A Lens on Texas; Summary of Contents, Volumes I – IV

Each of the four volumes are about 240 pages long… so the complete set is almost 1,000 pages in total. They are printed in a large landscape format measuring 13"x11" on high quality premium lustre paper suitable for providing the best reproduction of the photographic material.
To purchase a set, please contact Jerry Clark either through this website or at email jerryclark7877@gmail.com

*Texas' human history and cultural aspects are presented in **Volumes I-III**. As such, these volumes are more text-driven than **Volume IV**, which focuses on Texas landscape photography.*

***In these Volumes I-III**, my goal was to organize and curate the material, provide insight and analysis to the trends, and highlight or expand on things that I find just plain interesting. And include some photography on the way … actually, there is a great deal of photography included, virtually all of which is my own. While I use some images from internet sources, such as maps and certain illustrations and some photographs, attributions for these other images are always referenced. Also, each section will include some deeper-dive photo-essays on specific topics. These include such architectural/cultural topics as the Spanish Missions from the 1600s and 1700s, the heavenly Painted Churches from the Czech, German and Polish communities around Schulenburg, and the impressive and historical courthouses and town squares of certain county seats, where history is literally written on the plaques that dot the lawns, and where the county's founders, heroes, and stories up to the modern age are often commemorated. Also, certain small towns or features of human construct that create a worthy or just interesting photo exposition are included. There is also a photo essay on San Antonio, which to me is the most historically significant and beautiful large town in Texas. Other photo-essays in these Volumes spotlight unique aspects of life in the small towns across the state today, as well as certain features of some of the other big cities. All of these deeper photo-dives, built from my own photography, bring more visual life to various aspects of Texas history.*

That all said, each period includes timelines of major events that occurred. Much of the text in the first three volumes is derived from and attributed where possible to related articles I accessed on the internet, including images and maps and graphs. In many cases, material is used either in whole parts or abridged from such articles. I have footnoted the sources I have used, with references typically shown at the end of sections. Most of the trend analyses and summaries and conclusions are my own.

***Volume IV** steps away from the human history and focuses on regional landscape photography. This includes an overview of the regional physiography of Texas, and then includes my photo-essays from my favorite parts of each region: the wildflowers of Central Texas and Hill Country area, the coastal scenes and birds of the Gulf Coast, the mystical cypress forest and the birds of Caddo Lake in the Piney Woods, the North Texas Plains, and the rugged desert and mountainous areas in West Texas, especially Big Bend. The beauty here often speaks for itself, so this Volume IV is a more text-light photobook.*

So with that said, here is a brief summary of each of the four volumes.

Volume I: The History – From the First People though the Spanish Mission Period.
Like a James Michener book, this Volume begins with the First Peoples from 20,000 years ago and the Native American civilizations that emerged, and then continues with the 300 years of Spanish rule dominated by the "Mission Strategy" upon which their colonizing effort was based. This Volume contains several Photo Essays and Side-bar extensions, including various Paleo Indian sites, The Lady in Blue miracle story, The El Paso Missions, The cities of El Paso and Ciudad Juarez, Presidio and Redford, and the Spanish Missions from San Antonio to Goliad to Menard.

This Volume consists of three Sections.
***Section I (pp 9-28): 20,000 BC to 0 AD. Ancestral Homo Genus and their Migration Patterns/Timing of the First Peoples in Texas** – This section tells the story of the archaeological finds both within and just outside Texas' border that changed North American archaeology, and summarizes the Paleo and Archaic Indian periods in Texas from 20,000 BC to 0/500 AD.*
***Section II (pp 29-56): The Ancestral North Americans Timeline Story, from 0 AD to Today.** This section tells the story of the emergence of tribes and their civilizations from Year 0 to 1500 AD, followed by the largely disease-driven post-Columbian decline in their population from 1500-1850, their subsequent forced displacement (1850-1900 AD), and their rebound to today. The section concludes with a summary of the population changes, and an Appendix detailing this population over the 10,000 years from 8000 BC to 2020 AD.*

***Section III (pp 57-239)**: **The Spanish Period in Texas: 1519 to 1821.** This Section begins with an Introduction outlining the immense breadth and scope of Spain's claims to North and Central America, and the early 1500s exploratory expeditions ("entradas") upon which these claims were based. It then continues with a brief summary of the principles behind Spain's "Mission-first" strategy for colonizing its territories, and the goals and objectives Spain hoped to achieve. It then chronicles Spain's colonization efforts in Texas, beginning with the first expedition into west Texas and New Mexico led by Juan de Onate in 1598. In total, Spain built some 43 missions and 16 presidios within or bordering today's Texas.*

At its peak in 1800, Spain controlled all of the US Lower 48 west of the Mississippi except the Pacific Northwest; all of the "Gulf of Spain" including Florida through Louisiana and Texas and all of Central America and virtually all of the Caribbean; as well as major parts of South America. It was the dominant land-owner of the New World. It would lose it all across the next 21 years, with the final piece being Mexico's 1821 victory in its War for Independence.

***Volume II** continues with the Mexican Period and the fight for Texas independence, and continues with how Texas emerged from being an under-populated Republic to being the fastest growing member of the United States in the rest of the 1800s. This includes all the challenges, conflicts, and cultural upheavals that occurred, fairly and unfairly, along the way to 1900.*

This Volume II consists of three parts:
***Part I (pp 3-66): 1821 to 1836 – The Period of Mexican Rule through The Texas Revolution** – tells the story of how Stephen Austin led the initiative to bring "The Old 300" and, along with other "empresarios", filled land grants they received with Anglos to settle Tejas as part of the new Mexican nation, only to see Mexico claw back rights and promises. This led to the Texas revolution, the crushing defeat at the Alamo and the Goliad Massacre, and then, in the next "47 Days that Forever Changed History", how Sam Houston was able to manufacture a victory against all odds, culminating with victory at The Battle of San Jacinto.*

***Part II (pp 67-138): 1836 to 1861 – The Republic of Texas, US Statehood, Antebellum Growth, Secession** – tells the story of how the new Republic of Texas navigated the early competing visions of itself to become the 38th member of the United States, growing by leaps and bounds with the influx of people from other US states and other countries abroad, and the challenges these people faced in forging a new life, including dealing with internal factions of pro-slavery versus pro Union leading up to the Civil War. It also includes a deeper dive into the data of Texas population growth from less than 10,000 in 1820 to over 600,000 in 1860, including examples of the various ethnic groups who emigrated from Europe.*

***Part III (pp 139-163): 1860 to 1900 – Civil War, Transition, Indian Conflict, Growth and Expansion** – tells the story of Texas' involvement in the Civil War, the aftermath of Juneteenth and Reconstruction, and how the state's economy grew with cattle, timber and cotton, predicated largely on the difficult and sad resolution of the Indian issues, which opened the previously-dominated Comancheria lands for settlement, followed by the growth of railroads linking the state within itself and with the rest of the country. This 40-year period saw Texas population quintuple from 600,000 thousand to 3 million, and saw Texas become #1 in the US in many economic parameters, fueling the wherewithal to also grow politically, construct a new State Capitol building, and form its 254 counties, prompting a boom in building County Courthouses that are still treasures to behold.*

This Volume II contains many Photo Essays and Side-bars, including on Stephen Austin; The Three Heroes of the Alamo: Travis, Crockett and Bowie; The San Jacinto Monument; Sam Houston; the Tejano Heroes of Texas Independence: Jose Navarro, Juan Seguin, and Lorenzo de Zavala; The Town of Goliad and its nearby Presidio Bahai and Mission Espiritu Santo; The Fisher-Miller Land Grant; The Painted Churches of Texas; the story of Cynthia Anne Parker and her son Quanah; Judge Roy Bean; the Texas State Capitol building; the City of Galveston; and various majestic County Courthouses.

Volume III also has three Sections:
Section 1 (pp 4-65) *completes the historical journey of Texas from 1900 to 2025, highlighting the major events and trends of this 125-year period, beginning with its expanding population base and the changing demographics and urbanization. The section also summarizes the data behind Texas' economy as one of the strongest in the nation. The section then concludes with my personal observations and summary of features that describe "Life in Texas in 2025" and the challenges ahead.*

This section also contains many Photo Essays and Side-bars, including: WW II in Texas (including the" Tora Tora Tora" Re-enactment at the 2025 Wings over Houston Airshow); A "Lest We Forget" Photo Essay on County Courthouse Monuments to Veterans; the NASA Space Program; Texas Sports; and Texas Floods.

Section 2 (pp 66-213) *transitions to a more photo-essay-centric look at various aspects of Texas life, including:*
The Oldest Towns in Texas; Photo Essays on Nacogdoches, San Antonio, Austin, Corpus Christi, Dallas, Houston, and Waco; Abandoned Cars and Concept Cars; Small Town Theatres and Murals; and Music in Texas.

Section 3 (pp 214-239) *is an Addendum on the Texas Oil & Gas Industry, providing a deeper dive into its development and the amazing story of how Texas led the US in a comeback to make the US energy self-sufficient and the #1 producer in the world, staking Texas' own status as the #4 producer in the world and Houston as the World's Oil & Gas Capital.*

Volume IV *steps away from human history and focuses on regional landscape photography. This includes a discussion of the regional physiography of Texas, and then includes Photo-Essays from my favorite parts of each region:*

- *The wildflowers of Central Texas and Hill Country area,*
- *Coastal Texas, from Port Arthur to Brownsville,*
- *Caddo Lake in the Piney Woods, one of Texas' most beautiful and photogenic natural areas as one of the largest flooded cypress forests in the country,*
- *The North Texas Plains and Panhandle, with its windswept fields and high plains storms, and*
- *The rugged desert and mountainous areas in West Texas Trans-Pecos area and the incomparable Big Bend area.*

Throughout all of the above areas, I include many of the amazing State Parks they contain, in addition to the National Parks and other protected lands. Birds, alligators and other wildlife are also featured.

The beauty here often speaks for itself, so this Volume IV is a more text-light photobook.