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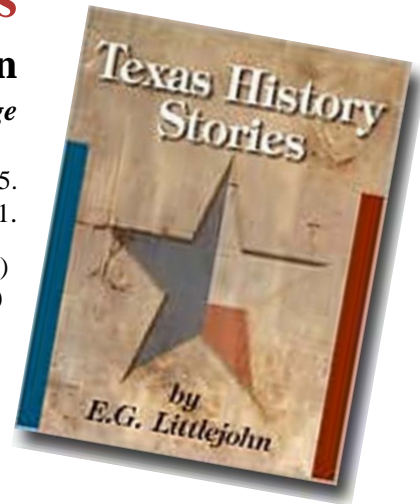
## Texas History Stories

by E. G. Littlejohn

*New Forward by Robert W. Sledge*

State House Press, McMurry Univ., 2005.  
ISBN 093834907-4. Original copyright 1901.

- Bk. I: Cabeza de Vaca; La Salle (56p)  
Bk. II: Ellis P. Bean; Stephen F. Austin (48p)  
Bk. III: Sam Houston; David Crockett (47p)  
Bk. IV: The Alamo; Remember Goliad; Story of San Jacinto (47p)  
Bk. V: Drawing the Black Beans; Castle Perote (46p)  
Bk. VI: Brave Dick Dowling; Robert E. Lee (46p)



### Review by Nancy Ray

*Texas History Stories* by E. G. Littlejohn (1862-1935) is not a new book. Written more than a hundred years ago and originally published in 1901, this reproduction is about the early days of Texas and the people of that era. It is divided into six short sections containing two or more stories, mostly biographies intended for juvenile readers.

This new edition is introduced in a foreword by Dr. Robert W. Sledge, historian at the McWhiney Research Foundation at McMurry University in Abilene. He writes, “A fun thing about history is the stories.” I agree—now. In school, I do not remember history as a “fun thing.” I learned facts and I passed the tests, but history was not an entertaining subject. In this book, the author uses a storytelling format to bring the characters alive. This style definitely makes the people and events more interesting than in my school textbook accounts, where information such as the young ages of these heroes was rarely mentioned. (Davy Crockett was only twelve years old when he left home). Also in this work are adequate descriptions of the hardships and dangers these brave men faced and the patience, perseverance, and determination it took to survive.

Mr. Littlejohn’s writing style makes the individuals become real. For instance, I learned about Ellis P. Bean, who left home as a sixteen-year-old boy because he wanted “to see other countries.” He experienced bad luck in his adventures and spent the next twenty years in a vicious cycle: captured, imprisoned, escaped, and captured again. However, the cruel treatment he experienced and the long years in captivity did not break his spirit. He once told his imprisoned companions, “There is no use in fretting over what cannot be helped.” What an attitude!

This book is educational, and I enjoyed learning about people such as Sam Houston, Stephen F. Austin, Robert E. Lee, and Davy Crockett (probably my favorite). I also learned that the concept of “drawing the black bean” began with Santa Anna. Read the story and decide the real winners for yourselves—the ones drawing black beans or the ones drawing the white ones?

The target audiences for *Texas History Stories* are students in grades 4-7, but I also recommend it for adults and as a supplement to textbooks for students. As stated by Dr. Sledge in the forward, “Read the book the way Littlejohn meant it—celebrating the heroes of the early days of Texas, and learning life lessons in the process.” That worked for me. I now have a much better understanding about the hardships of the early Texans, and I have a higher appreciation for the sacrifices they made.