

## Annotated Bibliography

### INTRODUCTIONS TO THE ACRE

Selcer, Richard F. *Hell's Half Acre: the Life and Legend of a Red-Light District*. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1991.

Dr. Selcer provides us with the classic guide to the history of the Acre, having done the essential, foundational work of having deeply studied the primary source documents— memoirs, court records, census documents, maps, and of course newspapers like the *Fort Worth Democrat* –and synthesized all of these into a living, breathing narrative that presents the history of Fort Worth, and of its Vice district, with great social clarity, humanizing legendary and risqué characters and helping us to understand their lived environment. I highly recommend the entire works of Dr. Selcer.

Nichols, Mike. “Sodom on the Trinity (Part 1): A Cold Day in Hell.” Hometown by Handlebar, 2020. <https://hometownbyhandlebar.com/>.

Nichols brings a journalist’s eye for vivid and clarifying detail to the primary source records, and presents the history of Fort Worth (and occasionally the Acre) with narrative flair and a palpable love and contagious curiosity for the rediscovered pasts and places of his hometown.

WELL-WRITTEN WORKS OF HISTORICAL/REGIONAL CONTEXT,  
RELEVANT TO PIONEER FORT WORTH/ “COWTOWN”

Dykstra, Robert R. *The Cattle Towns*. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1983.

Dykstra tells the story of the Kansas cattle towns at the end of the trail, and does a particularly good job of illuminating the political and economics that would make or break a town as a successful depot of the cattle trade. His passages on the political and economic in-fighting that stemmed from the issues of quarantine (on Texas cattle carrying fever-bearing ticks) might support a case-study relevant to our own moment of history.

Hämäläinen, Pekka. *The Comanche Empire*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009.

A richly researched/fiercely argued work placing the Comanche in a truly international context, especially relevant to Texas and Fort Worth history by clarifying the military, economic and environmental considerations that led to the establishment of this outpost on the Trinity, at the edge of the Comanche empire.

Skaggs, Jimmy M. *The Cattle-Trailing Industry: between Supply and Demand, 1866-1890*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991.

The classic description of the history, economics and human dynamics of the cattle-trailing industry which sustained early Fort Worth.

White, Richard. *Railroaded: the Transcontinentals and the Making of Modern America*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2012.

An excellent narrative of the contest between railroads/the egos of railroad tycoons, that governed the expansion of the Texas & Pacific Railroad across the west and—from our own perspective —its critical juncture with Fort Worth in 1876.

## USEFUL WORKS TO UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT OF A 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY VICE DISTRICT:

Asbury, Herbert. *Sucker's Progress: An Informal History of Gambling in America from the Colonies to Canfield*. Montclair, NJ: Patterson Smith, 1969.

A concise and entertaining description of the key games/cheats that defined frontier America; the chapter on Faro is especially good.

Bullough, Vern L., and Robbie Tyrell. *A Bibliography of Prostitution*. New York: Garland, 1977.

For those wishing to explore the history/subject matter of prostitution in an academic manner, the works of Vern Bullough are a good starting point.

Frost, H. Gordon. *The Gentlemen's Club: The Story of Prostitution in El Paso*. El Paso: Mangan Books, 1983.

Mr. Frost humanizes and enriches the historical subject of Texas prostitution by having conducted interviews with the surviving veterans of the trade, which provides a countervailing force against some of our moralistic assumptions of the trade's economic and human dynamics.

Hitchcock, Tim and Robert Shoemaker, Sharon Howard and Jamie McLaughlin, *et al.*, *London Lives, 1690-1800*([www.londonlives.org](http://www.londonlives.org), version 1.1, 24 April 2012).

The London Lives website is a wealth of primary source documents and historical essays; especially relevant to the subject of vice are the essays on English common law approaches to Vagrancy, and approaches to policing (and fining) from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

Humphrey, David C. “Prostitution in Texas: From the 1830s to the 1960s.” *East Texas Historical Journal* 33, no. 1 (1995).  
<https://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/ethj/vol33/iss1/8>.

Humphrey’s historical essay is the best single summary of the history of prostitution in Texas, touching the key currents (social, economic, legal) that have governed its form.

Jackson , Ken. “Spence v. Fenchler The Case That Ended Legalized Prostitution In Texas.” *El Paso Bar Journal*, 2015, 7–10.  
[https://elpasobar.com/system/bar\\_journal/document/67/EPBJDEC15web.pdf](https://elpasobar.com/system/bar_journal/document/67/EPBJDEC15web.pdf).

An entertaining and highly illuminating essay describing the role of El Paso (and future Walt Disney) attorney Gunther R. Lessing in bringing a Texas Supreme Court Case which apparently radically altered/undermined the footing of Municipal Regulation districts that had governed vice in many Texas cities, following the 19<sup>th</sup> century model that had been established by Paris and London.

Parent-Duchâtelet, A.-J.-B. *Prostitution in Paris, Considered Morally, Politically, and Medically: Prepared for Philanthropists and Legislators from Statistical Documents*. Books. Boston: C.H. Brainard, 1845.

The work of Parent du Châtelet (the variant spelling of whose name seems to be a source of difficulty in the bibliographic record) was formative to the systems of Reglementation/Regulation that governed much of 19<sup>th</sup> century prostitution in Europe, and also in many cities in the USA, including in Texas. Reglementation’s chief aim was to suppress the spread of syphilis by registering and regularly medically examining prostitutes; Parent du Chatelet’s work (and that of his followers) is also interesting in providing actual detailed statistics of prostitution from the records of the Paris police.

Ringdal, Nils Johan. *Love for Sale: A World History of Prostitution*. New York: Grove Press, 2005.

Ringdal's ambitious history challenges many of our assumptions of what pre-modern sexuality/ moral and legal attitudes towards prostitution actually looked like, before the arrival of syphilis in the 1500s; his chapters on medieval sexuality make it particularly clear that the European model/assumption had long been that prostitution was a vice to be fined as a form of remunerative tax, chiefly through the agency of the Church, and that many (if not most) of the great monuments of the Gothic period were essentially paid for by prostitutes, who in many instances had formed themselves into Guilds which directly participated in civic life. Again, the arrival of syphilis and the onset of the Reformation appear to have been transformative, and his subsequent chapters on the Reglementation /Regulation system and the eventual moralistic push-back (frequently led by erstwhile Abolitionists and early Feminists) are also fascinating context. His chapter discussing the history of the "sex trade/white slave" narrative, is also very illuminating and perhaps still relevant to the moral, political and legal dynamics of our own day.

Sanger, William W. *The History of Prostitution: Its Extent, Causes and Effects throughout the World; Being an Official Report to the Board of Alms-House Governors of the City of New York*. New York: Harper, 1858.

An embodiment of the Parent du Chatelet regulation approach, and usage of concrete statistics, from New York City in the 1850s; with interesting chapters summarizing the contemporary legal approaches towards prostitution and regulation, in countries around the world.

## INTERESTING WORKS OF LOCAL INTEREST TO THE ACRE

Humphrey-Donnell , Donna. “The Well-off Fort Worth Madam Who Wasn’t Really Etta Place.” Historynet.com. <https://www.historynet.com/well-off-fort-worth-madam-wasnt-really-etta-place.htm>.

In which the identity of the last Madame in the Acre, Eunice Grey proprietress of the Waco Hotel (adjacent property to current A&M Law Building) is revealed through solid historical research and interviews.

Thompson, Jim. *Bad Boy*. New York: Mulholland Books / Little, Brown and Company, 2014.

Autobiographical novel of Fort Worth’s great noir scribe, describing his experiences in the last glimmerings of the Acre as a teenaged bellhop in the Hotel Texas during the 1920s.