Ghosts of the Guadalupe: A Factual History of Agriculture, Families and Violence Between 1905 and 1955 in Southern New Mexico. By Jerry R. Cox. 2005. Action Printing, 2407 82nd Street, Lubbock, TX, 79423. 528 p. US \$75 plus tax in New Mexico, and shipping; hardcover. Autographed copies available directly from the author, Jerry R. Cox, 1603 West Riverside Drive, Carlsbad, NM 88220 (Phone 505-887-8835). ISBN 0-9773008-0-3.

We all have impressions or ideas of what the early pioneers went through to settle the West. We have seen it all in movies and on television. Is what we have seen and thought really true? In *Ghosts of the Guadalupe* we see what occurred in a relatively small section of New Mexico on what might be called the second “Old West.” Jerry Cox has selected an area in southern New Mexico on what was designated as the Guadalupe Ranger District for the period of 1905 through 1955.

The author started with a small metal box of 3 × 5 index cards that contained ownership and grazing records for the US Forest Service Guadalupe Ranger District. He then looked at old newspapers and court cases and sought out descendants of the original residents for interviews. From this he developed a “look-in-time” of what the early settlers went through and how they survived. The book goes through each of the 22 allotments on the Ranger District. Using a unique style, the author has placed a factual history on the left-hand side of each page. On the right-hand side of the page are stories from newspaper accounts, eyewitness accounts, and descendant recollections of happenings during the period. They are stories of the everyday events and of murders, depressions, drought, flooding, bank closures, bank robberies, and declining livestock markets. This takes up over 450 pages of the book.

The next section is titled “Vegetation Changes.” The author has used paired comparative photos from 2 different times to show how the vegetation of the area has changed from a grassland with few trees to a landscape where various trees are the dominant vegetative feature.

The last major section covers the “Livestock Populations.” He documents how the numbers of livestock have declined by over 90% in some areas over the past 60 years. He ends with a section of “Observations” where he provides some personal thoughts as to what the future holds for the area.

Throughout the book are a large number of photographs depicting the early settlers living in the area. These photos, from many sources including relatives of the settlers, provide a lasting impression of the people. These people were not like the ones we see in the movies or on TV. They were a group of hard-working people that only wanted to stay alive and maybe be able to leave a little something to their descendants. They are the type of people that settled much of the West. They provided the background of our Western heritage. Dr Cox has brought the “good old days” to life in all their glory and sadness.

This is a must-read book for history buffs.

Gary Frasier, Editor-in-Chief *Rangelands*. ♦