



The Texas Sheriff: Lord of the County Line

Thad Sitton

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The Texas Sheriff takes a fresh, colorful, and insightful look at Texas law enforcement during the decades before 1960. In the first half of the twentieth century, rural Texas was a strange, often violent, and complicated place. Nineteenth-century lifestyles persisted, blood relationships made a difference, and racial apartheid was still rigidly enforced.

Citizens expected their county sheriff to uphold local customs as well as state laws. He had to help constituents with their personal problems, which often had little or nothing to do with law enforcement. The rural sheriff served as his county's "Mr. Fixit," its resident "good old boy," and the lord of an intricate rural society.

Basing his interpretations on primary sources and extensive interviews, Thad Sitton explores the dual nature of Texas sheriffs, demonstrating their far-reaching power both to do good and to abuse the law.

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