Reception and Book Signing Honoring

Randolph B. “Mike” Campbell, Regents Professor of History, University of North Texas

DeGolyer Library, Texana Room
Monday, November 3rd, 2003

Gone to Texas
A History of the Lone Star State
RANDOLPH B. CAMPBELL, University of North Texas

Gone to Texas engagingly tells the story of the Lone Star State, from the arrival of humans in the Panhandle more than 10,000 years ago to the opening of the twenty-first century. Focusing on the state's successive waves of immigrants, the book offers an inclusive view of the vast array of Texans who, often in conflict with each other and always in a struggle with the land, created a history and an idea of Texas.

Striking a balance between revisionist and traditional approaches to history, author Randolph B. Campbell tells the stories of the colorful individuals and events that shaped the history of Texas, giving equal treatment to the lives of men like Sam Houston and to women and minorities in Texas's history. He addresses the fact that Texas is widely regarded as a special state-a place with a story that appeals to millions of people, many of whom have never even been there-and examines what created this idea of Texan distinctiveness. Organized chronologically, the text focuses on five main themes: Texas as a "forgotten" province of the Spanish empire that was only protected when some other nation threatened to occupy it; the interpretation of the Texas Revolution as a clash between two disparate cultures rather than as a deliberate, pre-conceived plan by the U.S. to steal the province from Mexico; the identification of Texas as a Southern rather than Western state in terms of its demographic, cultural, economic, and political influences and development; Texas's distinction not as a "unique" state but rather as the exaggerated embodiment of traditional American ideals and emotions such as individualism, personal liberty, and violence; and the two-hundred-year-old history of Texas as a destination for immigrants seeking new opportunities.

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