



Official State Historical Center of the Texas
Rangers law enforcement agency.

**The Following Article was Originally Published in the
*Texas Ranger Dispatch Magazine***

The *Texas Ranger Dispatch* was published by the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum from 2000 to 2011. It has been superseded by this online archive of Texas Ranger history.

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Funded in part by grants from
the Texas Ranger Association Foundation

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TEXAS RANGER DISPATCH Magazine

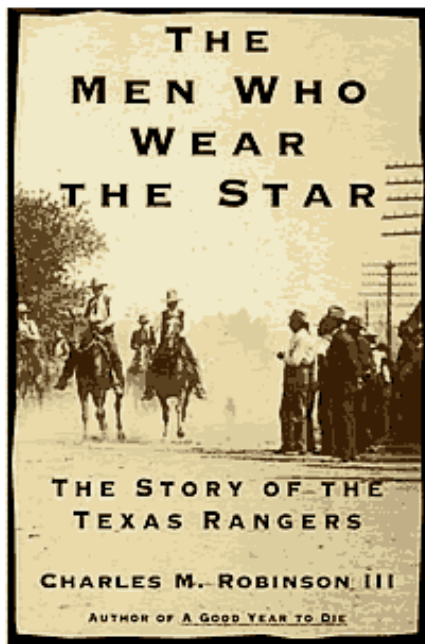
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Book Review:

*The Men Who Wear the Star:
The Story of the Texas Rangers*

by **Chuck Parsons**

Random House, New York. 352 pages. 31 illustrations. 4 maps. Acknowledgments, introduction, notes, bibliography, index. ISBN 0-679-45649-X hardcover. \$29.95.

This is the first comprehensive single-volume work on the history of the Texas Rangers since Walter Prescott Webb's *The Texas Rangers: A Century of Frontier Defense*, first published in 1935. Although both histories of the Ranger organization - now entering its third century -

discuss the major incidents of Ranger history, *The Men Who Wear the Star* is not a mirror image of Webb's work.

Robinson begins his study with a discussion of the concept of the Ranger, an idea that originated with the British colonists in the eastern United States when a battalion served under Major Robert Rogers during the French and Indian War. This tradition of "ranging" was continued when English-speaking people settled in Texas in the 1820s. Although there are various claims regarding exactly how the Texas Rangers originated, Robinson supports the theory that backs Moses Morrisson, a leader who commanded a handful of volunteers. This modest beginning of a small number of settlers ready to fight Indians and thieves and any other marauders became the organization of the Texas Rangers.

Robinson discusses in subsequent chapters how Jack Hays and the new revolving weapon altered warfare and how the Rangers contributed during the Mexican War and the American Civil War. A significant portion of the book deals with McNelly's Washington County Volunteer Militia Company and the Frontier Battalion under Major John B. Jones. Jones influenced the Ranger force until the end of the frontier and the rise of the "modern" Ranger.

In treating the twentieth century Rangers, Robinson focuses on the tarnishing of the star, recounting such incidents as the massacre at Porvenir in January 1918. He concludes by touching on the "Bonnie and Clyde affair" and discussing the myth making of the Texas Ranger. Included is the most famous myth of all, the fictional "Lone Ranger," and other Rangers who have appeared in motion pictures and television programs such as "Walker, Texas Ranger."

Certainly the Texas Ranger force deserved an updating of the 1935 classic by Webb. Robinson provides such an update with *The Men Who Wear the Star*. If there is a significant weakness, it is that Robinson ends his history virtually where Webb ended his. Certainly the Rangers have accomplished much in the last fifty years or so that is worthy of discussion, but none of it is presented. A few chapters covering the Rangers' contribution during the World Wars and also the social changes that forced the alteration of the face of the traditional white male Ranger would have added greatly to this work. In spite of this omission, the book deserves to be in the library of every person who appreciates Texas history.

Other books by Charles Robinson :

The Frontier World of Fort Griffin: The Life and Death of a Western Town (Spokane: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1992).

Bad Hand: A Biography of General Ranald S. Mackenzie (Austin: State House Press, 1993).

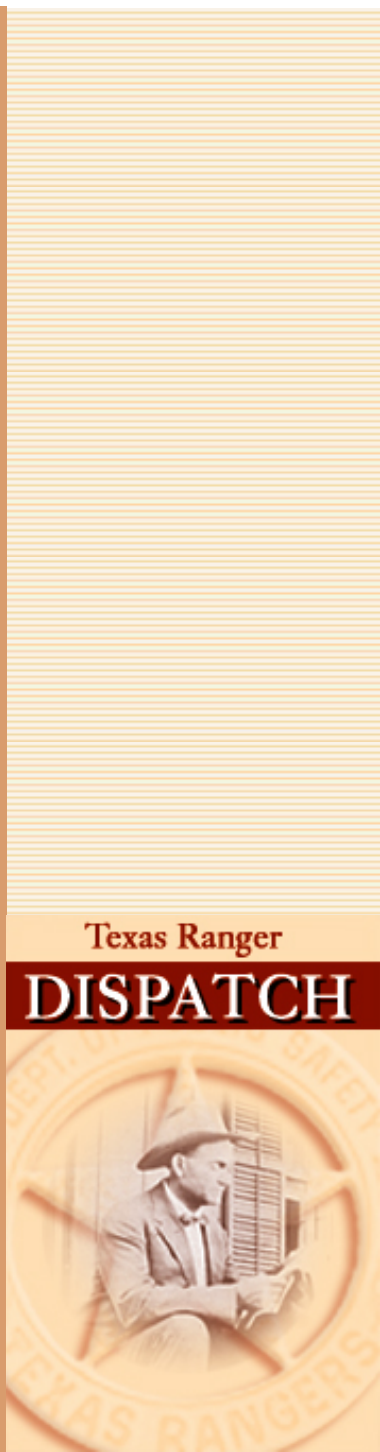
The Buffalo Hunters (Austin: State House Press, 1995).

A Good Year to Die: The Story of the Great Sioux War (New York: Random House, 1995).

The Indian Trial: The Complete Story of the Warren Wagon Train Massacre (Spokane: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1997).

Satanta: The Life and Death of a War Chief (Austin: State House Press, 1997).

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