



## A Military History of Texas by Loyd Uglow.

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In twelve chronological chapters, historian Loyd Uglow examines the military history of Texas and the individuals, events, and developments that shaped the region and its people. He begins by examining the warfare between Native American tribes before the arrival of Europeans. Since the combatants did not leave a written record, he uses information gleaned from archeological discoveries, tribal traditions, and the travel accounts of the earliest Spanish explorers.

Uglow then moves to familiar subjects like the Spanish colonial era, the transition from Spain to Mexico, the Texas Revolution, the Republic of Texas, the Mexican-American War, the Civil War, the post-Civil War frontier, border conflicts with Native American tribes and Mexico, and developments in Texas during the two World Wars and afterwards. Uglow ends his narrative with a look at the "Texas Defense Industry" and speculations about the military future of the state (342-46). Throughout, he makes good use of primary and secondary sources.

Though a single-volume military history of Texas must forego much depth of detail, this one reveals continuities and contrasts in Texas history that might otherwise be missed. Individual events become part of a larger narrative. Specific instances of racial tension, hostility, and mistrust among Texans, Mexicans, and Tejanos take on a greater complexity when one enlarges the scope of the study to include periods of cooperation and cohabitation. The confusing mix of Mexicans, Anglos, and Tejanos on both sides of the War for Independence and the First Cortina War in 1859 aptly illustrates the complexity involved. Uglow rightly argues that

the entire lower Rio Grande valley had for decades been a region where Mexico and Texas intermingled, as witnessed by Texan filibusters who sometimes fought under Mexican leaders, and Mexicans who fought for separation from Mexico. In other words, it was a political and racial hybrid with frequently changing loyalties. (207).

Uglow also stresses the frontier's role in the development of Texas. The location of Texas on the frontier between rugged wilderness and scattered settlements and as a borderland between various nations including the Native American tribes, Spain, France (in Louisiana and later Mexico under Maximilian), Mexico, the Republic of Texas, the United States, and the Confederate States of America, served as the largest element of continuity shaping the growth of Texas and its people. Texas existed as a frontier/borderland region long before Europeans arrived. Prior to the first Spanish expedition into the region, Caddos, Karankawas, Apaches, Comanches, and other tribes struggled for land and resources. The arrival of the Spanish, the French, and eventually the Anglos only added new competitors to that struggle.

In this multipolar arena, ... [all competitors] would engage in a struggle for survival and supremacy that would see shifting alliances, savage battles, plans for wars of extermination, and the destruction of weaker bystanders whose misfortune it was to live among giants. (16)

Uglow has revealed a North American version of the great game where Native American tribes, far from being helpless victims of European aggression, fought for supremacy in the area.

The volatile nature of the disputed territory led to centuries of military struggle. In short, “on a more basic level, Texas [due to its location on a volatile frontier and border region] has instilled in its people a military heritage difficult to dispute” (346). According to the author, that military heritage carried beyond the Indian wars, through the world wars, and into the twenty-first century.

Overall, Loyd Uglow, a retired US Naval Reserve Commander and the current chair of the history department at Southwestern Assemblies of God University in Waxahachie, Texas, has produced an excellent resource for students of Texas history. That said, *A Military History of Texas* has a few shortcomings.

In the first place, it is almost devoid of maps. Even the most ardent students of Texas military history will suffer from their absence, particularly when dealing with borderlands that ebb and flow over time. Second, a birds-eye perspective on history will lack detail. To compensate, Uglow could have provided explanatory endnotes to direct readers to further resources. The same could be said of a judicious bibliography arranged by time period or subject matter.

Some readers will contest Uglow’s claim that “Texas history is military history.” He does show the impact of Texas’s martial spirit upon such matters as industrialization, immigration, women in society, and race relations among others. But he shorts twentieth-century matters. A mere thirty-one pages address the circa one-hundred year interval that saw the United States rise to the status of the world’s greatest military power. Why? First, the frontier aspect of Texas history ended with the defeat of the remaining Native American tribes and their confinement to reservations in the 1880s and 1890s. Second, as the federal government grew in power, it assumed responsibility for the international border with Mexico. Although border issues continue to the present day, several agencies within the federal bureaucracy and not the State of Texas or the US military dictate immigration and border policy. The loss of the frontier and federal bureaucratic control of the border have removed factors that often necessitated a military response and thus generated the martial spirit in Texas. As Texas and Texans move further from that period, one wonders whether that loss will weaken not only the martial spirit, but Uglow’s claim that all “Texas history is military history.”