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## Review of *Women and Texas History: Selected Essays* Edited by Fane Downs and Nancy Baker Jones

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*Women and Texas History: Selected Essays*. Edited by Fane Downs and Nancy Baker Jones. Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1993. Foreword, introduction, xviii + 182 pp. \$14.95 paper.

This collection of essays, based on papers prepared for a 1990 conference sponsored by the Texas State Historical Association, provides both an interesting sample of the last decade's scholarship on Texas women and a discussion of areas needing further study. The thirteen articles cover a variety of topics; three additional pieces consider the progress and challenges of scholarship in Texas women's history.

A particularly strong focus on the Progressive era discloses both individual and group efforts at reform. Studies by Judith N. McArthur and Paul M. Lucko describe campaigns to regulate child labor and modernize the state's prisons. Jacquelyn McElhaney looks at the Dallas journalist S. Isadore Miner Callaway, demonstrating the remarkable influence of an energetic journalist determined to push her readers' concerns beyond fashions and social events. Another Progressive, veteran suffragist Minnie Fisher Cunningham, unsuccessfully ran for governor of Texas in 1944 as a staunch New Dealer, an effort described by her great-great niece, Patricia Ellen Cunningham. This activist's life neatly illustrates changes in the political landscape after suffrage and the links between the Progressive Era and the New Deal. Also in the Progressive tradition, Delta Kappa Gamma, the teachers' honor society, worked to enhance the profession of teaching, as Debbie Mauldin Cottrell's research reveals.

Other essayists see Texas women in relation to their families rather than in voluntary associations. Studies by Sylvia Hunt and Diana Davids Olien consider wives—married teachers in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries whose experiences challenge us to reconsider the pervasiveness of domesticity as a norm; women in the "ragtowns" and company camps of the oil fields, who tried against all odds to maintain traditional housekeeping

standards. Mexicana workers migrating to Texas cities during the twentieth century, according to Barbara J. Rozek's commendably wide-ranging article, like other immigrants, made choices about work based on the welfare of their families.

Working women receive a different focus in Sherilyn Brandenstein's revelation that the Fort Worth-based magazine *Sepia Record* during the 1950s portrayed African American working women—whether single, married, or mothers—much more positively and realistically than general circulation magazines did for women of all races. Like Brandenstein's piece, articles on Mexicana actresses and on English-language authors by Elizabeth C. Ramírez, Lou Rodenberger, and Sylvia Grider provide useful material for considering women's contributions to the state's cultural traditions.

This volume, of fundamental interest to women's history scholars and southern history specialists, can also provide a point of entry for those just beginning to study Texas women. Besides providing good examples of recent work in the field, it is an important resource for efforts to move from what Sylvia Grider calls "the monograph stage" toward synthesis and, as Elizabeth Fox-Genovese's keynote essay urges, to find "between the multiplicity of individual women and the culture of all women" meaningful patterns in the history of Texas women.

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