

Citation metadata

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Date: Fall 2005
From: Southwestern American Literature(Vol. 31, Issue 1)
Publisher: Center for the Study of the Southwest
Document Type: Book review
Length: 880 words

Main content

Article Preview :

One Ranger: A Memoir by H. Joaquin Jackson and David Marion Wilkinson. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005. 279 pp. \$24.95 hardback.

For the first 76 pages of One Ranger: A Memoir, H. Joaquin Jackson hints at the sort of book he has written. On page 77, and thereafter, he delivers, and splendidly.

The first few chapters of One Ranger, while hardly mundane, feel like an extended preamble. We read of the boyhood of Joaquin Jackson, an Anglo of Scots-Irish lineage given a Hispanic middle name after, he is told, his father's favorite football player, an All-American on the 1935 University of Texas squad. (It turns out that not a single Longhorn made All-American until the 1940s, and not a single Joaquin has ever lettered in the sport. No matter: by "Joaquin" he is known.) We read of a Texas boyhood, of a father who was a failed farmer, alcoholic, and wife-beater, of a scrappy mother who gave as good as she got. We read of Jackson's first unfortunate marriage, his wonderful second marriage to the prettiest roadhouse singer in the state, his early career with the Texas highway patrol and subsequent acceptance by the Texas Rangers. We then read of the history of the Rangers, extending back to the early settlers, when Texas was the northernmost portion of Mexico...

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McDADE, Joseph. "One Ranger: A Memoir." *Southwestern American Literature*, vol. 31, no. 1, 2005, p. 64+. Accessed 14 Nov. 2020.

Gale Document Number: GALE|A207283601

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