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Review of King Fisher: The Short Life and Elusive Legend of a Texas Desperado, by Chuck Parsons and Thomas C. Bicknell

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relaying the exaggerations found in the reports of Randolph B. Marcy, Amiel W. Whipple, and William H. Emory. The “mid-nineteenth-century explorers’ groping for perspective” relied upon their only artistic frame of reference—Picturesque and Romantic—for the fantastical scenes they encountered, including the exoticism of Native Americans. Tyler’s chapter “Pretty Pictures ... ‘Candy’ for the Immigrants” also strikes close to home. My German ancestors immigrated to Illinois from southwestern Germany in the 1870s, then to Kansas and Texas, likely drawn by lithographs espousing the rich lands there such as *Panorama der Stadt Neu-Braunfels in Texas ...*, as discussed by Tyler.

Tyler’s chapter “The Image Breakers” is especially effective when he dissects the myriad images of “cowboys” circulated via popular lithographs. While Tyler may not be entirely correct in some of his interpretations of a man in a Western hat vs. an actual cowhand, his synthesis of the evolution of the cowboy as THE symbol of Texas is spot on. He writes, “a cowboy roping cattle” on a trading card for A. H. Belo’s *Galveston News* “demonstrates ... the respectability the cowboy had attained in personifying the image of the state.” (p. 357) I couldn’t have said it better myself. With excellent methodical analysis and exemplary, sometimes surprising, reproductions, Tyler’s *Texas Lithographs: A Century of History in Images* should find a treasured place in all libraries, especially those dedicated to world, American, and Texas history and art.

National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum

MICHAEL GRAUER

King Fisher: The Short Life and Elusive Legend of a Texas Desperado. By Chuck Parsons and Thomas C. Bicknell. (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2022. Pp. 272. Illustrations, appendices, notes, bibliography, index.)

John King Fisher has not generally been as celebrated and studied as other outlaws of his era such as Billy the Kid, John Wesley Hardin, or Jesse James. Yet during the mid to late 1870s, Fisher was one of the most feared men in South Texas, holding sway over several counties along the border with Mexico. Similarly, as a desperado-turned-lawman, he is usually not mentioned in the same company as Pat Garrett or Wyatt Earp. However, as a deputy sheriff of Uvalde County during the early 1880s, he was well-regarded and would probably have been overwhelmingly elected sheriff of that county in November 1884 had he not been killed in March of that year. Chuck Parsons’ and Thomas Bicknell’s biography of Fisher is therefore a welcome and useful addition to the body of knowledge about social conditions during a volatile era in Texas History.

This biography follows Fisher from his birth in Collin County to his upbringing in Goliad County, to his young adulthood and criminal

activities in Dimmit and Maverick Counties, ending with his career as a lawman in Uvalde County. The picture that emerges is of a young man trying to survive in a harsh and violent environment who often resorted to crimes like cattle theft and murder. He was so feared during the late 1870s that it was difficult to find jurors to try him or witnesses to testify against him. Fisher apparently decided to change his ways after being arrested by famed Ranger Captain Leander H. McNelly. By the early 1880s he had moved his family to Uvalde County, where he served as the deputy sheriff until his violent death on March 11, 1884. Unfortunately, Fisher was assassinated while attempting to make peace between his friend, Ben Thompson, and the owners of San Antonio's Vaudeville Theater.

The co-authors are prolific authors of crime and law enforcement in Reconstruction-era Texas, Parsons having previously written biographies of Texas Rangers McNelly, John B. Armstrong, and Lee Hall. Parsons and Bicknell also collaborated on a biography of Ben Thompson, the gambler and Austin city marshal who was murdered with Fisher in San Antonio. This biography of Fisher is the result of the same exhaustive research readers have come to expect from the authors. In this case, documenting Fisher's life was made particularly difficult by the lack of primary source material. Unlike Billy the Kid or Hardin, Fisher apparently did not give interviews to journalists interested in his career. Very few letters from him survive as well. The fact that Parsons and Bicknell were able to reconstruct a narrative of his life given the dearth of such sources is a testament to their skill as historians.

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Emmet J. Scott: Power Broker of the Tuskegee Machine. By Maceo C. Dailey Jr. Ed. by Will Guzmán, and David H. Jackson Jr. (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2023. Pp. 424. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index.)

Emmet J. Scott was born in Houston, Texas in 1873. He attended Wiley College in Marshall before leaving school to found a successful African American newspaper, the *Texas Freeman*. The connections he cultivated with African American business and political leaders around the state, along with his organizational skills, soon brought him notice from Norris Wright Cuney, the African American leader of the Texas Republican Party in 1894. Under Cuney's tutelage, Scott gained national political connections and valuable political acumen. As a political operative and a newspaper man, Scott was well acquainted with the work of Booker T. Washington. He had written several pieces in his *Texas Freeman* supportive of Washington's famous Atlanta Cotton Exposition speech in 1895. His skills and connections allowed Scott to be charged with the