



REVIEW OF TEXAS BOOKS



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***** FICTION *****

Arnold, Janis. *EXCUSE ME FOR ASKING*. Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 1994. 351p. Hardcover: \$18.95, ISBN 1-56512-057-4. 94-25655.

A mother's hysterical words in a moment of nocturnal chaos leave a deep etching in the imaginative mind of her young daughter, Julia. *Excuse Me For Asking* portrays the way such a moment can shape a young woman's life and her relationships to family and friends. The story tells of a young woman who abandons her dreams of an exciting life in the big city and returns instead to live in her small home town of Cypress Springs, Texas. Julia's attitudes and preoccupations are revealed in her own voice, as well as in the sympathetic, if sometimes exasperated, voices of those close to her. Arnold has rightfully been compared to Anne Tyler for depicting with humor and compassion the dynamics of close relationships.

Excuse Me For Asking belongs in any collection of high quality contemporary fiction. It is a novel with compelling human interest and a touch of mystery. Previously Arnold wrote *Daughters of Memory* (Vol.VI, No.4) which was well received.

Sarah Tusa

Burkhart, Stephen S. *LASER BURN*. Austin: State House Press, 1994. 160p. Hardcover: \$19.95, ISBN 1-880510-26-X. 94-36631.

With a heavy hand and an axe to grind, first-time author and San Antonio surgeon Stephen Burkhart delivers a fiction which is a vehicle for expressing the direction managed health care reform could take in America. His hero, Jack Armstrong, is obviously the author himself: "... all-American boy. Orthopedic surgeon. Innovator in shoulder surgery. Investigator in basic orthopedic biomechanical research. Author of numerous scientific articles." Because of the rationed health care Armstrong sees coming with HMO's, he is ready to pack 'em up to practice medicine in Mexico. Burkhart does bring in some other plot elements: the pilot of the President of the United States requires special shoulder surgery that only the All-American boy can perform with his laser, and Burkhart, ahem, Armstrong, needs cadavers on which to perfect his laser art. A heroin-smuggling scheme and an accidental jab with an AIDS-infected needle complete the number of sparks that fly as he flails with his axe. Obviously Burkhart is passionately concerned about future health care issues, but this fictional endeavor doesn't make his case stronger or his axe finer.

Sally Dooley

Caram, Eve La Salle. *WINTERSHINE*. Austin: Plain View Press, 1994. 80p. Illustrations. Paperback: \$11.95, ISBN 0-911051-74-0. 93-086532.

"All childhoods are strange," says the writer of this account of growing up in the Ozarks and later in South Texas during the Depression. This reminiscence is a record of ordinary folk trying to survive. Caram observes family members: "Each was entrapped in his own special strain of life ... unable to lock into any other." Hard times killed her father, broke her mother, and left all members of the family scarred. While the grownups wrestled with "the demons that rise out of the earth to taunt us," the author's imagination helped her to escape. She played on a foundation of a house never built, imagined rooms that never were, and colored castoff drawing plans made by her uncle for houses he never built. Always her drawings were "to celebrate living in this world." Later, writing would become "a way for me to cope with loss," this impoverished existence. Houses without indoor plumbing, extremes of hot and cold weather, hurricanes and other hardships are all here. This is no page-turner, but it is a living out of a life where desperation existed with beauty, and where beauty, we are led to believe, will be the vehicle to help the author win out. Caram is the author of *Dear Corpus Christi*, a novel (Vol.VII, No.4).

Violette Newton

***** EDITOR'S CHOICE *****

Cooper, J. California. *IN SEARCH OF SATISFACTION*. New York: Doubleday, 1994. 351p. Hardcover: \$21.95, ISBN 0-385-46785-0. 94-555.

Readers of J. California Cooper's new novel will revel in her creation of an absorbing story peopled with memorable characters. As in her first novel, *Family* (Vol.V, No.4), she portrays with originality the heart-rending brutality blacks suffered around the time of the Civil War and the relationships and love which helped them survive. In this new work, she ponders the different avenues people take in their quests for satisfaction, a search that every person undertakes, no matter one's sex, color, age, or economic or physical state. Life offers people the opportunity to discover what gives satisfaction, she believes, but it is an arduous task wringing from them energy, sweat, and thought. Those who succeed are loving people no matter their circumstances, while others surrender to their selfish desires and remain unfulfilled. Such subject matter could evolve into a soap opera or an allegory, but with Cooper's narrative skill and her inimitable style, the result is a satisfying novel with deep religious

themes.

Set in a fictitious town somewhere between the North and the South, a freed slave fathers two daughters by two different women, one black and poor and the other the alcoholic mistress of the manse. The plot follows the lives of YinYang, Ruth, and Ruth's daughter, Hosanna, and their relationships with a large wealthy white family over a period of three generations. Ignorance, poverty, and prejudice are stalwart enemies as the characters pursue satisfaction while Satan, like a Greek chorus, often laughs on the sidelines as some of the characters succumb to ambition, greed, and hate. Cooper sees clearly into the human heart and shows how wary one must be in pursuit of the elusive state of contentment.

Cooper, a resident of Marshall, Texas, has also written four collections of short stories and seventeen plays. She has been honored as Black Playwright of the Year and recipient of the James Baldwin Award. An important voice for the African American experience, she speaks eloquently for the human experience as well.

Sally Dooley



De la Garza, Beatriz. *THE CANDY VENDOR'S BOY AND OTHER STORIES*. Houston: Arte Público Press, 1994. 220p. Paperback: \$9.95, ISBN 1-55885-106-2. 93-29313.

In this impressive first book, de la Garza writes about Texas Mexicans, "strangers in a strange land," whose lives have been altered by revolution, migration, bigotry, abandonment, and shame. In places as diverse as the carefully sculpted Walnut Hills and the dusty wastes of Los Encinos, her characters are caught in the grip of memories that transfix, undermine, restore or shed light on themselves, as evident in the first two stories of the collection.

The title and lead story, for example, is set in mid-January of 1918. Young Private Daniel Aramberri returns after six months at Camp Bowie to his dilapidated neighborhood in the Austin slums. His father, a "dirty Mexican" hunchback candy vendor and symbol of defeated hope, has aged tremendously under the burdens of poverty and illness. Danny confronts his recollected past when he is snubbed because of prejudice at a Knights of Columbus (irony intended) dance. Afterwards, he concedes that at least "out there," in the Army, fate is not fixed against him. Next, a disappointed spinster reminisces while embroidering her younger sister's wedding gown. Whereas Luisita is to be married, Adela stitches together torn fragments from her earlier life. In 1914 she, her father, and her sisters were forced by political pressure to flee their spacious home in Saltillo. Her family lost its land, wealth, status, and leisure. Moreover, Adela, at the age of twenty-five, had to abandon her hopes for marriage. Now she sits in a four-room shack in San Antonio and is consumed by "sterile dreaming."

An attorney and educator who lives in Austin, de la Garza compels her characters to learn hard lessons about family, faith, and ethnic pride. Personal integrity, she contends, must be at the center of all that we do.

Joe Nordgren

Erickson, John R. *HANK THE COWDOG: MOONLIGHT MADNESS*. Houston: Gulf Publishing, Co. 1994. 117p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$11.95, ISBN 0-87719-252-9; Paperback: \$6.95, ISBN 0-87719-251-0; Cassette: \$15.95, ISBN 0-87719-253-7. 94-14263.

Hank tells the readers what they know well: "Nobody pays any attention to the Head of Ranch Security." Why? Because the Head of Ranch Security is a proud and foolish dog who often finds himself in compromising situations with the rest of the ranch gang. In this twenty-third adventure in the popular series, Slim adopts and cages an orphan raccoon much to Hank's consternation. When the coon is seized with "Moonlight Madness," Hank is the brunt of the trickery. Certain to please his following of children of all ages, Hank is a delightful ranch cowdog.

Sally Dooley

Goyen, William. *ARCADIO*. U.K.: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1983. Reprint. Evanston: Tri-Quarterly Books/Northwestern University Press, 1994. 147p. Paperback: \$12.95, ISBN 0-9101-5006-9. 94-4052.

A reissue which is part of a Northwestern University Press project to reprint the oeuvre of Texan William Goyen, *Arcadio* is worthy of attention. In this novel are the motifs of singers and singing, of sexuality, of spirituality, and of the compositional qualities of the literature now described as that of the carnivalesque tradition. These are the signatures of Goyen's body of work. Completed while Goyen was dying in the early 1980s, *Arcadio* is of particular value to any library that intends to maintain a complete representation of the more significant modern writers. Devoted readers of the prose stylists of modernism, such as Djuna Barnes and John Hawkes, will find a kindred spirit in the author of the quite beautiful, poetic prose found here.

Goyen (1915-1983) has long been acclaimed abroad. His *House of Breath* (1950) and other novels and stories are a major contribution to American literature and to modernist fiction worldwide.

Robin M. Latimer

Goyen, William. *HALF A LOOK OF CAIN*. Evanston: Tri-Quarterly Books/Northwestern University Press, 1994. 136p. Hardcover: \$22.50, ISBN 0-8101-5031-X. 94-13827.

An experiment in structure, with a technique of nesting interrelated narratives to include a lighthouse keeper's log, a patient's notebook, and therein a fable, this novel cannot be read easily or once. Like the modernist texts that influenced it, this novel requires an attentive, active reading. To complicate the reading, the epistolary mode adds a dimension concerning privacy, the reader's right or privilege to the information, and raises interpretive questions which necessarily involve the arrangement of numerous narrators and narratees in the epistolary "chain."

Goyen, we are told in Reginald Gibbons' careful afterword, insisted that "fiction is always a small drama of telling" and that Goyen dramatically embodies the act of telling as the chief aspect of healing the damage we as human beings incur. Furthermore, we are reminded that Goyen saw his title as a refer-

ence to D.H. Lawrence's line concerning "half a look of gathered love and half a look of Cain," an image evoking desire and its concomitant torments. It is probable that Goyen's topic, desire, and voyeuristic epistolary form caused his publisher, Random House, to reject the novel in the early fifties. A consensus of Goyen's translators and literary friends soon followed that the reading public was not ready for the novel. It was shelved as a result and not published until this year. Any serious collection of twentieth century fiction will include this book. Highly recommended.

Robin M. Latimer

Kelton, Elmer. *THE FAR CANYON*. New York: Doubleday, 1994. 323p. Hardcover: \$22.95, ISBN 0-385-24895-4. 93-44344.

Native Texan Elmer Kelton, the award-winning author of more than thirty novels, presents an interesting view of the West in his latest effort, *The Far Canyon*. The novel traces the steps of Jeff Layne, whom Kelton formerly introduced in his highly-praised novel *Slaughter*. After Jeff's stints as a Confederate soldier and a buffalo hide hunter, he is left wandering and disillusioned, having witnessed the destruction brought on by war and the wholesale butchery of buffalo. In an endeavor to redeem himself and forge a new identity, Jeff returns to his roots, his birthplace in South Texas. Kelton generously sprinkles Jeff's journey with characters and motifs commonly found in western novels. The plot involves tough cowboys with vulnerable souls, decades-old family rivalries, land disputes, and persecuted Native Americans. Central to the novel is Jeff's compulsion to make peace with the past and rid himself of the mental ghosts that continue to haunt him.

Although the characters may ring hollow and one-dimensional under the pen of other western writers, Kelton manages to present them as rich, complex, and ultimately, sympathetic. Kelton explores timeless themes of love, revenge, and spiritual renewal against the backdrop of a harsh and unforgiving landscape that is both historically accurate and interesting to readers.

Elmer Kelton resides in San Angelo, Texas, and has received numerous literary awards, including four Western Heritage Awards, five Spur Awards, and the Levi Strauss Golden Saddleman Award for lifetime achievement in western literature.

DeLisa Bates

Meyer, Carolyn. *WHITE LILACS*. San Diego: Gulliver Books/Harcourt Brace & Co., 1993. 242p. Hardcover: \$10.95, ISBN 0-15-200641-9; Paperback: \$5.00, ISBN 0-15-295876-2. 92-30503.

Jim Crow is the rule in 1921 in a small Texas town where the white residents vote to displace the African American community of Freedomtown in order to build a city park for the whites' use only. Rose Lee Jefferson, a young black girl, narrates this story, recreating an embarrassing time in American history. Meyer uses detailed scenes to depict several evils of segregation: daily discrimination, inequities in education and employment, and Ku Klux Klan threats. Henry, Rose Lee's brother, and other blacks demand the civil rights they defended in World War I. Nevertheless, blacks must move from their homes, school, and churches. The community is angry and despairing, but when

Rose Lee draws on paper each building in Freedomtown, she not only preserves a record of her community's existence, but she also salves their wounds of outrage. This is a beautifully written novel which rightfully denounces bigotry and prejudice. Although it is recommended for readers ages ten to fourteen, the book will touch the hearts of adults who savor Meyer's style and skill. Highly recommended.

Sally Dooley

Munson, Sammie. *HEJ! TEXAS, GOODBYE SWEDEN*. Austin: Eakin Press, 1994. 114p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Hardcover: \$12.95, ISBN 0-89015-948-3. 93-38928. (Juvenile)

Continuous poor crops and diminishing land holdings led many Swedes to seek better opportunities in Texas in the last century. Young Carl and his sister Christina decide to join their brother Oscar and Christina's fiancé in Texas by earning passage to Texas by promising a year of labor. The sadness of leaving parents, the trials of sailing in steerage, and the hard work on a Central Texas cotton farm are balanced by the joy of Christina's reunion with her fiancé and Carl's hope for a brighter future. Sammie Munson, who based this story on a forebear, describes the Swedish customs and pioneer experience through the lives of teenagers to create an interesting look at Texas history for elementary school readers. The book might also be useful to inspire students' research into their own family backgrounds. The book is illustrated with line drawings and historic photographs. A glossary of Swedish words and sayings, along with a map, contribute further information.

Munson, a former Houston teacher, is the author of *Take My Hand*, a novel for teenagers, and *Our Tejano Heroes*, for young readers.

Frances M. Ramsey

Wade, Mary Dodson. *PM GOING TO TEXAS/YO VOY A TEJAS*. Translated by Guadalupe C. Quintanilla. Houston: Colophon House, 1995. 24p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$12.95, ISBN 1-882539-17-6. Paperback: \$4.95, ISBN 1-882539-18-4. (Juvenile)

When a little cowboy-dressed child speaks of going to Texas, he is consumed with the idea of a place whose culture is based solely on that of the cowboy. Attractive, brightly colored drawings by Virginia Marsh Roeder and catchy English rhymes by Mary Dodson Wade with Spanish translations by Guadalupe C. Quintanilla combine to offer young readers a chance to share a young child's expectations of a Texas visit. This is an appealing story for youngsters as it is. The author adds, however, other facts below the illustrations, and in bordered texts she explains the numerous attractions in Texas besides the limited ones the little cowboy imagines. This clearly detracts from what would have been a good children's book. Because this material is in small print and lacks illustrations, it is superfluous and incongruent with the book's rhymes and illustrations. A list of Texas cities, towns, and state parks, with their locations, is also out of place in a story book for young children.

The author, Mary Wade, a former school teacher, previously wrote two excellent biographies for advanced elementary

children: *Estevan, Walking Across America* (Vol.VIII,No.3,4) and *Austin, The Son Becomes a Father* (Vol.IX,No.3.).

Sally Dooley

Watt, Donley. *CAN YOU GET THERE FROM HERE?* Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1994. 163p. Hardcover: \$19.95, ISBN 0-87074-376-7; Paperback: \$9.95, ISBN 0-87074-377-5. 94-5095.

Watt's collection of twelve short stories, a number of which have been previously published, realistically depicts the regional cultures and attitudes of Texas. A unifying theme of everyday desperation in the characters' lives runs through the otherwise nonrelated stories. The plots hinge on specific events which cause the characters to react in various, sometimes surprising, ways. Watt offers unique insight into interpersonal relationships by giving the characters depth of emotion and motive as they relate to one another. His characters move beyond the trailer-trash-bubba-stereotypes to offer reasons for their behavior. In the title story, Irene and Royce attempt to deal with life after the oil industry flounders. Irene must decide whether to stay with the security of Nina's Ready-to-Wear or to travel to Mississippi with Royce as he attempts to recapture his wealth "on the ripples of a boom." Watt writes all of the stories with detail and realism which make them truly Texas.

This book recently won an award from the Texas Institute of Letters for the best first book of fiction. His stories have been widely published, and "Waiting for a Good Day to Leave" appeared in *Roberts Writing Awards Annual* for 1990. A long-time Texas resident, Watt currently lives in Tucson, Arizona.

Janet K. Turk

POETRY

Gwynn, R.S. *THE AREA CODE OF GOD*. West Chester: Aralia Press, 1993. 20p. Paperback: \$25.00.

Readers familiar with R.S. Gwynn's work expect the craftsmanship they get in *The Area Code of God*. Gwynn continues his multifaceted, dense signature imagery, predictably quick changing, often "stopped" with surprising shifts of mock grandiosity. "1-800," the poem in which the book's title is embedded, illustrates this. The speaker, an insomniac and late night T.V. addict, huddles, pad at hand, trusting his brandy, not Shakespeare's sleep, to knit up his "raveled sleeve of care." He scribbles phone numbers for ". . . Devices that will make one's tummy flatter, / Rout car thieves, or purge household taps of lead! / All made of stuff no earthly force can shatter! / Their lauds ascend Olympus in his head." ("Laud," the verbal noun ascending Olympus in a poem about T.V. commercials is what I mean by "surprising.") Finally, the pathetic persona "resolutely punches the first number / Of what may be the area code of God." Four of the chapbook's seven poems are sonnets (one a curtal), a form Gwynn somewhat scornfully masters, taking swipes at romantic sonneteers in the book's opening sonnet. A ballad depicts a social activist's evolution from youthful certainty in the Congo, leading natives in singing "If I Had a Hammer," to latter-day boomer burnout, "Unsure of which side's right or

wrong." The longest poem, "The Classroom at the Mall," in eleven sestets, is laced with ironies about teaching in a shopping mall's see-through classroom: a "Pentecostal hair - / Do with a woman underneath," looks through the glass and copies notes from Faust that are on the board, notes she mistakes for the propagation of heresy. On the last class day, a departing student says: "They sure had thoughts, those old guys." The teacher muses, "I've nothing left to say / And couldn't put it better myself." Indeed, this respected scholar-critic, who teaches creative writing at Lamar University-Beaumont, speaks all too rarely through the medium of his own formal verse.

Bob Gaskin

★ ★ ★ NONFICTION ★ ★ ★

ART

Johnson, Patricia Covo. *CONTEMPORARY ART IN TEXAS*. Australia: Craftsman House, 1995. 240p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$50.00, ISBN 976-8097-701.

The popular conception of the average Texan is that he or she is a rugged, rebellious individualist. From that premise the author, a curator and art critic for the *Houston Chronicle*, has selected fifty prominent contemporary Texas artists and has interpreted their various styles. She contends our very environment is responsible for producing great innovators who have defined the artistic Texas mystique for the world. This view is also expressed in the foreword, written by Walter Hopps, Director of the Menil Collection. At this point in time, Johnson writes, three generations of Texas artists are working simultaneously and making an unprecedented impact on the development of contemporary art. Included among them are Minimalist Donald Judd, Neo-Expressionist John Alexander, and photographer Keith Carter. A brief essay provides a historical background, identifies the artistic temperament of major cities, and prefaces an alphabetically arranged presentation of the artists with biographies and stylistic analyses. Their works are illustrated in black-and-white and color.

Johnson has done a fine job of presenting this material, which fills a void in books about contemporary art in Texas. Highly recommended.

Lynne Lokensgard

BIOGRAPHY

Carpenter, Liz. *UNPLANNED PARENTHOOD*. New York: Random House, Inc., 1994. 231p. Hardcover: \$20.00, ISBN 0-679-42798-8, 94-13995.

Picture this: Liz Carpenter, former press secretary to Lady Bird Johnson, was retired and living in Austin where she enjoyed entertaining friends, writing books, and public speaking. She had made this new life for herself after being widowed and returning to Austin from Washington, D.C. When she was seventy-three, her dying older brother asked her to raise his three children, ages twelve, fourteen, and sixteen. With the same pluck and resolve with which she had met other challenges in life, Carpenter

accepted, and three grief-stricken teenagers came to live in her West Austin home. Accustoming herself to their voracious appetites, hectic schedules, raging hormones, messy bedrooms, and loud music, Carpenter coped with rearing children in the nineties. From obtaining much sought after tickets to a U2 concert to refereeing fights over tee shirts and socks, Carpenter became a loving, wise surrogate mother/grandmother. A cultural exchange worked between the two generations. Parents raising teenagers today will laugh with Carpenter, but they will be as dismayed as she was over the magnitude of problems with which young people today must deal. Humorous stories are juxtaposed with poignant anecdotes, but throughout the book Carpenter's enthusiasm for life abounds.

Sally Dooley

Carrington, Evelyn M., ed. *WOMEN IN EARLY TEXAS*. 2d ed. Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1994. 334p. Illustrations. Index. Paperback: \$19.95, ISBN 0-87611-142-8. 94-21170.

As urbanization of Texas continues apace, as political trends affect changes in historical texts, as time itself distances us from our predecessors, this second edition of *Women In Early Texas* is timely. The fifty sketches of women who made history in Texas prior to 1900 gain significance now that the stories are read in contexts different from those of 1975 when the book first appeared. The sketches were originally collected by the American Association of University Women, Austin Branch, as a contribution to the country's bicentennial. Debbie Mauldin Cottrell, in a new introduction, gives an invaluable account of publications about Texas women that have appeared in the near-twenty-year time lapse: detailed studies in historiography, culture (particularly with regard to ethnic women), analyses of women in the work force and of women's involvement in religion, law, politics, and civic matters. *Women in Early Texas* and like publications provide raw material for further scholarly work. "Qualitatively and quantitatively," Cottrell writes, much work lies ahead, especially in collecting available primary sources.

Ernestine Sewell Linck

Dressman, Fran. *GUS WORTHAM: PORTRAIT OF A LEADER*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1994. 284p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$29.95, ISBN 0-89096-580-3. 93-31049.

This book provides an understanding of how the dynamic interaction among business, social, and political leaders can produce great personal fortunes and have a profound influence on the economic and cultural growth of cities. Gus Wortham is pictured as a man who was able to set clear goals, establish priorities, and focus energies on activities to achieve his objectives. To a great degree, Wortham's success stemmed from the legacy of his father. In addition to a strong sense of self-worth and responsibility, his father provided Wortham with a network of well-established friends in the economic and political societies of Texas and the nation. Those individuals served as mentors, door-openers, and partners to Wortham as he began his business career. But success did not just fall into Wortham's hands. Using his ability to detect trends, he also positioned himself in such a way as to take advantage of those trends. As in most successful creative endeavors, the risks taken provided rewards not only to himself and to his investors, but also to the broad community

which he served through the insurance and lending activities of his companies. Also, the reader will discover the extent of Wortham's tireless personal commitment and financial support for the cultural and economic development of Houston.

While this book, at times, indulges in over veneration of Mr. Wortham, it presents some of the major personalities instrumental in guiding Houston's economic and social growth.

Charles S. Hawkins

Johnson, Cecil. *GUTS: LEGENDARY BLACK RODEO COWBOY BILL PICKETT*. Arlington: The Summit Publishing Group, 1995. 224p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Hardcover: \$19.95, ISBN 1-56530-162-5. 94-38591.

Larger-than-life legends are usually folk tales, but Bill Pickett, the most famous black rodeo cowboy ever to sit in a saddle, was a real flesh and blood character. Born in 1870 and reared in Taylor, Texas, Pickett invented bulldogging--a style of wrestling a steer to the ground while clamping a firm tooth-hold on the animal's upper lip or nose. Pickett worked most of his life for the Miller brothers on the 101 Ranch in Oklahoma and traveled the rodeo circuit, making many friends and lots of money. For over forty years, Pickett performed in wild west shows, world fairs, and various circus groups until, in 1932, he met his fate. The "fatal mistake," the one he once claimed he would make, took his life when he fell under the hooves of an angry bronco. Cecil Johnson tells in the book the extraordinary story of Pickett's daring and skill. Johnson's style is rough, and some of the events he describes are virtually unfounded, making the book an entertaining read for those who are willing to give up hard-nosed scholarship for twentieth-century western American myth. Recommended for public libraries.

Brenda L. Herbel

Lincecum, Jerry Bryan and Edward Hake Phillips, eds. *ADVENTURES OF A FRONTIER NATURALIST: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF DR. GIDEON LINCECUM*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1994. 321p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$35.00, ISBN 0-89096-592-7; Paperback: \$14.95, ISBN 0-89086-603-6. 94-11122.

As delightful to read as it is informative, *Adventures of a Frontier Naturalist* provides in Lincecum's own words the life of an amazing frontier individual. Although Lincecum was self-taught, his autobiography reflects a brilliant, discerning mind and a talent for description of the environment around him. Lincecum was born in Georgia in 1793. As his family moved about Georgia and South Carolina pursuing new land, he became an accomplished hunter and woodsman. Once married, he brought his family to Alabama and Mississippi where he was a farmer, a merchant, and an Indian trader before he began to earn a living as a doctor. After several of his patients died, he visited the Choctaws to learn more about Indian herbal medicine and thereafter abandoned the more dangerous allopathic methods generally practiced. In 1835 he explored Texas and recorded the flora and fauna with precision and accuracy. Twelve years later, he moved his wife and nearly-grown children to land in present Washington County. For the next twenty-five years he devoted himself to intellectual interests, especially science. He kept elaborate records of weather for the Smithsonian Institute and submitted his study on ants to Charles

Darwin.

The Lincecum Papers housed at the Barker Texas History Center at the University of Texas at Austin contain voluminous records of his journals, correspondence, and memoirs. Although scholars generally agree that much of his memoirs were embellished as he wrote them in later life, they make fascinating reading and will be appreciated by the general reader as well as those with special interests in the natural history of Texas. The editors, both professors at Austin College, have pieced together three texts into a nearly seamless narrative of a fascinating individual.

Sally Dooley

White, C.C. and Ada Morehead Holland. *NO QUITTIN' SENSE*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969. Reprint. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994. Illustrations. Paperback: \$14.95, ISBN 0-292-75508-2. 70-100645.

Ada Holland, a journalist, read in a newspaper about the black Reverend C.C. White and the provisions that he kept in a building called "God's Storehouse" and shared with needy folks, whether black or white. Through interviews and recordings with White, Holland puts the material into a chronological narrative in the voice of Rev. White, capturing his syntax and vocabulary. White tells of overcoming tremendous obstacles of poverty and ignorance to become a generous, loving man and spiritual leader. His personal travails inspire as they reflect life in rural East Texas in the early part of this century leading to the 1960s when blacks achieved their civil rights. Holland's work with this material is remarkable.

First published in 1969, *No Quittin' Sense* won the Texas Institute of Letters award for the best nonfiction book.

Sally Dooley

CHRISTIAN LIFE

Davis, Verdell. *RICHES STORED IN SECRET PLACES*. Dallas: Word Publishing, 1994. 151p. Hardcover: \$10.99, ISBN 0-8499-1166-4. 94-34088.

After twenty-seven fulfilled and happy years as a minister's wife and mother, Verdell Davis was widowed in the summer of 1987. Her husband, Creath Davis, died with three other prominent Dallas men in an airplane crash in Montana following a Christian retreat. Shocked and lonely, Verdell Davis for several years felt her way through valleys of despair and pain. How could she go on living without the person who mattered most to her? By confronting and learning to deal with nearly overwhelming grief daily, hourly, or often for only fifteen minutes at a time, she survived. Like Christians before her, Davis' faith in God wavered during this duress, but the solace she sought in the Bible and in prayer slowly came to her. This record of her spiritual growth and the Scripture that spoke to her will doubtlessly provide courage and inspiration to others who have lost loved ones. She provides no platitudes or simple antidotes for the grief-stricken, but she models behavior that brings healing. How a person can know and love God in the midst of suffering is the powerful subject addressed here. First-time author Davis writes with

sincerity and simplicity. She resides in Dallas where she recently completed twenty-five years as an educator and administrator.

Sally Dooley

EDUCATION

Malmgren, Dallin. *IS THIS FOR A GRADE? A SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR TEACHING IN THE 90s*. San Antonio: Corona Publishing Co., 1994. 135p. Paperback: \$9.95, ISBN 0-931722-98-5. 94-70041.

This book offers insight into a teacher's experiences in public high school. Using short chapters with catchy titles, Malmgren enlightens readers with information ranging from whom one should really get to know in his/her school to suggestions about how to motivate students toward creative writing assignments. These short readable chapters give the book the accessibility of a guide. But therein is a problem.

As a guide, the book reads too informally, diminishing the serious quality of the issues raised. Also, the quips and quotes are part of far too general a look at public school teaching; most teachers will discover all this information in the first grading period of the term. In addition, because of the personal reflections in Malmgren's subject field, English, many teachers will find the ruminations irrelevant. The book is a one-time read with limited benefits--even to English teachers.

Patricia Acosta Harris

FOLKLORE

Brear, Holly Beachley. *INHERIT THE ALAMO: MYTH AND RITUAL AT AN AMERICAN SHRINE*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995. 184p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$19.95, ISBN 0-292-70824-6. 94-17220.

The current struggle at the Alamo is for the future, not the past, Holly Beachley Brear effectively argues as an anthropologist in this carefully-reasoned treatise. A San Antonio native who teaches in Virginia, Dr. Brear knows no fear as she analyzes the philosophical ownership of this "stone womb of Texas society." Its "matronly custodians"--the Daughters of the Republic of Texas (DRT)--are seen as playing out a clearly definable role as defenders of the Texas Creation Myth. Only two groups, both Anglo, have won their favor and can occupy the Alamo unchaperoned: the Fiesta-oriented Order of the Alamo and the Texas Cavaliers, socially elite men's groups which through "the transformative power of ritual" perpetuate the mythological origins of Texas and their own roles in it. Those excluded must declare their versions of the Alamo's past outside, literally, in the street.

Dr. Brear's descriptions, not unexpectedly, sometimes get tangled in academes. And when she compares the DRT's reverence of the Alamo martyrs to Christians and their reverence of the Trinity, it can be guaranteed that will lose the True Believers, who will be looking for some reason to reject this book anyway. For everyone else, Dr. Brear comes down to some answers as to why there have been increasing ethnic and historical assaults on the Alamo by outsiders in recent years. As American demographics change, sites "embodying American creation mythology" in general will naturally generate increasing

amounts of revisionism. As a borderlands' city, San Antonio is on this new frontier. Objectively analyzing the origins of the myths and the resulting roles we assign each other, as Dr. Brear has set out to do in the case of the Alamo, is one way to help us honestly understand who we all are.

Mary M. Fisher

Stewart, Finley, ed. **BEST STORIES FROM THE TEXAS STORYTELLING FESTIVAL**. Little Rock: August House Publishers, Inc., 1995. 171p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$25.00, ISBN 0-87483-404-X; Paperback: \$15.00, ISBN 0-87483-405-8. 94-48478.

Twenty-three of Texas' best storytellers have been brought together to create a reader's delight. Gleaned from the Texas Storytelling Festival in Denton, the nearly three dozen tales are as diverse as they are diverting. Well selected by editor Finley Stewart, founder and executive director of the Texas Storytelling Association, they include, for example, the story of the custodian of Houston's old main library who--some say--still comes to work after death. Then there is a Persian fable about a clever caged bird. And a report on the Gulf Coast cockroach invasion. Horrors! Enhancing interest in each story is the storyteller's introductory comments regarding the provenance and personal resonance of the story. Though much is necessarily lost by not hearing these raconteurs in the flesh, there is plenty to enjoy.

Mary M. Fisher

GENEALOGY

Ladd, Kevin, comp. **GONE TO TEXAS: GENEALOGICAL ABSTRACTS FROM THE TELEGRAPH AND TEXAS REGISTER, 1835-1841**. Bowie: Heritage Books, Inc., 1994. 322p. Indexes. Paperback: \$25.00, ISBN 0-7884-0005-3.

Compiled to assist family members' research of Texas antecedents, *Gone To Texas* is filled with material difficult to find elsewhere. Issues covering six years of *The Telegraph and Texas Register*, an important early Texas newspaper, were gleaned to form the abstracted genealogical information. These years cover the events leading to the Texas Revolution, the War for Independence, and the period of the Texas Republic when the *Register* became the national journal of Texas. The accounts of events and people make the book appealing to readers interested in localized history. Newspaper abstracts provide information that brings an immediacy to readers with reports of settlers' conflicts with Native Americans, accounts of murders, duels, and marriages, as well as advertisements of rewards for the return of runaway slaves and announcements of new businesses, schools, and political events. Here is a storehouse of source material on thousands of people in Texas in one convenient volume.

The indexes are helpful. The "Surname Index" assists the genealogist, although the given name is not included. The "Place Index" lists counties, cities, towns, forts, small settlements and also includes creeks, rivers, and other geographic features helpful in tracking down ancestors. A "Slave Name Index" will be useful in African American genealogy. Ladd is the director of the Wallisville Heritage Park, a genealogy research center in

Chambers County, Texas.

Naaman J. Woodland, Jr.

GUIDEBOOKS

Roberts, Larenda Lyles. **DALLAS UNCOVERED**. Plano: Republic of Texas Press, 1994. 280p. Illustrations. Index. Paperback: \$12.95, ISBN 1-55622-378-1. 94-11345.

Unconventional in style and content, this chatty and informal guidebook uncovers the style and tone of the state's second largest city, giving insights to which only a native or long-time dweller would be privy. Roberts points out sites that are uniquely Dallas: Deep Ellum, the original Neiman Marcus, SMU, the Adolphus Hotel, and Dealey Plaza/Grassy Knoll. She gives entertaining vignettes of ordinary citizens "who made good": H. Ross Perot, Mary Kay Ash, and Barney the dinosaur plus brief histories of Braniff's colorful jets, *D Magazine*, and Freedman's Towns. All of Dallas' professional sports are saluted, with special recognition of the Cowboys. Amusing sections like "Why is That? Answers to Ten Petty Questions about Dallas" ask why Dallas freeways are named after people. Another section, "Dallas Secrets," lists the ritzy neighborhoods where the rich and famous live, hidden bargain stores, and where the snobbiest sales clerks work. Dallas visitors and newcomers will get more bang for their travel bucks with this witty guide.

Sally Dooley

HISTORY

Everett, Dianna. **THE TEXAS CHEROKEES: A PEOPLE BETWEEN TWO FIRES, 1819-1840**. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990. Reprint. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995. 173p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Paperback: \$11.95, ISBN 0-8061-2296-X. 90-50233.

The Texas Cherokees settled in East Texas in 1819 and were therefore involved with the colonization of East Texas and the Texas Revolution of 1836. In 1839 they were moved by a Texas Republic army into Indian Territory. This "critical social and political history based on previously unresearched primary documents" should be in all scholarly collections of Western Americana said Mickey M. Sparkman in a full review in Vol. VI, No.1, in 1990.

Sally Dooley

Jordan, Terry G. **GERMAN SEED IN TEXAS SOIL: IMMIGRANT FARMERS IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY TEXAS**. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1966. Reprint. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994. 237p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Paperback: \$12.95, ISBN 0-292-72707-0. 66-15703.

_____. **TEXAS LOG BUILDINGS: A FOLK ARCHITECTURE**. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1978. Reprint. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994. 230p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Paperback: \$19.95, ISBN 0-292-78051-6. 77-24559.

Terry G. Jordan holds the Walter Prescott Webb Chair in History and Ideas in the geography department at the University

of Texas at Austin. These two previously published works are in their fourth and second, respectively, paperback editions. Favorably reviewed by both academic and general publications, the books will be of interest to libraries with Texana collections.

Sally Dooley

Pate, J'Nell. *NORTH OF THE RIVER: A BRIEF HISTORY OF NORTH FORT WORTH*. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University, 1994. 205p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Paperback: \$12.95, ISBN 0-87565-133-X. 94-6502.

In 1848, Seaborn Gilman and John B. York, with their families and belongings in two covered wagons, founded a homestead just north of the Trinity River, and what became the city of Fort Worth was born. J'Nell Pate tells the interesting story of North Fort Worth beginning with the contributions of the Gilman and York families. She provides history of the stockyards and meat packers, without which Fort Worth most likely would not have enjoyed its growth and wealth. Pate also provides a well-rounded picture of community life, including the impact of immigration, the contributions of churches and schools, the creation and prosperity of local businesses, and the rough-and-tumble barroom brawls down by the stockyards. Above all else, North Fort Worth, in the nineteenth century and today, is a place where "people car[e] about people." *North of the River* is an excellent local history to include in all Texas history collections.

Brenda L. Herbel

Powell, Donald B. and Mary Jo Powell. *THE FIGHTIN' TEXAS AGGIE BAND*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1994. 157p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$29.95, ISBN 0-89096-595-1. 93-33734.

This treatment does not give one the same sort of goosebumps that the nation's largest military-style band does. The workman-like narrative covers the subject but fails to sound its music, largely due to a lack of first-person memories of bandmen. What might HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros, the first Mexican American commander, remember of his band years, one wonders? And what might the band's first female member recall? The centennial history does, however, offer a concise, frankly chauvinistic, chronological survey based primarily on secondary sources and interviews with band directors. In the course of describing the growth of the group from thirteen male cadets in 1894 to more than 300 men and women today, the co-authors focus on five longtime directors, their styles and contributions. Lt. Col. Richard J. Dunn, for example, in the 1920s introduced the band's trademark precision drills. Enlivening the text is a trove of trivia, ranging from the never-washed red socks that are passed to each new drum major to the outhouse prepared by band sophomores for the Aggie bonfire. The large format book is lavishly illustrated with more than 130 black-and-white and color Aggie band pictures and appended with an alphabetical roster of all former bandmen. Lacking, however, is an index.

Mary M. Fisher

Shirley, Glenn. *THE FIGHTING MARLOWS: MEN WHO WOULDN'T BE LYNCHED*. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1994. 188p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index.

Hardcover: \$24.95, ISBN 0-87565-130-5. 94-6503

Author Glenn Shirley has written numerous books and articles about outlaws and gunslingers of Texas and the former Oklahoma and Indian Territories. In this work, he looks at the Marlow brothers--George, Charles, Alf, Epp, and Boone--and the events that led to three of them being massacred at Dry Creek in Young County, Texas, on January 19, 1888. Shirley blames the Marlow brothers' troubles on an overzealous local law enforcement out to prove itself. The Marlows were marked as outlaws, yet none of them, except for Boone, had any previous entanglements with the law. Boone had killed a man three years prior, but the Wilbarger County sheriff was satisfied that the murder was in self-defense, as Boone claimed. After some questionable horse thievery charges against the brothers, Boone's claim of self-defense, in the murder became suspect, and new charges were made in the lapsed case. As a result, a tragic chain of events was set in motion, leading to the involvement of some of the local officials in the attempted lynching of the Marlows at the Young County jail and later the mob ambush of them as they were being transported to another town for safekeeping. All of this portrays a sorry picture of local justice. Only by the intervention of federal authorities were the two surviving brothers, George and Charles, acquitted of horse stealing charges and the local conspirators indicted.

The author has built a convincing case by the ample use of eye-witness testimonies contained in court documents. This book, Number 12 in the ongoing Chisholm Trail series of Texas Christian University Press, is highly recommended for both public and academic libraries.

Jon P. Tritsch

Wallace, Ernest, David Vigness, and George B. Ward, eds. *DOCUMENTS OF TEXAS HISTORY*. 2d ed. Austin: State House Press, 1994. 337p. Index. Hardcover: \$32.95, ISBN 1-880510-08-1; Paperback: \$19.95, ISBN 1-880510-09-X. 94-12996.

Documents of Texas History was originally published in 1963, at which time 126 documents vital to the shaping of Texas history found their place between two covers. Thirty-one years later, the updated and expanded version of the collection holds 141 documents and is even more handsome and impressive than the first edition. The volume spans the years 1528 to 1994 and includes such important papers as Texas' "First Declaration of Independence," the "Ordinance of Secession," *Roe v. Wade*, and the "Lottery Established." The editors took special effort to choose articles which had profound impact on the economic and political standing of Texas, as well as those which were important to Texans personally, such as "The Dallas Cowboys: America's Team," excerpted from a *Dallas Morning News* article. Wallace and Vigness edited the first edition, and Ward passed final judgment on which items should be added. This book is an absolute must for any library in Texas.

Brenda L. Herbel

LETTERS

Shelton, Perry Wayne, comp. *PERSONAL CIVIL WAR LETTERS OF GENERAL LAWRENCE SULLIVAN ROSS, WITH OTHER LETTERS*. Austin: W. W. Morrison Books,

1994. 128p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$29.50, ISBN 0-926158-22-8.

Students of the American Civil War are familiar with the military feats of Texan Lawrence Sullivan "Sul" Ross. Son of a well known Indian fighter, Sul Ross first gained recognition as a Texas Ranger for rescuing Cynthia Ann Parker, a captive of the Comanches. When the Civil War began, Ross joined the Confederate army even though he had no strong pro-slavery convictions. He rose quickly in the ranks as a cavalry officer. By late 1863 he was a brigadier general commanding four Texas cavalry regiments in what came to be known as "Ross' Texas Cavalry Brigade." He was only twenty-five-years-old at the time. Publication of these letters, most of which are in a collection at Baylor University, will be helpful to Civil War students. The majority of the letters were written by Ross to his wife during the war and provide fresh insights into military campaigns and personalities in the Trans Appalachian West. Particularly informative are letters written during the Vicksburg and Atlanta campaigns. The letters were originally transcribed and compiled for a 1938 master's thesis at Baylor. Shelly Morrison has edited the work and provided additional notes and an index. An introduction by T. Michael Parrish summarizes Ross' career.

Ralph W. Wooster

LITERARY CRITICISM

Jones, Roger Walton. **LARRY MCMURTRY AND THE VICTORIAN NOVEL**. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1994. 94p. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$19.50, ISBN 0-89096-621-4. 94-15607.

Fifth in the Tarleton State University Southwestern Studies in the Humanities series, this new study of Larry McMurtry's novels is enlightening and well done. Grown out of a doctoral dissertation directed by McMurtry scholar Mark Busby, Director for the Center for the Study of the Southwest, the book is reflective of the high quality of serious scholarship that should be applied to Texas' most celebrated contemporary author. Roger Jones' scholarly prose is accessible and eschews the faddish post-modernistic jargon and approaches that mar so much of today's criticism. His analysis illuminates the text of McMurtry's primary novels. Although twenty bucks is a hefty price for less than eighty pages of text, the book will be of tremendous value to anyone seeking a deeper understanding of McMurtry's major works.

Clay Reynolds

LITERATURE

Fernández, Roberta, ed. **IN OTHER WORDS**. Houston: Arte Público Press, 1994. 554p. Paperback: \$19.95, ISBN 1-55885-110-0. 94-9206.

Roberta Fernández brings together in this collection the voices of forty-five Latina writers, nine of whom have Texas roots. Their essays, fiction, and poetry offer insight into Latina culture, feminism, and identity, as well as highlight the immense diversity found within the Latina community and experience. Essays by Roberta Fernández, Gloria Anzaldúa, Cherríe Moraga, and Judith Ortiz Cofer address the ambivalence and internal strife created by living in two cultures. The erasure of cultural identity,

being eliminated through assimilation of the languages, folklore, and customs of a people, is being resisted, Fernández maintains. "We are reclaiming our cultures and languages, which have survived in spite of centuries of outside imposition."

The poetry in this anthology is rich and diverse in subject matter and style, ranging from Olga Elena Mattei's poem, "Ms. Bourgeois," that addresses loss of identity from a feminist perspective as the individual is assimilated into the institutions of marriage and motherhood to Rosemary Catacalos' touching poem "Katakalos" about her kindhearted, Greek immigrant father who puts sugar water in bottle caps to feed to ants. In the fiction section of *In Other Words*, Alicia Gaspar de Alba's excellent story, "Cimarrona," stands out. It tells of a runaway slave whose desire for freedom is obstructed by her own destiny, not because of being a slave, but because of being born a woman. The resistance and defiance of this character make "Cimarrona" a story that lingers. Roberta Fernández deserves praise for her selections in this outstanding anthology of Latina writers.

Gayla Chaney

MUSIC

TEXAS MUSIC: Volumes I-III. Los Angeles: Rhino Records, Inc., 1994. VOL. I, POSTWAR BLUES COMBOS. CD: ISBN 1-56826-440-2; Cassette: ISBN 1-56826-441-0. Vol. II, WESTERN SWING & HONKY TONK. CD: ISBN 1-56826-442-9; Cassette: 1-56826-443-7. VOL. III, GARAGE BANDS AND PSYCHEDELIA. CD: ISBN 1-56826-444-5; Cassette: 1-56826-445-3.

This eclectic and eccentric collection of recordings spanning fifty postwar years has in common one thing only: it all happened in Texas. As diverse as other aspects of our Texian heritage, this meandering musical trail leads from the Deep Ellum blues of Dallas (T-Bone Walker, the Kings, B.B. and Freddie, Ivory Joe Hunter) through the rhinestone swing corrals of East Texas (Bob Sills, Cliff Bruner, Floyd Tillman) to the cannabis-fueled Third Coast rock tracks of Austin in the 1960s and 1970s (Roy Head, Sam the Sham, Sir Douglas Quintet, Johnny Winter). No claim is made for sweeping inclusion, definitive compendium. The choices are unapologetically arbitrary. How else to explain the absence of Buddy, Willie, Janis, and Z.Z. Top? But that is part of the fun and the value of the collection: trying to remember where (who?) you were when you first heard the Thirteenth Floor Elevators' version of "You're Gonna Miss Me" (1966) or "Dance, Franny, Dance" (1964) by the Floyd Dakil Combo. There is even a nice plug in the liner notes from Governor Ann dated June, 1994, written in that halcyon summer before the Newt-ron bomb of November returned her to the private sector. I wonder if Governor George ever boogied down to "Dance, Franny, Dance"? Naaa.

Tanner T. Hunt, Jr.

NATURAL HISTORY

Gehlbach, Frederick R. **THE EASTERN SCREECH OWL: LIFE HISTORY, ECOLOGY, AND BEHAVIOR IN THE SUBURBS AND COUNTRYSIDE**. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1994. 302p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$45.00, ISBN 0-89096-609-5. 94-11135.

This is a report of a very comprehensive study of all aspects of the life history of the eastern screech owl. As the subtitle suggests, the book compares the urban and the rural populations and draws conclusions. Data were taken from the Central Texas scarp, prairie, and woodland near Waco as well as residential areas in the region. The final report shows suburban environments to have advantage over the countryside. Dr. Gehlbach draws this conclusion, in part, because: "The comparatively open ground of suburbia . . . makes hunting easier and discloses or deters predators so that nesting is more successful . . . Suburbia often contains a more evergreen and mature canopy, a more protective tree stratum than the countryside, and the owls select tree cavities or evergreen foliage as winter and early nesting-season roosts for thermoregulatory reasons." There are noticeable editorial errors, but the data are complete. It is valuable as a first comparative study of a species using suburbia and countryside as the variables. It is not to be considered light reading, however.

Jed J. Ramsey

Powell, A. Michael. *GRASSES OF THE TRANS-PECOS AND ADJACENT AREAS*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994. 377p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$75.00, ISBN 0-292-76553-3. Paperback: \$29.95, ISBN 0-292-76556-8. 93-47656.

This delightful new field guide to the grasses of the Trans-Pecos and adjacent areas of Texas is overflowing with precise line drawings, illustrations, and photographs combined with a text written in a way useful for non-scientists as well as experts on grasses. Outstanding features of this work include an illuminating description of the ecology of the Trans-Pecos ecosystem containing the Chihuahuan desert community; the importance of grasses in the development of human history; and the floristics, classification, and history of grasslands. All of the essential terminology necessary to identify grasses is clearly illustrated and lavishly described, much to the relief of the beginner. Naturally the bulk of this work contains lucid botanical descriptions of some 268 species of grasses occurring not only in the Trans-Pecos of Texas, but also in the South Plains, Edwards Plateau, the Texas Plains country and into New Mexico, Oklahoma, Arizona, and northern Mexico. This book, another landmark for the University of Texas Press, will surely prove to be essential for anyone studying the floristics and natural history of these regions.

Phillip Malnassy

Truett, Joe C. and Daniel W. Lay. *LAND OF BEARS AND HONEY: A NATURAL HISTORY OF EAST TEXAS*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984. Reprint. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994. 176p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Paperback: \$12.95, ISBN 0-292-78134-2. 83-26000.

Truett, a research ecologist, and Lay, a wildlife biologist, have collaborated to produce a fine but small volume which is both informative and enjoyable in its examination of the ecological and biological problems of East Texas. Using many resources, they conclude, "To rebuild the land requires . . . three things--the knowledge, the means, and the will." Truett and Lay agree that the knowledge and the means are present, but "where is the will?" This new paperback reprint is worthy of a place in any library interested in giving readers a look at what has happened to the

ecology of East Texas and what possible directions it could take in the future.

Jed J. Ramsey

PHOTOGRAPHS

Hickman, R.C. *BEHOLD THE PEOPLE: R.C. HICKMAN'S PHOTOGRAPHS OF BLACK DALLAS, 1949-1961*. Austin: Texas State Historical Association for the Center for American History in cooperation with the Center for Studies in Texas History at the University of Texas at Austin, 1994. 128p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Hardcover: \$29.95, ISBN 0-87611-136-3. 94-2947.

In the ugly days of racial segregation in Dallas and elsewhere, pictures of blacks were not seen in white publications except to depict crimes or tragedies. Black-owned newspapers, such as the *Dallas Star Post*, mirrored the cultural lives of middle-class blacks who were all but invisible to the predominant white culture. R. C. Hickman worked as a photographer for the *Star Post*, freelanced for *Jet*, *Sepia*, and *Ebony*, and was an official photographer for the NAACP. On weekends he pursued his own commercial photography business. His photographs constitute a visual record of a neglected part of postwar America. Today the collection of his negatives and photographs is housed at the University of Texas Center for American History. The photographs are noteworthy not only for the excellent quality of his work but also for the scope of his subject matter.

Having little interest in studio work, Hickman carried his Speed Graphic to homes, churches, parties, and businesses. At the same time, black veterans were beginning to protest segregation and demand civil rights at home. Hickman began photographing picketers and victims of racial violence for the NAACP and for publication in the *Star Post*. His photographs were also used as evidence that black schools were separate, but certainly not equal. Overall, the collection published here gives readers an insightful look at a prosperous, hopeful black Dallas of the 1950s.

Sally Dooley

SOCIAL LIFE AND CUSTOMS

García, Lionel. *I CAN HEAR THE COWBELLS RING*. Houston: Arte Público Press, 1994. 205p. Paperback: \$9.95, ISBN 1-155885-114-3. 94-8658.

Reading these warm reminiscences of growing up in a small South Texas Mexican American village, one learns the colorful memories from which Lionel García gleans material for his novels. The characters from his recently published *To A Widow with Children* (Vol.IX, No.4) are in evidence here: the dog, the brothers and sisters, the aunt, the crazy uncle, and the parish priest. These delightful twenty-four stories depict a daily life that although poor in material goods, abounds in riches of love, humor, and joy found in the family and community.

Lionel García, a practicing veterinarian, resides in Seabrook, Texas. He is the author of three prize-winning novels: *Leaving Home*, *A Shroud in the Family* (Vol.II, No.3), and *Hardscrub* (Vol.IV, No.4), which won the Texas Institute of Letters Best Novel Award and the Southwestern Booksellers Association's

Texas Literary Award. A significant Texas writer, García creates from the mind and the heart.

Sally Dooley

SPORTS

Falkoff, Robert. *DREAMLAND: THE INSIDE STORY OF THE '93-'94 HOUSTON ROCKETS' CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON*. Houston: Gulf Publishing Co., 1994. 193p. Illustrations. Index. Paperback: \$12.95, ISBN 0-88415-251-0. 94-31682.

Given the excitement generated by the arrival of Clyde Drexler, Houston roundball fanatics should jump at the chance to dust off their Nikes and break for *Dreamland*, where they can relive the Rockets' high octane run into NBA history. Using a diary format, Robert Falkoff traces the team's manic nine-month "press" from training camp through its seven-game slugfest in the Finals against the Knicks.

Dreamland, a fitting tribute to Hakeem "The Dream" Olajuwon, offers something to everyone interested in Rockets' basketball. Armchair strategists can mull over game plans that go far beyond the collective chant of "Just throw the ball to Hakeem!" Rabid defenders of Houstonian integrity can scorn to the point of catharsis the very talented but insidious San Antonio "Worm," Dennis Rodman. Trade cynics can fantasize about the Robert Horry-for-Sean Elliott deal that collapsed like a trial balloon. Even the *Enquirer*-like romantic voyeurs have a chance to flirt with a Sam Cassell-Madonna night on the town. There is a lot here to revisit, bemuse, and appreciate: the Rockets 15-0 start, the deep shooting freeze of January-March, the sad reality of the death of Vernon Maxwell's daughter, NBC's cutting to the O.J. Simpson highway drama on June 17, vivid photographs capturing moments of incredible athleticism, and jubilant players reaching almost to disbelief for the Larry O'Brien NBA Championship Trophy.

Though his message is cliché, namely that "Dreams do come true," Falkoff, who has covered the team for the *Houston Post* for the past fifteen years, gives Rockets' fans a chance to celebrate again, and again, and again.

Joe Nordgren

CONTRIBUTORS

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Ralph A. Wooster, Professor of History at Lamar University-Beaumont, is the author of four books, one textbook, and numerous articles in professional journals.

REVIEW OF TEXAS BOOKS

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