

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Great Plains Quarterly

Great Plains Studies, Center for

1991

Review of Ella Elgar Bird Dumont: An Autobiography of a West Texas Pioneer.

Rebecca J. Davis

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsquarterly>



Part of the [Other International and Area Studies Commons](#)

Davis, Rebecca J., "Review of Ella Elgar Bird Dumont: An Autobiography of a West Texas Pioneer." (1991). *Great Plains Quarterly*. 561.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsquarterly/561>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Great Plains Studies, Center for at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Great Plains Quarterly by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

for as long as a year without seeing another woman. The photographs in the book add a personal touch, allowing readers to develop a stronger sense of the central characters.

What makes this book so powerful is Ella Dumont's intense honesty. She possesses great natural talent as a sculptor, a talent which she can only haphazardly pursue amidst the rigors of frontier life. She realizes that she "buried a talent on those broad barren prairies of the Texas Panhandle." Dumont's artistic talent is equalled by her practical skills as a hunter, skinner, markswoman, carpenter, and tailor. The ever-present comparison of the pragmatic versus the aesthetic fills the book and makes for fascinating reading.

REBECCA J. DAVIS
Department of English
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Ella Elgar Bird Dumont: An Autobiography of a West Texas Pioneer. Edited by Tommy J. Boley. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988. Foreword, preface, photographs, notes, bibliography, index. xxxxi + 227 pp. \$19.95.

The destruction in the South caused by the Civil War prompted many Southerners to move to Texas to reconstruct their lives. Ella Elgar Bird Dumont chronicles not only such a move from Mississippi to Texas in 1866 but also the details of her life as a plainswoman in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

Dumont's autobiography is full of details of life on the Texas Plains. She relates experiences as diverse as skinning buffalo and dressing hides to the loneliness of her life where she might go