



West Texas: A History of the Giant Side of the State

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Texas is as well known for its diversity of landscape and culture as it is for its enormity. But *West Texas*, despite being popularized in film and song, has largely been ignored by historians as a distinct and cultural geographic space. In *West Texas: A History of the Giant Side of the State*, Paul H. Carlson and Bruce A. Glasrud rectify that oversight. This volume assembles a diverse set of essays covering the grand sweep of West Texas history from the ancient to the contemporary.

In four parts—comprehending the place, people, politics and economic life, and society and culture—Carlson and Glasrud and their contributors survey the confluence of life and landscape shaping the West Texas of today. Early chapters define the region. The “giant side of Texas” is a nineteenth-century geographical description of a vast area that includes the Panhandle, Llano Estacado, Permian Basin, and Big Bend–Trans-Pecos country. It is an arid, windblown environment that connects intimately with the history of Texas culture.

Carlson and Glasrud take a nonlinear approach to exploring the many cultural influences on West Texas, including the Tejanos, the oil and gas economy, and the major cities. Readers can sample topics in whichever order they please, whether they are interested in learning about ranching, recreation, or turn-of-the-century education. Throughout, familiar western themes arise: the urban growth of El Paso is contrasted with the mid-century decline of small towns and the social shifting that followed. Well-known Texas scholars explore popular perceptions of West Texas as sparsely populated and rife with social contradiction and rugged individualism.

West Texas comes into yet clearer view through essays on West Texas women, poets, Native peoples, and musicians. Gathered here is a long overdue consideration of the landscape, culture, and everyday lives of one of America’s most iconic and understudied regions.

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