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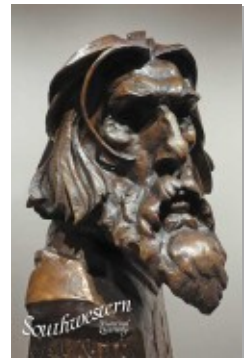
*More Than Running Cattle: The Mallet Ranch of the South  
Plains* by M. Scott Sosebee (review)

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of Oscar, wrote to a different crewman's father to ascertain her son's fate. These are the stories that sometimes get missed. Historians largely focus on the airmen, but the stories of the families back at home need to be told as well. This is one of the strengths of this book.

The author, who is a nephew of Oscar Allison, has done an excellent job in researching this topic. He has compiled multiple sources from the Allison and Grizzle families, including letters, documents, and pictures. Whereas most historians might simply stop there, Allison also went the extra mile. There are newspapers, records from the Air Force Historical Research Agency, and documents from various organizations that compile records for veterans and their families from the Second World War. The result is that readers get a well-rounded book that describes the Allison-Grizzle family experience in the war.

Overall, this is an excellent book for those interested in the air war in Europe. Through the clever use of family sources and official records, Allison uses these three men to give some insight into how the air war in Europe affected the young men who fought and died in the skies above Europe, while also providing some insight into how their struggles abroad affected their families back in the United States and Texas.

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LUKE TRUXAL

*More Than Running Cattle: The Mallet Ranch of the South Plains.* By M. Scott Sosebee, with a foreword by Jim Bret Campbell and photographs by Wyman Meinzer. (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2023. Pp. 245. Illustrations, map, notes, index.)

This glossy, photograph-laden profile tells the story of the Mallet Ranch on Texas's South Plains. Primarily focused on the lives of founder David DeVitt's philanthropic daughters, Christine and Helen, the narrative highlights the uniqueness of an operation founded in the late-nineteenth century that successfully continues to operate today largely as it began. In *More Than Running Cattle*, historian M. Scott Sosebee continues to feature lesser-known contributors to Texas history. He pens here a synthesis and update of David Murrah's 1994 monograph, *Oil, Taxes, and Cats*, wrapping it into a package underscoring the contributions the Mallet Land and Cattle Company continues to provide to the region.<sup>1</sup>

A casual glance at this oversized book on a shelf or in a catalog does not reveal the complex, sometimes distressing story told among the historical prints, institution-provided marketing shots, and mostly uncaptioned photographs provided by Wyman Meinzer. His grassland vistas of the ranch's acres dotted with Angus cattle, oil field pumpjacks, and decaying buildings seem detached from Sosebee's narrative. Only the few historical photographs and family

<sup>1</sup> David J. Murrah, *Oil, Taxes, and Cats: A History of the DeVitt Family and the Mallet Ranch* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 1994).

snapshots fit closely within the chronicle. Others feature the projects the DeVitt sisters' largesse brought to Lubbock and other parts of the South Plains through their CH Foundation and The Helen Jones Foundation, Inc.

Despite the book's "coffee table" feel, Sosebee's account proves captivating and "has everything television or movie producers and directors might want" (p. 221). The story often takes on a gossipy, soap-opera feel in describing and dissecting the often-dysfunctional family and company dynamics that unfolded over a century. There is the long-distance relationship that David and Florence DeVitt carried on throughout most of their marriage, the tragic deaths of the couple's two sons, Christine's indecision and obstinance, and there is Helen's colon. Readers may find much to dislike about the DeVitt family, but they will see much to admire, too, not the least of which are the gifts for which they are responsible. While acknowledging Christine's sometimes abrasive personality, at her death many remembered her quiet help and generosity to Mallet hands and to nurses and others who looked after her in later years. At this book's core is a celebration of "one of the most notable philanthropic funds in Texas history" (p. 107).

Christine chartered the CH Foundation in 1969. Her generosity might have been partially motivated by her hatred for paying taxes. By 1950, primarily from oil revenue, DeVitt wealth had grown to heights the sisters never imagined. By 1969, Christine had already donated millions to Lubbock's Methodist Hospital and to Texas Tech University. Too numerous to mention here are the many other beneficiaries of the DeVitt fortune. Since 1984, the sisters' foundations have given more than \$360 million to colleges and universities, public and private schools, museums, libraries, and human and health services groups — mostly in Texas. While Sosebee's narrative is ostensibly a ranch history, the true power of this book is in publicizing the legacy left by the DeVitt sisters through the continuing impact of their philanthropic efforts.

*The Colony, TX*

MICHAEL M. MILLER

*Behind the Scenes: Covering the JFK Assassination.* By Darwin Payne. (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2023. Pp. 311. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index.)

There's more to this Dallas historian's recent book than its subtitle suggests. Sure, it is a working newsman's recounting of what he observed and wrote during the momentous weekend of November 22–25, 1963, in Dallas, an account based on his reporting notes at the time and a thirty-year-old unpublished manuscript of his involvement in the events. But there's more.

*Behind the Scenes—Covering the JFK Assassination* is what author Darwin Payne calls a "memoir/history" (p. vii) in the preface. He describes that fateful assassination weekend in Dallas as he lived it, writing with a who-what-when-where-why-how matter-of-factness. Threaded throughout is the story of his own family journey