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*The Feud that Wasn't: The Taylor Ring Bill Sutton, John Wesley Hardin, and Violence in Texas* (review)

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ing a Republic of the Sierra Madre as an independent buffer state in northern Mexico. Probably the best known filibuster was José María de Jesús Carvajal who rallied several hundred Texas mercenaries into a mob called the "Liberating Army of Northern Mexico." In what was known as the "Merchant's War," Carvajal and his rabble captured Camargo and attacking Matamoros, only to be defeated by a superior force of the Mexican army in street-to-street, house-to-house fighting.

Certainly the most serious uprising on the Rio Grande, one that would send hundreds of Texas Rangers and the United States Army scurrying for the Rio Grande, was the Cortina War of 1859–1860. Although Collins did not have available a recent biography of Cortina that corrects many of the errors of previous writings on the subject, his treatment of this revolutionary event is thorough and objective. Collins's geography is a bit shaky at times (the small port of Brazos Santiago was not at the mouth of the Rio Grande and the Battle of Valverde was a long way from the southern Sangre de Cristos) he superbly depicts events along the Rio Grande. As one who has spent half a lifetime trying to understand what happened on the border in the crucial decade prior to the Civil War, I hasten to recommend Michael Collins superbly researched and entertaining book.

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JERRY THOMPSON

*The Feud that Wasn't: The Taylor Ring, Bill Sutton, John Wesley Hardin, and Violence in Texas.* By James M. Smallwood. (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008. Pp. 254. Illustrations, maps, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. ISBN 9781603440172, \$29.95 cloth.)

James M. Smallwood's *The Feud that Wasn't* is a straightforward narrative of violent conflict in Reconstruction-era Texas between members of the "Taylor Ring" and the forces of Unionism and law enforcement. *The Feud that Wasn't* stakes its claim as a corrective to the long-held belief that the "Taylor-Sutton Feud" in Reconstruction-era Texas was merely some type of long-running feud between the pro-Confederacy Taylor forces and Unionist elements led by peace officer William "Bill" Sutton.

Smallwood eschews the use of the terms "gang" and "organization" to describe the Taylor outfit in favor of the term "ring." Founded by brothers Creed and Pitkin Taylor in the 1850s, by the end of the Civil War the Taylor Ring had expanded their horse and cattle rustling operations to include attacking and terrorizing freedmen and white Unionists. Its almost 200 members were never active in the ring at the same time and the same locations during the twenty-five year lifespan of the ring. However, the bonds between these Texans were cemented by their kindred interests and shared goals of plunder and profit, using the "Lost Cause" as justification for their malfeasance.

This book is also an important contribution to the history of crime and punishment in Texas. The author chronicles the complexities of policing rural Texas, a task that still confounds law enforcement today. The confusion between the chain of command and authority among civilian and military authorities as well as over jurisdictional limits bedeviled any attempts at maintaining law and order. This was

especially true after 1868, when Union occupation troops were vastly diminished and relegated to the Indian frontier. A lack of manpower enabled Taylor Ring associates to run roughshod over South Texas as bounty hunters, vigilante groups, county sheriffs, and others chased after them through more than forty counties. Between 1870 and 1873 the ephemeral Texas State Police (40 percent were freedmen) were expected to fill the void left by the removal of the army but were stifled by racist attitudes and little public support.

In the end, it was a resurgent Democratic Party that repealed the State Police Law in 1873, leaving law enforcement to local and county officials. In this complicated landscape, deciding who were the good guys or bad guys depended on where one stood on the Civil War. Under Republican domination the Democrats tolerated the terror and violence of anti-Union elements. Once back in power, the new government reintroduced the state militia, which had a force of 3,500 men to assist local authorities and the state police in ending the decades-long crime wave.

Smallwood's scrupulous use of a wide range of primary resources and colorful vignettes will ensure this book finds a wide-readership with both general and academic audiences. The book is chock-full of memorable characters such as the Taylor brothers, John Wesley Hardin and Texas Ranger Leander McNelly. At the end of the book there is a helpful appendix listing 197 men who took part in these activities between 1850 and 1880.

This book is an important contribution to post-Civil War Texas history, but, it could have benefited from an analysis of recurrent domestic terrorism in this region, particularly in the current age we live in. Smallwood makes numerous references to "terrorist Klan groups," "Klan-like groups," and "Klan-like terrorist groups," but never identifies any specific organizations or explains their development or recrudescence. While *The Feud that Wasn't* is an accomplished work and an important contribution to post-Civil War Texas history, it will not be the final word on this complicated era in Texas history.

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*Andersonvilles of the North: The Myths and Realities of Northern Treatment of Civil War Confederate Prisoners.* By James M. Gillispie. (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2008. Pp. 286. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. ISBN 9781574412550, \$24.95 cloth.)

Few aspects on the American Civil War are the subject of as much popular misconception as the issues surrounding prisoner of war camps. Margaret Mitchell's classic *Gone with the Wind* (1936), MacKanlay Kantor's *Andersonville* (1955), and the sizable amount of academic literature on the subject generally arouse strong emotions among readers. These works have long shaped our understanding and biases of Civil War-era prisons, and James M. Gillispie's new book *Andersonvilles of the North* serves as a revisionist examination of this traditionally controversial topic. Gillispie's book functions on multiple levels. His main goal is to provide an updated and reconsidered explanation of Federal prison operations and how