

The Sesquicentennial of Texas: A Commemoration

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TWO YEARS AGO, THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE TEXAS STATE HISTORICAL Association authorized Dr. L. Tuffly Ellis, who served as the director of the Association for eight years and as managing editor and editor of the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* for seventeen years, to produce four expanded sesquicentennial issues for the eighty-ninth volume of the *Quarterly*. I am aware that I am flying false colors, for this one particular issue, which bears my name as editor, is essentially the product of Dr. Ellis's efforts. As testimony to his service to the Association, it even carries his last Director's Report, which he envisioned as an explanation of the many duties of the organization, complete with a record of what he saw as its accomplishments and failures. We shall all miss Dr. Ellis. He was, in the most basic sense, a visionary who accepted only the best from his associates, colleagues, and friends. His immense labors on behalf of the Association, particularly in the development of the new *Handbook of Texas*, are now and will continue to be honored for years to come. Indeed, we have passed through what may properly be called the Ellis years.

It is altogether appropriate that the *Quarterly* increase its offering with this volume. The Texas Sesquicentennial Commission, in view of the state's economic austerity program, has urged communities and organizations to take up the slack where funding is lacking. Because it is the oldest learned society in Texas, and because of its distinctive mission, the Association takes genuine pleasure in responding affirmatively to that challenge. This year the *Quarterly* will carry at least twelve articles, as opposed to the usual four to eight, and it will cover the Texas experience from the prerevolutionary period to modern times. It is the *Quarterly's* way of joining in a salute to Texas during the 150th anniversary of its independence.

Special issues are not altogether new to the *Quarterly*. In April, 1973, there was a special number dedicated to the black experience in Texas. Another solid achievement was the issue on the Mexican War, pub-

lished in July, 1973, and most recently, the Centennial of the University of Texas was commemorated by the *Quarterly* in October, 1982. This was the only scholarly effort to record major portions of the school's history. But for all the exertions involved in those projects, they were, in fact, only single issues of the *Quarterly*. This present offering will encompass an entire volume—the full four issues.

Accordingly, the *Quarterly* staff has found itself much busier than usual, and I acknowledge with grateful pleasure the scores of authors, editors, and referees who contributed to making these numerous pages possible. In particular, George B. Ward, managing editor, Mary M. Standifer, senior editor, and Janice M. Pinney, assistant editor, deserve special recognition. Faced with a reduction of the *Quarterly* staff by one-fourth just as this project began, they nevertheless responded with grace under pressure and are making every effort to produce a quality volume.

Finally, I would like to add a personal note to these remarks. This past spring I was honored by the Executive Council by being asked to assume, for one year, the duties of acting director of the Association. With Dr. Ellis's retirement in May, however, the Council asked if I would assume these duties much earlier than we had anticipated and take the title of interim director. I accepted the Council's offer, and because of the generosity of Southwest Texas State University, I was able to come to Austin three months earlier than originally planned. At this time, I would very much like to thank the many well-wishers, colleagues, and friends for their encouragement and support during this interim period. The burden of the director's duties has been eased enormously by their solicitous attentions. While these kindnesses can never be repaid, they are, at least, appreciatively recognized at this time.