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*I've Been Out There: On the Road with Legends of Rock
'n' Roll* by Grady Gaines with Rod Evans (review)

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contribution to both the creation of the cultural identity of Texas Mexicans and the economics of the Texas Triangle.

Texas Christian University

JESSICA WEBB

I've Been Out There: On the Road with Legends of Rock 'n' Roll. By Grady Gaines with Rod Evans. (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2015. Pp. 192. Photographs, index.)

In this memoir about the heyday of rock n' roll, Grady Gaines, a saxophonist, in collaboration with Rod Evans, a journalist, brings the reader into the musical world of African Americans during the long 1960s, a period from the mid-1950s to the mid-1970s. It was a time of tremendous cultural, social, and racial change in Texas, the United States, and the world. One manifestation of those changes was the proliferation and acceptance of various forms of African American music in the popular culture. And Grady Gaines and his various bands were an integral part of the change that, musically, ushered in a new era in history.

Born in 1934 in the rural East Texas town of Waskom, Grady Gaines came of age in the Fifth Ward of Houston. There, Gaines developed his interest in the saxophone first in the respected Phyllis Wheatley High School music program and later in legendary Houston night clubs such as Don Robey's Bronze Peacock Dinner Club. In 1955, Gaines joined Little Richard, the innovative and provocative singer and piano player, and his band the Upsetters, as lead saxophone player. For the next few years, he toured with Little Richard across the South, in the North, along the West Coast, and around the world, playing before segregated audiences in the "chitlin" (black) circuit and before integrated "crossover" (white) audiences. They performed at nationally known African American theaters like the Apollo in Harlem, New York, and the Howard in Washington, D.C. They appeared in the films *The Girl Can't Help It* with Jayne Mansfield and *Don't Knock the Rock*. The dynamic interplay between the two artists is immortalized in a classic photograph: while Little Richard is shown playing the piano, Gaines is standing on top of the piano blowing his saxophone. When Little Richard left rock n' roll to become a preacher, Gaines and the Upsetters were the preferred back-up band for Sam Cooke, James Brown, Fats Domino, the Staple Singers, Bobby Darin, Brenda Lee, and more than sixty other artists who were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Gaines had fun, broadening his cultural experiences and expanding his social horizons.

As fascinating as Gaines's life has been, the memoir's design is troubling. Memoirs are supposed to be lenses into an aspect of an individual's life and should offer the reader some perspective into issues, events, and activities of a larger interest. However, the memoir's twelve chapters do

not flow evenly and, at times, the plainspoken narrative seems rambling and repetitive. A major distraction is the far too many anecdotal commentaries and testimonials from Gaines's contemporaries that are interspersed throughout the book. Although the memoir's photographs are vivid reminders of the time period, they also leave the reader wanting to know more about the personalities who made the music industry a catalyst for social change. There are also some minor factual errors. For example, Gaines performed at one of President Bill Clinton's inaugural balls in 1993 and not in 1994.

Nonetheless, Gaines has a story to tell, an insight to offer, and a worldview to share about a transformative period in Texan and American cultural history. Grady Gaines was more than a footnote to history; he was an actual participant and observer.

Suffolk University

LESTER P. LEE JR

Bush League Boys: The Postwar Legends of Baseball in the American Southwest. By Toby Smith. (University of New Mexico Press, 2014. Pp. 216. Further reading, index.)

Between the end of World War II and before television cemented its iron grip on America, minor-league baseball reveled in an Indian summer of popularity. It was perhaps the last era when local heroes genuinely claimed the hearts of children and others who retained youthful hearts. Albuquerque-based journalist Toby Smith has beautifully captured that fleeting time.

A modest amusement common to baby-boom children was collecting baseball cards. From the back of a 1950s bubble-gum card, the author, then a boy living in Connecticut, read an item of trivia on Joe Bauman of the 1954 Roswell Rockets. In that year, Bauman hit seventy-two home runs, far exceeding Babe Ruth's legendary sixty homers in 1927, then the major-league record. Imagine: seventy-two home runs! New Mexico! Cactus and sagebrush! This mind-boggling bit of trivia so impressed young Toby Smith that it was the seed that sixty years on yielded *Bush League Boys*.

Smith begins with a chapter on Bauman and Bob Crues, who drove in a Paul Bunyan-like 254 runs (!) for the Amarillo Gold Sox in 1948. His colorful description of Bauman—"a naturally strong kid, with brick-thick fingers as long as snakes"—is typical of the vivid writing found throughout *Bush League Boys*. Smith shows us that it was not uncommon for a player to marry his bride on the field before a game: "Do you take this left-fielder to be your lawfully wedded husband? Oh, to seal the bonds of holy matrimony on a scruffy grass-and-packed dirt playground before a thousand strangers wolfing red-dyed frankfurters and slugging down Dr Pepper" (153).

Smith employs his journalistic skill to tease out nuggets of rich detail