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## Southwestern Collection

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We would like to thank everyone who attended the 127th Annual Meeting of the Texas State Historical Association, March 2–4, 2023, in El Paso at the Paso Del Norte Hotel and the Judson F. Williams Convention Center. We will have news from the event in our July 2023 issue.

Guadalupe Mountains (relatively!) near El Paso, Texas. From *Southern Pacific Railroad* by A. B. Gray (Cincinnati: Wrightson & Co.'s Print., 1856), opp. p. 18. *Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.*, <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/90705838/> [Accessed Jan. 31, 2023].



GUADALUPE MOUNTAINS,  
NEAR EL PASO TEXAS.  
Viewed from the East.

*Engraving, Wallace & G. Thompson, N.Y.*

# Southwestern Collection

*In Memoriam*

Author, historian, speaker, retired educator, former president of the Texas State Historical Association, and retired Karnes County judge Robert H. Thonhoff Sr, passed away on Tuesday, January 17, 2023.

Thonhoff was born December 12, 1929, in Salida, Colorado, to Harold and Lula M. Thonhoff. After graduating from Salida High School in 1947, he served in the U.S. Air Force from 1947 to 1950. On June 1, 1951, he was united in marriage with Victoria Marie Balser at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in San Antonio. They became the parents of three children, Margaret Lou, Robert Henry Jr., and Susan Elizabeth.

Robert's formal education included a B.A. in history at St. Mary's University in 1953, an M.A. history at Southwest Texas State University in 1963, and much postgraduate work in history, German, and Spanish at the University of Texas at Austin, the University of Idaho, and at Bee County College.

He started a thirty-five-year teaching career in Jourdan, Texas, in 1953. From 1956–88, he and his wife chose to live, work, and raise their three children in Fashing, where he was a teaching principal at Fashing Elementary. Both Robert and his wife retired from teaching on June 1, 1988, and moved into their newly built home in nearby Karnes City, where he continued to spend much time researching, writing, and speaking on his favorite subject, Texas history. In 2012, they moved to San Antonio to be closer to their daughter, Susan, and medical care.

Over the years, he wrote or edited twelve books and published numerous articles on Texas history. Among many other awards, he was a five-time winner of the prestigious Presidio La Bahía Award from the Sons of the Republic of Texas. A highlight of his life occurred in 2013, when he donated his extensive historical collection to the brand-new Texas A&M University-San Antonio Library Special Collections and Archives, the first person to do so.

He was a longtime and active member of the Texas State Historical Association. In 1977, Robert received the TSHA Leadership Award. In 1980, he was elected a Fellow of TSHA, and he served on its Executive Council from 1984–88, as second vice-president in 1992, first vice-president in 1993, and president in 1994.

He was also a charter and lifetime member of both the Karnes County Historical Society and the Panna Maria Historical Society. He was a charter member of the Karnes County Historical Commission since its inception and was its chairman from 1961 to 1974 and again from 1994 to 1998. An original researcher for the Institute of Texan Cultures in 1967–68 and an original participant of the first Texas Folklife Festival in 1972, he continued to serve as emcee of festivals for thirty-five years in the character of "Professor Katzenjammer" until he retired in 2007.

Largely because of his works on the Spanish colonial period of Texas history, he was made an honorary member of the Order of Granaderos y Damas de Gálvez of the in 1981, an Alcalde of the City of San Antonio, an honorary admiral of the Texas Navy, an honorary Son of the Republic of Texas, a Knight of San Jacinto, and historian of the Texas Connection to the American Revolution Association. In 1993, he received the Federal Republic of Germany Friendship Award and the VFW Americanism Award. On March 6, 1994, he was made an Honorary Canary Island descendant. In 2013, he received the Lifetime Outstanding Achievement Award from the Order of the Sons of Hermann. He was also awarded medals from both the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Sons of the American Revolution for his efforts in writing and speaking on the vital roles of Spain and Texas in the winning of the American Revolution.

On March 17, 1994, he broke retirement to accept appointment as Karnes County Judge, in which position he served until January 1, 1995, when he retired again. His main achievement was renovating the grand old Karnes County Courthouse for its centennial celebration on October 25, 1994.

Memorial donations may be sent to Texas A&M University-San Antonio Archives & Special Collections, One University Way, San Antonio, TX 78224, or online at [www.tamusa.edu/archives](http://www.tamusa.edu/archives).

### *Clippings*

In June 2023, the Texas Archeological Society (TAS) will launch a field school near Nacogdoches to excavate an important colonial site with Caddo sites adjacent. These investigations will yield information about early times in Texas as the Spanish, French, and American Indians came together. The principal archeologist will be Dr. Tamra Walter of Texas Tech University, who specializes in historic mission archeology.

Mission Concepción was one of the oldest mission sites in eighteenth-century Spanish Texas. Established in July 1716 by the Domingo Ramón expedition, it was placed near the village of the principal chief of the Hasinai, the lead tribe of the Caddo, sometimes known as the “Tejas.” Ramón estimated the Caddo population to be between 4,000 and 5,000. The mission was occupied intermittently then re-established in San Antonio in 1731.

More information and registration forms may be found at [www.txarch.org](http://www.txarch.org) (field school). The TAS offers student and diversity scholarships to support those who request assistance. Twelve individuals received scholarships to attend the 2022 field school near Kerrville.

The Texas Catholic Historical Society has created a Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/TXCatHis>. The page was designed and will be maintained by student interns from the University of Texas at Austin, and it will include archival material, book reviews, a cathedral series, and more. New content will be uploaded every week. The society also wants to encourage anyone, including students and teachers, to send post suggestions such as event information, relevant news stories, or publications. Digitized issues of *Catholic Southwest: A Journal of History and Culture* are available at <https://txcatholic.omeka.net/>.



Patrick Dearen of Midland, who twenty-six books include the histories *Castle Gap and the Pecos Frontier* (TCU Press, 1988), *Devils River: Treacherous Twin to the Pecos, 1535–1900* (TCU Press, 2011), *Crossing Rio Pecos* (TCU Press, 1993), and *Bitter Waters: The Struggles of the Pecos River* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2016), was inducted into the Texas Literary Hall of Fame on the campus of Texas Christian University in Fort Worth on October 19, 2022. According to its website, the hall was established in 2004 to “celebrate and encourage the state’s rich literary heritage by honoring its foremost authors, whose original writing reflects enduring cultural relevance and artistic creativity.” Its sixty-six members include Walter Prescott Webb, H. W. Brands, J. Frank Dobie, John Graves, Elmer Kelton, Larry McMurtry, and Katherine Anne Porter.

### *Dust Jackets*

In August 2022, the University of Arizona Press published a fortieth-anniversary edition of a beloved classic, Gary Paul Nabhan’s *The Desert Smells Like Rain: A Naturalist in O’odham Country*. Featuring a new preface by the author, this remains an evocative work about nature, how to respect it, and what newcomers can learn from the longtime residents of the Sonoran Desert, the Tohono O’odham people. Nabhan brings O’odham voices to the page at every turn, writing elegantly of how they husband scant water supplies, grow crops, and utilize wild edible foods. Woven through his account are coyote tales, O’odham children’s impressions of the desert, and observations on the political problems that come with living on both sides of an international border. Nabhan conveys the everyday life and extraordinary perseverance of these desert people while also writing about his own heritage and connections to the desert, climate change, and the border. Gary Paul Nabhan is the Kellogg Endowed Chair at the University of Arizona’s Southwest Center, the author or editor of over thirty books, a MacArthur Fellowship recipient along with numerous other awards, and

has lived in the desert for more than forty years. The University of Arizona Press can be found online at [www.uapress.arizona.edu](http://www.uapress.arizona.edu).



The University of North Texas Press recently published *Billy the Kid: El Bandido Simpatico* by James B. Mills. In the annals of American western history, few people have left behind such lasting and far-reaching fame as Billy the Kid. Mills has left no stone unturned in his twenty-year quest to tell the complete story, as he explores the Kid's disputable origins, his family's migration from New York into the Southwest, and how he became an orphan, as well as his involvement in the Lincoln County War, his outlaw exploits, and his dealings with Governor Lew Wallace. Mills illuminates the Kid's relationships with his enemies, lovers, and numerous friends to contextualize the man's character beyond his death and legacy. Most importantly, Mills is the first historian to fully detail the Kid's relations with New Mexicans of Spanish descent. Throughout the work Mills plumbs the question of who was Billy the Kid: a young reprobate committed to a life of crime, who relished becoming a famous outlaw and cold-blooded, self-absorbed sociopath, or the generally good-hearted, generous, courteous, young vigilante that so many remembered with considerable fondness? In this groundbreaking biography, Mills takes the reader closer to the flesh-and-blood human being named Henry McCarty, alias William H. Bonney, than ever before.

Author James B. Mills resides in Australia. He has studied the American frontier since childhood and has published articles in *True West* and *Wild West* magazines. The University of North Texas Press can be found online at [www.untpress.unt.edu](http://www.untpress.unt.edu).



In 2021, Deep Vellum Publishing resurrected *The Accommodation: The Politics of Race in an American City*, by longtime Dallas political journalist Jim Schutze. (The first edition was reviewed in this publication in 1990 by W. Marvin Dulaney). This powerful classic of Dallas history examines the violent and suppressed history of race and racism in the city, from slavery through the Civil Rights Movement, and the city's desegregation efforts in the 1950s and '60s. Known for being an uninhibited and honest account of the city's institutional and structural racism, Schutze's book argues that Dallas's desegregation period came at a great cost to Black leaders in the city. However, the book's storied, underground history speaks to its continued relevance that make it, in the opinion of many, "The Most Dangerous Book in Dallas" and "essential reading to understand" the city.

Originally set to be published by the Taylor Publishing Company of Dallas in 1986, *The Accommodation* was literally pulled from the presses under pressure from unnamed powerful Dallasites. It was then published by Citadel Press of New Jersey in 1987, only to then lose 2,000 of the 5,000 copies printed in a mysterious bookstore fire, leaving only 3,000 copies in circulation. Although it sold poorly in this initial incarnation, its reputation grew, and while long out of print, the title saw waves of interest among Dallas residents in the intervening years. Used copies sold online for hundreds of dollars, and interested readers passed around digital copies and samizdat printouts. In the meantime, Dallas County Commissioner John Wiley Price—who writes the foreword for this edition—acquired the rights, allowing for this important book to literally and figuratively rise from the ashes and reach generations of new readers. Deep Vellum Publishing can be found online at [www.deepvellum.org](http://www.deepvellum.org).

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The Texas State Historical Association welcomes members who joined or rejoined between October 12, 2022 and February 2, 2023.

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 Houston, TX  
 Hirsch & Westheimer, P.C., Houston, TX  
 Houston *Chronicle* Library, Houston, TX

Institute of Texan Cultures, San Antonio,  
 TX  
 KNA Partners, Houston, TX  
 M Capital Advisors, San Antonio, TX  
 Marathon Financial Insurance Company,  
 O'Fallon, IL  
 Ned S. Holmes Investments, Inc., Houston,  
 TX  
 Primoris Services Corporation, Dallas, TX  
 Sophienburg Museum & Archives, New  
 Braunfels, TX  
 Southern Steel Company, San Antonio, TX  
 Sydtran, L.P., Houston, TX  
 Texas Historical Foundation, Austin, TX  
 Texas History.com, Grand Junction, CO

### *Collection Deadlines*

If you have anything you would like to announce in the July 2023 issue of the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, please send it to Ryan Schumacher at [ryan.schumacher@tshaonline.org](mailto:ryan.schumacher@tshaonline.org) by May 5, 2023. We welcome announcements, calls for papers, news about our members, and other items. For the October 2023 issue, please send material by August 5, 2023.