

Come hell or high water.

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REVIEW *of* TEXAS BOOKS

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Volume 31/Spring 2017 /Issue 1

Welcome to a new era of the Review of Texas Books

First published in 1986 in Beaumont, Texas, by Sally Dooley, the *Review of Texas Books* is in its 31st year. As the *Review* enters its fourth decade, the editors felt it only fitting that the publication move online, and we welcome you to the inaugural online edition.

As Lamar alumna and instructor Beverly Williams said in her 2007 thesis, when it comes to book reviewing, "[t]he Athenians did it. Byron did it. Dorothy Parker did it. Keats died from it." We recognize the blood, sweat, and tears that go into writing a book while likewise recognizing the process of reviewing books. Thank you to Sally Dooley for her vision and to Beverly Williams for documenting that vision.

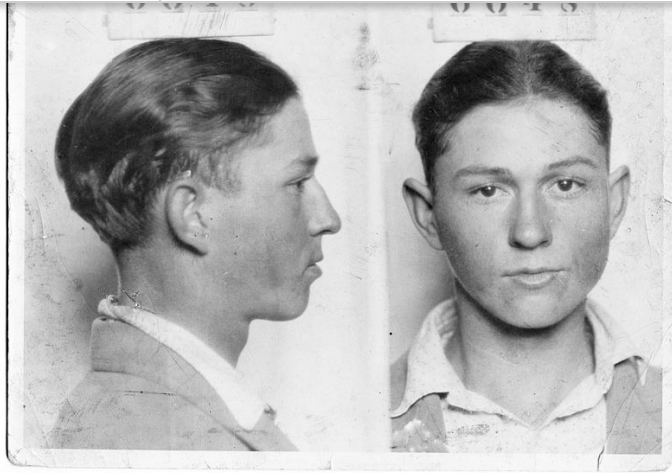
You, our readers, seek good books, and we know good books. In fact, it's Texas, so we know darn good books, and we're pleased to be able to present some of them to you here.

(And don't just take our word for it - click on any book cover to see what others had to say on [Goodreads](#).)

Editors' Choice

Gangster Tour of Texas

T. Lindsay Baker



*were bumblers...[who]
possessed neither dash
nor genius."*

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The Gangster Era in Texas Review by Lloyd M. Daigrepoint

In Chapter 21 of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Huck witnesses the shooting of "Old Boggs" in a small town in Arkansas. In the aftermath the dying man is dragged into a drugstore and placed in the storefront window so that the citizenry may see the bullet holes and enjoy a better view of his death throes. Still later a lanky man with a white fur stovepipe hat extends the entertainment by repeated re-enactments of the murder, for which he is praised by the townspeople and regaled with alcoholic refreshment. The human tendency to draw entertainment from the violent and sensational which Mark Twain here satirizes is a rather obvious characteristic, evident in American society today.

And when readers confront T. Lindsay Baker's *Gangster Tour of Texas* they will no doubt assume that this level of entertainment is the chief purpose of the volume. If we are interested in the "tour," no doubt it is at least in part because of the sensational appeal and fascination of stories about people who are known for "breaking bad" - Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow, George "Machine Gun Kelly" Barnes, the Newton brothers, and more. But *Gangster Tour of Texas* is also an ably researched volume put together by a noteworthy historian who provides detailed yet succinct biographies as well as detailed instructions for would-be tourists, replete with maps, illustrations, and photographs.

The biographies may be the volume's best feature. They are well written, fast-paced, and objective, and Baker reveals a penchant for humor as when he recounts the story of the robbery of the First National Bank in Cisco two days before Christmas in 1927 by four men, one of whom was dressed as Santa Claus; wishing to abandon the getaway vehicle, the robbers attempted to commandeer an Oldsmobile driven by 14-year-old Woodrow Wilson Harris, who was taking his parents and his grandmother into town. Young Harris yielded the driver's seat but took the keys with him when the robbers released him, and they were forced to return to the getaway car only to realize that they had left the loot in the Oldsmobile.

Then there is the story of the "Flapper Bandit" Rebecca Bradley Rogers, a 21-year-old college student overwhelmed by a variety of debts, who decided to rob the Farmers' State Bank in Round Rock. She set fire to a nearby abandoned house as an attempted distraction, but the fire drew so many onlookers that she became discouraged, so she drove to Buda, Texas, where she entered a bank, produced a .32 automatic (no magazine and one cartridge in the chamber), took \$900, and locked the bank employees in the vault - but only after making sure they would have enough air.

After capture, the petite and harmless-looking *ingenue* was tried four times on charges ranging from arson to robbery but never convicted. She married one of her attorneys.

Whether intended or not, one effect of the volume is a general undermining or, we may say, "deconstruction" of its supposed premise that the lives of criminals and the scenes of crime and punishment are glamorously worthy of the attention. Photos of the youthful yet notorious

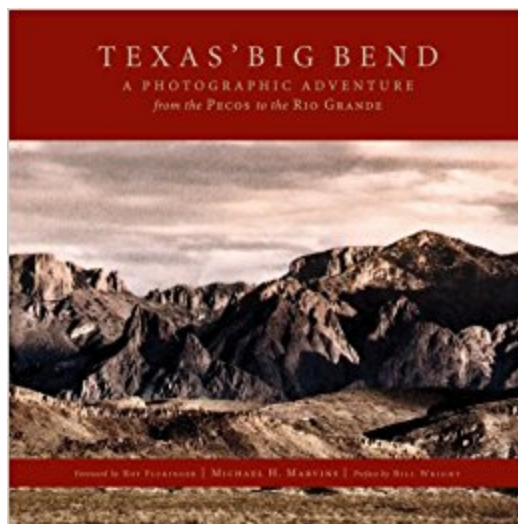
back without a part – a bit too much resembles Snemp Howard. The photograph of Bonnie Parker on the mortician's table does inspire interest – her face cleansed of blood, her reddish blonde hair unpinned, her bare shoulders exposed – but Bonnie is still no Faye Dunaway. Photographs of hideaways, banks, funeral homes, gravesites, and even bullet-riddled automobiles are in general dreary and without particularity, begging the question: Would anyone really want to take the trouble to go to see these?

Along this same vein, Professor Baker's descriptions inform us that many of the so-called gangsters possessed neither dash nor genius. With the exception of Clyde Barrow – who did exhibit an extraordinary talent for both stealing cars and evading capture – most were bumblers, like the Santa Claus robbers in Cisco. How did Becky Rogers not realize a house fire next door to the bank she intended to rob would only bring more witnesses? In an instance leading to the most notorious mail robbery in Texas history, the perpetrators' antics sometimes resembled burlesque: "Once they argued so long over who would drive the...getaway car that the mail rolled by undisturbed. Another time they saw a man walking along the route of the mail trucks, and they took him to be a railway mail agent. The third time...the getaway driver drank so much at a Christmas party that he wrecked the stolen care intended as the escape vehicle" (208).

Gangster Tour of Texas may certainly be appreciated for its sensational and violent content. And it certainly will clearly guide the interested "tourist" to crime scenes, gravesites, former bungalows, and museums. But perhaps its greatest benefit to readers is as a work of history. Moreover, Professor Baker's text – clear and concise, ironic and humorous – challenges us to reconsider our own desire to glamorize such subjects. The photographs, maps, and directions provide a subtle reinforcement of this challenge.

Baker, T. Lindsay. *Gangster Tour of Texas*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2011. 352 pp. Illustrations. Maps. Photographs. Flexbound. ISBN 978-1-60344-258-9

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Texas' Wilderness Magnified

Review by Yves Laberge

This big coffee-table book made with about 200 full-page color photographs is presented as the first book to capture simultaneously the entire region of far West Texas nearing the Mexican Border, including Big Bend National Park, Big Bend Ranch State Park, historic towns like Alpine, Marfa, Terlingua, and Marathon, and the vast territory sweeping between the Pecos and the Rio Grande (5).

The entire book succeeds in capturing the quintessence of the mythic American West: its endless landscapes, impressive

mountains, the immense desert, and countless old roads. The author presents his photographic vision of Big Bend as "the Texas of the movies – what a lot of people who have never been to Texas expect the most of the state to look like" (192).

In his Foreword, Bill Wright accurately mentions that he used to link these Texan landscapes with the stories written by Edgar Rice Burroughs (7).

Marvins, Michael H., Roy Flukinger, and Bill Wright. *Texas' Big Bend: A Photographic Adventure from the Pecos to the Rio Grande*. Houston: Bright Sky Press, 2009. 207 pp. Photographs. Maps. Cloth. ISBN 978-1-933979-49-6



The Legend of Bonnie & Clyde

Review by Cheryl Johnson

Clyde Barrow and Bonnie Parker purchased their final meal at Ma Canfield's Café, in Gibsland, Louisiana, on the morning of May 23, 1934. Eyewitnesses to this purchase debated whether the breakfast sandwiches were bacon or fried bologna. The couple had no way of knowing this would be their last meal, or that the father of their fellow gang member, Henry Methvin, was willing to save his son at all costs.

The legend of Bonnie and Clyde has been fascinating readers since their now infamous and well posed pictures first hit the newspaper stands in the spring of 1933.

What could a book written over 75 years after Bonnie and Clyde's crime spree came to a shocking halt possibly tell us that we haven't already heard? Apparently, plenty!

exhaustive research which will fascinate readers as they relive one of the most tumultuous times in American history.

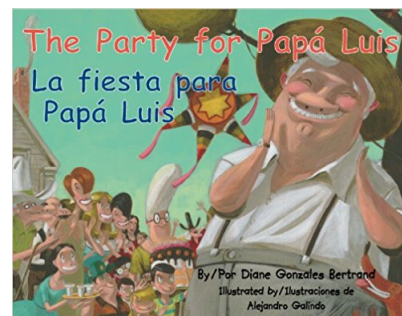
Guinn begins his account with an in-depth history of the marred families into which both Bonnie and Clyde were born. Their mothers, both deeply religious, were intent on raising their children in the church. But Bonnie and Clyde had much bigger aspirations than the local Baptist church could offer.

Guinn also gives us insight into the wealthy city of Dallas, a city that did not handle change or poverty well. For poor families like the Parkers and Barrows, the stark contrast of wealth against their meager way of living would only serve to fuel the crime sprees of Bonnie and Clyde. Once these two met, their passion and determination would give them the infamy they each craved.

Go Down Together: The True, Untold Story of Bonnie and Clyde takes readers on a wild ride across Texas and the United States in riveting fashion. No matter how much you think you know about Bonnie and Clyde, until you've read this account, you have not heard it all. Often reading more like a novel than a historical account, Guinn weaves a masterful story that isn't just for history buffs.

Guinn, Jeff. *Go Down Together: The True Untold Story of Bonnie & Clyde*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010. 480 pp. Photographs. Paperback. ISBN: 978-1416557074

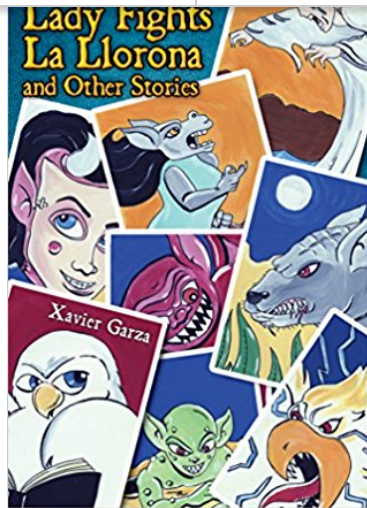
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The Surprise Celebration: A Bilingual Story

Review by Cristina Ríos

What an enjoyable party to be invited to! Family and friends have planned a surprise birthday party for the dearly loved Papá Luis. The story is built in a cumulative



"Brujas, Ghosts, and La Llorona, Oh My!" Review by Salena Parker

Xavier Garza's *The Donkey Lady Fights La Llorona and Other Stories* is a bilingual, fun, and spooky collection of tales from Latin-American folklore that will incite laughter and fear from readers of any age, especially middle school readers. Readers simply need to vertically flip the book to engage in either English or Spanish text. Garza's stories begin with a battle between La Llorona and the wicked Donkey Lady, both of whom are attempting to steal young Margarito—a non-believer in ghosts—and claim him as their own. As each of the following 11 chapters unfold, young protagonists encounter creatures like *duendes*, ghosts, thunderbirds, and El Diablo, all the while gaining insight into the importance of familial ties, respect, and the power of good ghost stories.

However, Garza does more than provide humor and chills; the children in these stories must navigate the real horrors of the world, like greed, jealousy, and neighborhood bullies, along with the supernatural. Younger readers will appreciate the jokes and struggles these child protagonists face, and hopefully use the adventures Garza depicts in his collection to build upon their imagination, confidence, and love for books. "Grandpa Tito's Book" is a particularly enjoyable eerie tale. Each story establishes the cultural and historical backgrounds Garza stemmed from to create his collection, and gives readers the opportunity to improve Spanish reading comprehension.

In this collection, Garza effortlessly blends clear prose with vivid illustrations for a childish sense of wonder and fright that will continue to haunt readers.

recurrence of the same words simplifies the reading in both English and Spanish. The text, side by side in both languages, will help English learners. Humor and illustrations abound.

An appropriate resource for bilingual classrooms and elementary school libraries.

Bertrain, Diane Gonzales. *The Party for Papá Luis/La Fiesta Para Papá Luis*. Houston: Arte Público Press, 2010. 32pp. Illustrations. Cloth.
ISBN 978-1-55885-532-8



Magic Snow on a Summer Day in Texas Review by Cristina Ríos

Something magic happened one hot summer day in Texas; perhaps it was just a mirage. An enormous amount of shaved ice overflowing down the hill produced a snow-sliding slope for children to glide through and refresh themselves from the heat. Dashing through the snow during the summer in Texas is certainly dreamlike. Apparently, the responsible ones are two entrepreneurial 10-year-old girls who creatively and vigorously compete with each other to attract customers to their own snow cone concession stands. An enjoyable read for the summer, the art is beautifully done, and the illustrations give the impression of real, animated children. Bilingual, Spanish, and English. Recommended for elementary school libraries.

Ruiz-Flores, Lupe. *The Battle of the Snow Cones/La Guerra de las raspas*. Houston: Arte Público Press, 2010. 32 pp. Illustrations. Hardcover.
ISBN 978-1-55-885-575-5

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Other Stories. Houston: Arte Publico Press, 2015. 83 pp. Illustrations. Paperback.
ISBN 978-1-55885-816-9

A Union Song

Review by Andrea Karlin

Which Side Are You On? The Story of a Song tells the compelling true story of how Florence Reese, the wife of a Kentucky coal miner organizer for the union, wrote the union song "Which Side Are You On?" in 1931, as bullets were being fired into her home as she and her children tried to keep from being shot. The real target of the bullets was her husband, the union organizer, who was not at home at the time of the attack by the local authorities and hired thugs who were trying to thwart his efforts to establish a union for mine workers.

This descriptively illustrated book gives a chilling account of what life was like for workers and their families as union organizers tried to establish unions like the mine workers' union.

This nonfiction picture book gives children and adults a unique look into a period of history that is often unfamiliar today.

Lyon, George Ella. *Which Side Are You On? The Story of a Song*. El Paso: Cinco Puntos Press, 2011. Reprint 2017. 40 pp. Paperback.
ISBN 978-1-933673-96-5



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Dreaming Big and Counting Blessings

Review by JoAn W. Martin

Only 12 years old, Jocelyn is the sole support for herself and Gram in 1888. Her grandmother is a washerwoman in Kansas City, Missouri, and Jocelyn delivers the clean clothes to Gram's customers. Worse than being poor, Jocey has to deal with being bullied by the other children. Summer and winter she always wraps a muffler around her mouth to hide her deformity, a cleft lip. She longs for a place where she and her grandmother can live in isolation.

When she finds out that a farm in Kansas has been willed to her, she determines to get Gram out of the city. They travel by wagon and hope the country air will cure Gram. Jocey keeps the geography book open on the wagon seat and follows it to find the farm. They have to stop to have the horse shod; they have to camp out every night, but the most serious problem is Gram's health. Jocey worries that Gram might die before they get to the farm. Her books and

dreams are the only things that keep her going.

Jocey knows a farm will be hard work, but avoiding neighbors, Indian peddlers, marauding sheep, and traveling salesman is worse. She begins to suspect that Gram's health has improved but that she fakes it so someone will wait on her.

Jocey pins her hopes on making a success of the farm and dreams of finding someone who can

more important to her – the isolation she needs or the lonesomeness of never having friends.

Irene Brown tries to show how different life was in 1888 than it is now. Many children were raised by their grandparents and had only the bare necessities. Instead of going to school, they were up early in the morning to do chores. This Spur Award winner will make anyone appreciate her blessings. The title is indicative of how early their day of work starts: "Before the Lark."

Brown, Irene Bennett. *Before the Lark*. Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2011. 208 pp. Paper. ISBN 978-0-89672-727-4

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Can Facebook and Romance Go Together?

Review by Frances M. Ramsay

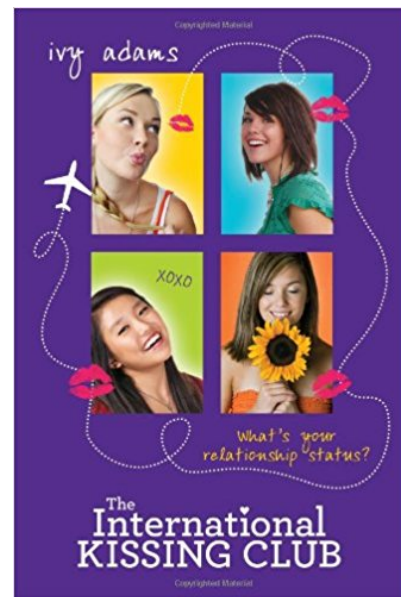
Four best friends cannot wait to get out of Paris, Texas, where each has family or school problems. A term as foreign exchange students seems like the answer until they realize how much they will miss one another's support.

The International Kissing Club is their solution for keeping in touch anonymously. Piper, the dramatic, plans to study art in Paris, France. Mel, the studious, hopes to learn more of the orphanage from which her doting parents adopted her. Cassidy's study in Australia is funded by her absentee father. Izzy, daughter of a football coach, must stay in Paris, Texas, where she takes a part-time job on a farm.

Each chapter begins with a picture of the girl whose experience is being described. They experience exciting but troubling romances and learn that kissing may mean more than gaining points. Although strained by misunderstandings, their friendships with each other are strengthened. Through their experiences, the issues of bullying and responsible use of social media are addressed.

An author note reveals that this young adult novel was written by three authors: Emily McKay, Shelee Roberts, and Tracy Deeks who share gossip, and watch movies in Austin, Texas. As individuals, they have authored over 30 novels.

Adams, Ivy. *The International Kissing Club*. New York: Walker & Co., 2012. 390 pp. Paper. ISBN 978-0-8027-2318-5

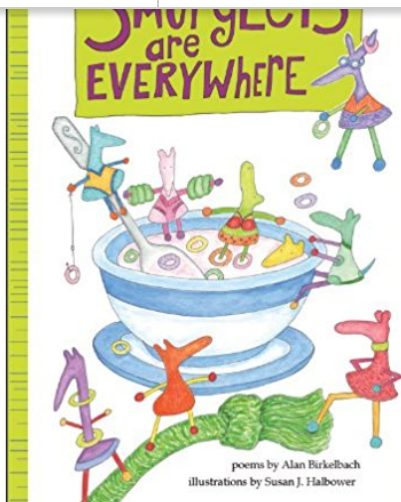


Poetry for Children

Review by Andrea Karlin

If your children and/or you enjoy whimsical, and, at times, silly, funny poems with illustrations to match, *Smurglets Are Everywhere*, by the 2005 poet laureate, Alan Birkelbach, and illustrated by Susan J. Halbower, is a poetry book that you will definitely enjoy. "Ogres Hate Okra," "When Blob Jr. Went to Camp," and "Potatoes are Attacking" are just a few of the 33 titles of poems in this unique collection.

Birkelbach, Alan. *Smurglets Are Everywhere*. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 2011. NP. Illustrations. Cloth.



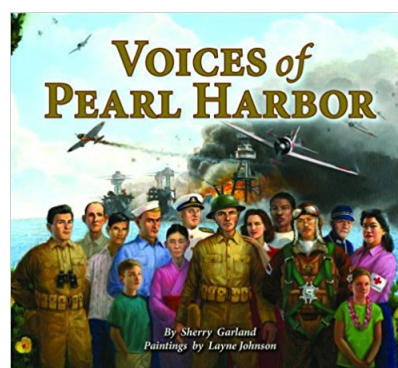
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From Beach Parties to Bombings

Review by JoAn W. Martin

Layne Johnson's touching painting on the cover shows all the participants who lend their stories to *Voice of Pearl Harbor*. They stand together solemnly with the destruction of the beautiful island in the background. Each page offers the voice of a different participant in the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor. We experience the battle from a native Hawaiian, an old islander who remembers diving for pearls and watching whaling ships sail by.



The commander of the Pacific Fleet does not worry about an attack from the Japanese. Peace talks and trade negotiations continue with the United States. Besides Hawaii is 4,000 miles from Japan.

Beach parties by day and dances by night fill the start of the Christmas holiday season in Pearl Harbor. The sailors and nurses are thrilled to be stationed on such a fun-filled, romantic island.

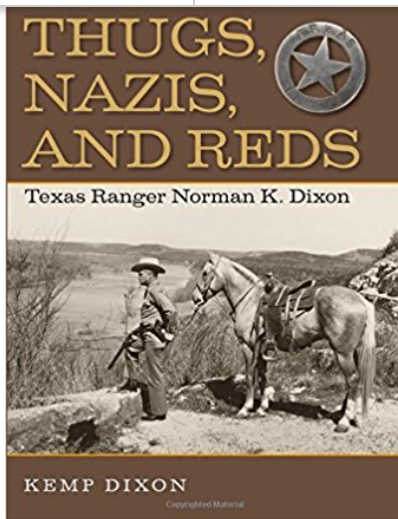
On Sunday morning we experience the shock and horror of the Japanese assault on the American Naval Fleet at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. From the viewpoint of the Japanese, their surprise attack brought them excitement and thrills. They testify that it went off like a well-oiled machine.

Through bombs, bullets, and fires, the Americans on Oahu worked furiously to help the wounded and save the sailors trapped inside the sinking ships. Back on the island of Japan, we hear the voice of a mother sending her son off to war. Our hearts go out to another woman whose voice echoes the horror of the atomic bomb that ended the war.

Heart-wrenching events are narrated against vibrant paintings that give life to the tragic story. Layne Johnson's visits to the island give authenticity to the illustrations. The end papers give the reader a map of the distance between the United States and Japan.

Pearl Harbor is the fourth in Sherry Garland's *Voices Series* of pivotal moments in American history that includes the *Dust Bowl*, *Gettysburg*, and the *Alamo*. She offers historical accounts of pivotal moments that teachers can use even for younger readers.

Garland, Sherry. *Voices of Pearl Harbor*. Greta: Pelican Publishing, 2013. 40 pp. Illustrations. Maps. Cloth. ISBN 978-1-455616091



The Ranger as Detective

Review by Lloyd M. Daignepond

The cover photograph for this volume presents an iconic image of the Texas Ranger in the 20th century, crisply trimmed western hat and polished boots, starched and deeply creased khaki shirt and slacks, Winchester rifle in readiness in the right hand, reins held firmly in the left hand tethering a fully saddled golden palomino. Ranger Norman K. Dixon protectively watches over the Texas territory from the heights bordering a river, across which mystery and evil threaten. Taken in 1951, the photograph anticipates the portrayal in the late 1950s television series *Tales of the Texas Rangers*, every episode beginning with the main actors and a dozen or so others (all dressed more or less as Dixon is) striding forcefully toward the camera as a male chorus sings the series ballad (to the tune of “Eyes of Texas”).

The photograph, like the television series, projects the Texas Ranger mystique into the modern era, but somewhat idealistically and romantically. Throughout most of his career Dixon far more often traveled across Texas in automobiles than on horseback; he relied upon careful investigation and research rather than firearms, and his attire itself reflects the degree to which regulation and bureaucracy replaced the old “one mob, one Ranger” ethos.

Yet it is our abiding sense of diminished romance that makes Kemp Dixon’s portrait of his father’s life and career of interest. Working with the 13 diaries kept by his father between 1938 and 1950 as well as numerous newspaper clippings and letters, the younger Dixon reconstructs an astounding narrative of the incessant busyness of days, weeks, and months investigating crime scenes,

studious and intellectual, a reader of classics and one whose training for law enforcement included knowledge of the science lab and subjects such as “anthropometry, handwriting, finger-printing, poroscopy, Bertillon, and anthropology” (13).

Given the cases Dixon pursued, readers are also apprised of a number of forgotten incidents in Texas in the years including and surrounding World War II. Dixon worked undercover to expose oil-field theft, un-American activities, and black market operations. He investigated the sensational murder of a California socialite and her daughter in West Texas, probable victims of mistaken identity. He also investigated a series of “Phantom” assaults in which couples parked in lovers’ lanes were attacked and sometimes murdered. In 1943 he worked to quell a lynch mob in Beaumont in a case involving a black man accused of raping a white woman. In the post-war era he spied on supposed Communists, sensibly resisting the paranoid influence of Joseph McCarthy by claiming that releasing names would compromise his ability to investigate under cover.

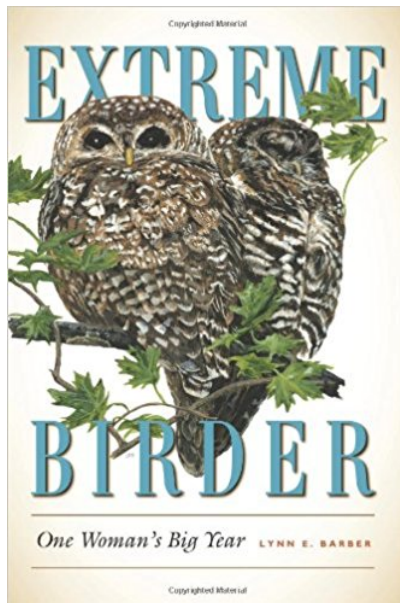
Perhaps one of Dixon’s most representative cases involves his work on the scandal at Texas A&M College in 1946. When administration voted to curb hazing within the college’s Corp of Cadets, many seniors revolted; the protest became an attack on the integrity of President Gibb Gilchrist as the upper classmen were joined by discontented veterans attending Texas A&M under the GI Bill. Dixon spent months patiently investigating all accusations and conducting hundreds of interviews before reporting very sensibly that the administration acted within its rights to curb abusive hazing practices but recommending sensitivity to students’ complaints concerning conditions on campus.

Researcher and detective, scientist and humanitarian, advocate of decency and restraint, Norman K. Dixon defines the Texas Rangers in a new era. *Chasing Thugs, Nazis, and Reds: Texas Ranger Kemp Dixon* is a volume for historians and general readers alike.

Dixon, Kemp. *Chasing Thugs, Nazis, and Reds: Texas Ranger Norman K. Dixon*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2015. 228 pp. Photographs. Maps. Hardcover.

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One Woman's Big Birding Year

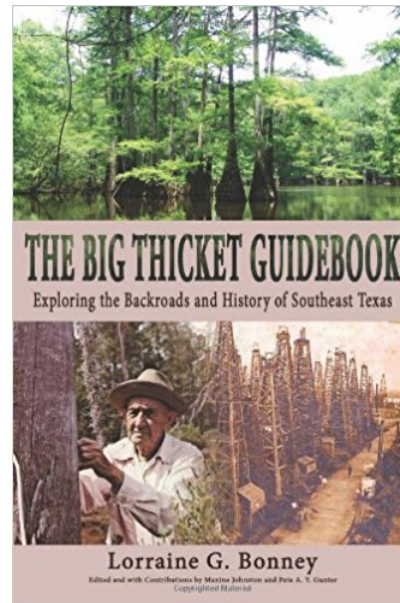
Review by Frances M. Ramsey

The author, board member of the American Birding Association and president of the Texas Ornithological Society, challenged herself to exceed previous records for numbers of bird species seen in the continental U.S. and Canada in a single year. In this wonderful adventure, she says, "For a whole year, I went wherever there were birds that I wanted to see, explored new and exciting areas for birds that were also new and exciting, and filled every day with birding and plans for birding, nearly nonstop, following my passion."

With degrees in zoology, bacteriology, and law, she is a practicing patent attorney. Encouraged by her husband, she took advantage of rare bird alerts on the internet and traveled to the areas where local birders helped her find the unusual species as well as the common ones for the area. In diary format, she describes weather conditions, who traveled with her, who aided her search locally, and what birds she found.

In her Big Year, 2008, she saw 723 species of birds and photographed 503 of them. Her beautiful color photographs adorn most pages. Highlighted sidebars include her poems, which reveal emotional aspects of her venture.

Entertaining as a travel adventure, this book



A Personal Tour Guide to the Big Thicket

Review by Jon P. Tritsch

For those looking for a travel guide to the Big Thicket, Lorraine Bonney, with contributions from Big Thicket Association members Maxine Johnston and Pete A.Y. Gunter, has compiled one of the best books available to give visitors everything they want to know about the Big Thicket and surrounding areas.

To acquaint the reader with the Big Thicket, Bonney gives historical background on topics including the area's geology, early native inhabitants and settlers in the region, the timber industry, and the Trinity River as well as relevant histories on some of the major cities and towns connected with the Big Thicket.

The best part of the guidebook, Part III, describes 15 tours and 39 automobile trips visitors can take for touring and sightseeing in the Big Thicket. The trips are described in generous detail down to a fraction of a mile and include maps and photographs to enhance the book's usefulness.

To complete this work, contributor Johnston devotes a few pages to describing the authors and the work that went into compiling the guidebook. Finally, contributor Gunter includes an extensive bibliography for additional research.

The Big Thicket Guidebook: Exploring the

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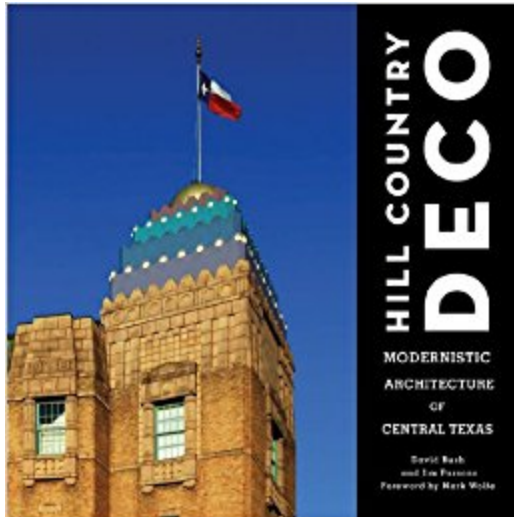
see, and wonder who will help them find these birds.

Barber, Lynn E. *Extreme Birder: One Woman's Big Year*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2011. 283 pp. ABA Checklist and Checklist Codes. Appendices. Index. Photographs. Flexbound. ISBN 978-1-60344-261-9

should be acquired by libraries for their collections. Individuals will want their own copies for the sightseeing trips suggested in the guidebook.

Bonney, Lorraine G. *The Big Thicket Guidebook: Exploring the Backroads and History of Southeast Texas*. Denton: Big Thicket Association/University of North Texas Press, 2011. 850 pp. Bibliography. Illustrations. Index. Maps. Cloth. ISBN 978-1-57441-318-2

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Art Deco in Central Texas

Review by Yves Laberge

This large art book, richly illustrated, is about the various architectural styles in Texas, between the two World Wars. Countless photographs depict numerous buildings from the first half of the 20th century. Here, the expression "Modernistic Architecture" is used broadly to describe Art Deco and similar styles. Mark Wolfe's foreword resumes the evolution of architecture in Texas in just a few efficient formulas: "Before World War I, Texas embraced Victorian-era architecture with a

vengeance" (viii). However, in order to look "new," architects from the early 1920s adopted an emerging style from France, Art Deco, and this book shows dozens of examples of this beautiful style in buildings, local banks, mansions, residences, duplexes, sculptures, and monuments, mainly located in Austin and San Antonio (but also Smithville, Kerrville, and other, smaller places).

Many facades from the 1920s and 1930s can be seen, such as the movie theaters designed by John Ebersson (84-85). Most images are recent, but some wonderful black and white vintage photographs from the 1940s are included for a few buildings since demolished. The authors succeed in showing how many of these familiar buildings correspond to the Art Deco style, the strongest point of the book. Many probably see these buildings today without noticing their architectural richness and heritage. One small detail - the book's title felt incomplete: Including "Art Deco" would assist potential readers in their research of this style and lead them to this excellent collection.

Bush, David and Jim Parsons. *Hill Country Deco: Modernistic Architecture of Central Texas*. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 2011. NP. Bibliography, Index, Notes, Photos. Cloth. ISBN 978-0-87565-413-3

Detailed History of Jefferson, Texas, from 1845 to the Civil War

Review by Frances M. Ramsey

Using primarily public records and regional and Jefferson newspapers, Jacques D. Bagur has compiled a detailed history of Jefferson from its beginning as a river port in the 1840s to the Civil

encounters many of the same people in different roles in different chapters."

Beginning with the wilderness conditions and strategic location for shipping cotton and supplying area needs, the book covers the development of the town site and wharves, business types and professions, women, slaves, education, hotels, politics, newspapers, railroads, culture and entertainment, crime, health and welfare.

Maps and copies of documents enhance the text. The list of sources and the author's explanation of his methods may be of help to others compiling local history. Those seeking information about ancestors who lived in the area will find the history of the area interesting and helpful. The historical details provided will be interesting to those who have visited Jefferson or enjoy regional historical fiction.

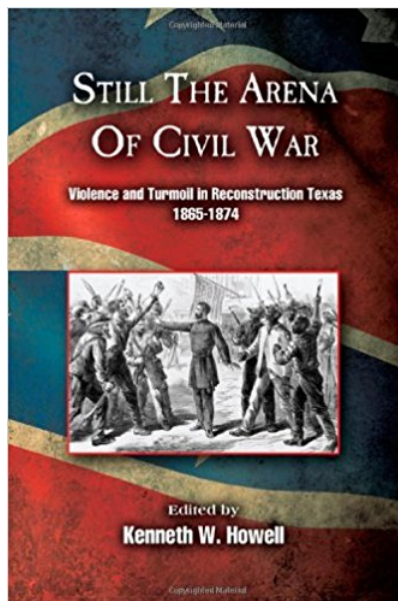


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Bagur, Jacques D. *Antebellum Jefferson, Texas: Everyday Life in an East Texas Town*. Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2012. 640 pp. Index, Photographs. Cloth.

ISBN 978-1574412659



Lose the War, Win Reconstruction

Review by Jon P. Tritsch

Civil War historian Kenneth Howell has previously edited *The Seventh Star of the Confederacy: Texas During the Civil War*, a collection of essays concerning the state's involvement in the conflict on the home front. He and 15 other historians continue the story in this latest anthology of essays that now examine Reconstruction Texas from 1865 to 1874.

The consistent theme throughout the essays is the battle by the defeated Democratic establishment to keep the antebellum political and social status quo in Texas.

Their targeted enemies fell into three broad categories: the emancipated slaves (Freedmen), native white Texans who supported the Union (Republicans), and the Yankee occupiers (the military and agents of the Freedmen's Bureau).

As Howell mentions in his introductory essay, "The chapters survey various forms of disorder, cruelty, and bloodshed and identify the social, political, and economic impact on the Texas citizenry." The chapters themselves are grouped into four parts. The first part contains chapters focusing on the struggles against the military occupation, the Freedmen's Bureau agents, and local lawmen. The essays in part two describe the rise and attributed violence of the Ku Klux Klan in Texas, the involvement of the Democratic Party against the agents of Reconstruction, and the coverage of the turmoil in Texas by the state's newspapers. In part three, the chapters examine the effects of the violence and persecution on the Freedmen, African-American women and Tejanos. The last three chapters in part four survey the effects of Reconstruction on the frontier, the lawlessness in Lavaca County, and the incidences of violent acts in the lower Brazos River Valley counties of Austin, Brazoria, Brazos, Fort Bend, Grimes, and Washington.

In all, this is a fine group of essays by the contributors. The numerous bibliographical end notes after each chapter show that the authors did extensive research with their essays. There are a few minor typographical errors, the most notable being a misidentification of neighboring Harris County on the eastern border of Fort Bend County as "Houston County" (403).

Still the Arena of Civil War: Violence and Turmoil in Reconstruction Texas, 1865-1874 should be a

Howell, Kenneth W., Ed. *Still the Arena of Civil War: Violence and Turmoil in Reconstruction Texas, 1865-1874*. Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2012. 445 pp. Illustrations, Maps, Tables, End Notes, Index. ISBN 978-1-57441-449-3

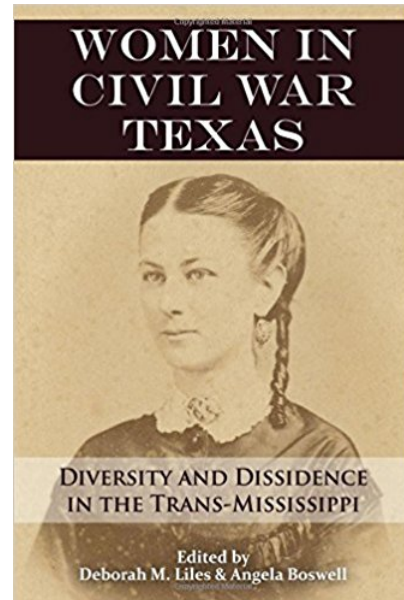
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Trials and Triumphs

Review by Lloyd Daigrepoint

The editors present eleven original essays, all by qualified historians, most with college or university credentials and specializations in women's studies. While diversity and dissidence comprise the general focus of these essays, the recurring theme of the volume is that women not only endured the Civil War but prevailed, developing independence and individualism as a result of their struggles. As Dorothy Ewing states in her appraisal of the experience of Caroline Sedberry, wife of a Texas legislator, "her story is representative of many women who adapted during the war years from one dependent on her husband's authority and guidance to a woman who was competent, successful, and willing to perform duties commonly attributed to men" (40).



In general the women of Texas supported secession in the early years, crafting flags and uniforms, writing newspaper articles, and sponsoring social events and church gatherings for the sake of maintaining morale and encouraging enlistment. In a reversal of Lysistrata's tactic, women shamed malingerers among the male population and even withheld "favors." But disillusionment with the Civil War did follow; the women of Texas suffered (as did their male counterparts) from physical fear, illness, nervous exhaustion, numerous privations, and, of course, the loss of loved ones. As women, they experienced particular stress in attempting to acquire the business acumen of their absent husbands and in assuming male roles requiring the assertion of authority over laborers and overseers. As Candice N. Shockley points out in her excellent contribution on Kate Stone and the "Elite Refugee Women," an added source of stress consisted in the way the Civil War "destroyed the sources from which elite women drew understanding of their own identities and self-worth. The emergence of new wartime ideologies installed a new paragon of virtuous womanhood—the Confederate Woman" (231).

Individual essays emphasize the particular problems of women at the edge of Texas society. The wives and daughters of German settlers in Comal, Kerr, and Gillespie Counties and of the North Texas settlers out of the Ohio Valley suffered widowhood and orphanage as husbands and fathers were lynched and sometimes murdered outright because of Unionist sympathies (41 men hanged in Cooke County in one month); for these women the war years meant a struggle merely to survive and to protect their families from frontier exigencies like Indian raids and food shortages.

For black and Tejana women the war generally increased abuse and discrimination and, perhaps even worse, provoked a deepening sense of their racist-engendered obscurity. Still, as Linda S. Hudson concludes in "Black Women and Supreme Court Decisions," from all of the suffering endured by these women (and, we might add, by all Texas Women of the Civil War) there "emerged women of great character, enormous strength of will, and an unceasing resolve to pass on to their daughters and granddaughters great courage, an abiding hope, and a boundless determination for a better life" (136).

The essays collected in *Women in Civil War Texas* may be read merely for the sake of interest and

place for any student or professional scholar. This volume belongs in every college library, but it is also one that many readers will find personally desirable.

Liles, Deborah M. and Angela Boswell, Eds. *Women in Civil War Texas: Diversity and Dissidence in the Trans-Mississippi*. Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2016. 336 pp. Photographs. Cloth.

ISBN 978-1-57441-651-0

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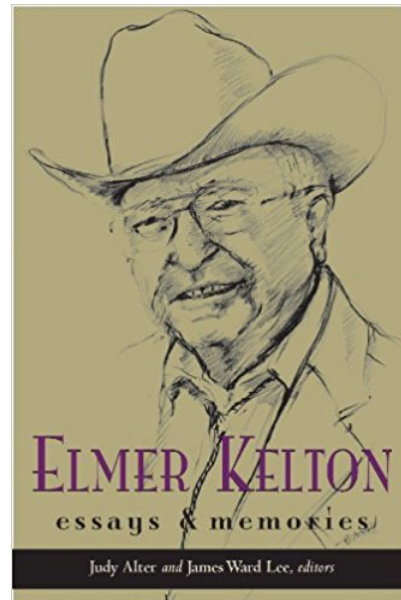


Honoring a Great Writer

Review by Frances M. Ramsey

Although he grew up on a ranch where his father was foreman, Elmer Kelton was too near-sighted to become a good cowboy, so he listened to stories and became an avid reader. After service in World War II where he met his wife, he received a degree in journalism.

This collection - including essays by his former editors at TCU Press, a San Angelo bookseller, Kelton's pastor, teachers of his books, and his son, rancher and writer, Steve Kelton - demonstrates how his employment in ranching and journalism supplied real-life facts for his novels that lifted them above the usual western romance.



Most of his characters must cope with unwanted change and harsh circumstances of living in an arid land. There are few happy endings, but the characters develop endurance. Extensive quotes from Kelton's books offer insight into his writing and display the qualities of his writing which the essayists admire.

Those who have appreciated his books will enjoy the memories invoked, and teachers of his writing will find this a rich resource.

Alter, Judy and James Ward Lee, Eds. *Elmer Kelton: Essays and Memories*. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 2011. 137 pp. Bibliography. Paper.

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