

BASIC TEXAS BOOKS

The result of 14 years of research, this is a guide to the 224 books that the author considers essential for any Texas research library, chosen from the over 100,000 books about Texas that have been published between Cabeza de Vaca's *Relacion* of 1542 and David Weber's *The Mexican Frontier* of 1982. The text, which usually runs several pages per entry, includes (1) full bibliographical details on every printing and issue; (2) quotations about the book from other scholars; (3) the story of how and why the book was written with anecdotes about the author and printer; (4) a detailed description of the contents of the book; (5) an analysis of the merits and inaccuracies, if any, in each book; (6) related books of significance; and (7) citations to other bibliographies. An additional 1017 Texas books are discussed and appraised and an annotated guide to 217 Texas bibliographies is included. A complete author-title-subject index and 66 full-page illustrations complement the text.

John H. Jenkins is the author and editor of numerous works on Texas history and bibliography, including *Recollections of Early Texas*, *Cracker Barrel Chronicles*, *Audubon & Other Capers*, *Printer in Three Republics*, and *I'm Frank Hamer*. His monumental 10-volume *Papers of the Texas Revolution* won the Summerfield G. Roberts award in 1973 for the best Texas work of the year. He is a Fellow of the Texas State Historical Association and a member of the Texas Institute of Letters and the Texas Philosophical Society.

The volume is designed by William R. Holman.

66opp. 66 illus. Index. 7 x 10in.

\$65.00

JENKINS PUBLISHING COMPANY

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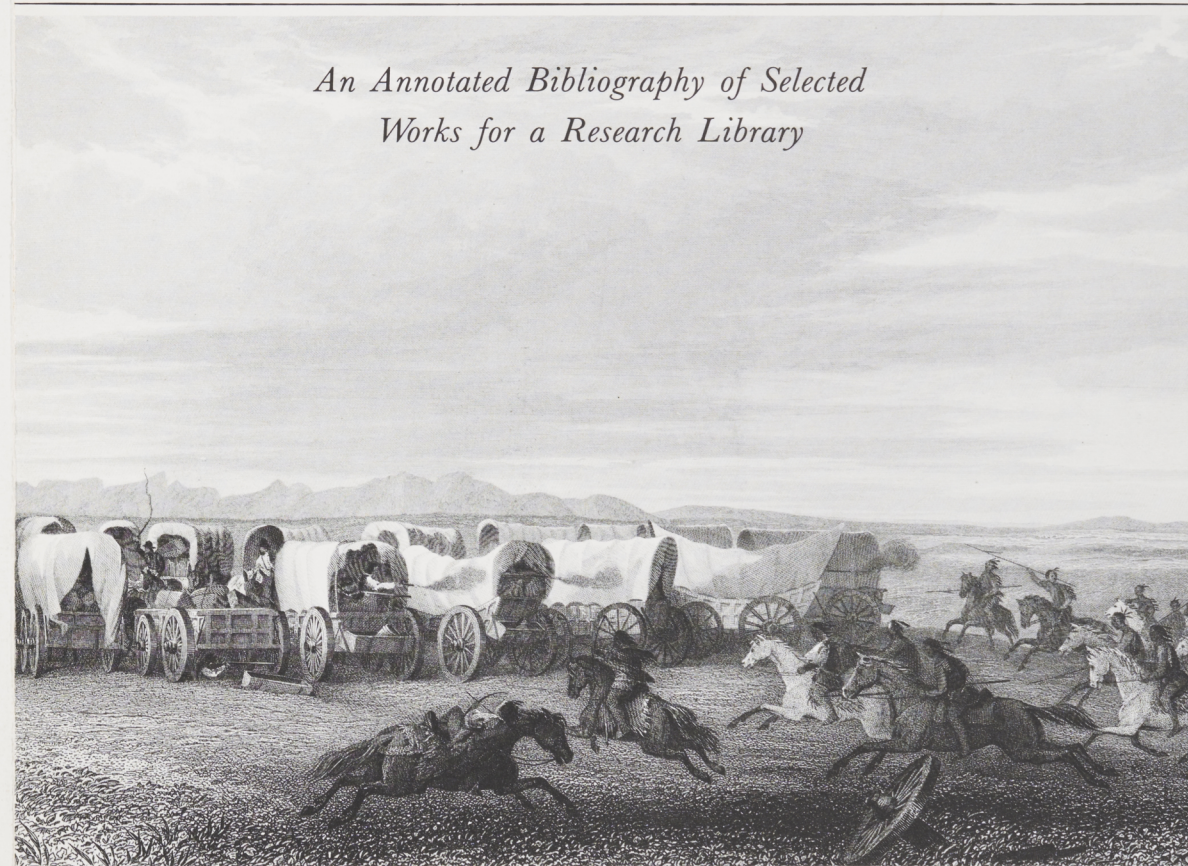
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ANNOUNCING

*An Important Reference Book for Libraries,
Scholars, Collectors, and Readers*

Basic Texas Books

*An Annotated Bibliography of Selected
Works for a Research Library*



By JOHN H. JENKINS

SAMPLE ENTRY

68 Gambrell, Herbert Pickens (1898-1982)

ANSON JONES: THE LAST PRESIDENT OF TEXAS.

Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1948.

viii,[2],462pp. Illus. 22cm.

Cloth, dustjacket.

[Verso of title:] First edition.

Other issues:

- (A). Austin: University of Texas Press, [1964]. xiv,[2],530pp. Verso of title: "Second Edition, with Annotations and Enlarged Bibliography." Foreword by William Ransom Hogan. Best edition by far, because it includes Gambrell's extensive annotations, which had been omitted by the publisher in the first edition.

This is the best biography of a Texan, better written than Barker's *Austin* and more scholarly than James' *Raven*. Walter P. Webb called it a "portrait which no one in Texas has surpassed in biography," and J. Frank Dobie said it is "the most artfully written biography that Texas has yet produced." William R. Hogan said it "has the most sprightly sense of humor I have ever encountered in the pages of a serious book," and Henry Nash Smith wrote that it "reminds us that the merits of a biography, like those of a novel or a painting, depend on treatment rather than subject."

Prior to this biography, Anson Jones was a virtually forgotten man, treated by historians as an insignificant, unsympathetic character. The reasons for this misunderstanding of Jones were twofold. First, Jones was elected President of Texas only because his opponent, Gen. Edward Burleson, was a semi-literate with no claims to the office other than being a frontier hero. Jones, never popular even after becoming president, further exacerbated the Texans by playing a cat-and-mouse game of international politics regarding whether Texas should be annexed or should remain independent, with English and French guaranties of support and with the collateral Texan dependence on Europe for security. Most Texans, then and afterwards, believed Jones favored Europe, and most Texans wanted statehood instead. In 1846, when Jones pulled down the Lone Star flag to officially end the republic and begin

statehood (saying "the final act in this great drama is now performed: the Republic of Texas is no more"), he received no applause. He was never called upon to serve Texas again.

Second, the only significant published defence of Jones was his own *Memoranda and Official Correspondence Relating to the Republic of Texas*. Unfortunately, this ponderous 648-page tome does a poor job of presenting Jones in a favorable light. Written during the 1850's when Jones was sour and bitter over the way he had been bypassed for office in the new state, it suffers from the harshness which Jones let seep into it. Moreover, it was published after Jones committed suicide, by his wife, who issued it just as "left by him, without note or comment [as written by a man] wounded, deeply wounded."

Never has a more forgotten and misunderstood man been more effectively resurrected. Webb said the Gambrell work makes "the mediocre Mr. Jones an unforgettable character." Hogan stated in a review that prior histories had "served to stamp Anson Jones as the churlish little doctor whose brief period of glory went to his head. The reviewer himself pleads guilty. But he hereby hastens to recant." Gambrell gives us an Anson Jones who knew what he was doing for Texas and who deserved a better fate. "With power and skill and play of wit," wrote Dobie, "Herbert Gambrell has gone down into a human soul."

Gambrell shows that Jones always worked towards statehood, playing a masterful game of baiting the United States, Mexico, England, and France with the notion that Texas might join the United States, might become a dependent of Europe, or might build an independent empire of its own. In the last stages of the movement to gain annexation, Jones—even more than Sam Houston—played the crucial and possibly deciding role in bringing about the ever-so-close favorable vote of the U.S. Congress offering statehood. In doing so, he not only outfoxed the international community but, without meaning to, deceived his own constituency so completely that they disbelieved him later when he tried to explain his motives.

As Gambrell states, Jones "was to puzzle foreign ministers and diplomatists on two continents. He was to play a hand in a game for fabulous stakes, and there would be a time when statesmen at London and Paris and Washington watched him more closely than they did each other. It was a game that determined the course of American and, to a certain extent, world history."