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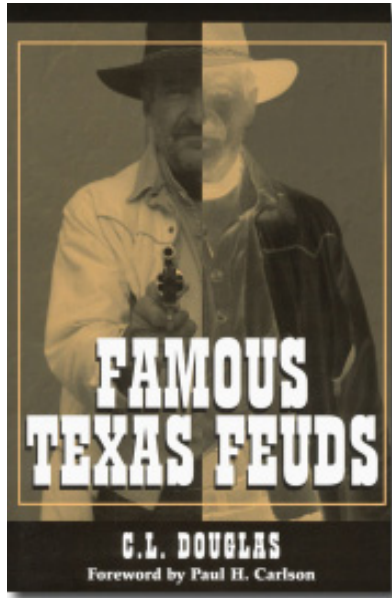
Technical Editor, Layout, and Design

**Pam S. Baird**



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## Famous Texas Feuds

By C.L. Douglas

Review by Chuck Parsons

Reprint by State House Press/McWhiney Foundation Press. Soft cover. \$16.95. ISBN 978-933337-11-1. 208 pages. Black and white photos. Index. Available from State House Press, McMurry University, McMurry Station, Box 637, Abilene, Texas 79697 or the Texas A&M consortium at [www.tamu.edu/upress](http://www.tamu.edu/upress).

**T**his hot-selling book first appeared in 1936, published by the Turner Company of Dallas, Texas. In 1988, it came out as a State House Press reprint, and it is now issued with a new foreword by Paul Carlson of Texas Tech University's Southwest Collection.

*Famous Texas Feuds* is an attempt to cover the best-known disputes in Texas. Considering that he had few of the modern research archives we have today, he did a very credible job. His study covers six feuds, starting with the East Texas conflict between the early Regulators vs. Moderators and ending with the short-lived conflict between the Jaybirds and the Woodpeckers, also in the same area. In between, his work focuses on the Sutton-Taylor feud, the San Elizario Salt War, the Lampasas County dispute between the Horrell and Higgins families, and the Mason County Hoo Doo War.

At the time of his research, Douglas had the distinct advantage of having men and women still living who either participated or were witness to many of the events. Douglas does not indicate if he actually interviewed many people in preparation of the book, but he does quote Robert Pleasants, the son of Judge H. Clay Pleasants, who significantly contributed to ending the Sutton-Taylor conflict. Although the memoirs of elderly individuals are subject to frailties, reminiscences of those who have experienced events of the past are important and should be preserved in spite of any possible weaknesses.



## Book Reviews

However, there are occasional errors that might aggravate the student of feud history. For example, Douglas's report on the triple lynching in DeWitt County identifies the trio incorrectly. Mason Arnold was not lynched at this point but was shot to death later on the streets of Clinton. A second embarrassing error occurs by Douglas accepting the writing of Ranger James B. Gillett, who stated that fifteen Rangers resigned rather than pursue fugitive Scott Cooley during the Hoo Doo War of Mason County. Actually, there were but three who resigned: Nelson O. Reynolds, Paul Durham, and James P. Day.

Even with a few mistakes, *Famous Texas Feuds* is an important work and a must for Texana enthusiasts, and a first edition of this book is now difficult to obtain. Douglas avoids a simple narration of ambushes and gunfights, and instead goes further in detailing the social conditions of the era. That environment contributed mightily to the factors that resulted in men shooting their neighbors, sometimes over several generations.



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