled or killed when struck by a log being skidded through the brush and timber.

A pair of big mules could pull a twenty-foot log with an average diameter of eighteen inches and weighing approximately one ton when freshly cut. Larger logs were pulled by two or three yoke of oxen. Bulls were used rather than steers because they developed more massive necks, chests, and shoulders. Unlike mule teams, the oxen normally had no lines attached to them for guiding. They worked by voice commands alone, and most "bull punchers" spoke softly to their animals.

"Uncle" John Bevil was one of the best known locomotive engineers in the Jasper-Kirbyville area. His young flagman was killed instantly when he leaned far out of a locomotive to check the track ahead as they approached a crossing on Big Creek. Apparently his head struck a tree or some other obstruction near the track. A bad wreck occurred near this same area when some heavily loaded log cars got loose from the locomotive and piled up at a trestle crossing.

I recently walked to the old tram crossing on Hurricane Branch near my home, attempting to recapture a feeling for the history of this land where my

ancestors lived and toiled. The trestle timbers have been gone many years but the road bed is still visible on both sides of the branch. Traces of the bar ditches remain where slip teams scooped dirt to build up low-lying areas of the right-of-way. It has been eighty-five years since huge virgin pine logs passed over this spot on their way to Kirby's big sawmill in Roganville, but sometimes late in the evening, when the only sound is rippling water below and a wood thrush's soft call as he seeks a safe haven for the coming night, I can almost see a Shay locomotive under a cloud of black smoke, slowly thrashing its way up the steep grade beyond the branch, with a heavy load of logs and a weary crew looking forward to supper and a little rest before returning to the piney woods at daylight.

**TEXAS WILDLIFE CONSERVATION – HISTORICAL NOTES**

*by Rollin H. Baker*

Since the early decades of the nineteenth century, the impressive biota of Texas has attracted both professional and amateur students of plants and animals. However, not until the beginning of the twentieth century did an organized program get underway to determine the kinds and distributions of the birds and mammals and also of reptiles, amphibians, crustaceans, mollusks, and plants inhabiting this ecologically-diverse region.

**BIOLOGICAL SURVEY OF TEXAS**

At that time Dr. C. Hart Merriam, then Chief of the Biological Survey of the U.S. Department of Agriculture dispatched at least ten field naturalists to the state. A major purpose of their visit was to learn the economic importance of wild plants and animals in relation to regional farming and ranching practices. In short, Dr. Merriam's field crew set out not only to inventory this array of wildlife resources but also to determine which species hindered and which species benefited man's ability to make a living on the land.

Tall, slender Harry C. Oberholser was assigned to prepare the part of the report about birds while short, wiry Vernon Bailey the part about mammals. As it turned out, the amount of information obtained was so voluminous that the two reports were published separately. Bailey's contribution in 1905 appeared on schedule. On the other hand, Oberholser's report (ultimately co-authored by E.B. Kincaid, Jr.) appeared many decades later in 1974.

Oberholser made his study of the bird life of Texas a life-long project. Since I had a personal interest in seeing this work published and available for reference, I recall confronting him diplomatically but unsuccessfully about it on two occasions.

Once I was in the audience when this distinguished ornithologist presented a paper about his report on Texas birds. This was at an annual meeting of the Texas Academy of Sciences in either 1940 or 1941. I enthusiastically contributed \$5.00 to a fund to aid in its publication. Still it did not appear.

In the spring of 1946, I visited with Oberholser when we were studying birds at Washington's Smithsonian Institution. He said that work on the Texas volume was near completion, yet it did not appear until after his death. Needless to say, my field work on Texas bird life late in the 1930s and early in the 1940s surely would have been enhanced if Oberholser's data had been published on schedule.

Vernon Bailey's masterful "Biological Survey of Texas" was the authority on the state's mammals for almost a half-century. Certainly as a reference for my field studies, his findings were invaluable. My several conversations with this sterling field naturalist about Texas mammals were also most stimulating.

Unfortunately, Bailey's important inventory actually appeared after resident mammals – beaver, grizzly bear, black bear, spotted cats (ocelot and jaguar), pronghorn, wapiti (elk), bighorn sheep, and bison – either had been extirpated or markedly reduced in distributions and/or in numbers.

#### TEXAS STATE GAME, FISH AND OYSTER COMMISSION

The early citizens of Texas did little to address the need for conserving the state's wildlife resources. The earliest pioneering settlers, much like the Native Americans before them, took only sufficient amounts of wildlife in order to sustain their families. Later intruders, some of them market hunters, cropped wildlife to such a degree that the first law protecting these resources was enacted in 1861.

It was not until 1907 that a specific agency, which was to become the State Game, Fish and Oyster Commission, became caretaker of Texas wildlife. This agency began recommending the passage of laws to conserve dwindling species and to have the means to enforce such laws. Beginning in 1909, citizens wanting to hunt were required to buy licenses. By this means the program was financed for more than three decades.

By 1915, predatory animal control became well established in Texas mostly by hunters and trappers trained by the U.S. Bureau of Biological Survey. Livestock raisers encouraged this program even though it destroyed a large number of non-targeted wildlife, innocent of depredations on cattle, horses, sheep, and goats. This activity completely eliminated the Texas gray wolf population and seriously reduced the number of spotted cats, mountain lion, black bear, and golden eagles. Meanwhile, the coyote, a major but highly elusive target, survived despite all of the attention it received.

The first six state game wardens were hired in 1919; by 1925, the number had increased to 100. Also in 1925, a new trespass law enhanced the right of landowners to close their land to hunters. With little public land available, hunters often were obliged to pay for hunting rights. This led to the "deer hunting lease" program. This movement brought out the concept that wildlife, like other products of the land, had a monetary value. With game populations worth money, land operators naturally became watchful that animal harvests did not exceed production rates.

In 1929, the dynamic William J. Tucker was named executive secretary of the Commission by the six governor-appointed commissioners. It was ten years later when my years of service with the Commission began.

By 1938, the Texas Game, Fish and Oyster Commission (later a part of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department) was a self-sustaining and certainly modest operation; none of its budget came from appropriations from the general tax fund. The Commission subsisted by means of fees paid for hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses and also from taxes paid on such natural resource extractions as sand, shell, and gravel.

Its initial mission, insofar as birds and mammals were concerned, was to obtain periodic – albeit “rudimentary” – inventories of wildlife populations in order to make decisions as to which species required total protection and which could withstand annual harvests. For the latter it was also necessary to determine when and for how long hunting and trapping seasons would be open and the sizes of bag and possession limits.

Lacking self-regulatory powers, the Commission was obliged to petition the legislature to recommend that appropriate laws be passed to legalize those proposed regulations. At the same time, the Commission cooperated with the U.S. Bureau of Biological Survey, now the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This was to enforce federal laws regulating the hunting of migratory game birds (ducks, geese, snipe, rails, gallinules, doves, etc.), to enforce the Lacey Act, and to protect non-game songbirds.

The Commission, noting wildlife population declines, arranged for passage of laws granting full protection from hunting to the Attwater (greater) prairie chicken in the 1930s. One of the major tasks was to get laws passed to eliminate the popular and ancient sport of hunting white-tailed deer with dogs. This practice was thought to be a major factor in holding down populations of white-tailed deer in many parts of eastern Texas.

In some counties, game laws (except those concerned with migratory birds, violations of which could be prosecuted in more rigorous federal courts) were difficult to enforce. Justices of the peace, county attorneys, and county judges sometimes were reluctant to prosecute the local citizenry (or kinfolk) for such minor offenses as head-lighting deer.

Backwoods attitudes in the 1930s, in fact still prevalent today in many sectors, believed that the good Lord put wildlife on this earth for man to use as he saw fit – and no laws should be passed restricting its utilization. I personally heard nesters espouse this position on several occasions. In some areas the local folk even went so far as to declare a year-around “open season” on state game wardens.

Local animosity is illustrated by the following selected example. State Game Warden Cecil Crow, stationed in “deep” East Texas, made the tragic mistake of returning gunfire while trying to apprehend a belligerent poacher. The latter, a resident of Louisiana, was hunting squirrels illegally on the Texas side of the Sabine River bottom. Normally, it was open season on such “foreign” invaders, but when Crow’s bullet, meant to pass well above the intruder’s head, killed the trespasser – certainly an accidental happening – the local folk had an excellent excuse for throwing the book at an unwelcome warden.

They threatened to try Crow for causing the out-of-state poacher’s demise. To protect Crow, the Commission transferred him to Lake Dallas, but he still had legal trouble. As a departmental employee I donated along with other staff members to cover his legal fees. Since I was called to active naval duty about that time, I never did learn what happened to him.



Lawbreakers were brought to justice by a mere handful of state game wardens assisted occasionally by members of sheriff's departments. As late as the WWII era, wardens such as J.J. Dent, Ray Williams, Tom Redford, Gus Cochran, Herbert Ward, Fischer Osborn, Earl Sprout, and my father-in-law, Tom Waddell of Eagle Lake, often were assigned to patrol several counties all alone. In 1938, for example, Waddell patrolled all or most of Austin, Colorado, Lavaca, and Wharton counties. To say the least, law enforcement was a difficult task.

Fines were assessed to persons found guilty of violations of the game-and-fish codes by justices of the peace. The offenses were classed as misdemeanors, and as I recall, the fine monies, aside from court fees, went to the school fund. There were, however, two laws in the 1930s, violations of which were classed as felonies.

One had to do with highly destructive practice of dynamiting fishes; the other with transporting a "live wolf" across a county line. The latter, I suppose, was instigated at the request of the powerful ranching lobby. A person guilty of one of these two offenses might be sentenced to up to two years in jail.

Sometimes state legislators passed game regulations without complete approval of officials of the Commission. A newly-elected legislator could, for example, make himself known as a "law maker" by getting enacted a law to close the season in his "home" county to the hunting of bobwhite quail or the trapping of mink. Such actions were hard for the Commission to quell diplomatically.

At first the Commission had no official public-relations or educational program. Articles about hunting seasons, the need to enforce game laws, and the importance of wildlife as a state natural resource occasionally appeared in the press.

A short, hard-working, and jolly fellow named W.J. Burr wrote some of the first Commission wildlife bulletins in the 1930s. By 1940, a more professional educational and public relations program got underway when publicist Roger Busfield was hired. Jay Vessels, Everett T. Dawson, and others followed. A *Monthly Bulletin* was inaugurated late in the 1930s. The slick and better-illustrated *Texas Game and Fish Magazine* was first published in 1943.

Wildlife pamphlets and technical bulletins also appeared. Valgene W. Lehmann wrote one of the first in 1937 – on bobwhite quail. I authored a bulletin on the same subject in 1940 and another on bullfrogs in 1942.

I was encouraged (or at least was not discouraged) to publish summaries of research findings in national scientific journals about the ecology of nine-banded armadillos and white-tailed deer in 1943, gray and fox squirrels in 1944, and raccoons in 1945. However, when my note on small rodents in eastern Texas appeared in the *Journal of Mammalogy* in 1942, I received a stern letter from Tucker suggesting that I should author only papers dealing with harvestable wildlife.

I also received another rebuke when a widely-published news photograph issued in 1941 showed me sporting a partial beard while ear-tagging an East Texas gray squirrel. Tucker wanted no beards in his outfit in those days.

Newspapers in larger communities hired outdoor writers. Most were hunter- or fisherman-scribes with little background in ecology or details about modern wildlife management. Bill Walker of the Houston Press, a typical outdoor columnist, liked to laud and then to criticize Commission programs, sometimes whether he had good reason or not.

Hunting and fishing clubs, usually dedicated to the wise and sustained use of wildlife, often had Commission personnel as advisors. One of the best in East Texas was the Beaumont Rod & Gun Club. Deer/turkey hunting leases in western Texas paved the way as demonstrations that wildlife had a monetary value as a renewable product of the land. However, such arrangements in eastern Texas were largely a post-WWII activity.

The Commission allowed employees unlimited "official" travel within the boundaries of Texas, but in pre-WWII days, vacation time had to be used for job-related, out-of-state trips. Consequently, my trips to attend such annual scientific meetings as those of the American Society of Mammalogists in 1940 and 1941, and of the North American Wildlife Conference in the same years, were on my own time and expense.

During this entire formative period the executive secretary was William J. Tucker. He was paid about \$3,600 per year. I finally made either \$1,800 or \$2,000 in 1943, the year I departed for duty with the U.S. Navy.

Tucker, wiry and slight in build, was truly a remarkable person. He had been a captain in the famed Rainbow Division. His book, *Not All Ashes*, about his WWI experiences in France, appeared in 1941. As a "loyal" employee I purchased a copy.

Tucker had a booming and commanding voice. His orations about the needs of Texas wildlife at sportsmen's meetings were impressive, attracting friends and foes alike. He was always "Mr. Wil" to me and to other employees. I was not particularly uneasy in his presence – just most respectful and careful not to say any more than necessary.

Even though administrative positions such as his always have built-in hazards and are challenged constantly by self-appointed "hate-the-Commission" groups, "Mr. Wil" did a remarkable job of appeasing both hunters and fishermen and the Austin political crowd. He served at the pleasure of the governor-appointed Commissioners for at least fifteen years.

#### TEXAS COOPERATIVE WILDLIFE RESEARCH UNIT

In 1935, an event took place which set the stage for the modern wildlife conservation and game management program in Texas. In that year the federal government, perhaps at the urging of such national wildlife authorities as Ding

Darling, Aldo Leopold, Herbert Stoddard, Seth Gordon, and Ned Dearborn, established a number of Cooperative Wildlife Research Units.

Ph.D. biologists employed by the U.S. Bureau of Biological Survey, now part of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, were assigned as adjunct professors at selected land-grant institutions and became leaders of these units. Among the schools first involved were Pennsylvania State, Oregon State, Connecticut, Idaho, Iowa State, Ohio State, and Texas A&M.

Federal funds also provided for office staff, field studies, and graduate-student fellowships. The idea was to encourage these schools to develop their own academic programs in wildlife research and game management to help meet the expected need for graduate wildlife biologists. Once the units got the programs underway, they were supposed to be phased out. Of course, like many self-perpetuating programs, they are still going strong at some institutions more than fifty years later.

Dr. Walter P. Taylor, then a Senior Biologist with the U.S. Bureau of Biological Survey, was dispatched from Arizona to College Station to become the leader of the unit established at Texas A&M. He was a forever-optimistic, "banty-rooster" type of person – a hard worker, a good promoter, and despite being perhaps a little too altruistic, an excellent public relations person.

Taylor had amassed a solid ecological background and distinguished research publication record. His Ph.D. was in Zoology from The University of California at Berkeley, and he was internationally known as a spokesman for environmental programs. He had been elected president of such national scientific organizations as The Ecological Society of America, The Wildlife Society, and The American Society of Mammalogists. He was highly suited for his mission in Texas.

To get the on-campus academic program going, Taylor helped establish the Texas A&M Department of Fish and Game (now Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences). In September 1937, the first staff member arrived. He was Dr. William B. Davis of Idaho, a specialist in mammals and birds. In 1938, Dr. Kelshaw Bonham of Seattle became instructor in fisheries biology. Bonham ultimately departed, but Davis stayed to become the leading authority on Texas mammals.

As in most academic situations, unit secretary Mrs. Dubois, perhaps a head taller than Dr. Taylor, had a lot to do with running the show. Field employees, like myself, soon learned that it was a good idea to keep her friendship.

Both Davis and I arrived on the campus of Texas A&M at the same time for the fall semester in 1937. We met on the stairs as we climbed up to the third floor of the Animal Industries Building to meet Taylor, Davis to begin his long professorial tenure and I to inquire about graduate studies.

That first school year (1937-1938) with the Taylor-Davis team was a memorable one. Daniel W. Lay was appointed as the Department's first

graduate assistant in September 1937, and helped Davis with the newly-established courses in mammalogy and ornithology. I was appointed president of the advanced seminar. It would have been a rather routine and lackluster chore had it not been for the parade of department-visiting dignitaries, all leaders in the field of environmental sciences.

They visited Taylor, but he always persuaded them to address the seminar. Taylor insisted that I introduce each of them, which I did nervously. Perhaps my greatest thrill was to introduce the celebrated founder of plant ecology, Dr. Frederick Clements.

Besides being busy completing the requirements for the Master of Science, Lay and I found time to carry out modest studies about mammals. We surveyed small mammal populations on Galveston and Mustang islands and gathered data on the ecology of Florida wood rats (*Neotoma floridanus*) living in a wooded sector on the Texas A&M campus. Summaries of the findings from these studies appeared in 1938 in the *Journal of Mammalogy*.

For the Texas Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit to get an active field program underway, "Walter P." (as we used to call Dr. Taylor – but not to his face) brought in Valgene W. Lehmann, a native of Brenham, who held a degree in botany from The University of Texas at Austin. Lehmann was then on assignment as a waterfowl biologist for the U.S. Bureau of Biological Survey at Utah's famed Bear River Waterfowl Marshes.

Lehmann worked first on a wildlife survey of Walker County. His work was augmented when on February 1, 1936, Taylor hired Texas A&M student Daniel W. Lay as field assistant. Lay joined Taylor on week-end field trips in the Huntsville area. Together they sampled the biota by collecting museum specimens of birds, mammals, and plants. Dr. S.R. Warner, then the authority on the Big Thicket flora and a professor at Sam Houston State College, cooperated by identifying the plants.

One evening, according to Lay, while he and Taylor were busily preparing bird specimens for the Texas A&M research collection at Huntsville's Boone's Motel, Warner stopped by to introduce ex-school teacher Phil D. Goodrum. This marked the beginning of Goodrum's noteworthy career as a Texas wildlife specialist and administrator. Ultimately, both Lay and Goodrum conducted research in this area as a part of the requirements for their graduate degrees at Texas A&M.

Beaumont-born Lay's studies about bobwhite quail explained why bobwhite quail were more abundant in some successional stages of cut-over pine growth than in others. Crockett-born Goodrum studied the ecology of gray and fox squirrels and developed highly-regarded and widely-used census methods for these tree dwellers.

Next Lehmann studied the distribution and ecology of the fast-disappearing Atwater prairie chicken. He examined present and former

habitats of this bird along the coastal plain from western Louisiana to Corpus Christi.

Lehmann devised a method of censusing prairie chickens by means of a rope count. A long rope or steel cable was attached by swivels to the back bumpers of two field cars. Then the cars drove parallel with each other back and forth through open chicken country counting the birds they flushed when the taut rope or cable came their way. I recall that the back bumper on my 1930 Model A Ford was torn away when the stout and ungiving cable struck a post hidden in prairie grass.

In 1938, Lehmann was stationed in Eagle Lake because Colorado County had a large and representative population of prairie chickens and was somewhat central in the species' distribution along the vast upper Texas Gulf Coastal Plain. Ultimately, Lehmann summarized his findings about the ecology and fragile status of the Altwater subspecies of the greater prairie chicken. His report, the first major study of a Texas wildlife species, was published as a government monograph in 1941.

Taylor also assigned Lehmann to conduct a biological survey of Colorado County. His colleagues on this project were Hilbert R. "Bandy" Siegler (a native of Wisconsin with a M.S. under Aldo Leopold) and, beginning in September 1938, myself.

Besides gathering field data on the local populations of prairie chickens, this team of workers, aided and abetted by the brilliant field-savvy of State Game Warden Tom Waddell of Eagle Lake, studied the ecology of other important species of the Gulf Coastal Plain. These included white-tailed deer, fur-bearing mammals, bobwhite quail, nesting upland and wetland bird life, and the economic importance of wintering populations of migratory waterfowl.

Before a major report on the biological survey of Colorado County had been completed, Lehmann and I were transferred to Waller in March 1939 and worked briefly on prairie chicken flocks in the Waller/Harris county area. By mid-1939, both Lehmann and I ended our field studies for the unit and were hired as wildlife biologists under the newly-enacted Pitman-Robertson Program of the Texas Game, Fish and Oyster Commission.

By 1940, Taylor was making great strides in educating Texans about the value of natural resource conservation. He spoke widely to varied audiences, including service clubs, sportsmen's groups, and farm-and-ranch organizations. He emphasized the value of scientific research and game management as a means of restoring and sustaining wildlife and habitat.

Taylor stressed the concept that wildlife, as a renewable product of the land, could produce a harvestable surplus. In short, his message was that effective enforcement of the game laws was certainly necessary but was not sufficient to sustain wildlife. The environmental needs of each species had to

be ascertained through scientific field studies. Then these wildlife habitats had to be safeguarded and managed by interested land operators.

Taylor emphasized that wildlife and its living places had a value. He also said that as a practical matter, wildlife had to co-exist compatibly with other farm and ranching programs through which land operators gained their major livelihood.

Taylor's persuasive actions gained support from agribusiness groups as well as from the Texas Academy of Sciences, the Texas Wildlife Federation, the Texas A&M Cooperative Extension Service, and the State Game, Fish and Oyster Commission.

With the Cooperative Extension Service he worked closely with wildlife specialist R.E. Callender, then successfully involved in persuading landowners to designate their properties as cooperative wildlife management areas. Signs bearing this information appeared on fence lines of properties in all sectors of the state.

In June 1938, the Department of Fish and Game awarded their first M.S. diplomas to Phil D. Goodrum and Daniel W. Lay. My own M.S. diploma, received at the same commencement, was for a major in Entomology and a minor in Fish and Game. My thesis concerned the ecology of insect life in the Big Bend region. Data for this was obtained in the summer of 1937 when I was employed as a student wildlife technician by the U.S. National Park Service and stationed in the CCC Camp in the then proposed Big Bend National Park.

The undergraduate program also produced such beginning wildlife biologists as Henry Hahn, John Carlisle, Randolph Peterson, Ben Ludemann, Bill Ramsey, and Willie Parker. Some of these became employees of the State Game, Fish and Oyster Commission and/or eventually entered the armed forces.

The late Randolph "Pete" Peterson did especially well. He was a WWII bomber pilot, married Elizabeth Taylor (the boss's daughter), became Curator of Mammals at the Toronto's Royal Ontario Museum, and achieved fame for his classic volume on the moose and as an authority on bats.

The program of the Texas Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit was an outstanding success under the campus direction of Taylor and the field leadership of Lehmann. It was Lehmann, however, who can be credited as the real instigator of modern wildlife management programs in Texas.

Using bobwhite quail as his study species, he ably demonstrated how populations of these birds would respond favorably to planted food patches and to additions of appropriately-placed winter cover, whether it consisted of planted wild plum thickets, prickly pear thickets, stacked brush piles, or felled huisache trees kept alive in prone positions by being only half-cut. Lehmann took pride in demonstrating such habitat manipulations to groups of hunters. In fact, his talent at promoting wildlife programs to the public rivalled his abilities as a research scientist.

Some time during WWII the Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit and Taylor were transferred to Oklahoma State University. Dr. Taylor, bless him, had been the right person, in the right place, at the right time. Thanks to him, the Texas A&M program was established.

### FEDERAL AID TO WILDLIFE

In 1937, the Depression was still on, dust storms had not abated, and the start of WWII was a couple of years away. The Congress, wisely, enacted a law co-authored by Senator Key Pitman and Congressman Willis Robertson to earmark federal taxes collected on the sale of arms and ammunition to a special fund. Monies from the fund, called the P-R Federal Aid to Wildlife Fund, could be distributed to qualifying states on a 75/25 basis for use in wildlife research and game management, but not specifically for law enforcement.

“Wildlifers” – mostly field-oriented graduates in botany, forestry, and zoology – could quit working as attendants in service stations or as fry-cooks and apply for state “P-R” jobs in their professional field.

Executive Secretary William J. Tucker of the State Game, Fish and Oyster Commission responded favorably in 1938 to hiring academically-trained wildlife biologists under this cooperative program. However, perhaps the true value of these workers was not brought home to Tucker effectively until one late summer day in 1939 when he was enticed out of his Austin office in the Walton State Building and down to a curb-parked truck. In it were cages containing live beaver.

These beaver had been trapped in the Llano River drainage by Texas A&M graduate student Arthur H. Cook. These fur-bearers were to be freed along a stream in eastern Texas where they had once been abundant but had been totally extirpated. After Cook explained his mission to Tucker, the latter decided that “greenhorn college kids” had some use in the wildlife business.

I must admit that earlier Taylor and Davis of Texas A&M and Tucker’s staff member Goodrum, and especially Lehmann, had convinced him that wildlife restoration and habitat management were important parts of a state game program.

As soon as funds were allocated in 1938, Phil Goodrum, the tree squirrel specialist, was hired as director of Wildlife Restoration. This was indeed an excellent choice. Goodrum was not only a well-grounded field biologist but had that easy-going East Texas diplomatic charm, a sense of humor, and some practical horse sense. He was equally effective at dealing with politicians, wary and suspicious sportsmen, the business community, and all those “unreconstructed” country folk.

During his tenure, the state was divided into several regions – more or less along ecological lines. Offices staffed with wildlife biologists were established in each region. Lay became Regional Biologist for southeastern Texas with headquarters at Beaumont. In June 1939, I joined him there as an associate.

Meanwhile, in mid-1938, Siegler left his position with the Texas Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit to become regional biologist in northeastern Texas, with headquarters at Mt. Pleasant. Later the entire eastern sector of Texas would be combined with headquarters at Lufkin, where both Lay and Siegler were stationed. Ultimately Siegler departed for New Hampshire to become chief of that state's wildlife program.

Most other regional positions were, by necessity, filled by newly-arrived "Yankees" – graduates from such institutions as Iowa State, Michigan State, Michigan, and Wisconsin. This was because there were few qualified applicants from Texas. Some of these well-trained men were Pete Henika from Wisconsin, Lee Fisher, Charles Friley, and Arnold J. Nicholson from Michigan, and William Green and Earl Saunders from Iowa.

By 1944, most had departed for either the military or for wildlife positions at home. Their places were filled by Texas A&M graduates and then, as time went on, by those from other Texas institutions.

To get the Pitman-Robertson Federal Aid to Wildlife Program underway at the grass-roots level, the Commission arranged for the governor to appoint leading citizens to County Wildlife Planning Boards. Getting acquainted with and educating Board members occupied a lot of time for these newly-appointed regional biologists.

These boards proved their worth on many occasions. They helped acquaint the regional biologists with an array of local "cooperative" sportsmen, political figures, landowners, old-timers whose recollections provided data on early-day wildlife, dog trainers, sporting goods dealers, and bird watchers. Board members helped develop goodwill for the Commission and its staff.

The boards also supplied data on local wildlife populations. Cooperating citizens contributed notable assistance to the Commission in making much needed inventories of important wildlife species in each sector of the state. These data helped form the basis for the important reference book entitled "Principal Game Birds and Mammals of Texas" which appeared in 1945. Goodrum and Lay did most of the final preparation but unfortunately did not receive authorship.

Wildlife studies were carried out on lands of cooperating farmers and ranchers because there were no state-owned areas for that purpose. As a result of these cooperative programs, employees of the Commission in those days were much more closely attuned to the public pulse than at any other time. Today, many wildlife biologists conduct many of their intensive studies in state-owned wildlife areas. Many seem to take on the role of specialists rather than being assigned as generalists, as were most of us in my day.

Personnel problems occasionally developed within the Commission as a result of the P-R Federal Aid to Wildlife program. The usually non-collegiate but highly practical and worldly-wise state game wardens were apprehensive of the newly-hired, green-horn, college-trained biologists.



The latter had the “book learning” and were aware of the ecological principles involved in making field biological studies but lacked the applied part. They also had their share of public relation problems – and still do – in dealing with farmers, ranchers, sportsmen, journalists, anti-hunters, politicians, and, of course, with the state game wardens themselves, who often viewed them as youngsters and strangers.

One can imagine how ineffective those regional biologists, with “Yankee” backgrounds, might have been when trying to carry on a conversation with a closed-mouth, suspicious, and opinionated nester down at the forks of some East Texas creek. Naturally, such residents looked to the state game wardens for advice and guidance instead of to “alien” biologists. These comments certainly are not meant to be derogatory, but successful public relations about wildlife matters in rural sectors was tough no matter what!

The state game wardens often decided they were underpaid compared to the college boys and on occasion could make life in the field difficult for the latter. The wardens sometimes even spoke against the new and often untested Commission programs to local bigwigs. Perhaps hoping to counteract this, Tucker commissioned all of his wildlife biologists as state game wardens.

As a result, wildlife biologists often met state game wardens socially as well as officially when they worked together on “joint” projects. In my case, for example, I took the time on several occasions to ride shotgun or sit all night at the edge of grain fields to assist wardens in apprehending “headlighters” who hunted white-tailed deer illegally along roads or in grain fields.

From a personal standpoint, I suppose my greatest contribution to the Texas wildlife program during my four-year tenure as a P-R wildlife biologist was in 1939 when I was assigned, with colleague Paul Jones, to evaluate the Mexican bobwhite quail liberation program.

It was apparently legal in Mexico for dealers to obtain live-trapped quail, package them in boxes, and export them to Texas for release under the auspices of the Game, Fish and Oyster Commission. A Texan could, for example, buy twenty-four such birds for \$12.00 with the Commission paying another \$12.00.

The box of birds would then be shipped directly to the buyer for release. It was a lot of “fun” for sportsmen to buy and release the birds with fanfare and the like. Office-seekers during election years found the practice of buying boxes of quail as “gifts” for important voters had political value. It was actually a most unscientific program, but it was also valuable as a public relations gimmick for the Commission and was perhaps “unscientifically” worth the expenditure of the money.

Jones and I travelled to most sectors of Texas and visited numerous liberation sites for Mexican birds obtained the previous autumn. In almost every case, there already was breeding stock of native bobwhites present. In

short, we found absolutely no scientific justification for the program. Very honestly but a bit warily, we recommended that the Commission abandon the program.

Not only did Tucker accept our report with thanks but immediately issued an order to abolish the practice. For a year or two pronounced grumbling at both local and state levels occurred, but Tucker held his ground. It was a win for science. I enjoyed that challenge.

In looking back, I suppose that my most enjoyable projects had to do with studies of bullfrogs, raccoons, and armadillos. I became concerned about the plight of East Texas bullfrogs. Market hunters and others would catch them in early and mid-spring – usually prior to the time when the eggs were laid and fertilized. First I needed data on the commercialization of this wildlife resource.

The Austin office helped by mailing my questionnaire about utilization to an array of selected Texas restaurants and wholesale and retail fish and seafood dealers. The response showed that Texas bullfrogs were used commercially and were in demand. My bulletin, published in 1942, paved the way for a law prohibiting the taking of bullfrogs before June of each year.

Late in the 1930s and early in the 1940s, raccoon field studies were popular nationwide. To get into the act, Coleman Newman and I obtained monthly samples of raccoon fecal droppings at several of this mammal's customary "latrines" on felled logs, in the forks of trees, and elsewhere along the Piney Creek flood plain near Camden in Polk County.

The remains of the various animal and plant foods in these large accumulations of feces were identified by Ford Wilke of the Food Habits Laboratory of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Wilke, Newman, and I published a paper in the *Journal of Wildlife Management* in 1945 summarizing findings about the seasonal diets of raccoons in East Texas river bottoms. In short, raccoons in our study area subsisted mostly on acorns in autumn and winter and mostly on crayfish in spring and summer.

Sportsmen seem to want to have some kind of critter to hate. The lowly nine-banded armadillo was a prime candidate for this dubious honor in eastern Texas in the 1930s. Hunters were often convinced, but could not prove, that armadillos, newcomers at that time in many sectors, ate the eggs and destroyed the nests of the hunters' favorite game bird, the bobwhite quail.

There already had been some inconclusive field work on the subject by E.R. Kalmbach in 1943. Even Lehmann set out "dummy" nests in armadillo country – without obtaining any evidence of nest molestation. I decided to collect a sampling of armadillos in the Lufkin area in May-June – the time of the quail nesting season.

Armadillo hunting was not as easy as supposed; nevertheless, I did collect a fair number and examined the contents of their digestive tracts for evidence of quail eggs. I found none but did publish a paper on armadillo food

habits in 1943 in *The American Midland Naturalist*. Perhaps the best part of this project was that I sent several frozen armadillo carcasses to parasitologist Asa Chandler of Rice Institute in Houston. Dr. Chandler discovered and described new species of parasitic worms living in armadillo viscera.

Another highlight of this adventuresome period was the opportunity to hobnob with the scientific leadership of the times. More than a bit starstruck, I made a point of getting to know, obtain scientific reprints from, or at least shake the hands of such luminaries as naturalist and author Ernest Thompson Seton, bobwhite quail specialist Herbert Stoddard, government ornithologist Harry C. Oberholser, Mexican mammal specialist Maj. E.A. Goldman, Harvard ornithologist James Peters, Wisconsin wildlife ecologist Aldo Leopold, Chicago museum mammalogist Wilfred H. Osgood, New York museum mammalogist Harold C. Anthony, wildlife editor W.T. McAtee, ornithologist Ira Gabrielson, mammalogist Vernon Bailey, and others. Perhaps the most cherished letter in my files, now in the archives at Michigan State University, is a brief note from Aldo Leopold, the father of American wildlife management, asking me for a reprint of one of my publications.

I want to mention just one more point about "Mr. Wil" Tucker. He was one of the few bosses whom I have had who gave me a straight "yes" or "no" answer. I doubt if Tucker ever was acquainted with the word "maybe." Unfortunately for me, most of my subsequent bosses knew the word and used it much too often!

I have been a member and have attended meetings of such organizations as The Wildlife Society (joined 1937), The American Society of Mammalogists (joined 1937), The Wilson Ornithological Society (joined 1938), The American Ornithologists' Union (joined 1940), The Ecological Society of America (joined 1946), and have attended and presented papers at numerous state, regional, and national/international meetings having to do with wildlife. I have been acquainted with most of the pioneer leaders in our field. During my career I have witnessed the maturation of the fledgling science of wildlife biology and the practical art of game management.

Certainly, the task ahead is not only to preserve and manage wildlife and its habitat but, equally important, to manage the people who are ever encroaching on wildlife and its environments. In my opinion, these politico-environmental approaches have yet to develop a solid philosophic base. Aldo Leopold and perhaps Rachel Carson made a start. So did the late C.H.D. Clark, that inimitable Canadian wildlife biologist. No such philosophic individuals are on the scene today. We need a few!

## THE CENTER FOR EAST TEXAS STUDIES

### AN SFA '98 PROJECT

The exact boundaries for East Texas are difficult to define. SFA geographer Charles Gardner locates East Texas in the red-land, pine-forest region east of the thirty-inch-rainfall line. He excludes the Red River blackland prairie to the north and the coastal prairie to the south. The Texas Forestry Museum lists thirty-eight "East Texas Pineywoods Counties," beginning with Red River County and dropping south to skirt the Trinity and Navasota rivers, then cutting back east across the top of the coastal prairie to Jefferson County. The East Texas Historical Association – according to the José Cisneros map on the *Journal* cover – expands its membership and East Texas geography from Sherman on the Red River to the Gulf coast, including Dallas and Houston and Crossing the Brazos into Austin County. People generally define East Texas according to their particular needs. They always include the Big Thicket, Devil's Pocket, Scrappin' Valley, and the Redlands. A real East Texan, however, does not need a map to know whether he is in or out of his territory.

The history of East Texas is all the hard living and slow dying that has taken place in these piney woods. The Indians, Spanish, French, and Anglos – the red, black, and white folks and all the shades between – have been exploring and hunting and singing and dancing, raising families, building churches and bridges and cities for 450 years of recorded East Texas history. And this East Texas history has a difference in tone and mood and attitude from the history of the folks that went on west to the Pecos or the Caprock.

This rich history of East Texas needed a place to abide, a home with a parlour to welcome people who wanted to see and hear and learn about the people of its past. Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, the heart of the pineys, was the obvious location. As part of President Dan Angel's SFA '98 plan for the university's progress, Liberal Arts Dean Fred Kitterle and a committee consisting of F.E. Abernethy, Al Cage, James Corbin, Archie McDonald, Robert Mathis, Jim Reese, and James Speer prepared a plan for creating such an institution, the Center for East Texas Studies. The Center will be administered by the College of Liberal Arts.

Even though the emphasis of the Center for East Texas Studies will be regional, this does not mean that its point of view will be provincial. East Texas is a small part of a large world in a large time. But just as one can study the science of geology in a grain of sand, he can also study mankind's history in the microcosm of East Texas. The Center wishes to make studies of this particular small space and time in all its infinite variety available to interested historians.

The philosophical purpose of the Center of East Texas Studies is to provide an understanding of how the many cultures of East Texas mixed together over a long time and in a particular piney-woods space and created a modern region and people with their own culture.

A more tangible purpose is to build the principal archive of East Texas primary historical materials, to encourage the collection and preservation of such materials, and to make these materials easily accessible and readily available to the public. These historical materials include personal papers, business records, books, maps, photographs, motion picture films, videotapes, newspapers, periodicals, and oral history collections and transcriptions.

The heart of the Center for East Texas Studies is the East Texas Collection, located on the second floor of the Ralph Steen Library and under the supervision of Library Director Al Cage and Collection Director Linda Nicklas.

The East Texas Collection is already rich in archival materials. It presently houses the business records of regional logging companies in its Forest History Collections. It houses the archives for Stephen F. Austin State University. Among its many collections are the Bennet Blake papers, the Peña-Chireno family papers, and the papers of Tol Barret, who drilled the first producing oil well in Texas. The Collection contains the records and publications of the East Texas Historical Association, which include thirty-two years of intensive and extensive historical research. The Center will increase these holdings through an aggressive policy of acquisition and will assure their easy useability through computer technology.

In addition, large collections of information on East Texas are held by other SFA campus organizations, such as the Texas Regional Institute for Environmental Studies and the U.S. Census Center.

The East Texas Collection already has holdings of works of local writers: Karle Wilson Baker, Charlotte Montgomery, Ardath Mayhar, to mention three. A goal of the Collection is to locate East Texas writers – and writers about East Texas – and to create a repository for future study of these authors and their works. The Collection has campus support for this work through the staff of the university's literary magazine REAL, a publication which frequently features regional writers but is national in scope.

Presently, genealogists are the most frequent visitors to the East Texas Collection. We hope to make the Collection the starting point for all genealogists who wish to trace their families' histories through East Texas and beyond and to establish a computer network with genealogical centers in Salt Lake City, Baton Rouge, and throughout the United States.

The Center for East Texas Studies will work in conjunction with East Texas local history organizations and with the Northeast Texas Museum Association and the Southeast Texas Museum Association to accumulate and exchange materials and information.

The Center for East Texas Studies will be supported on the SFA campus by a large faculty contingent, over sixty professors presently, who have been actively engaged in East Texas research. The research and publications of the Texas Folklore Society, which has been headquartered on the SFA campus

since 1972, will be available to the Center. Archaeology and anthropology research is regularly published from the SFA campus. The schools of forestry and education circulate newsletters from the research and activities of their members. The result of such an accumulation of information and active researchers on East Texas should afford the Center for opportunity to seek research grants and contracts from foundations, governmental agencies, and businesses.

By the SFA '98 date the Center for East Texas Studies should be so firmly and prestigiously established that it will be the obvious repository for all important regional materials. Any study of anything East Texas should have its beginning in the Center for East Texas Studies.

In order to establish an identity and a focus for the Center, a historical exhibit will be mounted near the entrance to the library's East Texas Collection on the second floor of the Ralph Steen Library. The Center's exhibit will be a chronological sequence of displays illustrating the story of East Texas from the geological, archaeological, and historical standpoints. Thus, a walk around the exhibit area would be a tour of Nacogdoches and East Texas history from geologic times to the present.

Each exhibit area will be illustrated by paintings, photographs, and other visuals illustrating the historical episodes and individuals of the depicted time. The pictures will be accompanied by examples of the material culture of the period; by an illustrative enclosed display of books about the period, together with library search assistance; and by push-button recordings explaining the history of the events depicted.

One purpose of the exhibit will be to provide a visible and educational picture of East Texas from its beginning to the present. A larger purpose will be to indicate the historical scope of the materials contained in the East Texas Collection. This permanent exhibit will be supplemented periodically with temporary art and artifact exhibits as well as traveling exhibits from the Institute of Texan Cultures, the Texas Humanities Resource Center, the Witte Museum, and other centers of Texas history and culture.

The Center for East Texas Studies will be more than a collection of primary and secondary materials and more than a museum of area history. It will be the gathering place for scholars, the interdisciplinary meeting place for lectures and programs on East Texas history, culture, and science. The Center will sponsor a variety of activities and publications to disseminate information about the rich heritage of the East Texas area to schools and libraries, community organizations, and tourist information centers. The Center for East Texas Studies will provide services and resources in one place that can be found nowhere else.

### **A Summary of the Scope of the Center for East Texas Studies**

The Center for East Texas Studies will be administered by the College of Liberal Arts, and among its activities will be the following:

- To promote, stimulate, and assist the study of all aspects of the environment, history, culture, society, and economy of East Texas.
- To build and maintain an inventory of the materials available for such studies.
- To encourage and assist with the collection of materials and assist in their deposit and preservation in appropriate entities both on and off campus.
- To serve as a focal point for interdisciplinary dialogue on regional studies by fostering multidisciplinary cooperation and scholarly exchange between individuals whose scholarship and expertise has or could focus on East Texas through a program for visiting lecturers and scholars, support of faculty research and travel, and development of computer technology to enhance communication among various constituencies.
- To develop and maintain outreach programs aimed at scholars, public schools, business and governmental organizations, and others with a need for or interest in information about the region.
- To act as a vehicle for grants and contracts which do not more appropriately fall within the preview of existing departments or programs.
- To enhance the appreciation and application of the concepts of regional studies in the academic and other programs of the university.

## BOOK NOTES

These pages contain notes of books of recent publication that contain information of interest to our members.

The first is Benjamin King's *A Bullet For Lincoln* (Pelican Pub. Co., 1101 Monroe, Gretna, LA 70053, \$19.95), a work of fiction that advances a conspiracy theory in the assassination of the president. The actual assassin is a character named Anderson, first introduced in King's *A Bullet For Stonewall*, whose apparent demise in this book makes impossible a resurrection for a third "bullet." John Wilkes Booth, who until now mostly received blame for the fatal shot, is here predicted as a would-be kidnapper of the president who is used by Anderson to eliminate the one person in the government who would have assisted the South in its recovery after the war. Reason: J.P. Morgan hired Anderson to do the deed so Federal largess would be spent in the west on railroads – so he could make more money. Plot is a bit far-fetched, and the style lacks Micheneresque proportions, but I love a mystery and don't care much for Morgan, so I thought it interesting.

Early in the 1960s, while a doctoral student at LSU, I attended my first Walter Lynwood Fleming Lecture on Southern History. Either Norman Graebner or Clement Eaton – I can't recall which, but heard both while in residence – held forth. I had never heard of the Fleming Lectures before; since I have come to regard them as the premier series in the field. Appropriately, Pulitzer Prize-winner James M. McPherson delivered the 55th Fleming Lectures, here printed as *What They Fought For, 1861-1865* (Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, LA 70803). McPherson explains that this is part of a larger study to be titled "Why They Fought" when published; these three lectures concentrate on Northern and Southern motivation in an ideological sense, and slavery. McPherson's sources are the letters of participants, and he quotes from them extensively to illustrate such points as Northerners fighting for Union more than slavery, Southerners fighting to *escape* slavery and to repel invasion, and their differences over slavery as a cause of the war. Brief, good.

More Civil War: Harry W. Pfanz, *Gettysburg: Culp's Hill & Cemetery Hill* (University of North Carolina Press, Box 2288, Chapel Hill, NC 27515) would have to be called a specialized study; it deals with the players and drama of specific areas of our nation's most significant in-land battle. Pfanz writes well, so this microscopic look does not descend into the tedium that could have been fatal. He provides biographical data when introducing the commanders, and the volume contains a great many photos and maps. For hard-core fans of the battle, there is also a lengthy Order of Battle for the Army of the Potomac and the Army of Northern Virginia.

Pelican Publishing Company (1101 Monroe, Gretna, LA 70053) has produced two more products for "professional Southerners:" *The South Was Right*, by James Ronald and Walter Donald Kennedy, and *The Southerner's Instruction Book*, by Jim and Susan Erskine. Authors of the first believe that "the South had legitimate reasons to assert its claim to independence" and propose to show how "our Southern nation was invaded and conquered by a



cruel and ruthless enemy who despised our people” (pp. 8-9). With more humor, the Erskine’s offer 350 one-liners to characterize Southerners. I liked the following best: “Never bend over without hiking up your pants first;” “If Mamma ain’t happy, ain’t nobody happy;” “The wise man remembers his wife’s birthday and forgets her age;” “You know how you really feel about your neighbor when a ‘For Sale’ sign goes up in front of his house;” and best of all, “The first bug to hit your windshield is bound to land right in front of your eyes.” I got more out of the latter book than the former one, maybe because it reminds me of Bob Bowman’s books on East Texas.

*Liz Carpenter, Girl From Salado*, by Betty Wilke Cox (Eakin Press, Box 90159, Austin, TX 78709) resulted from the author’s association with the biographee as friend, housesitter, and observer of Texas affairs as librarian for the Austin *American-Statesman*. It is largely an anecdotal presentation of the eventful life of this “girl from Salado” who is the daughter of Texas pioneers, proud graduate of the University of Texas, Washington Journalist, aide and friend to both LBJ and Mrs. LBJ, and now in a fifth or sixth career, inspiration to all who are growing older because she is still “getting better all the time.” Perhaps the most useful portions deal with Carpenter’s family history and with her activities immediately following the assassination of JFK. Reading level would be appropriate for secondary students.

Janice Woods Windle’s *True Women* (G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 200 Madison Ave., New York 10016 – \$28.50) is a wonderful novel based on the lives of her great-grandmothers and maternal grandmother. What lives they lived! Their time in Texas paralleled all the historic events and involved many of the persons of historical importance during the Anglo years of the nineteenth century and the first third of the twentieth century, and they seemed always to live in the middle of the arena where great events in the drama of Texas played out. The “voice” of the novel is definitely feminine, and although most of their husbands seem to have been saints, inevitably all of their troubles came from men – especially the wars that bounced them about and took away husbands and sons. This is the best-written novel these old eyes have examined in some time. Highly recommended.

Michael C.C. Adams’ *The Best War Ever: America and World War II* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2715 N. Charles St., Baltimore, MD 21218), a part of the American Moment Series, is a book much different from what the title might suggest; the title is at least irony. What Adams does here is dispute the “best war” myth associated with WWII. Postwar traumatic syndrome did not begin just with the “bad war” in Vietnam. WWII had its share – as much as 30% of casualties; divorces increased, juvenile delinquency resulted from parental absence, etc., etc. Adams does confirm that the U.S. had little choice in whether or not to fight once the war began or that we were on the winning side. Probably he is right about the myth – especially among descendants of the generations that bore the battle-front and home-front burdens, and he provides a counterpoint to the nostalgia. But darn it, it still is the “best war ever.”

Betty Hanna’s *Ladies of the House: How to Survive as the Wife of a Texas Legislator* (Eakin Press, P.O. Drawer 90159, Austin, TX 78709, \$14.95) is a

fun book written by the wife of long-time legislator Joe Hanna, and herself a past president of the club and member of the Texas Historical Commission. Hanna undertook the assignment to write a history of this "exclusive" club of ladies whose husbands currently or previously served in the Texas House of Representatives for the ladies themselves, but all us "political junkies" will enjoy it as well – especially about LBJ worrying about the toilet seat standing at attention during a visit of the club to his ranch. My favorite anecdote: one wife painted such a happy picture of life in Austin to a constituent that the constituent's husband filed against her legislator-husband in the next election. Thereafter she only talked to folks backhome about going to church and charity work. Good pictures and "insider" stories.

George C Herring, *LBJ And Vietnam* (University of Texas Press: Austin, 1994, Box 7819, Austin, TX 78713-7819 – \$29.95), is the latest volume in "An Administrative History of the Johnson Presidency Series" produced in conjunction with the LBJ Library. Herring previously wrote *America's Longest War and The Secret Diplomacy of the Vietnam War*, and writes with authority on the failure of President Lyndon B. Johnson's conduct of the war. Herring says that Johnson made war "in cold blood," quoting Secretary of State Dean Rusk, meaning that he maneuvered the U.S. into the conflict without generating the kind of national support that brought the Home Front into full support of the Battle Front; in other words, without emotion. Then, says Herring, LBJ also bungled handling of peace feelers from whatever source, management of civilian and military affairs and personalities, and tried always to stand on middle ground until that ground eroded from beneath him, all to protect the Great Society programs that constituted the priority of his administration. One thing is certain: there will be more second-guessing and analysis of this war in the years to come.

*Ma's in the Kitchen, You'll Know When It's Done! The Recipes and History of Governor Miriam A. Ferguson, First Woman Governor of Texas* (including a foreword by the second woman governor, the Hon. Ann W. Richards), by Carl Randall McQueary and May Nelson Paulissen (Eakin Press, P.O. Drawer 90159, Austin 78709-0159, \$16.95) is a tribute to food – every personal or political event in the lives of the Fergusons is punctuated with what was served on the occasion. To this is added nearly 100 pages of recipes, and the most interesting part of all: homilies by Ma. The biographical material is laudatory and the problem areas and scandals glossed or ignored, but the food, always the food, is emphasized. I shall try some of the recipes.

*Twelve Days in Texas*, by Donna D. Cooner and illustrated by Bob Leland (Hendrick-long Pub. Co., Dallas, 75225), with a picture-text format, is for young Texans. Playing on the theme of the twelve days of Christmas, in this case "On the first day of spring My true love brought to me" not leaping lords or hens but mockingbirds, javelinas, armadillos, lazy longhorns, lone star flags, cotton, jumping jackrabbits, Indian paintbrushes, mourning doves, long-tailed opossums, and bluebonnets, and on the twelfth day of spring, "I moved." There follows, in mature style, explanations for each in case the book falls into the hands of outsiders.

**BOOK REVIEWS**

*The Cartwrights of San Augustine*, by Margaret Swett Henson and Deolece Parmele (Texas State Historical Association, 2.306 SRH, University Station, Austin, TX 78712), 1993. B&W Photographs. Appendix. Index. P. 337. \$39.95 Cloth.

Dr. Ralph Steen sent me a post card of the British Museum one summer when he was in London. He allowed as to its being nice but "new" by San Augustine's standards. We in San Augustine have often been known for being the oldest and the best, regardless of the subject. Knowing the Cartwright family initiated this book, I was afraid we were in for more of the same. I was wrong.

*The Cartwrights of San Augustine* is a beautifully written book which tells the story of the Cartwright family while documenting the history of San Augustine and the Redlands. The author begins the Texas story of the Cartwrights when John and his wife Polly Crutchfield settled in the Ayish Bayou District in 1825 with their family. Their children were Matthew, who married Amanda Holman; Robert G., who married Mary Lanier; Dicey Hoskins, who died young; George W., who married Ann Oliver; Mary, who married William Garrett; Clementine, who married Sanford Holman; Martha, who lived only two weeks; J. Clinton, who married Elvira Holman; and Richard Hankins Cartwright, who married Ann Berry.

The Cartwrights made money providing services and supplies to the settlers in the sparsely settled new country of Texas. John Cartwright brought a cotton gin, blacksmith tools, and saleable merchandise to Texas when he came. His sons continued the business after his death. They used the money they made to speculate in land, which carried them to all parts of Texas.

This book is concerned primarily with their eldest son, Matthew Cartwright, and his family. The children of Matthew, who had amassed the fourth largest estate in Texas by 1870, all moved to Terrell, Texas, except Columbus. Columbus Cartwright and his family remained in San Augustine where his descendants still live.

The Cartwrights were a large, illustrious family. Best known to Texas historians of today is probably Summerfield G. Roberts who has been recognized for his contributions to the history of our great state. One of my favorites was Judge Regan Cartwright who died a few years ago in Houston.

George L. Crocket wrote *Two Centuries in East Texas*, a history of San Augustine and the Redlands, published in 1936. Crocket's book had numerous mistakes in it, but he did not have the sources available that are available today. If Rev. Crocket was half as good at saving souls as he was at saving East Texas history, hell will be half empty.

*The Cartwrights of San Augustine* will not supplant Crocket's book, but it does document the history of San Augustine and the Redlands while telling the story of the Cartwrights in the settlement of Texas, the Fredonia Rebellion, the Battle of Nacogdoches, the Texas Revolution, the Mexican War, and even the Civil War.

*The Cartwrights of San Augustine* is well documented with the vast family collection of documents and the standards of the period. Of special interest to East Texas is the numerous citations to the Blake Papers which are transcripts of the Nacogdoches Archives.

When the author described John Cartwright standing with his sons atop the bluff at Natchez on the great Mississippi River, I swear I got a whiff of crawfish. I like her style.

I wonder if Margaret can save souls!

Willie Earl Tindall  
San Augustine, Texas

*Freedom's Lawmakers: A Directory of Black Officeholders During Reconstruction*, by Eric Foner (Oxford University Press, 200 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016) 1993. Illustrations. B&W Photographs. Indexes. P. 290. \$75.00 Hardcover.

The period of Reconstruction was fraught with numerous economic, social, and political concerns. No problem, however, provoked more controversy or bulked larger in scope in the immediate post-war years than that of the considerable number of newly freed slaves assuming public office.

As the subtitle states, this book is a directory of black officeholders during Reconstruction. In this carefully crafted work, Eric Foner succeeds in creating an intriguing work as he presents comprehensive biographical information on the lives of over 1400 public officials whose positions run the gamut from census marshal to constitutional convention delegate to constable to customs official to congressman.

It appears that the information presented in this book is intended to dispel the view of some that blacks were incompetent, corrupt, and general unfit for public service. As stated in the introduction, "These judgments stemmed from a combination of racism and an apparent unwillingness to do simple research about black officeholders" (p. xii). Eric Foner's work is an impressive scholarly effort to lift from the pages of historical obscurity the lives of many black office holders whose life stories would otherwise be generally unknown to history.

The bulk of the book is an alphabetical listing of 1,465 black public officials. The entries vary in length, but each contains the name, date, and place of birth and death, if known, free or slave status before the Civil War, state of literacy, and occupation. There follows a succinct bibliographic amount of each entry which, of course, chronicles the public office or offices held. At the end of the book there are five indexes. Each entry is indexed by state, occupation, office held during Reconstruction, topic, and birth status (slave or free).

This thoroughly researched work, which draws from various sources, evidences careful scholarship. What results is an important and exhaustive

reference work that considerably broadens the field of historical knowledge for students of American and Texas history.

Brooke Tucker  
Houston Baptist University

*The Newton Boys, Portrait of an Outlaw Gang*, by Willis and Joe Newton, as told to Claude Stanush and David Middleton (State House Press, P.O. Box 15247, Austin, TX 78761) 1994. Index. P. 332. \$16.95 Paper. \$24.95 Hardcover.

"We weren't thugs. All we wanted was the money, just like doctors, lawyers and other businessmen. Robbing banks and trains was our way of getting it. That was our business" (p. xi). The "businessman" was Willis Newton, leader of a gang of bank and train robbers composed primarily of three of his brothers, Jess, Doc, and Joe. Born near Dallas in 1889, Willis was the middle of eleven children. The father of this clan was a shiftless tenant farmer who moved his family virtually every year – Willis attended school just once, for a few weeks when he was twelve – while the mother admiringly read outlaw stories from cheap magazines to their children at bedtime. "Willis," she later confided, "I guess if I had been a man, I'd a-been a bank robber or outlaw too" (p. 26).

The boys began to ride the rods on freight trains at a young age, and soon they experienced trouble with the law. Incarceration proved highly educational: "They don't reform people they send to the penitentiary and jails," observed Willis. "They go down there and learn more" (p. 264). With knowledge and encouragement gleaned from experienced inmates, Willis and his brothers began robbing banks in a businesslike fashion. They used nitroglycerine, concentrating on banks in rural communities which had square "lug" safes (urban banks already were installing road safes which "screwed" into concrete vaults and had no cracks into which nitro could be poured).

The Newtons carefully studied banking operations, law enforcement methods, and security and communication systems. They utilized the best automobiles for getaways, planned and checked out escape routes, and operated at night to avoid dangerous daytime robberies. These professionals looted eighty banks and six trains, from Texas to Canada. But in 1924, when Willis attempted to pull off a million-dollar train holdup near Chicago, a non-relative gang member panicked and shot Doc several times. Although Doc survived, his injuries resulted in the capture of the gang and prison terms resulted.

The Newtons eventually settled in Uvalde, where in 1973 Claude Stanush and David Middleton interviewed Willis and Joe (they were eighty-four and seventy-two, respectively; Jess recently had died and Doc was confined to a nursing home). *The Newton Boys* is a transcript of the interviews, which were dominated by Willis, although Joe made significant contributions. The photo

collection is excellent, and the book offers a fascinating look at the hardscrabble existence of Texas tenant farmers early in the twentieth century.

Bill O'Neal  
Panola Junior College

*Southern Agriculture During the Civil War Era, 1860-1880*, by John Solomon Otto (Greenwood Press, P.O. Box 5007, Westport, CT 06881-5007) 1994. References. Index. P. 171. \$49.95 Cloth.

In this first book-length history of Southern agriculture, 1860-1880, Otto correctly argues that a revolution occurred that "transformed Southern labor, marketing, transportation and agricultural practices" (p. ix). Chapters cover Southern Frontiers and Southern Agriculture (1607-1860), The Civil War and Southern Agriculture (1860-1865), Political "Reconstruction" and Southern Agriculture (1865-1870), Political "Redemption" and Southern Agriculture (1870-1880), and Southern Agriculture and the Southern Frontiers (1860-1880). The author failed to define the South but apparently meant the Confederate states plus Maryland, Kentucky and Missouri, but not present day Oklahoma.

Otto believes that "by 1860, this westward migration of Southern agriculturalists was reaching its political, if not natural, limits" (p. 17). However, Randolph Campbell, in *An Empire for Slavery*, revealed that in 1861 Texas slavery was still expanding. Using perceptive examples from Southern states, Otto correctly concluded that "between 1860 and 1880, Southern agriculture underwent the most tumultuous transition in its long history" (p. 102).

Texas historians will note Otto's interesting comments on Texas land policy, cattle, and immigration. This book could have been strengthened by using more scholarship from Campbell plus Samuel Evans, Terry Jordan, Richard Love, and the Texas Crop and Livestock Services' *1866-1984: Texas Historic Crops Statistics* and *1867-1985: Texas Historic Livestock Statistics*. Otto's survey contributes to our understanding of Southern agriculture and will be a convenient point of departure for future study.

Irvin M. May Jr.  
Blinn College at Bryan

*Bad Hand. A Biography of General Ranald S. Mackenzie*, by Charles M. Robinson, III (State House Press, P.O. Box 15247, Austin, TX 78761) 1993. Illustrations. B&W Photographs. Footnotes. Bibliography. Index. \$29.95 Cloth.

*Bad Hand* is a revealing examination of the career and personality of Ranald Slidell Mackenzie, a tragic hero of the nineteenth century whose mutilated right hand caused Western Indians to call him "Bad Hand." The son of a controversial naval officer, Mackenzie attended West Point and graduated in 1862, first in a class of twenty-eight. He distinguished himself in Civil War

combat, repeatedly exhibiting extraordinary boldness and a mastery of cavalry tactics. Regarded by General Ulysses S. Grant as "the most promising officer in the army," he was wounded six times and brevetted to the rank of major general by the age of twenty-four.

Mackenzie remained in the regular army after the war, in 1870 accepting the colonelcy of the Fourth Cavalry. Impatient and frequently irritable, Mackenzie also was hard-working and resourceful, and he soon transformed his regiment into the army's best Indian-fighting outfit. Mackenzie and the Fourth were stationed wherever the Indian threat was greatest, including hard service in Texas from 1871 through 1875. Mackenzie received a richly deserved promotion to brigadier general in 1882, and the next year the shy bachelor became engaged to a widow whom he apparently had loved from afar for many years. But his success and happiness were destroyed by the collapse of his health. His mental abilities noticeably deteriorated, and an earlier abstinence from alcohol was replaced by habitual drinking. Mackenzie was granted a lengthy medical leave after a nervous breakdown, but when he resumed his duties doctors became convinced he was insane. Mackenzie was retired from the service at the age of forty-three and placed in an asylum. Later he was released to the care of a devoted sister, but he became increasingly childlike and died when he was forty-eight.

Charles M. Robinson, III, the author of *Frontier Forts of Texas* and *The Frontier World of Fort Griffin*, has written a fascinating biography of *Bad Hand*. The book is filled with period detail and insightful combat analysis. Most interesting of all are the theories regarding Mackenzie's illness, first advanced by Robinson in a paper presented to the Texas State Historical Association. For years it was suggested that Mackenzie was the victim of syphilis. But Robinson argues convincingly that his numerous wounds, a fall from a wagon onto his head, and the hardships and overwork of constant campaigning were likelier causes of his incapacity. *Bad Hand* is a stimulating and perceptive book about one of the giants of the last frontier.

Bill O'Neal  
Panola Junior College

*Civil War Shadows in Hopkins County, Texas*, by June E. Tuck (Walsworth Publishing Company, Marcelen, MO) 1993. B&W Photographs. Index. P. 405.

This work is obviously a labor of love – one suspects a life-time labor – by one who is a native of Hopkins County. The review of this typewritten book is succinctly stated in the author's preface: "My feeling came to be that a more vivid description of the people, events and the times could be had by reading the words of the participants than by attempting to summarize in my own words what had been written by the contemporaries on the scene."

True to her credo, Tuck fills the next 404 pages with verbatim reproduced letters, lists, rolls, and manuscript documents which she has collected from various archives. Outside of the first two-and-one-half pages of narra-

tive, there are only a few sentences and paragraphs scattered throughout to explain the period of time to which the documents relate. Nonetheless, history buffs as well as scholars and students will be fascinated by reading the poignant Civil War letters which bring home again just how uncertain life was in those times.

Although exact citations are lacking it is apparent that the author succeeded in acquiring from the national archives and the Department of the Army copies of official federal correspondence. These relate to events in and around Hopkins County during Reconstruction. This reviewer was surprised to learn that this quiet, rural section of northeast Texas was troublesome enough for federal authorities to station a permanent military cadre, complete with stockade, at Sulphur Springs. In reading the cryptic official reports filed by Yankee officers at the post, one gets the uneasy feeling that the Civil War did not end at Appomattox: indeed, that a guerrilla continuum flared and sputtered in the creek bottoms for some years afterwards.

The section on Reconstruction is followed by a chapter entitled Civil War Soldiers, which contains the names and brief service statements of hundreds of area veterans. The author's source for this valuable inclusion is a bit confusing but may have come from old newspaper accounts. It is apparent however, that the author has a talent for ferreting out primary sources. Anyone who has tried to locate the best government documents and have them copied by corresponding with "E"-type employees can appreciate the author's perseverance and success. Particularly laudable is a section of photographs of Hopkins County Civil War soldiers, although one mysterious woman appears in this section. Photo credits would have been helpful.

Genealogists, some Civil War buffs, and those interested in East Texas county histories will want to include this book in their collection.

Robert W. Glover  
Shiloh Ranch

*Ben McCulloch and the Frontier Military Tradition*, by Thomas W. Cutrer (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill & London, P.O. Box 2288, Chapel Hill, NC 27515-2288) 1883. B&W Photographs. Notes. Selected Bibliography. Index. Maps. P. 402. \$34.95 Cloth.

Thomas Cutrer has produced a well-written, well-researched biography of an interesting and important figure in both Texas and American history. Ben McCulloch, an intelligent, thoughtful, rough-and-tumble man, was drawn to war as inexorably as the moth to the flame; and to continue the well-worn metaphor, in time he was consumed by it. But before his death at the Battle of Pea Ridge, he crammed into his fifty-one years no less than five armed conflicts, not counting duels or other deadly adventures. If one adds to the list his readiness, nay eagerness, to fight the Latter Day Saints in the so-called "Mormon War" of 1858 and the bandidos in the "Cortina War" in Texas and Mexico, there would be seven. In fact, Cutrer presents the convincing



argument that the very ferocity of his demeanor led the Mormons to realize their necessity to capitulate to the mandate of president James Buchanan and the United States government.

McCulloch's niche in history would have been more prominent had he not been a warrior whose lineage was linked to a dying breed, for he fell into the early American-Jacksonian mold, which is to say a soldier, who, albeit able and brave and well-read, was still amateurish. The end of the tyro and the rise of the professional began with John C. Calhoun's long tenure as secretary of war, was solidified by another secretary, Jefferson Davis, and was signified by the Civil War. It is ironic that Southern Democrats destroyed the tradition of so many other Southern Democrats.

Simultaneously, opportunities were raised for the Democrats' enemies, the Whigs. For all McCulloch's obvious abilities, he was already an anachronism by 1861, "a Jacksonian Democrat in an officer corps whose critics charged it with rampant Whiggish elitism" (p. 316). Although dedicated to soldiering, Ben McCulloch never rose above the status of talented amateur. He remains, however, a loyal son of Texas, a slain Confederate hero, and a legendary figure.

James W. Pohl  
Southwest Texas State University

*Tainted Breeze: The Great Hanging at Gainesville, Texas, 1862*, by Richard B. McCaslin (LSU Press, Baton Rouge, LA 70892) 1994. B&W Photographs. Appendices. Index. P. 233. \$29.95 Hardcover.

Historians have recognized the importance of internal dissent in undermining the efforts of the Confederacy at least since the publication in 1924 of Albert B. Moore's *Conscription and Conflict in the Confederacy*. Subsequently, they have devoted much energy to explaining the dissent, but have spent little time looking at the Confederate reaction. Richard McCaslin's *Tainted Breeze* – an important contribution to the development of that historiography – examines the suppression in 1862 of a potential uprising in five counties in northern Texas.

Events in north Texas are particularly interesting because the response appears to have been out of line with the actual threat. The charges leveled against most of those accused of treason rested primarily on rumor. Even then, little suggested that the individuals associated with what was known as the Peace Society intended treason. Most if not all of them were neither abolitionists nor sympathetic with abolitionism. When a similar movement was uncovered in Arkansas the previous year the response was relatively modest, with those charged being forced to enlist in the Confederate army. In Texas the result was the execution of twenty-two men, known as the Great Hanging, and the subsequent deaths of many more. Why this particular community reacted so violently to dissent is the central focus of this work.

McCaslin's main point is that it was not the nature of the dissent but the community's perception of it that determined the response. The Texas Peace Society existed in a community, on the state's borders with the Indian Territory and the homelands of the Plains Indians, that historically had feared any threats to stability. Commonly the danger of instability was seen as threatening enough that vigilante justice was used to suppress it. By 1862 unusual fear and a tradition of vigilante action created the ideological framework for reacting to the Peace Society. Prominent local slaveholders, operating under the authority of popular sanction in what was known as the Citizens Court, acted decisively. They arrested men, refused to turn them over to other authorities, tried them, and then ordered seven executed. When that did not appease the community, the Court executed fourteen more.

The Great Hanging set the stage for the spread of violence. In the end forty-two men died and McCaslin shows that the impact of the violence was even longer lasting. It contributed to continued hostility and social tension through the rest of the war. The violence-spawned fear added to the domestic crisis of the Confederacy, generating additional antagonisms and conflict. McCaslin's close examination of this event throws new light on the social history of the Confederacy and uncovers the dynamics not only of dissent but also of its suppression. He also adds to our knowledge of Civil War Texas, that too often ignored "dark corner" of the Confederacy.

Carl H. Moneyhon  
University of Arkansas at Little Rock

*The Campaigns of Walker's Texas Division*, by J.P. Blessington (State House Press, P.O. Box 15247, Austin, TX 78761) 1994. B&W Photographs. Bibliography. Index. P. 332. \$29.95 Hardcover.

Walker's Texas Division was the largest unit of Texans in the Confederate Army, and they upheld the heritage of Lone Star fighting men admirably. The division served in the Trans-Mississippi, the most neglected department in Civil War history, as a fast-marching, hard-hitting unit that faced the foe whenever called upon to do so. This history is well worth remembering.

Joseph P. Blessington served in the division as a private, and shortly after the guns fell silent he took pen in hand to record the history of the unit. Historians are indebted to him for his tremendous work because his book helps plug a historical gap.

The division's history is told through every march and battle as only a soldier who felt the heat, cold, and rain could. In reading the volume, one realizes that Private Blessington wanted the reader, sitting in the comfort of his easy chair, to understand that there is much more to war than fighting.

And there was fighting. Battles hidden deep in the shadows of Gettysburg and Shiloh, battles with strange names to those who do not study the Trans-Mississippi, such as Milliken's Bend and Jenkins' Ferry, where historically

obscure brigades formed their units and fought black and white Union soldiers in Arkansas and Louisiana.

Blessington also records two strange facts that reflect the attitude of the Confederate soldier in attempting to understand the events he could not control, the surrender of Vicksburg and the retreat of General Nathaniel P. Banks at Mansfield. The former was attributed to a conspiracy between Generals John Pemberton and Ulysses Grant to surrender the gray army before the need to do so, and to surrender on July 4 to add insult to injury; the latter was a result of a captured Confederate officer giving Banks misleading information.

In reading Blessington's work, originally published in 1875, the reader can see what I refer to as the "myth of war," the adding of romance to the horror of the battlefield which all too often causes the young to wish for a war of their own; this, too, reflects the time that the book was written, a time when aging veterans met to recall the days of their youth when they charged the enemy amidst shot and shell. But in 1875, they heard the cheers of the audience rather than the screams of the wounded.

David Stroud  
Kilgore, Texas

*Women & Children of the Alamo*, by Crystal Sasse Ragsdale (State House Press, P.O. Box 15247, Austin, TX 78761) 1994. B&W Photographs. Glossary, Bibliography. P. 114. \$14.95 Paper. \$21.95 Hardcover.

The fate of Travis, Bowie, Crockett, and the other defenders of the Alamo is well known, but there were other participants in the siege of the Alamo. These were the women and children who either accompanied their husbands and fathers, or who sought refuge from the vengeance of Santa Anna. This slim volume examines six of these lesser known participants of the siege of the Alamo.

These six, Juana Navarro Perez Alsbury, Madame Candelaria (born Andrea Casteñon de Villanueva), Susanna Dickinson, Concepcion Charli Gortari Losoya, Ana Salazar de Esparza, and Enrique Esparza survived the final assault on the Alamo on March 6, 1836. All told tales of the Alamo's fall, usually to journalists and late in life. Ragsdale uses these accounts as the basis for this book. For the most part she succeeds in relating the stories of the women and children who survived Santa Anna's attack on the Alamo.

The story of the siege of the Alamo forms the background to the profiles of these survivors. In each case the same facts are presented, which tends to become repetitive. The material becomes more interesting when it reveals the later life and destiny of each of the six. The most famous is Susanna Dickinson, because she and her daughter, Angelina, were the only Anglo survivors of the battle. But the stories of the five *Tejana* women are more interesting, because they focus on a little known facet of Texas history, the importance of women, particularly *Tejanas*.

The book begins with a physical description of the Alamo and its siege. The chapters about each of the six could stand alone and be effective. Primary sources are cited in the bibliography, which is subdivided by chapter and subject. It should be noted that direct quotes or obscure facts are not cited as to their source.

*Women and Children of the Alamo* provides another look at the siege of the Alamo and the actions of the participants on both sides, especially during the final assault and the events immediately afterward. This volume could provide a good start for further investigation into this aspect of the Texas History.

Michael R. Bryant  
Mesquite, Texas

*A Long Ride in Texas: The Explorations of John Leonard Riddell*, edited by James O. Breeden (Texas A&M University Press, Drawer C, College Station, TX 77843-5465) 1994. B&W Photographs. Index. P. 115. \$24.50 Hardcover.

John Leonard Riddell, a New Yorker educated at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and Ohio medical schools, served as chemistry professor at the University of Louisiana (Tulane) from 1836-1865. A prolific writer on botany, chemistry, geology, physics, and medicine, Riddell earned an international reputation as an acute observer.

This account of his horseback trip from Houston to San Antonio in 1839 and the legendary San Saba silver mine predates by a decade similar scientific observations of Dr. Ferdinand Roemer, who has been considered the "father" of Texas geology. The editor added an article written by Riddell in 1879 about the geology and mineral deposits along the Trinity River in southeastern Walker County.

Botanists and geographers will enjoy Riddell observations, but so will historians and the general public. His worries about being attacked by Comanches in the San Antonio area and his struggle to cope with the miserable weather ranging from hot and dry to heavy rains while camping with all of his botanical gathering gear are vivid and entertaining.

The editor provides an excellent biographical sketch of Riddell and documents the narrative and the travelogue with ample notes. This is a significant contribution to the scientific and travel literature of 1839.

Margaret Swett Henson  
Houston, Texas

*Fighting the Good Fight: The Life and Work of Benajah Harvey Carroll*, by Alan J. Lefever (Eakin Press, P.O. Box 90159, Austin, TX 78709-0159) 1994. B&W Photographs. Appendices. Endnotes. Selected Bibliography. Index. P. 180. \$19.95 Hardcover.

B.H. Carroll, longtime Texas Baptist preacher, denominational leader in the Texas and Southern Baptist Conventions, pastor of Waco's First Baptist Church for twenty-eight years, and founder of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (SWBTS), is the subject of this biography by Alan J. Lefever, archivist and adjunct professor in church history at SWBTS in Fort Worth.

Lefever, utilizing a wide and impressive range of sources, traces Carroll, a physical (6' 4" tall and weighing over 260 pounds) as well as a spiritual giant, from birth throughout his life which involved several controversies that displayed Carroll's bulldog determination. He never backed away from fights, and believing himself always right, won almost all of them. The author, in the process of narrating Carroll's story, reveals to the reader hitherto little known facts about his subject, who is depicted not as a saint but as a man with human frailties, which delineates Carroll more realistically.

Carroll is prominent for several reasons. He helped unite the separate Baptist groups to form the Baptist General Convention of Texas in 1886; stood for, and thereby helped define, "Baptist Orthodoxy" throughout numerous altercations; and consequently gained recognition and a leading role for Texas in the Southern Baptist Convention. Additionally, he was an outstanding pastor of Waco's First Baptist Church and became a great teacher and educator whose crowning achievement was the founding of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (presently the world's largest) in 1907, which grew out of the Theological Department of Baylor University that Carroll had created earlier.

Utilization of fewer and shorter direct quotes and incorporating these facts into the text would have improved this work. A few inconsistencies exist, such as the 1868 Spring Hill revival on p. 22, but which on p. 79 supposedly occurred in 1867. Overall, however, this is an enjoyable, intriguing, timely, and worthwhile study which presents an exemplary overview of early Texas Baptist history. Additionally, this portrayal of B.H. Carroll is particularly relevant and demands attention since it provides another perspective from which to view the widespread controversies encompassing Texas, Southwestern and Truett Seminaries, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

Ron Ellison  
Beaumont, Texas

*Life on the King Ranch*, by Frank Goodwyn (Texas A&M University Press, Drawer C, College Station, TX 77843-4354) 1993. B&W Photographs. Glossary. P. 293.

This reprint of Frank Goodwyn's biographical narrative of his life on the King Ranch reveals not only its impact on a boy but also of a part of Texas

now gone. Beginning in 1911, Frank's intimate knowledge of that seemingly timeless yet restricted world of ranching Texas developed from his formative years as an integral part of the lives of his father and the Hispanic *vaqueros* he bossed at Norias, the lower spread of the King domain. The foreboding terrain of desert range, from which developed the *charro* culture of the Mexican Texas, ruled them all.

Not a history but rather the unique story of one youngster's passage into adolescence, this series of anecdotal vignettes of ranch life capture the spirit and times of the increasingly scientific and technological dominance of running one of Texas's largest cattle ranches among and with an Hispanic culture in place on the Rio Grande long before the beginning of the first Anglo cattle drives to the northern railroads.

Although the whoppers and tall tales indicate Frank Dobie's impact on Goodwyn, his book is much more than another bundle of frontier yarns. This biographical recollection, bubbling with a rare mixture of a growing boy, a frustrated spinster teacher, families, folk magic, telephones, spirits, automobiles, legends, and horses and cattle, evokes the mystery of a special group of people long gone. *Life on the King Ranch* is worth reading again, as well as for the first time.

Melvin Clarno Johnson  
Texas Forestry Museum

*El Rancho in South Texas*, by Joe S. Graham (University of North Texas Press, P.O. Box 13856, Denton, TX 76203-3856) 1994. B&W Photographs. Bibliography. Index. P. 121. \$10.00 Paper.

Some well-deserved attention on ranching as an institution in North America is the focus of the exhibit entitled *El Rancho in South Texas: Continuity and Change from 1750* and Joe Graham's printed guide to the display he helped develop. This work focuses on South Texas, the region in which ranching in what is now the United States began from Spanish/Mexican roots.

The text relies on primary sources from interviews of people with first-hand knowledge as well as on secondary sources by writers such as David Dary, Jo Mora, Sandra Myres, Americo Paredes, and others. Graham's intensive research on *vaqueros*, as well as on South Texas folklore, folk life, and material culture, enlivens the work, Graham also offers case studies of two South Texas ranches – the de la Garza family's El Randado and the Jones family's Alta Vista, both excellent examples of contemporary ranches with strong *vaquero* influence.

The black-and-white photographs, many taken by Graham himself, combine with others from the Conner Museum at Texas A&M University at Kingsville, with which Graham is associated, and from family collections, especially the Jones family, whose archives, lamentably destroyed in a fire in June 1994, are now lost. Depicted are structures, wells, dipping vats,

windmills, livestock, *vaqueros*, and much more in this perceptive look at an important economic factor in a large part of the American West.

Lawrence Clayton  
Hardin-Simmons University

*In the Shadows of the Big Thicket*, by Mildred Lowery (Best of East Texas Publishers, P.O. Box 1647, Lufkin, TX 75901) 1993. P. 109.

*In the Shadows of the Big Thicket*, by Mildred Lowery of Lufkin, is a comfortable read. Lowery writes easily, sympathetically, and vividly of a young man's growing up in the Big Thicket some time in the last century. Josh Runnels was ten years old and living in San Augustine when his father died, leaving him an orphan. His mother had died earlier. Young Josh moved south to live with his grandparents on Brushy Creek, a tributary of Village Creek in the Big Thicket.

*Shadows* is about Josh's growing up under the tutelage of his grandfather, J.J., and about his learning to live in and love the depths and the insides of the Big Thicket. J.J. teaches Josh about hunting and fishing. He teaches him the trees and the trails and the plants and the animals that make the Thicket their home. Josh's education is about people, too, and some of the chapters deal with his experiences as his trail crosses the lives of other people in the Thicket. On one occasion and in one chapter, John and J.J. find the skeleton of a young man who died in the Thicket and are brought into the family's suffering first at the loss and then at the discovery.

Another time Josh hears that the revenuers are planning a raid on one of the Big Thicket whiskey stills. Territorially looking after those who have become his own people. Josh rides to warn the bootlegger and then leads the revenuers off on a wild chase that leaves them mired in a swamp and then glad to get out with their lives intact.

In another chapter, Josh and his buddy Hal explore the Thicket when they are twelve or thirteen years old. Led by the spirit of adventure and the excitement of going deeper and deeper into the Thicket, the two boys eventually wander until they are lost. They spent two long days and two very educational nights in the big woods before J.J. finds them and leads them out.

By the concluding chapter, Josh is twenty-two. He has grown up as a loving and dutiful grandson, a brave fighter and a strong hunter, and a good manager with his own farm. He finds a sweetheart who is cut from the same Big Thicket cloth as he is, and even though they do not start courting with any intensity, the reader knows that their destinies in the Thicket are entwined.

*Shadows* is not a novel. It is too episodic, each chapter having its own story. The reader's main problem with the book, however, is with its setting, its history, and geography. One knows it takes place in the Thicket, but the Thicket can be variously defined and located. In my mind the stories were set somewhere around the Tyler-Hardin County line.

Nor am I sure when the stories take place. Nothing historical is mentioned to give the reader a clue; no governor or president is referred to. The Civil War is not mentioned, nor is the time of the families' coming to the Thicket. Trains *are* mentioned, so I decided the story took place in the 1880s.

Once the reader decides where and when, he can read on with pleasure and with genuine interest in the characters' destinies. Reading *In the Shadows of the Big Thicket* is like hearing stories about the ancestors of one's Big Thicket friends.

Francis Edward Abernethy  
Stephen F. Austin State University

*Elmer Kelton Country: The Short Nonfiction of a Texas Novelist*, by Elmer Kelton (TCU Press, Box 30776, Fort Worth, TX 76129) 1993. B&W Photographs. Index. P. 352. \$14.95 Paper. \$25.00 Cloth.

In 1968, Escal Duke, professor of Texas history at Angelo State University, invited a columnist and "Western pulp" writer to speak to his classes. A student then, I was somewhat disappointed in my professor for a professional indiscretion. Several minutes into the presentation, however, my classmates and I recognized that this fiction writer was also a folklorist and historian in the grand tradition of Dobie, Webb, and Bedechek. Now, two and a half decades later, Elmer Kelton is receiving the critical attention (and readership) he deserved then. What many consider his trilogy, *The Time it Never Rained*, *The Good Old Boys*, and *The Day the Cowboys Quit*, are taught and studied in many universities. Unfortunately – even with the new covers on his old paperbacks – Kelton doesn't get the rack space of L'Amour or Hillerman, or even the new publishing "series" authors. Nevertheless, to first-time readers of Kelton, like my students this summer, his work has become a major repository of the fact, fiction, and myth of the Southwest.

*Elmer Kelton Country: The Short Nonfiction of a Texas Novelist* provides source material for students of the author's fiction along with his views on the land, its caretakers, its wild and domestic denizens, and the sport of rodeo. Highlighted by major pieces published in *Texas Monthly* and *Persimmon Hill*, the majority of articles are from San Angelo's *Livestock Weekly*. The work is divided into six sections: LAND AND WATER – first-hand experiences, profiles of persons and geographies, and the background of the "big dry" as it appears in *The Time it Never Rained*, the problems of too much rain, the huge range fire of 1988, and constant comment on land and resource management; PLOWS AND COWS – specific facts and profiles of "real" farmers and ranchers, articles on sheep and cattle raising, the "crossover generation" of old timers bringing their character traits and skills into the "new way" of doing things, chuck wagons, and "outlaw steer" prototype of Dobie's longhorns, horse training, a historical-folk analysis of the disappearance of the cowboy; OLD TIMERS REMEMBER – profiles of those that "did," and at least one (Rachel Bingham, ranch cook) who would never do it again; THE WAY IT WAS – the buffalo, a shootout, land



rush, fabrications and folklore, an Indian battle; *RODEO LIFE* – profiles and activities; *WRITING ABOUT THE WEST* – a tribute to Omar Barker, humorous and witty discussions about Kelton's fictional "way of going."

This is a valuable sourcebook for folklorists and historians of the Southwest. And although literary critics will search it for factual donces and authorial strategies in Kelton's fiction, this compendium is not meant to collect library dust. *Kelton Country* would be a fine addition to a bathroom reading rack, a trusty companion on a trip West, or a fine gift for retired cowboys or ranchers knowledgeable in fact, fabrication, and folklore – and the "truth" of each.

Lee Schultz  
Stephen F. Austin State University

*Longhorn Legacy*, by Lawrence Clayton (The Cowboy Press, Abilene, TX) 1994. Notes. P. 61.

Cattle rustling brings back memories of Rusk County. At daybreak of the day of my father-in-law's funeral, his nephew and I rode with rifles off safety to prevent white trash from getting one of his fat steers they had shot. Understand?

Graves Peeler, inspector for the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association, knew incidents like this well. *Longhorn Legacy* relates cattle rustling events along the Trinity River in Liberty County, on the Ramsey Prison Farm, and in Matagorda County. After ranching in Fort Bend County, Peeler moved to McMullen County where from his ranch he went arrowhead collecting, trophy game hunting – a collection now housed at Texas A&M University, Kingsville – and purchased high quality Longhorns.

Peeler's greatest achievement during his ninety years was to become the "Savior of the Longhorn." Influenced by his father and J. Frank Dobie and financially supported by Sid Richardson, Peeler, an expert Longhorn buyer, collected the world's largest herd of Longhorns. Clayton believes that the Longhorn registry would not have been possible without Peeler.

Irvin M. May Jr.  
Blinn College at Bryan

*Civilizers: The DuVals of Texas*, by Roy L. Swift (Eakin Press, P.O. Box 90159, Austin, TX 78709-0159) 1992. B&W Photographs. Notes. Bibliography. Index. P. 577. \$32.95 Hardcover.

This well-researched, anecdotal history concentrates on four generations of the DuVal family in Texas and is entertaining and informative reading. The author is an accomplished writer reminiscent of the nineteenth century's Francis Parkman whose sweeping narrative and descriptive prose chronicled the French settlement of Canada. From 1835 through the 1930s, the DuVals were lawyers, judges, soldiers, lawmen, and writers who helped shape Texas.

Most of their activities took place in and around Austin and San Antonio, but occasionally touched East Texas and the Rio Grande.

Williams Pope DuVal (1784-1854), the patriarch of the Texas DuVals, descended from Huguenot immigrants to Virginia. He did not reach the Lone Star State until 1848, but he set the pattern of public service followed by his descendants. A congressman from Kentucky in 1813, he became the territorial governor of Florida from 1822-1834. A great raconteur, his adventures were used by Washington Irving for Ralph Ringwood in *Wolfert's Roost* in 1855. Two of the three sons of DuVal came to Texas in 1835 and served with Fannin at Goliad; Burr H. died in the massacre but John Crittenden (1816-1897) escaped to become a surveyor, Texas Ranger, and the author of *Bigfoot Wallace* (1870) and *Early Times in Texas* (1892). The third son, Thomas Howard (1813-1880), moved to Austin in 1946 where he practiced law and rose through the legal profession to become the first U.S. District Judge for the Western District of Texas that stretched from Tyler to San Antonio and the Rio Grande. Opposed to secession, he fled Austin in 1863 and made his way to Washington, D.C.

Judge Thomas H. DuVal's son and grandson continued the tradition in the legal field. Burr Grayson DuVal (1842-1893) served in the Confederate army, as did his brother-in-law, lawyer Charles Shannon West, the husband of Burr's sister, Florence. After the war Burr was a rancher and business man and moved to San Antonio where he became a U.S. marshal and then clerk of the U.S. District Court.

The last half of the book focuses on Judge DuVal's grandson, DuVal "Bud" West (1861-1949). He grew up in Austin, but moved to San Antonio to serve as deputy clerk in the U.S. District Court, deputy U.S. marshal, and assistant district attorney in the federal court. In 1898 he prosecuted his former Austin friend, William Sidney Porter (O. Henry), for bank fraud. In 1915, DuVal West became President Woodrow Wilson's special agent to Mexico to confer with, and assess, Generals Villa, Zapata, and Carranza, who vied for the presidency and wanted the recognition of the United States. West's boyhood friends, Albert Sidney Burleson, Edward M. House, and Thomas Watt Gregory, serving President Wilson, had secured that appointment and also his elevation to judge of the Western District Court, thereby following the footsteps of his grandfather.

The author's access to family papers provides interesting details that make the story come alive for general readers. Historians will find useful resource material in the narrative and voluminous notes.

Margaret Swett Henson  
Houston

*Gus Wortham: Portrait of a Leader*, by Fran Dressman (Texas A&M University Press, Drawer C, College Station, TX 77843-4354) 1994. B&W Photographs. Notes. Bibliography. Index. P. 284. \$29.95 Hardcover.

This gracefully written biography of philanthropic businessman Gus Wortham is another reminder of how much of Houston's history is written in the ink of a ledger.

Not a typical Horatio Alger hero, this son of an established insurance man nevertheless succeeded far beyond almost all his contemporaries in establishing a national empire, forging a niche in the local and state power structure, and immortalizing himself through generosity to the arts and culture of the Bayou City. Indeed, author Fran Dressman depicts the American General tycoon as the last of the Southwestern gentlemen whose individuality branded their names on their enterprises and their generation.

Dressman, director of Constituent Communications at the University of Houston, has integrated abundant archival materials, personal communications, interviews, and principal secondary works of the period into a welcomed account of the man and his times. Her mastery of the subject eases the general reader over the technicalities and terminology of the trade, even managing to make mergers, buyouts, and stock sharing more interesting than logic would dictate. The author adroitly fits her material into larger historical themes, the hallmark of effective biography.

While not uncritical, Dressman declines to dwell on the controversial or negative. Wortham's close relationships with Ben Barnes and other fallen political figures suggest more elaboration. His contribution to right-wing causes identified with colleagues also remains unclear. It is a matter of curiosity that no interviewee divulged even an undignified story in an unguarded or vindictive moment.

A footnote offers an interesting insight into this captain of industry's decision-making. A departing government official asked Wortham's opinion of the man's salary value on the private market. Wortham responded with a generous estimate, but later hired the fellow at the same lower salary offered him by a competitor.

Garna L. Christian  
University of Houston-Downtown

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