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Water from Stone: The Story of Selah, Bamberger Ranch Preserve. By Jeffrey Greene. Illustrations by Margaret Bamberger. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2007. xi + 218 pp. Map, illustrations, works cited, index. $24.95 cloth, $16.95 paper.

The dissected edge of the Edwards Plateau in Texas marks the southern boundary of the Great Plains. The rugged scarp is scarred by erosion, gouged as if by claws, limping off to the Texas Hill Country, then to the Gulf Coastal Plain, and finally to the sea. Here oceans rose and fell through geologic time, the shoreline lying (twice) at what is now the end of the Great Plains. Dinosaurs walked those shores, their footprints in stone now exposed in creek beds at the base and, in one unique place, at the top of the Plains. That place, west of Austin, is Selah Bamberger Ranch Preserve, a spot in one way like all others: it is subject to human actions that change our world as surely as the timeless forces of nature.

That place is David Bamberger's hope and vision, his challenge, his Malabar Farm writ large. This book is about him and the restoration of Selah as his commitment to the world and to the people with him on his quest. Selah, like Walden Pond, is a place to pause and reflect, which is the meaning of the word. But however much David may be a pause-and-reflect kind of guy, he is driven toward his grand purpose. His approach is pragmatic and practical. People, finding the right ones, and building chemistry among them, is a strength that made him a successful businessman from vacuum-cleaner salesman to fried-chicken baron, and it clearly served him well when he turned his attention to the overgrazed, dewatered, cedar-bound slopes

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that now run with clean water year round, nurturing the graze for cattle, deer, and endangered scimitar-horned oryx. With water Selah has become a haven for birds and other wildlife. Vast numbers of Mexican free-tailed bats roost in the specially built chiroptorium. The story is infused with the warmth of good hearts, inside and out, starting with David's mother, Hes. He replicated an old-time country store in her honor that serves for the teaching of her life-lessons to the many school groups that pass through, part of his "people-ranching"-rural experiences for urbanites. His wife, Margaret, supplied the black-and-white illustrations done in a style that fits the country and makes the book all the more engaging. His brother-in-law is the author.

So what has David accomplished, why does it matter, and where will it go? He has reached one goal: he has restored this little corner at the end of the Great Plains. It matters because the world needs success stories to demonstrate what can be done with will and perseverance. A memorial to humanity's destruction of Earth, a tombstone really, stands near the entrance to Selah. That does not have to be our footprint; David shows that people can be timeless forces for good. **Louis L. Jacobs**, *Department of Geological Sciences, Southern Methodist University.*

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