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Editors’ Choice:
*Galveston* and *Red River*

P. G. Nagle

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**Confederacy’s Saga Continues**

Review by Max Loges

*Galveston* is a continuation of the adventures of Jamie Russell, a Confederate artillery lieutenant. Prequels to *Galveston* include *The Guns of Valverde* and *Glorieta Pass*, which focus on the Confederacy’s attempt to capture the New Mexico Territory. The story is presented from the viewpoints of Jamie, his sister Emma, who is staying with her Aunt May in Galveston while recovering from the death of her fiancé, and Quincy Wheat, a young officer on the Union warship *Harriet Lane*. The climactic scene concerns the Confederacy’s attempt to recapture Galveston on January 1, 1863.

P. G. Nagle does an admirable job of presenting history. Her historical references, place names, actions, and description are realistic. Historical characters are accurately portrayed. In instances where her fiction may protrude upon actual history, the events are realistically presented in terms of what could have actually happened.

As literature the book has some problems. Characters tend to be stereotypes. Major Owens is the classic rake but lacks realistic motivation for his pursuit of Emma. *Galveston* also suffers somewhat by being in the middle of Nagle’s proposed saga. Jamie suffers pangs of conscience from events that occur before the book opens, but the reader is never told what actually happened. Overall, however, the book is enjoyable.

*Red River*, the most recent addition to Nagle’s Far Western Civil War Series, is told from the perspectives of Jamie, Nat Wheat, a sailor in the U. S. Navy’s river fleet, and Marie Hawkland, the owner of several plantations near the confluence of the Mississippi and Red rivers. The time frame covered is from early 1863 through late spring 1864.

Like its prequel, *Red River* does a fine job of reporting history. The separate battles and larger campaigns are in keeping with the historical record. The military actions, such as artillery engagements, are described realistically and powerfully, giving readers a sense of what it was really like. Historical characters are portrayed accurately and the geography of the Red River Valley in terms of place names and features of the landscape is realistic.

As literature *Red River* is significantly better than *Galveston*. The plot seems more realistic and less forced. The characters portray a variety of emotion consistent with real human behavior. They also experience significant changes in their opinions and values. This is particularly true of Nat Wheat and Marie Hawkland. In addition, interior conflicts, like Nat’s troubled relationship with his father, are handled skillfully.

Nagle also does an admirable job in maintaining the reader’s interest in the entire series. While each volume is a story in itself, successive volumes build an overall curiosity about where and how Jamie’s story will continue. Also, questions readers may have about incidents in the earlier volumes find plausible answers as the larger story unfolds.

(Continued on page three)
Featured Publisher: Forge

Forge Books is an imprint of Tom Doherty Associates and publishes fiction and nonfiction in a wide variety of genres and categories, including works of scholarly significance and leisure reading. Its sister imprint is Tor Books, famous for its science fiction and fantasy books.

The Red Zone: Cars, Cows, and Coaches, The Life and Good Times of a Texas Dealmaker

Red McCombs
Mickey Herskowitz

San Antonio Wheeler-Dealer
Review by David Carroll

There are countless deep-pocketed contributors to the University of Texas' expansive endowment. The native of tiny Spur, Texas, Billy Joe "Red" McCombs, has to be among the most prominent. The university even named its business school after him. A large and expressive man, McCombs never met a deal he didn't like, investing in well over 200 companies along the way. The San Antonio resident's self-made fortune came primarily through cattle, oil and gas, car dealerships, broadcasting and sports ownership. But it was cars and sports that combined to totally captivate him. Very early on he understood the fundamental nature of this basic love affair between the American public and their cars and their star athletes.

Told in a highly readable manner, this autobiography honestly hits all corners of his life experience. He also gives credit to others, detailing important partnerships with car and sports ownership tycoon Charlie Thomas, co-founder of Clear Channel Communications Lowry Mays (Clear Channel is still the largest holding in the McComb portfolio), trusted financial advisor and "consiglioire" Gary Woods, and, most importantly, his wife of over 50 years, Charlene. People who live as fully as McCombs don't often have time to spend reflecting on "what might have been." The current owner of the NFL's Minnesota Vikings, a two-time owner of the NBA's San Antonio Spurs, and also a former owner of that league's Denver Nuggets, McCombs does harbor regret for one lost ownership opportunity. An untimely hospitalization with hepatitis, worsened by alcohol, prevented the possible acquisition of Major League Baseball's Houston Astros.

The highly respected Mickey Herskowitz, who assisted in the writing of this book, is a longtime Houston newspaper sportswriter who has authored a number of sports books. He also has written books about George W. Bush and, most recently, about his controversial grandfather, Prescott Bush. Indexed and lavishly illustrated with photographs, The Red Zone is a satisfying and entertaining look at one of the most prominently successful businessmen in a state filled with larger-than-life figures in commerce. As an interesting side note, the book also contains a foreword from James Michener, one of the very last essays written by him prior to his death.

Red McCombs is a living logo for the Lone Star State—a strapping man with a booming bass voice, a wheeler-dealer who shoots from the hip and asks questions later. He started out at the age of ten, selling peanuts for a nickel a bag to laborers in his hometown of Spur, Texas, and emerged as a millionaire before he was thirty.

Mickey Herskowitz is a Texas-based journalist, who has written or co-written more than thirty books, and a nationally known sports columnist for the Houston Chronicle.

David Carroll has been an academic librarian for over twenty-six years: He earned a B.A. in English from Kansas State University and an M.A. in librarianship from the University of Denver. The son of a former collegiate Sports Information Director, Carroll has followed athletics and sports figures for over forty years.
I Would Rather Sleep in Texas: A History of the Lower Rio Grande Valley & the People of the Santa Anita Land Grant
Mary McAllen Amberson
James A. McAllen
Margaret H. McAllen

Rio Grande River and South Texas History
Review by Sally Dooley

Meticulously researched and documented, this sprawling saga of the Rio Grande Valley families of the Santa Anita Land Grant covers two centuries of complex Texas, Mexican, and American history. Margaret H. McAllen (1914-1995), a past member of the Texas State Historical Commission, initiated the research. A relative, Mary Margaret McAllen Amberson, graduate of the University of Texas at Austin and a student of history and anthropology, together with her father, rancher James A. McAllen, continued the study to write this present book.

Maps, drawings and photographs of events and people reveal the extensive research of public, family, and government archives. There are nearly one hundred pages of endnotes, a twenty-page bibliography, and appendixes of cattle brands and Spanish ranching terms. This hefty book will be a marvelous history for scholars' use, and the general reader with interest in the area will find it an entertaining, if detailed, reading experience.

Fishing Yesterday's Gulf Coast
Barney Farley

Some True Fishing Stories
Review by Sally Dooley

Barney Farley was a legendary fishing guide in the first half of the twentieth century in Port Aransas, Texas. Located on the northern end of Mustang Island east of Corpus Christi, Port Aransas was then a small fishing village. At about the time of the Depression, Barney opened a tackle shop and charter service. He guided large groups and was honored to guide President Franklin Roosevelt in 1937. That story is entertaining: Farley, claiming the President's rods and tackle were unsuitable, gave his guest a light rig like his own. The President caught some tarpon and had a great time. Farley, a good writer, narrates other stories of fishing escapades during the time when men oared boats and fish were plentiful. His observations of fish and wildlife habitat are careful, and his

(Continued on page five)
knowledge of the life cycle of various species of Gulf Coast fish is enormous. Those who fish for sport will gain insight into seasonal fishing tips as he describes ling, jackfish, trout, sharks, and sheepshead, among others. As early as the 1960s, Farley realized the need for conservation. He wrote “The Truth about Fishing and How We Can Improve It” about limiting catches and closing the bays to commercial fishing, especially the shrimp trawlers that remove the fishes’ food. Sadly, much of what he forecasted has come true, and people have to go out further for fewer fish. Although some measures have been taken to protect fish, much action is needed to restore the bays.

Farley’s love of coastal sport fishing is revealed in all these essays, but especially in “I Fished at the End of a Rainbow.” Some of these essays and observations were previously published in two small booklets. The manuscript for this book was discovered in the Tarpon Inn in Port Aransas in the late 1990s. Fisher people (there are women, too, who fish) and coastal dwellers will delight in those stories while simultaneously realizing the bounty of nature that is diminished by over fishing. The accompanying photographs illustrate Coastal Bend scenes. The foreword by George S. Hawn and the introduction by Larry McEachron add context to Farley’s life and work.

Hearon, a native Texan who now lives on the East Coast, is the author of fifteen novels all focusing on women’s quandaries. Two of her novels won the Texas Institute of Letters award for fiction. A recipient of fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts, her most recent novel is Ella in Bloom. An afterward by Dr. James Ward Lee, Texas Tradition Series editor, gives a thoughtful appraisal of her fine work.

Seven Choices: Finding Daylight After Loss Shatters Your World
Elizabeth Harper Neeld, Ph.D.

The Work Grief Requires
Review by Sally Dooley

Based on her own heartbreak of suddenly losing her young husband, Elizabeth Harper Neeld reveals a road map through the shock and pain into a new found self, who can begin to love life and others again. With poignant reminiscences of her own bouts with depression and self-doubt, she recounts the advice she was given or searched for that helped her grow in spite of the intense suffering. As she was doing her grief work, she spoke with professional grief counselors.

Barney Farley was a Port Aransas fishing guide whose memories and stories about fishing the Texas coast were originally written in the 1960s for his family and friends. Their posthumous publication is supported by the Harvey Well Sportsman Conservationist Award Trust of Corpus Christi.

Shelby Hearon lives in Vermont, but she lived in Texas for many years, and her novels are set in the Lone Star State. The Second Dune is the second novel Texas Christian University Press has reprinted. The first was A Prince of a Fellow. The Texas Tradition Series is designed to keep outstanding Texas titles available, after they have gone out of print in their original editions.
Behind the Walls: A Guide for Families and Friends of Texas Prison Inmates

Jorge Antonio Renaud

How One Can Help a Prisoner in Texas
Review by Sally Dooley

Written by a convict presently serving time for armed robbery, this guide will assist friends and families of prisoners to understand Texas criminal justice. Describing the daily life behind walls in succinct chapters, Jorge Renaud details Diagnostic, Living Quarters, Food, Clothing, Work, Medical, Mail, Money, Recreation, Education, Religion, and Visits. His instructions are also brief and practical: don’t mail money, food, or clothes; follow dress code for visits; call before visits; and don’t bring contraband. The social structure of the entire prison system is examined and the conflicting values discussed. Statistics show that for every inmate who doesn’t return to prison, the state saves $30,000 annually, yet prison, as Renaud points out, depersonalizes the criminal. Renaud’s relation of the racism, gangs, violence, and substance abuse in prisons demonstrates how difficult it is to come out of prison with a capacity to live in the “free world.” He advises the reader to encourage education for inmates and discusses library privileges, craft shop, vocational training, religious studies and courses for GED, and even university degree opportunities. Practical information about communication with inmates during emergencies, preparing for parole, and how to help parolees stay out of prison is clear. The one advice this author gives is to encourage the prisoner to endeavor to come out with his dignity intact. The subtext of the book chronicles the history of the Texas Department of Corrections under W.J. Estelle that was broken by the famous Ruiz v. Estelle case in 1980 and the subsequent changes by Judge William Wayne Justice. The Texas Department of Criminal Justice resulted.

Eight appendixes of related materials, resources and addresses together with a glossary and index complete this comprehensive guide.
The Great Storm: 
The Hurricane Diary of 
J. T. King, Galveston, 
Texas, 1900 
Lisa Rogers

Typical Teen-Atypical Storm 
Review by Dale Farris

Award-winning children’s author Rogers (A Texas Sampler, Angel of the Alamo) adds book two of The Lone Star Journals series (the first was Rogers’ Get Along, Little Dogies), this time focusing on the harrowing story of the great 1900 hurricane that devastated Galveston.

In this marvelous historical fiction, Rogers writes a lead character, thirteen-year-old J. T. King, who records his experiences in a diary whose entries begin on Sunday, April 8, 1900, progress through his surviving the storm, and end on Friday, April 12, 1900. Because Rogers has researched her subject so thoroughly, she is able to create a protagonist who is strikingly authentic. A historical appendix, complete with photos and maps, will also be useful to young readers and teachers alike in better appreciating this fascinating tale.

More than a century later, the Galveston hurricane of 1900 remains the most devastating storm in American history. Pounding most of the island city to rubble, and claiming 6,800 lives, the storm stranded Galveston’s stunned populace without a bridge to the mainland. The page-turning frenzy of J. T.’s fight to survive the storm forms the best of the book, but the lively details of what it must have been like to live in Galveston in 1900 at age fifteen will definitely relate to targeted middle school readers.

Before the storm, J. T. shares his life as an active teenager, swimming, riding his bike, and getting into scrapes, with his best friend, Ippy, including an early brush with death when Ippy is attacked by a shark. J. T. sleeps on a cot in the pantry of his grandmother Mornie’s boardinghouse, and life on the island at the corner of Q½ and 25th Streets seems as secure as the sturdy old house.

(Continued on page eight)
Lisa Walter Rogers has worked as a teacher and an education consultant to publishers. Her first book, A Texas Sampler: Historical Recollections, was a finalist for the Texas Institute of Letters Book Publishers of Texas Children's/Young People's Award.

Geronimo Treviño III has played Texas dance halls since 1989 and has opened shows for several of the country legends he writes about. He lives in San Antonio and sells Swedish chocolate when he's not performing with his band.

Dale Farris holds a master's degree from the University of Texas at Austin and a bachelor's degree from Lamar University. He is a professional reviewer for Library Journal, Quality Press, and Quality Progress magazine. He is completing a degree in computer information systems.

(Continued from page seven) When the hurricane hits, after numerous announcements by forecasters not to be alarmed, J. T. weather the killer storm and records how he and a few others managed to survive. As deafening winds and rain whip the waves thirty feet high, J. T.'s blood chills at those waves pushing ahead of them, "an enormous wall of wreckage, at least three stories tall."

This superb addition to children's literature nicely complements the other solid, historically accurate works about the storm, including the recently popular Isaac's Storm, by Erik Larson, Galveston and the 1900 Storm by Patricia Bellis Bixel and Elizabeth Hayes Turner, and Through a Night of Horrors, by Casey Edward Greene (editor) and Shelly Henley Kelly. Highly recommended for all juvenile collections in all public libraries.

Dance Halls and Last Calls: A History of Texas Country Music
Geronimo Treviño, III

Texas Dance Halls
Review by Dale Farris

In this fascinating look at days long gone in Texas dance halls, author Treviño (musician, Swedish chocolate maker) provides a timely update on the status of 114 vintage Texas dance halls and their communities through the eyes of the musicians who played there.

Treviño provides an interesting introductory history of country music that includes the first cowboy singers, the first country music star, the first phonograph recordings, instrument innovations, the original pioneers in radio and TV, and the first million-dollar seller, linking these key events to their ties to these Texas dance halls. The forty-eight-page country music history, alone worth the investment in the book, nicely sets the stage for the brief, thumbnail sketches of the dance halls in which this history happened, all beginning in the late 1800s with the early European migration to Texas.

The information on each dance hall includes its location, namesake when known, its early establishment, a focus on the style of music that appealed to the community, driving directions, a brief history (when known), and an intriguing black and white photograph of the hall as it stands today.

With the significant national interest and growth in country music, Treviño's work provides an important piece of the history of the dance halls in Texas in which many of today's well-known country music stars got their start. Willie Nelson has said of the importance of these dance halls, "They've supported me for years," and Bob Wills said, "It's a lot of fun to play a dance, jump in your car, drive three, four hundred miles, sleep an hour or two, shave, go play another, drive five, six hundred miles." Floyd Tillman said of the Cabaret in Bandera, after playing there at the age of 85, "I played this hall twenty years ago, and I still love it."

Drawing on an extensive bibliography of sources about country music, its stars and legends, dance halls, as well as on the Handbook of Texas, Treviño's work is a definite addition to all public libraries, especially in the communities featured in the book.

Dance Halls and Last Calls: A History of Texas Country Music
Geronimo Treviño, III

Defending the Borders: The Texas Rangers 1848-1861
Frederick Wilkins

Third Volume in Planned Four-Part Series on Texas Rangers
Review by Dale Farris

The third in his critically acclaimed series of Texas Ranger histories, author Wilkins (The Legend Begins: The Texas Rangers, 1823-1845, The Law Comes to Texas: The Texas Rangers, 1870-1901) narrates the rarely told story of the rangers during the period 1848-1861. Many of Texas’ indomitable historical characters pop up in this vital piece of the story of Texas, including “Rip” Ford, Sam Houston, Henry McCulloch, Ed Burleson, and “Sul” Ross.

Covering the largely neglected period between the close of the Mexican War and the opening of the Civil War, Wilkins adds volume three of his planned 4-volume history of the Texas Rangers, and further establishes his ranking as the Texas Ranger historian capable of carrying on the famed tradition established long ago in Walter Prescott Webb’s The Texas Rangers.

In this part of Texas history, the state experienced a marked increase in population as Americans move to Texas. Resident Texans joined in the migration, moving from the settled eastern counties to the west. This resulted in a series of frontier settlements in a harsh area that was mostly unknown prior to this population shift. Also during this time, the U.S. Inherited the war the Texas Republic had been fighting with the Comanche for over a decade, and the old differences between the Texans and the Mexicans did not vanish when Texas joined the other states.

With these conflicts continuing to simmer and as more people began to move into these hotly contested areas, Texas formed different types of military companies, variously referred to as Minute Men, Mounted Volunteers, or Texas Rangers. These are the nature of the times and the concerns Wilkins focuses on during these years between the wars when the Texas Rangers managed, barely, to defend the frontiers of the state.

Wilkins makes a strident effort to work with as many original source documents as possible, delving deep into muster rolls, correspondence, quartermaster papers, and reports that still exist in the archives of the State Library. Also, reviewed were papers from many past Texas governors, and the personal reflections in John Salmon Ford’s Memoirs, edited and published in Rip Ford’s Texas. Ford’s diary is the only substantial record of any ranger during this time frame that has survived for modern day researchers.

As Wilkins writes of the difficulties in keeping the rangers going during this era, “Fortunately, the lessons from this decade were not ignored completely, and led to the final establishment of a ranger force, in 1874, that was the culmination of all the difficult days and years that had begun in the 1820s.”

Wilkins’ volume three belongs in all libraries in Texas, along with the prior two volumes, as well as the entire four-volume set when the fourth volume becomes available.

Savage Frontier: Rangers, Riflemen, and Indian Wars in Texas 1835-1837
Stephen L. Moore

Frontier Facts
Review by Emma B. Hawkins

Savage Frontier is the first of a two-volume, in-depth study of the first five years of the Texas Rangers. By consulting, as often as possible, first-hand accounts from newspaper articles, diaries and letters; accounts of early historians; memoirs of famous rangers such as George B. Erath and Noah Smithwick; and republic era documents (muster and company pay rolls, casualty lists, service papers, pension papers, claims for reimbursement, etc.), rather than second-hand sources, Moore hopes to set the record straight between fact and folklore surrounding this legendary corps of Indian fighters and peace keepers.

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**Review of Texas Books**

(Continued from page nine)

Though modeled on the earliest "confirmed" existence of the initial "true" Ranger company founded in 1827, the first Texas Ranger company to be "legally recognized by the provisional government of Texas" was formed on October 17, 1835, under the leadership of Robert Morris Coleman and for the purpose of protecting early Texas settlers from Indian depredations." Along with old photographs, a few maps, supply lists and muster/pay rolls, in the first volume the author focuses on the early successes and failures of the Texas Rangers from their beginnings, through the Texas Revolution against Mexico, to their dissolution in 1837-38. A lengthy Index (nineteen pages, three columns per page) provides a convenient guide to the multitude of names that might attract readers interested in family genealogy as well as an account of the early years of the fabled Texas Rangers.


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**RX for Your Writing Ills: Self-editing for Creative Writers**

Joan Upton Hall

Author Prescribes Cures for Writers’ Ills

Review by Joan T. Hollier

Writers never had it so good. Computers enhance the flow of creative ideas, and technology makes publishing easier. As a result, writers in increasing numbers pass up the traditional agent and editor and turn to self-publishing. However, along the path between idea and published story lurk demons and dragons, diseases and disabilities determined to sabotage the writer and dismay the reader.

Writer/editor Joan Upton Hall offers cures for such maladies in a second edition of her book *RX for Your Writing Ills: Self-editing for Creative Writers*. Hall says, "I wrote the RX book for those willing to learn on their own without hiring a freelance editor like me." The new version of *RX* offers revisions suggested by users of the original book and includes additional aids discovered in the author’s work with writers in workshops and classes.

As a reviewer, I read many self-published books that sadly have gone to the publisher without self-editing, without the help of a critique group, or without the services of a competent editor. Hall says, "That's what gives self-published books a bad name. If only the writers would get their work edited by a competent person!" I have seen vast changes in the quality of manuscripts that come through a nonfiction critique group, some that have gone from rough notes to published books with the help of writing comrades. I read the books I review with pen in hand, marking errors. Writers who use this book will surely have fewer errors in their finished manuscripts. Even writer Joan Hall demonstrates that writing is a continuous learning process when she says, "As an English teacher, I thought I knew how to write a novel. To my surprise, learning what today's commercial publishing requires has been like earning another degree."

Author Hall’s book is designed to save writers money when they learn to do their own editing. She says, "Most of my clients are surprised and thrilled to find how much better their work reads with a little 'tweaking.' Others back off when they find the cost of editing 'too expensive.'" Her book tells about kinds of editing writers can do themselves and how to cultivate a critique group to help them.

This book is not a rule book. The reader may be mildly reminded of classroom grammar and usage, but the concepts are easily grasped by the most reluctant student of English. Each of the ten chapters addresses a specific problem typically encountered when a writer attempts self-editing. The author uses a low-key approach, injecting humor into her explanations and examples. She illustrates with her own cartoons that lighten up the treatment of writing diseases. Each chapter identifies symptoms, makes a diagnosis and suggests a treatment program. Numerous examples make the problem easier to identify and treat, plus a checklist verifies that the disease is cured.

Hall moves beyond suggestions for writing competent, grammatically-correct prose to include tips for writing dialogue,

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Review of Texas Books

(Continued from page ten)
describing characters in fiction, and
establishing settings. She uses excerpts from
her own writing as well as from other writers
to offer encouragement, to help preserve a
positive attitude and hope for the future.

Major changes and additions show up in the
appendix of the book. Besides additional helps
for writing dialogue, describing characters, and
managing movement of stories through time
and space, the book includes many practical
aids. Hall provides an example of her record
keeping, a sample submission log for tracking
manuscripts out to various markets.

Among valuable additions, she puts a guide for
synopsis writing and a model for formatting
manuscripts, both mazes which writers must
negotiate to enter contests and solicit
publication. She shows examples of both
synopsis and format that actually worked to get
writers’ works published. She includes
examples of her monthly column
“Demystifying Writers’ Demons” that answer
frequently asked questions about grammar,
usage, punctuation, and capitalization.

Some items in the appendix point directly to
the writer of fiction. She gives clarified
explanations of the mechanics for writing
dialogue and internal monologue. She warns
against “showy” punctuation that is the
hallmark of the amateur writer. The appendix
concludes with an action-packed list of books
Hall has found helpful in developing her
editing skills. An index of terms helps the
beginning writer unravel the jargon of the
trade.

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Phoebe Clappsaddle and the Tumbleweed Gang
Melanie Chrismer

Dainty, Darling Phoebe Clappsaddle Combines Southern Manners with Roping Rattlesnakes
Review by JoAn W. Martin

The Tumbleweed Gang drift into town and try to ruin Phoebe’s flame thrower chili and sabotage
her bronco-riding. Their worst embarrassment is
losing to a girl. Phoebe realizes these bad guys
need to learn some manners, not to mention
reading, writing, and arithmetic. She entices
them with her hot biscuits, prickle pear
marmalade and chili. But she insists they wash

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Review of Texas Books

(Continued from page eleven) up for supper. Burping in public and picking teeth with a cactus needle are a sharp contrast to Phoebe’s curtsying and blowing kisses to the crowd.

Being a descendant of the real Phoebe Clappsadle gives Melanie Chrismer the edge on demonstrating the protagonist’s roping tricks with her pink lasso, and Virginia Roeder’s spirited, clever drawings of the sashaying Phoebe and her detailed illustrations offer much to study. Readers can’t resist even the evil, smirking Clifford, Elmo and Eastace, who blow into town one day like a tumbleweed and get caught on a fence. Even the horses have unique expressions.

Sylvia Blackley Thompson has over twenty years of experience as a book reviewer, historical trip narrator, and lecturer on Texas and Southern history. She lives in Houston.

Don’t Laugh At Me
Steve Seskin
Allen Shamblin

Common Sense and Sensitivity
Review by JoAn W. Martin

An attractive Reading Rainbow Book, Don’t Laugh At Me tackles the age-old problem of being bullied. Who has not experienced the frustration of enduring the "put-down?" Preschool children are accustomed to the protected environment of a compassionate family, but too soon they hear derogative remarks about wearing glasses. Wearing braces on one’s teeth, even on one’s legs offers to bullies a chance to build themselves up by tearing down another person.

An afterword by Peter Yarrow tells us how he discovered the song "Don’t Laugh At Me.” Over 50% of the schools in Connecticut have launched a program in Connecticut to help children find their common sensitivity to the painful effects of disrespect, intolerance, ridicule, and bullying; actions and exchanges, which, in the hands of adults, become the basis for active racism, war, and other devastating dysfunctional behaviors.” Music and words for the song are in the back of the book as well as a CD. A website, www.dontlaugh.org offers free materials for spreading the message of respect for self and others.

A Tribute to Early Texas through the Lens of Master Photographer
John R. Blocker
Anita Higman
Sylvia B. Thompson

Backdrop and Foreground
Review by Andrew B. Preslar

Even though the title of this beautiful book claims that it is first a tribute to early Texas and second to the camera lens, Higman and Thompson seem even more moved by their obvious love and admiration for the photographer, John Blocker. He considered himself to be an amateur, and he earned his living primarily with his other remarkable gifts. After working for some years as a rancher, he became a machinist for the University of Texas for thirty years, where he was affectionately known as Uncle John. But later in life the lens became the vehicle for refining and sharing his artistic vision of the world, and like all good artists, he worked with the themes and models he knew best and loved most. Not only do the photographs display Blocker’s genius for composition, his mastery of balance, design, and light, but they also serve to illustrate the dynamic interplay of past, present, and future that characterizes Texas and captures the imaginations of those who cherish her. Many of the photos are land and waterscapes, but there are others, too—missions, windmills, wagons, ruined stone houses or the Texas capitol seen from inside the UT tower before the clock was installed—and in most of them Texas serves not only as a thing of power, beauty and mythos in her own right but also as a backdrop for the art and artifice of those people whose lives and dreams and deaths and legacies were, and still are, unalterably intertwined with her.

These kinds of books open windows to worlds (Continued on page thirteen)
Review of Texas Books

(Continued from page twelve)
we can experience no other way, but they often seem a little too slick, the compositions too obviously contrived. This one seems simply genuine and is all the more remarkable as an example of its kind for that. Also it's inexpensive, a not-altogether-incidental consideration in collection development right now. Recommended for Texana and general public collections, and perhaps for high schools offering photography programs.

Eldorado:
The California Gold Rush
Dale Walker

Leaving Hearth and Home
Review by Clay Reynolds

This new volume by one of Texas' most successful popular historians adds a third book to his California history series that already includes Bear Flag Rising and Pacific Destiny. Walker, a Spur Award winner and denizen of El Paso, former director of Texas Western Press, is rapidly becoming a formidable voice for historical accounts of California and the American West. Written with the casual pace and tone of a well-made novel, Eldorado details the account of the Gold Rush of '49. Far more than a general historical overview, Walker's volume delves deeply into the details and background of the principal argonauts, who left hearth and home and journeyed across an almost impenetrable wilderness or sailed around the tip of South America to try to find their fortune. Walker bases his discussion primarily on letters, diaries, newspaper accounts, and other documentation from the period. But he salt's his mince with stunning and incisive revelations about everything from wagon capacities to dietary deprivations aboard the many ships that set sail for the Golden Gate in the 1850s. Along the way, he paints vivid portraits of key individuals, including not only Sutter, the infamous Swiss whose minor empire was ultimately taken over by rapacious gold-seekers but also such minor luminaries as the family of John Audobon. He also reveals that those who prospered the most from the gold in "them thar hills" was likely the merchants, card sharps, saloon owners, and prostitutes who offered their wares and services to the prospectors. Although written without footnotes, this is a rich source of information for any doing research in the period, but for even the casual reader, it's an intelligently written and highly entertaining volume.

Dale L. Walker is the recipient of the Year 2000 Owen Award for lifetime achievement in Western history and literature. He is the author of over fifteen books and writes for the Rocky Mountain News.

Judy Alter, director of Texas Christian University Press, is the author of several novels, short stories, and nonfiction for young readers.

James Ward Lee is professor emeritus and former chair of the English department and director of the Center for Texas Studies at the University of North Texas. He now serves as acquisitions consultant for Texas Christian University Press.


Literary Fort Worth
Judy Alter
James Ward Lee

Beyond Stereotype
Reviewed by: Sandra Gail Teichmann

Literary folks in Fort Worth? You bet. Literary folk mingling with and writing about the mink-laden ladies and the well-heeled gentlemen flocking to the stock show; the swishy women shopping at Neiman-Marcus before lunching at Cafe Aspen; the intellectuals engaged in discussions of, yes, literature at TCU and Texas Wesleyan; the Merle Haggards, the Willie Nelsons, and the George Straits hanging out at Billy Bob's; the pitchers and first base men throwing hard balls for the Fort Worth Cats; the patrons of the arts supporting the Kimbell and the Amon and the Museum of Modern Art; the children growing up in a growing-up city; the ever-in-the-know folks forecasting and lamenting the weather and the politics; and, not to be forgotten, those, not unlike James Ward Lee himself, who are trying to eat their way through (Continued on page fourteen)

Clay Reynolds is Professor and Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies at the University of Texas at Dallas. His recent works include Monuments, The Tentmaker, Ars Poetica, and Threading the Needle.
Touring Texas Gardens
Jessie Gunn Stephens

Garden Splendor
Review by Sandra Gail Teichmann

Gardens are perhaps one of the most peaceful places left to visit on earth, yet we seldom take the time. In Touring Texas Gardens, Jessie Gunn Stephens invites us to stroll through public and some private grounds, some cultivated, some wild in Texas where we can hardly resist the promise of solitude, color, and communion with Mother Nature. The gardens in Texas are many and varied in type from the lush and formal of Houston's Bayou Bend to the dry and educational of El Paso's Xeriscape Demonstration Display Garden. In Austin we might walk through a flowering meadow at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center or fill our senses with rosemary and mint at the It's About Thyme Garden. In Lampasas we might lean down for the scent of an old rose like one of those our great grandmothers tended. In Gladeville, if it were in the springtime, we might drive through the twenty acres of meadows laden with golden daffodils in bloom.

Gardens in the winter can be as or more lovely than in the summer. Stephens recommends: "the bare trunks of ancient crape myrtles" at the Dallas Arboretum, "the splendor of towering pines" in the Pinneywoods Native Plant Center at Nacogdoches, as well as the Japanese gardens in Fredericksburg and Fort Worth, for winter beauty.

The possibilities for stepping into the spendor of plants, grasses, and trees are many, and each clearly laid out as to location, hours, type, size, history, best times to visit, and birds to watch for. As Stephens' invitation, commentary, and personal knowledge of Texas Gardens seem to be most genuine, I have now tucked my copy of Touring Texas Gardens into my glove compartment in anticipation of my next Texas road trip.

Review of Texas Books

Wordsworth's Gardens
Carol Buchanan

Sumptuous Feast for Scholars of Romanticism
Review by Steve Zani

Wordsworth's Gardens is an exceedingly well researched look into the material world that surrounded William and Dorothy Wordsworth in their life in the Lake District. The book is rich enough when seen simply as a volume of photography, with pictures taken by the author's husband, Richard Buchanan. It is packed with page after page of natural imagery, including landscapes, cottages and individual flora of the area. But most appealing here is the connection of those photographs to Carol Buchanan's lengthy account of Wordsworth's life in relation to the territory, along with readings of his poetry that are similarly grounded in the circumstances of his life and the landscapes that surrounded him. Virtually all of Wordsworth's major poems, and a good number of less anthologized pieces as well, are touched upon in the work, analyzed in the context of Wordsworth's life during their composition, and accompanied by relevant photographs of the very subjects of his composition. Detailed descriptions of relevant gardens, with full page maps, provide a wealth of information. Scholars interested in authorial intent, or those who pursue new historical readings of Wordsworth will find this book absolutely essential to understanding his work. Appendices in the rear of the work give detailed information about the botany and geography of the area, as well as giving explicit lists of poems related to the landscapes and gardens that the Wordsworths frequented. In short, this work is an excellent research tool, filled with eminently useful scholarship and extraordinary photographs.

Texas Prisons: The Largest Hotel Chain in Texas
Lon Bennett Glenn

Testament to the Work Ethic and Intelligence of Texas Prison System Employees
Review by Steve Zani

Lon Bennett Glenn's frank and opinionated writing style may put off those looking for an ostensibly objective account of the Texas Prison System, but his perspective and candor provide a singular education into prison life in a system that has undergone radical change in the past several decades—changes not for the better, according to Glenn. This book has the advantage of Glenn's unique involvement in prison life. Beginning first as a guard, he worked his way up the system, eventually becoming a warden and witnessing a great number of administrative and policy changes in the meanwhile. Sometimes historical, sometimes topical, the book moves from subject to subject but always remains interesting. Glenn is opinionated—he is for the death penalty, against educational programs for inmates, and he proclaims in the first fifteen pages that poverty doesn't cause crime. However, his arguments come from both personal experience and balanced logic that is hard to refute. For example, while he thinks that women have no place in contact positions with the male prison populace, it's also true that he thinks men have no place in contact positions with the female convicts. Where the book excels is in Glenn's devotion to finding support and rationale for everything he says. His argument for the death penalty, for one example, is supported by pages of research, personal anecdotes, and the perspective of a man who has spent years watching prisoners who cannot be controlled when they have nothing to lose. The book is highly informative, a useful tool for generating argument and debate about prison reform, and far better written than one would expect from a man who spent his life hanging around the prison populace.


Carole Buchanan lives in Richmond, Virginia, with her husband Richard. They often visit their gardens in the Lake District near Wordsworth's birthplace. Carol is also the author of Brother Crow, Sister Corn. Traditional American Indian Gardening and The Wildlife Sanctuary Garden.

Lon Bennett Glenn began his career with the Texas Prison System in 1966, when at age of twenty-one he signed on as a prison guard at the Clemens Unit in Brazoria County.

Steve Zani has a Ph.D. in comparative literature and teaches in the English and Modern Languages department at Lamar University.
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