



# Review of Texas Books 2023

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## Foreword Texas, We Read On

Spring greetings from the shiny new editorial team at [redacted]! Since the departure of our former editor, the singular and much-missed Jennifer H. Ravey, we have been planning, curating, and designing this issue and forthcoming ones. We thank you for your continued patronage of the [redacted] and hope you will share it with all the readers in your life. We have decided to continue as an annual digital publication issued in early spring; we will carry forward our tradition of offering a handful of reviews “from the backlist” but will primarily print reviews of books published in the previous year.

In 2023, dear Texans, we read on through unprecedented headlines of war, strikes, felony indictments and convictions of high-level government leaders, Twitter’s rebranding, failing banks, and The Eras Tour. We read about shifting geohistorical landscapes in John S. Wilson’s [redacted] and shifting political landscapes of Reconstruction in Robert J. Dillard’s [redacted]. We read of racially coded Ranger justice in the biographies of John B. Denton, by Mike Cochran, and Leander McNelly, by Tom Clavin. We heard Latino voices speak of the terrors of cartel violence and immigration in [redacted], a horror anthology edited by Richard Z. Santos.





*At What Cost, Silence?: The Texian Trilogy, Book 1*

**At What Cost, Silence?**

Philip Zozzaro

Paen, makes a fairly profitable living farming tobacco. He is married to the exquisite Madeleine

of more than a decade form the essence of the narrative while each chapter is seen through poignant as the progression from youth to early adulthood comes with both triumphs and heartache. By the conclusion of this wonderful novel, the reader will find themselves ready to dig into the continuation of this saga. A literary triumph from start to finish.

*The San*

*Francisco Book Review, Booklist Magazine U.S. Book Review*









*Follow Me to Hell: McNelly's Rangers and the Rise of Frontier Justice*



Kelly Ann Ellis. *The Hungry Ghost Diner*. Beaumont, TX: Lamar University Literary Press, 2023. pp. 117. Paper: ISBN-13: 9781942956990, US \$17.00

## **Hungry Ghost Diner Satiates**

*Nicki Michalski*

*The Hungry Ghost Diner* by Kelly Ann Ellis is a wide-ranging exploration of one

**Reviewer Bio:** Dr. Michalski is an associate professor and interim department chair of the

*John B. Denton: The Bigger-than-Life Story of the Fighting Parson and Texas*

*Ranger*













John S. Wilson, ed. *Mapping Texas: A Cartographic Journey, 1561-1860*. Waco, Baylor University Press, 2019. pp. 132. Hardcover: ISBN 9781481311816, US \$29.99.

## **Charting Texas History**

Andy Coughlan

Everyone has access to a map, nowadays, with a simple click on an app. A cross-country drive is accompanied by a soothing voice telling us every turn, guided by pinpoint satellite navigation. But once, a map was more than a way to get from A to B. It was a geopolitical guide, a source of survival, of rebellion. It was also a work of art. *Mapping Texas: A Cartographic Journey, 1561-1860*, compiled from The Texas Collection at Baylor University, is the perfect addition for lovers of history, geography, or art. There is a brief introduction, and the maps are presented in sections

but the

**Reviewer Bio:** Andy Coughlan is a journalism professor at Lamar University, award-winning arts writer, and exhibiting artist. A native of Brighton, England, he has lived in Southeast Texas for 40 years.



*A Night of Screams: Latino Horror Stories*

*A Night of Screams: Latino Horror Stories*

*A Night of*

*Screams*

*Before We Became a New People*

*A Night of Screams*

*Outcry Witness*

*Outcry Witness*





Jeffrey R. De Lio, *Selling the Humanities: Essays*. Huntsville, TX: Texas Review Press, 2023. pp. 222. Paper: ISBN-13 9781680033182, \$29.95

### **Can the Humanities Survive an Increasingly Neoliberal World?**

Hannah Franklin

At a time when our society is becoming increasingly focused on profit, economic growth, and materialism, causing people to consider fields in the humanities impractical, Jeffrey R. Di

*Selling the Humanities: Essays*, attempts to tackle the issue of whether or not there is a place for the humanities in our current neoliberal society. At the same time, Di Leo also confronts the issue of whether it is possible to prove the value of the humanities, while still retaining the humanizing qualities that define this field. This book is a collection of twenty-four essays in which Di Leo analyzes a diverse assortment of critical issues within several areas of the humanities: literature, philosophy, critical theory, and music. Throughout his essays, Di Leo addresses a broad range of topics withBT/.169 rg0.082222222222222oReview Press, 2023.





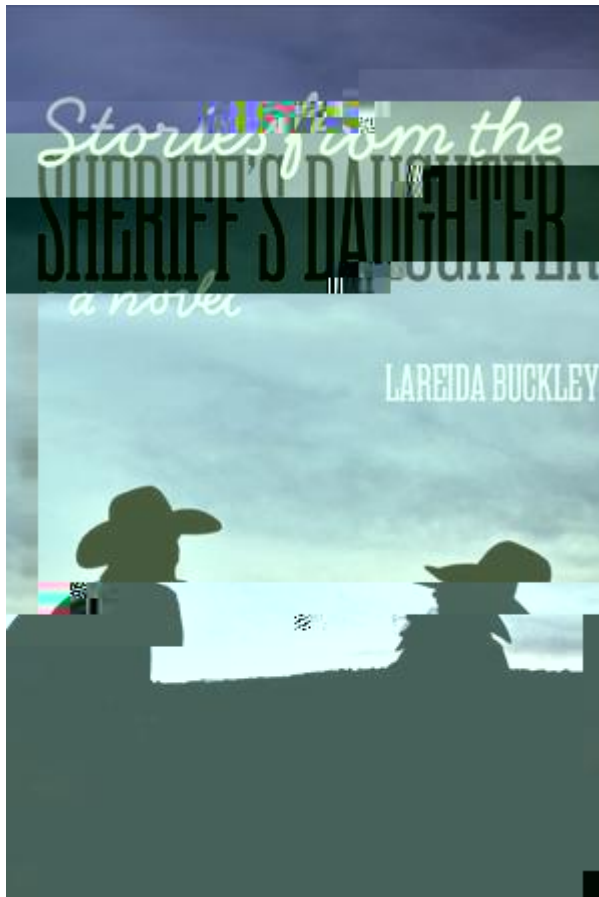


*Stories from the Sheriff's Daughter.*

community. She returns and remains there, taking a position as a social worker and resigning herself to the fact that this is where she should have been all along.

-hand account from Dolly gives us a glimpse of small-town Texas life and the trials and tribulations of growing up there.

**Reviewer Bio:** Stacey Knight is an Associate Professor in the School of Nursing at Lamar University. As a descendant of Austin's Old Three Hundred and an avid reader, she applauds and supports the efforts of Texas authors and those narrating Texas history.



Robert Dillard. *Two Counties in Crisis: Measuring Political Change in Reconstruction Texas*. Denton, TX: UNT Press, 2023. pp. 241. Paper: ISBN-13 9781574419078, US \$34.95

**Two Counties in Crisis or One State in Transition? A Review of Two Counties in Crisis: Measuring Political Change in Reconstruction Texas**

J. P. Nelson

*Two Counties in Crisis* is a fascinating exploration of the politics of Texas during the Reconstruction era that followed the U.S. Civil War. The main title does not reflect the breadth of the historical analysis within the book. Within its pages, Dr. Dillard does an exemplary job of educating readers on key developments in the governance of Texas during Reconstruction. Alongside the discussion of broader historical trends, the book used detailed analyses of two demographically distinct Texas counties to illustrate the dynamics at play closer to the level of the individual citizen.

(and culture in a broader sense) to explain the development of a more uniform state political analysis is compelling as well, and raises important points about the interpretation of Texas history. While the central focus of the work is on the U.S. Civil War and Reconstruction, Dillard makes the work relevant to present-day political observers. The epilogue highlights how some aspects of Texas political culture have changed in the intervening years. The detail of its discussion of Texas history alone makes the book worth reading; the broadly accessible incorporation of social scientific research into it

University and college libraries should definitely purchase *Two Counties in Crisis*. It is exactly the kind of book that researchers and students of Texas politics should read to deepen their



broader citizenry would benefit from reading such a book (and history buffs among them would likely enjoy it). For these reasons, the book is a less essential purchase for community libraries than those associated with colleges, but it can be a valuable addition to their shelves nonetheless.

**Reviewer Bio:** James P. Nelson is an undergraduate alumnus of Lamar University, and received