A Sampler of Books by Texas Authors

Texas has a variety of writers of fiction and nonfiction. They write in many genres including drama, satire, history, commentary, short story, and novels of mystery, romance, and westerns. This sampler includes books by people who were born in Texas, lived in Texas, as well as some who say they came to Texas, “as fast I could.”

Collision  DB/RC 67269  by Jeff Abbott  Military consultant Ben Frostberg’s bride is shot dead on their honeymoon. Two years later an assassin is murdered – and Ben’s card is found in the victim’s pocket. As Ben tries to convince Homeland Security agents he’s being framed, a deep-cover government agent violently rescues him.  Violence and strong language.

Holly Blues: A China Bayles Mystery  LB 06437  by Susan Wittig Albert  China Bayles is fit to spit when her husband’s troubled ex-wife, Sally, shows up at her herb shop, claiming to be broke with nowhere else to turn. When she invites Sally to stay, China starts receiving menacing calls from an “ex” of Sally’s, who seems to have a connection to the murder of China’s parents.  Strong language.

Yokota Officers Club  RC 54726  by Sarah Bird  Okinawa, 1960s. Hippie Bernadette Root returns to her large, nomadic, Air Force family after a year stateside at college. She wins a dance contest then performs on tour through Japan, looks up her family’s former maid, and discovers past secrets.  Strong language.

First American: The Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin  RC 50878  by H.W. Brands  Biography of one of America’s founding fathers, incorporating correspondence and anecdotes of his contemporaries. Franklin was heralded as a leading inventor and scientist, author, and diplomat as well as a bon vivant. In exploring Franklin’s conversion from British loyalist to revolutionary, Brands seeks out the genius within the man.  Best seller.

Glass Rainbow: A Dave Robicheaux Novel  DB 71706 and LB 06465  by James Lee Burke  Louisiana detective Dave Robicheaux worries about his adopted daughter Alafair’s involvement with local writer Kermit Abelard, whose protégé is an ex-con memoirist Robert Weingart. Robicheaux’s concerns grow when he and PI Clete Purcel find connections between the Abelard clan and the murders of seven young women.  Violence and strong language.

Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories  RC 33451  by Sandra Cisneros  A collection of twenty-two short stories about growing up female in a culture where men are unfaithful and families are held together by the church and a sense of community. The stories reflect the experiences of these women, born south of the border but living in the United States and caught between two cultures, the past, and the present.  Some strong language.

Cow People  BR 08805 and CT 04648  by J. Frank Dobie  A chronicle of Texas ranchers and their customs. Written in the natural rhythm of Texas language, it is an affectionate and nostalgic remembrance of life lived long ago.
Lone Star CT 03669 by T. R. Fehrenbach A history of the Lone Star State, as well as an insider’s look at the people, politics, and events that shaped Texas.

Farewell: A Memoir of a Texas Childhood CT 06443 and RC 49782 by Horton Foote The prize-winning writer of drama and screenplays reminisces about his family experiences in Wharton, a small Texas town. He describes his parents’ circumstances at the time of his birth in 1916 and continues until he leaves home at age seventeen to study and work at the Pasadena Playhouse in California.

God Bless John Wayne RC 45711 by Kinky Friedman Kinky Friedman, country singer turned mystery writer, reluctantly agrees to help his buddy Ratso find his birth mother. The simple search becomes a case for the irreverent, wisecracking “Kinkstah” when Ratso’s previous PI turns up dead. Strong language and descriptions of sex.

Old Yeller BR 07798, BR 11976, RC 47404, and DB 47404 by Freed Gipson 1860s Texas. Fourteen-year-old Travis at first resents the big, yellow stray dog that hangs around his home, but he comes to love and depend on him. With his father away on a cattle drive, Travis is the man of the house and looks to Old Yeller for help and protection. Newberry Award winner.

Goodbye to a River CT 02908 by John Graves John Graves leads us through an exciting three-week trip down the Brazos River in this classic narrative. An excellent history of the early inhabitants along the river is well woven into this engrossing book, with memories of events in Texas history that took place along that river.

Gates of the Alamo RC 51379 by Stephen Harrigan Saga of the legendary mission in the Mexican territory called Texas in 1835-1836. Features fictional characters of Edmund McGowan, a traveling botanist; widow Mary Mott, a San Antonio innkeeper; and Mott’s sixteen-year old son Terrell, as well as historical personalities. Some descriptions of sex and some strong language.

The Gift of the Magi and Other Stories BT 03343 by O. Henry Includes the classic “The Gift of the Magi” and other short stories featuring O. Henry’s trademark “twist endings.”

Strangers on a Train CR 01846 by Patricia Highsmith Two men, a tennis star and a psychopath, meet by chance on a train and “swap” murders. Strangers on a Train was the source for Alfred Hitchcock’s classic masterpiece. Some violence.

Klail City CT 05280 by Rolando Hinojosa Rolando Hinojosa is one of the best known and most prolific Mexican American novelists. Klail City in its Spanish version won Latin America’s most prestigious literary award, Casa de las Americas. The pivotal novel in Hinojosa’s continuing saga, Klail City deals with power and race relationships in the lower Rio Grande Valley. Strong language.

Conan the Warrior RC 22180 Robert Ervin Howard (edited by L. Sprague de Camp) Heroic fantasy features Conan the Cimmerian, a barbarian adventurer of massive strength living in the Hyborian Age. Tiring of uneventful guard duty in a border post, Conan finds his next adventure when he befriends a beautiful woman pirate who is fleeing from the Stygians.

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Fax Me a Bagel: A Ruby the Rabbi’s Wife Mystery, No. 1  CT 06420  by Sharon Kahn  When a patron drops dead in The Hot Bagel, Ruby’s friend the baker faces interrogation and it’s up to Ruby to fill the holes in the story. Ruby Rothman loves bagels, as did her late husband, Stu, formerly the rabbi of a thriving congregation in Eternal, Texas, before a hit-and-run driver killed him. Ruby is particularly partial to the bagels her friend Milt sells in his shop, The Hot Bagel. She likes them so much, in fact, she’s seriously considering Milt’s offer to become a partner in the business. Her plans don’t change when Marla Solomon, the sister of a “mover and shaker” in the congregation, drops dead, nearly at Milt’s feet, from ingesting a poisoned bagel. Some strong language.

Buckskin Line  DB 50220 and LB 04794  by Elmer Kelton  On the Texas frontier in 1840, Comanche warrior Buffalo Caller claims a red-haired boy during a raid that kills many settlers. The orphan, Rusty Shannon, is eventually rescued, grows up to become a Ranger; and, years later, has another encounter with Buffalo Caller.

Who Let the Dogs in? Incredible Political Animals I Have Known  RC 59290  by Molly Ivins  Texas columnist portrays national figures from the Reagan era through George “Dubya” Bush’s first term. Selections, which previously appeared in Ivins’s newspaper column or elsewhere, include irreverent commentary on Ross Perot, Dan Quayle, Newt Gingrich, John Ashcroft, Ann Richards, Phil Gramm, and Madonna. Some strong language. Best seller.

Death of a Healing Woman: A Texana Jones Mystery  RC 47921  by Allana Martin  Texana Jones operates a trading post on the Mexico-U.S. border. She is still mourning the death of two friends when she finds the body of a third, healer Rhea Fair. The authorities blame drug couriers. As Texana investigates, an outbreak of rabies spreads through the countryside. Spur Award Winner. Some violence.

The Road  BR 17072 and RC 63649  by Cormac McCarthy  A father and his young son journey south after the destruction of the civilized world. Their survival kit consists of a few blankets, a pistol, a cart of scavenged food, and their love for each other. Their values are tested by encounters with other desperate survivors. Best seller.

Dead Man’s Walk  BR 12567 and LB 04497  by Larry McMurtry  This prequel to Lonesome Dove recounts the early days of Gus McCrae and Woodrow Call. Not yet twenty, they join the Texas Rangers under the command of Caleb Cobb. Traveling with the Rangers is Matilda Roberts, a hefty prostitute who occasionally provides comfort to the men as they head for Santa Fe across the Jornada del Muerto. Violence, strong language, and some descriptions of sex.

Texas  BR 06335 and RC 22973  by James A. Michener  In this novel, the Texas governor charges a task force with studying the state’s history to encourage citizens to appreciate their heritage. The author blends fact and fiction in an expansive panorama that follows the lives and fortunes of several families of varied ethnic backgrounds, from the days of the Conquistadors to the modern lives of contemporary oil barons. Some strong language and some descriptions of sex.

Pale Horse, Pale Rider  BR 17498, CT 03767, and RC 65339  by Katherine Anne Porter  A short story collection. In “Old Mortality” girls Maria and Miranda learn about
the young woman pictured in an old framed photograph at their grandmother’s house. “Noon Wine” is about Olaf Helton, who hires on at a Texas dairy farm. The title piece recounts a grown-up Miranda’s tragic love affair with a soldier.

Deerinwater  RC 25272  by Jan Reid  Jared Ramey, ex high school football star, college dropout, and Marine, returns to his home town of Deerinwater, Texas, to seek his little daughter’s love. He also wants to try to reclaim his former wife and win back the respect of his parents. Working as a deputy, Jared is drawn into a fierce feud between his boss, Sheriff Sam Bookout, and District Attorney Jerome Ramey, Jared’s father. Violence, strong language, and explicit descriptions of sex.

Lightning Thief: Percy Jackson and the Olympians  RC 63443  by Rick Riordan  Upstate New York, 2005. Sixth-grader Percy Jackson is shocked to discover that he is the son of Poseidon and a mortal mother. He attends a summer camp where demigods learn to defend themselves against the predations of monsters from Greek myth. After Percy angers Zeus, his friends Grover, a satyr, and Annabeth, daughter of Athena, join him in a quest to resolve the problem. For grades 5-8.

Arms of Nemesis  RC 41404  by Steven Saylor  The Spartacus Slave Revolt is underway in 72 B.C., and some slaves are suspected of murder. Gordianus the Finder is awakened at night by a visitor who insists he come with him to Baiae on the Bay of Naples. Upon arrival, Gordianus learns the overseer of Marcus Crassus’s estate has been murdered, and if the guilty parties can not be found before the funeral games, ninety-nine slaves will die. Some violence.

The Tourist  DB 69186  by Olen Steinhauer  After barely surviving a difficult mission, Milo Weaver transfers out of his post as a CIA assassin or “tourist.” But when an old friend is suspected of espionage, Milo must leave his family and desk job to revisit his dark past. Some violence and some strong language.

Lone Texan  DB/RC 69944 and LB 06519  by Jodi Thomas  Galveston, Texas, 1859. Widow Sage McMurray Lander of Whispering Mountain Ranch returns home after studying medicine back East. Drummond Roak has waited for Sage and begins courting her, but unsavory outlaws and Sage’s brother-in-law cause problems that include kidnapping and murder. Explicit descriptions of sex and some violence.

The Great Plains  CT 03807  by Walter Prescott Webb  A landmark work in historical interpretation of the West, this book examines the causes and effects of development of the plains. It analyzes the land, climate, barbed wire, dry farming, wells, windmills, and native animal life in a very readable style.