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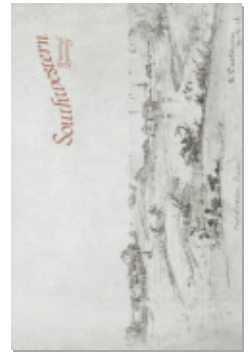
Texas State Cemetery (review)

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Southwestern Historical Quarterly, Volume 116, Number 2, October 2012, pp. 206-207 (Review)

Published by Texas State Historical Association

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/swh.2012.0089>



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Lake is emblematic of the region's history. As early as the 1850s, sulfurous springs made it a resort town. By the turn of the century, Sour Lake Springs had a popular hotel and hotel. Unfortunately, the sulfurous springs were indicative of the presence of oil. Soon after Spindletop, oil supplanted tourism in the town economy. Other towns also had colorful histories. In the Woodville Shooting Scrape, the several prominent citizens had a shootout. They fired forty shots, four were wounded, and none killed. One observer noted, "A little more straight shootin' would'a saved a lott'a time and ammunition" (195).

After offering an enticing view of the Big Thicket's history and geography, Bonney offers an extensive list of self-guided tours. Each of the thirty-nine tours includes detailed routing with discussion of people, historical events, and natural beauty along the way. One need only go to the suggested starting point, watch the odometer, and read along for an interesting adventure. Bonney includes maps and photographs to aid the tours as well as a bibliography for additional reading. *The Big Thicket Guidebook* is a welcome addition to those wishing to experience the history and beauty of one of Texas's natural treasures.

University of North Texas

MARK STANLEY

Texas State Cemetery. By Jason Walker and Will Erwin with Helen Thompson, photographs by Laurence Parent, epilogue by Rick Perry. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011. Pp. 216. Color and b&w illustrations, map, notes, bibliography, index. ISBN 9780292726727, \$39.95 cloth.)

The Texas State Cemetery is a beautiful oasis on the edge of downtown Austin. Situated on a gently rolling tract of land a short distance east of the state capitol, its carefully landscaped park-like setting attracts scores of visitors each day. They come not just to appreciate the beauty of the setting; they are drawn by the myriad layers of history that blend to convey the story of Texas. A walk among the trees, monuments, sculptures, and memorial markers transports the visitor to a world full of artists, soldiers, politicians, writers, trailblazers, musicians, scientists, teachers, sports legends, community builders, and more. In *Texas State Cemetery*, cemetery staff members Jason Walker and Will Erwin undertake the daunting tasks of recounting the site's history and providing brief insights into the lives of some three dozen of the thousands of people interred or memorialized there.

The Texas Legislature established the state cemetery in December 1851 upon the death of Sen. Edward Burleson, "a soldier and commander of troops at the Battle of San Jacinto, vice president of the Republic of Texas, a founder of the city of San Marcos, and an early settler of Waterloo" (18). Among the many people eventually reinterred at the site are "Father of Texas" Stephen F. Austin and Confederate Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston, whose graves are marked with some of the cemetery's most prominent statuary.

Authors Walker and Erwin offer a brief history of the cemetery in the opening chapter, in which they convey a chronological story of the site's development, discuss some of the more famous burials, and tell about the 1990s restoration of the grounds, an effort that involved numerous state agencies, the genesis of which is rightly accredited to the leadership and tenacity of former Lieutenant Governor Bob Bullock. Subsequent chapters contain brief biographical sketches

of a select sampling of persons buried at the cemetery, organized by topic or era, with an introductory essay by a variety of contributors: historian Gregg Cantrell on the Republic of Texas; U.S. Air Force Gen. (ret.) Hal Hornburg on Civil War and Reconstruction; former U.S. Commerce Secretary Don Evans on Public Officials; Texas author Stephen Harrigan on Cultural Figures; University of Texas physicist and Nobel laureate Dr. Steven Weinberg on Educators and Academics; and retired Texas Rangers Capt. Jack O'Day Dean on Texas Rangers. The book ends with an epilogue by Gov. Rick Perry.

In the volume's foreword, the current members of the Texas State Cemetery Committee state, "Not much new historical ground is being broken within this book; rather, it is a compendium of notable Texans at the Cemetery" (xi). That is an accurate statement, and in fact seems to set the tone for the text in the biographical sketches that follow, much of which reads as if written by a committee, and which often is bogged down by an overabundance of passive-voice verbiage and an inconsistent writing style. This book does not rise to the level of scholarly history, and perhaps that is by design, but it misses the mark considerably in its sparse documentation. Many quoted passages, for instance, are not credited, and many other statements of fact contained within the text are similarly lacking in documentation. Others offer only cursory references, such as the numerous citations of *The Handbook of Texas* that mention only page numbers, without reference to volume, article title, or author. In some cases, entire entries, such as those for Ashbel Smith (152–155) and Gideon Lincecum (157) include no documentation at all.

Texas State Cemetery is a handsome volume with considerable information contained within its pages. With many archival images, as well as stunning color photographs by noted Texas photographer Laurence Parent, it is an attractive volume surely destined to grace the coffee tables of proud Texans everywhere.

Austin, Texas

CYNTHIA BEEMAN

Gangster Tour of Texas. By T. Lindsay Baker. (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2011. Pp. 350. Illustrations, maps, sources, index. ISBN 9781603442589, \$29.95 paper.)

As someone who has had the privilege of traveling through parts of the state with T. Lindsay Baker on more than one occasion, I can attest to the fact that *Gangster Tour of Texas* gives the reader a sense of what such a road trip might be like. Baker is a premier yarn spinner and a consummate historian, and his writing accurately conveys his remarkably honed sense of place, as well as his enthusiasm for a historical tale well told. What draws the reader in immediately whether the stories are familiar (such as Bonne and Clyde, Machine Gun Kelly, or the Newton Boys) or perhaps lesser known (like the Flapper Bandit, the Rum King of San Antonio, or the Post Morphine Ring), is the personal voice of the author. By that I mean he has crafted each story in a way that conveys the experience of following along with him on his historical investigations. At the end of each chapter, he ups the personal approach by offering a universal challenge: "Judge the Evidence Yourself"—a unique way of presenting his list of sources.

Gangster Tour of Texas is site-based history at its most compelling level. In his