



The State Library and Archives of Texas: A History, 1835-1962

David B. Gracy II

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The Texas State Library and Archives Commission celebrated its centennial in 2009. To honour that milestone, former State Archivist David Gracy has taken a retrospective look at the agency's colourful and sometimes contentious history as Texas' official information provider and record keeper. In this book, he chronicles more than a century of efforts by dedicated librarians and archivists to deliver the essential, nonpartisan library and archival functions of government within a political environment in which legislators and governors usually agreed that libraries and archives were good and needed - but they disagreed about whatever expenditure was being proposed at the moment.

Gracy recounts the stories of persevering, sometimes controversial state librarians and archivists, and commission members, including Ernest Winkler, Elizabeth West (the first female agency head in Texas government), Fannie Wilcox, Virginia Gambrell, and Louis Kemp, who worked to provide Texans the vital services of the state library and archives - developing public library service statewide, maintaining state and federal records for use by the public and lawmakers, running summer reading programs for children, providing services for the visually impaired, and preserving the historically significant records of Texas as a colony, province, republic, and state. Gracy explains how the agency has struggled to balance its differing library and archival functions and, most of all, to be treated as a full-range information provider, and not just as a collection of disparate services.

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