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because sometimes we actually do something here that makes a difference, for the good. (p. 78)

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Spanish Expeditions into Texas, 1689–1768. By William C. Foster. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995. 339 pages. \$45.00 cloth; \$19.95 paper.

Spanish Expeditions into Texas is a most valuable reference work regarding many aspects of the period of early Spanish expeditions into Texas, its inhabitants, its rivers, and its flora and fauna. The book encompasses eleven expeditions from the late seventeenth century to 1768.

Leaders of the Spanish expeditions were required to keep diaries; others who were not required to keep diaries did so as well. They described what they saw during each day's travel and identified or named the streams crossed and campsites used. They also stated the direction followed and estimated the number of leagues traveled each day. Diarists named and described the Indian tribes they encountered as well as the animals, trees, shrubs, landmarks, and weather.

Foster's purpose was to trace as accurately as possible the route each expedition followed. Since later parties followed at least part of the route of earlier ones, it was possible to compare information given in the diaries to contemporary topographic maps to verify the landmarks noted. The routes and campsites used on successive tours were then identified on U.S. Geological Survey topographical maps to check the accuracy of distance estimates between rivers and camp locations and to verify the reports of heavily wooded areas. Aerial photographs and on-site inspections enabled Foster to ascertain sites even in remote regions.

The diaries required for each expedition provide the main source for determining routes. Diaries had to be signed under oath and attested by at least two responsible members of each party. On six of the eleven expeditions more than one diary was kept, and these additional diaries provided information for cross-checking the directions and distances traveled daily and for identifying campsites.

Because translators occasionally omitted one or more daily entries, the author had to consult manuscript copies to learn the

directions and distances traveled on those missing days. Although distance estimates vary slightly from one diarist to another, most daily travel distances recorded proved fairly reliable when checked against contemporary topographic maps. Foster used several diaries to learn the various names first applied to rivers and streams and to determine the modern waterways to which they referred. Names were often wrongly applied to the rivers crossed, creating confusion among diarists.

Tracing in minute detail the route of any expedition is virtually impossible, because no diary provides enough detailed information, and each has some flaw, such as failing to note the direction or distance of a day's travel or giving the wrong name to a river or campsite. But by consulting the seventeen diaries for the eleven expeditions and comparing them, Foster determined a reasonably accurate route for each. Because it was found that the riverbeds have not been much altered by natural causes in three hundred years, nor the inland prairies or groves bordering them, modern topographic maps and aerial photographs have helped enormously in identifying landmarks. Most terrain features described by diarists can be found today on contemporary maps or by on-site observations. Route maps accompany each chapter. Another factor is that some Spaniards or Indian guides who had accompanied earlier parties were usually present after the first expedition.

Recent studies by climatologists indicate that these Spanish expeditions all occurred during a "Little Ice Age," from about 1550 to 1850, when Europe and North America were much colder and wetter than today. This explains why some parties encountered sleet, snow, and freezing weather in South Texas, and even below the Rio Grande.

Expedition leaders were required to use experienced Indian guides at all times. The guides were instructed to follow familiar Indian trade routes, not to seek new trails. As a result the early expeditions blazed no new trails through unexplored wilderness. Because of Foster's thorough and painstaking methods in verifying the routes, it is safe to assume that they are as accurate as is possible to make them with the available documentation.

The fatal impact of European diseases on the native populations of the Americas had already occurred widely before they began to affect the Texas Indians in the late seventeenth century. The population collapse in the Americas after 1500 has been called the worst demographic disaster in world history. Sixteenth-cen-

ture epidemics had reduced the population of central Mexico by perhaps 90 percent. Concerning northern Mexico, the seventeenth-century historian Juan Bautista Chapa, who accompanied the first two expeditions, listed 161 tribes south of the Rio Grande that had already become extinct. Then he listed ninety-five others and predicted correctly that they, too, would vanish as a result of conquest and disease.

The first of the expeditions included in this volume was that of Coahuila governor Alonso de Leon in 1689 in search of La Salle's colony. Four earlier efforts by land and five by sea had failed to find it. Just north of the Rio Grande, De Leon found Frenchman Jean Gery, whom La Salle had sent to "pacify" the tribes near the river. Gery served as guide and interpreter, for he knew several Indian languages. He led De Leon to the ruins of the French settlement, which smallpox and a Karankawa war party had destroyed. Surviving Frenchmen among the Indians told of the smallpox epidemic that had killed many settlers and spread to neighboring Indian villages.

Early in 1690 De Leon set out again with orders to burn the remains of La Salle's Fort Saint Louis on Matagorda Bay and then to search for French survivors among the Indians. After that, if the Tejas Indians were receptive, he was to establish a mission near the Neches River, which he did.

The 1691 expedition was carried out under both Domingo Teran de los Rios, governor of the province of Tejas, and Fray Damian Massanet. On the way, Massanet received two letters, delivered by Indians, from the missionaries among the Tejas, reporting that the Indians had turned against them. Massanet remained at the Tejas missions.

In 1693 Governor Gregorio de Salina Varona of Coahuila, who had twice visited the Tejas area, led a party to resupply the missions. Soon after Salinas returned, the Tejas forced Massanet and the other priests to leave.

In 1709 Fray Isidro Espinosa and Fray Antonio de Olivares, with a small escort, made a brief trip to the Colorado River to check on rumors that the Tejas were prepared to move there if the Spaniards would build them a mission. The rumor proved false.

Early in 1716 Captain Domingo Ramon set out to establish missions and a presidio on the northeastern fringe of the land Spain claimed. Heading the priests were Espinosa and Fray Antonio Margil. Ramon remained as commander of the new presidio.

In 1718 Martin de Alarcon, as governor of the province of Texas, led an expedition to establish a presidio and mission on the San Antonio River and to deliver supplies to the East Texas missions. A year later, when war began between Spain and France, French troops approached the East Texas settlements and the Spaniards withdrew. In 1721 Governor Marques de Miguel de Aguayo was sent to reestablish Spanish authority, to found new missions, and to rebuild the presidio at Los Adaes on the Red River.

In late 1727 Brigadier Pedro de Rivera reached Texas while surveying presidios. His orders required a full description of the land, climate, vegetation, wildlife, and Indian tribes. There were no more Spanish expeditions across Texas until 1767, when the Marques de Rubi made another military survey. By this time France had ceded Louisiana to Spain.

In the fall of 1767 Fray Gaspar José de Solis made an inspection tour of the Franciscan missions. His diary contains detailed and valuable observations and comments on Texas and the Indians.

For those more interested in other matters than the routes followed, the appendices are most useful. The first one lists the Texas wild animals recorded in the diaries. The second lists trees, shrubs, bushes, vines, mosses, and grasses. The third is about epidemic disease episodes. The fourth lists and briefly describes the 140 Indian tribes encountered. The bibliography and index are extensive.

The diarists also mention sightings of wild Spanish horses and cattle, homosexuality among certain tribes, the mail deliveries to distant posts, and other matters. The diaries are an important source of information for archaeologists, ethnohistorians, anthropologists, biographers, climatologists, historical demographers, and other scholars. William Foster has performed a most valuable service.

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Through All the Displacements: Poems by Edgar Gabriel Silex.
By Edgar Gabriel Silex. Willimantic, Connecticut: Curbstone Press, 1995. 78 pages. \$10.95 paper.

Edgar Silex's gut-honest and passionate collection of the damages stemming from multilevel colonization, *Through All the Displace-*