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Great Plains Quarterly

Great Plains Studies, Center for

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Winter 2005

## Review of *Gone to Texas: A History of the Lone Star State* By Randolph B. Campbell

Eugene Atkinson  
*Tarleton State University*

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Atkinson, Eugene, "Review of *Gone to Texas: A History of the Lone Star State* By Randolph B. Campbell" (2005). *Great Plains Quarterly*. 1403.

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*Gone to Texas: A History of the Lone Star State.* By Randolph B. Campbell. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003. xii + 500 pp. Photographs, maps, appendixes, select bibliography, index. \$35.00 cloth, \$29.95 paper.

In *Gone to Texas*, Randolph B. Campbell has combined the best recent scholarship with thirty years of his own prodigious efforts to produce the best narrative account of Texas yet. Authoritative and engaging, a chronicle that is equal parts Spanish colonial period, revolution and republic, Civil War and Reconstruction, and twentieth-century politics, the work includes the usual cast of explorers, generals, ranchers, governors, and businessmen. It treats the standard controversies, the climactic battles, and the diverse populations that have created a complex state, if one not so unique as Texans would like to believe. It does all of this with humor, clarity, flair, and an appreciation for the lives and words of

ordinary individuals—women and men from many backgrounds who, probably unintentionally, became part of history.

As might be expected from the author of *An Empire for Slavery* (1989) and *Grass Roots Reconstruction in Texas* (1997), Campbell is particularly interested in events surrounding the Civil War, and his chapters on Texas politics and antebellum life are among the best in the book. Effectively mixing political history with descriptions of houses, diet and health care, transportation, churches, and recreations, he avoids the dreaded, awkward, catch-all, stand-alone topical treatment found in most texts. He asserts boldly that secession, when it came, was in defense of slavery; and he convincingly argues that roots in the Deep South and experience in the War and Reconstruction did more to shape Texas than any brief ranching frontier.

Certainly Campbell does not ignore West Texas and the Great Plains, but he emphasizes the Indian and Spanish elements. He begins with the earliest immigrants into the Panhandle and discusses the more important archaeological sites. He brings a special insight into the comparative cultures of Caddo, Jumano, Apache, and Comanche, including instruction on the proper way to butcher a bison. Not especially interested in the Reconquista or Spanish prologue to exploration, he does rescue the overlooked expansion of the North Mexican frontier and establishes the significance of the New Mexico settlements to the opening of Texas.

The absence of footnotes means that intriguing quotations and individuals go unidentified. A few illustrations are reproduced as dark and indistinct. And Campbell reminds readers a little too often, perhaps, to “see the map” at the top of the page. *Gone to Texas*, nonetheless, is a magnificent achievement, regardless of the omissions or limitations some readers may lament.

EUGENE ATKINSON  
Department of Social Sciences  
Tarleton State University