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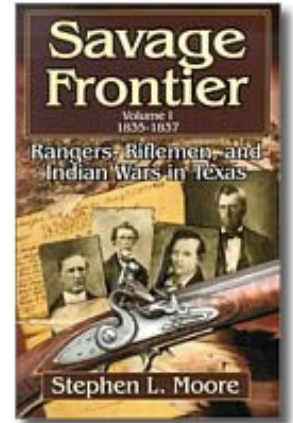

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Book Review:

Savage Frontier: Rangers, Riflemen and Indian Wars in Texas

Republic of Texas Press. 2320 Los Rios Blvd., Plano, Texas 75074. Telephone: 972-423-0090. xvi + 336 pages. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Soft cover only. ISBN 1-55622-928-3. 36 illustrations and maps. \$19.95.

Today, it is difficult to conceive just how savage the Texas frontier was in the early days before the Alamo, the Civil War, and to a lesser degree, the 1880s. In *Savage Frontier*, Stephen L. Moore thoroughly discusses that brutal time during the 1835-37 period, when hardy pioneers had both Indians and Mexicans to fear and fight.

The conflicts began as early as 1821, when a party of white settlers clashed with some Karankawas along the coast. The discord steadily increased as settlers continued to pour in. Austin's "Old Three Hundred" established colonies on land along the Brazos and the Colorado Rivers. To provide some protection, John J. Tumlinson and Robert Kuykendall wrote to Governor Jose Trespalacios and asked permission to raise fifteen men to build blockhouses and small boats to fight on land and sea. Moses Morrison raised a nine-man Ranger unit, which is considered the origin of the Texas Rangers.

The Ranger unit and other small squads of men patrolled the frontier, protecting homes from all threats, pursuing raiders to recover stolen goods, and punishing wrongdoers. Moore's study describes dozens of deadly exchanges between Texans, Indians, and Mexicans: the battle on the Rio Blanco in April 1835, Coleman's attack on the Tawakonis in July 1835, the Bexar siege of December 1835, the Alamo, the Runaway Scrape, and the Battle of San Jacinto, to name but a few examples.

There were many battles and skirmishes that are nearly forgotten today,

including the May 1837 Post Oak Springs Ranger massacre and the McLean-Sheridan-Barnes slayings of May 1837. Moore has researched all available documents and provided new information about these engagements.

Along with the details of these many encounters, Moore provides rosters that have not been published before. Some reprint names from forgotten documents, and others are created from using numerous primary sources such as the memoirs of Noah Smithwick and the audited military claims of the Republic of Texas. From these sources, which are not readily available, important information has been gleaned which clarifies our state's history.

Moore maintains his focus throughout, guiding the reader through the maze of administrative problems of a fledging nation in almost constant conflict. Extensive primary records and accounts document the organization of early Ranger units. It is a must read for all who appreciate the struggles of early Texas.



- Chuck Parsons

Stephen L. Moore, a sixth-generation Texan, manages a creative department for the nation's largest direct seller of home décor products. He is a descendant of a number of Texas Rangers who served during the years of the Republic of Texas. He, his wife Cindy, and daughters Kristen and Emily make their home north of Dallas in Lantana, Texas.

A graduate of Stephen F. Austin State University, Steve was a featured author at the 2002 Texas Book Festival in Austin. Steve has written three books and will have two more published in 2003. One is Volume II of *Savage Frontier*, which will focus on the years 1838-1839. The other book is a detailed history of the San Jacinto campaign of 1836.

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