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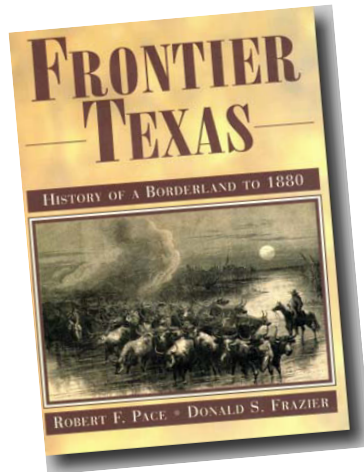
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Frontier Texas

History of a Borderland to 1880

Robert F. Pace and Donald S. Frazier

State House Press. McMurry University, Box 637, Abilene, Texas 79697-0637. Bibliography, index, 27 photographs and illustrations, 8 maps.

ISBN 1-880510-83-9. \$19.95, hardcover only.

Review by Chuck Parsons

Frontier Texas offers a glimpse into the history of the borderland of Texas—not the Rio Grande borderland, but the area thought of as the Panhandle and adjacent areas.

There are seven chapters providing a history of the North Texas borderland:

1. Comanches, Spaniards, and the Land, 1700-1821
2. Settlement, Forts, and Soldiers, 1821-1861
3. Ranching and the Cattle Frontier to 1861
4. Civil War and the Texas Frontier, 1861-1865
5. The Military Returns to the Frontier, 1865-1880
6. Destruction of the Buffalo and the Rise of the Cattle Frontier, 1865-1880
7. The Frontier Transformed

Naturally, there is some overlap in this arrangement. Even though the average Texan may feel this is a mere overview of the state's history, each chapter contains new information. More importantly, the readers are made witnesses to the events described.

In discussing the era from pre-Spanish times to 1880, authors Pace and Frazier grab attention with the description of the 1864 capture of Alice Todd by a Comanche war party. She was never recovered, but what is fascinating is that her captors illustrated their accomplishment in pictographs still visible near Paint Rock, Texas.

From this event, discussed in the introduction, the authors move back in time to the days when the earliest historically identifiable group, the Jumanos, were kings of the hill.



Book Reviews

They were eventually pushed aside by the Apaches through either slaughter or intermarriage. The Apaches were then conquered by the Comanches, who were later overthrown by US troops under Ranald S. Mackenzie. The land where the buffalo once roamed by the millions became the home of grazing cattle. It is a tale of conquest followed by conquest.


It would be impossible to cover this area and these centuries without some consideration of the Texas Rangers. Pace and Frazier give attention to this famous organization from its origin, when Stephen F. Austin hired ten experienced frontiersmen to “range.” The group, by then numbering fifty-six men, was formalized at the 1835 revolutionary convention. To become a Ranger all that was needed was a “good and sufficient horse [and] one hundred rounds of powder and ball.” Unlisted was the understanding of a distinct possibility of losing one’s scalp! These men soon proved themselves as a “tough, efficient fighting unit.”

There are two other memorable events relating to the Texas Rangers. One is the efficiency of Delaware Indians, who assisted the Rangers in their scouts. The second is the rescue of Cynthia Ann Parker and her daughter Topsannah by a Ranger squad under L. S. Ross in 1860.

The Texas Rangers developed and grew in number. Under Governor Coke in 1874, the Frontier Battalion was created, lead by Major John B. Jones. A new era was born.

Jones and his efficient companies of young men soon ended the “Indian problem,” and the white outlaw became their focus. As time passed, more changes occurred: buffalo herds were destroyed and cattle took their place, the vast land was reduced by technology as trucks or helicopters replaced the herder on horseback, and telegraphs and telephones replaced couriers on horseback between settlements. In spite of all the advantages of the “modern age,” there are still problems. For instance, the dry land can still be inhospitable, as the presence of water remains an essential for any standard of quality of life.

There may be places in Texas with longer recorded histories, and there are possibly areas whose influence was greater in the state’s development. However, Pace and Frazier make the history of borderland Texas fascinating, interesting, and unforgettable. The book has no endnote numbers to break the line of type, but there is an extensive bibliography for those who wish to read more.

It should be further noted that, although the book *Frontier Texas* was intended to stand alone, it makes a great companion piece to the exhibit “Frontier Texas!” in downtown Abilene. In fact, readers are encouraged to visit. Many of the events described in this book are displayed, and it is a must for anyone who is capable of appreciating history and seeing how technology can make the past come alive. The exhibit is open seven days a week and is well worth the time spent. For more information, contact “Frontier Texas!” at 325.437.2800 or visit  www.frontiertexas.com.