Editor's Introduction

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Norman D. Brown is one of the great master storytellers of twentieth-century Texas politics. This volume is the sequel to his groundbreaking *Hood, Bonnet, and Little Brown Jug*, published in 1984. In that book he explored the major themes shaping the rough-and-tumble world of Texas partisan politics from 1921 to 1928: among them the power of the Ku Klux Klan over local and state officeholders and opinion makers, the role of newly enfranchised white women in the body politic, and the enduring clash between the “Drys” and the “Wets”—those who wanted to ban the distribution, sale, and consumption of alcoholic beverages and those who did not. Brown’s work combines a scholar’s resourcefulness in seeking out historical sources, both printed and archival, and a dramatist’s eye for character development and the illuminating quotation. In the process he reveals the political dynamics of a state struggling between its Old South and New West identities, and his account remains always conscious of what its chief protagonists considered Texas’s “exceptionalism.”

Hood, Bonnet, and Little Brown Jug concluded with the Democratic Party of Texas deeply divided between business-minded, laissez-faire Hoovercrats, who had bolted from the party to support Republican Herbert Hoover for president, and Al Smith Democrats, who had remained loyal to the party ticket, despite Smith’s Catholic faith and antiprohibitionist stance. Brown writes that as the forty-first Texas legislature convened and with the 1930 Democratic primary in sight, “the stage [was] set for a bruising intra-party fight,” whose results would “either confirm the Hoovercrat triumph of 1928 or give a verdict of ‘Love’s Labor’s Lost.’”¹ The conflict between supporters of federal initiatives and regulations and those unalterably opposed to them, however, took on heightened significance with the onset of the Great Depression and the hopeless poverty that many Texans experienced during that decade.

That poverty could be traced in the demographic trends of the 1920s. Between 1920 and 1930 Texas's population grew significantly, from 4,663,228 to 5,824,715, adding more than 1.16 million people. Between 1930 and 1940, however, population growth slowed: the 1940 census recorded 6,414,824 people, a growth of 590,109. The population of Texas remained a white majority throughout the 1930s: by the end of the decade, the population of Texas consisted primarily of whites (74.1 percent), blacks (14.4 percent), and people of Mexican or other Latinx descent (11.4 percent). Despite overall trends toward urbanization in the 1920s, in 1930 the majority of Texans still lived in rural areas: over 63 percent of the population lived in towns or regions with a population under five thousand. Among both blacks and whites, 55 percent lived in rural areas. These rural-dwellers would bear the brunt of the hardships of the Great Depression.²

When the stock market crashed in 1929, however, most well-to-do Texans initially assumed that its effects would leave the state unscathed. New York City seemed far away, and the stock market was irrelevant, except to its investors. The Texas cotton crop had already been sold that year for a good profit; Texas cities boasted strong economies; and the state's newest oil fields, recently discovered in East Texas, were gushing. These signs of prosperity convinced many that they would weather the economic storm of the crash well. Rural and small-town Texas told a different story; these residents did not at first notice a significant contrast between their lives before and after the crash, because they had always been impoverished. Sharecroppers, subsistence farmers, and oil field roustabouts just barely survived, even in the so-called Roaring Twenties. Still, Texas leaders, both political and economic, persisted in projecting a bright future for the Lone Star State throughout 1929 and 1930. In 1931, however, as overproduction caused prices for cotton and oil to drop to alarmingly low levels, more and more Texans reluctantly began to admit that they were suffering, just like the rest of the country.

The Hoover administration proved unequal to the task of managing a catastrophe of the magnitude of the Great Depression, and most Texans, who had supported Hoover in large numbers in 1928, repudiated his leadership. Hoover's failure caused state Democrats to close ranks, for few of them (and few Americans) wanted to side with Hoover after the Great Depression led to a spike in unemployment and a precipitous drop in consumer purchasing power. Their votes contributed to the landslide victory of Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1932. Between 1929 and 1938, led by Governors Dan Moody (1927-1931), Ross Sterling (1931-1933), Miriam "Ma" Fergu-

son (1933–1935), and James V. Allred (1935–1939), Texas political leaders grappled with how best to respond to the economic and social challenges presented by the Great Depression and to the challenges and opportunities presented by FDR's New Deal.³

These leaders often relied on familiar political tools. As Brown demonstrated in *Hood, Bonnet, and Little Brown Jug*, the progressive impulse remained strong in some Texans in the 1920s despite the end of the Progressive Era. As governors, Pat Neff and Dan Moody both tried to implement certain kinds of reforms in the “business Progressive” model, which emphasized “administrative reorganization, tax reforms, good roads, better schools, and expanded health services,” while they refused to try to improve “capital-labor relations” or to institute “broad social programs, such as state protection for women and children in industry and workmen’s compensation laws.”⁴ Notably, this progressive impulse did not extend to efforts to improve the lives of African Americans, Mexican Americans, or other minority groups in Texas.

Indeed, Texas progressivism veered toward economic efficiency and away from “small p” progressivism—social justice. Despite the fact that the unprogressive Ma Ferguson—supported by her husband, former Texas governor Jim “Pa” Ferguson—served a term between Neff and Moody, many Texas voters believed that the state government should be free of corruption and cronyism, though implementing reforms proved problematic in a state with a long tradition of deep suspicion toward government regulations and toward federal intervention in particular. Brown focused his attention on the movers and shakers of state government, noting in passing that most women, most non-Christians, and virtually all black people were shut out of the many robust partisan political discussions that marked this period in Texas history. It was, after all, an era that saw the all-white primary, the mass disfranchisement of African Americans and Mexican Americans, and the violence-backed segregation of public schools and other public institutions and services.

Despite the deepening economic and social crises of the 1930s, in many ways Texas politics at the state level proceeded as business as usual. For example, the challenges faced by the Texas legislature to fund and to create good roads—an ongoing issue for Moody and a topic of heated debate between Sterling (pro) and Ferguson (anti) during the 1930 Democratic primary—pointed both to the need for state intervention and to the growing pains experienced by state governments unused to providing such services.⁵ Moral reforms of various kinds proved to be enduring, and enduringly divi-

sive, issues. Moody's second administration grappled with whether to pass a bill to legalize gambling. Prohibitionists and alcohol advocates battled for control of the Democratic Party until the Eighteenth Amendment (Prohibition) was finally repealed in 1933. In the midst of all this, Pa and Ma Ferguson still challenged the ideals of business progressivism in favor of a more rural, tradition-based politics that prized personal relationships over political philosophy or public policy. The Fergusons thus demonstrated that their brand of politics had staying power, despite the expectations of their fellow Democrats and of city-based journalists. While the political machinations of the 1920s had indeed "ended with the Klan virtually extinct in Texas," Texas politicians and politics were, to a degree, predictable and bound by the prejudices and expectations of rural white folk.⁶

The images of the title of this volume—*Biscuits, the Dole, and Nodding Donkeys*—evoke the major issues of Texas politics between 1929 and 1932—emphasizing both continuities in and disruptions to the story of the 1920s.⁷ Always an excellent source for a colorful quote, Jim "Pa" Ferguson wrote of the Texan electorate in 1932:

There now are only two ways in which a man can make himself governor. One is to convince people that he will give them something they want and the other is to convince them that he will relieve them of something they don't want. You might call it giving the people a biscuit. As long as the biscuits last they are for you. But when you cease to deliver the biscuits they will not be for you any longer.⁸

The Fergusons continued to make certain that they provided their constituents with "biscuits," thereby ensuring their continued political influence. Though the elections of Moody and Sterling appeared to be a rejection of Fergusonism, Ma's 1932 reelection revealed voters' discontent with reformists. Ma and Pa still had plenty of populist biscuits to distribute to the ordinary white men and women who had little patience for urban reformers.

The desire of Texans to be "fed" by their leaders spelled disaster for politicians who could not deliver, and in the context of the Great Depression, it was difficult to deliver much of anything of tangible or material value. During Ma's second term the Fergusons found themselves in trouble once again for allegedly diverting federal money to their own supporters. As Brown shows, Ma Ferguson ran for office one last time in 1940 and was de-

feated soundly by W. Lee "Pappy" O'Daniel. The populist biscuits, however, passed into Pappy O'Daniel's hands: his campaign slogan, "Pass the Biscuits, Pappy!," made him popular with many former Ferguson supporters. Personality politics in Texas endured, albeit in slightly different form, with a new generation.⁹

At the onset of the Great Depression, those Texans resistant to federal "interference" opposed the idea of direct financial relief—"the dole" (a pejorative term that included public-works projects)—assuming that those who worked hard would not starve and that those who were starving ought to work. However, this notion did not last. Brown highlights the shifting attitudes toward the dole and other New Deal programs in Ma Ferguson's 1932 campaign for reelection. She promised to provide direct relief to the unemployed, using federal funds, and she won reelection. At one point more than four hundred thousand Texans were receiving direct relief.¹⁰ Her successor, James V. Allred (1935–1939), often considered the last progressive governor of Texas, promoted direct relief, too, and governed over the state while federally funded and directed organizations such as the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) put many Texans to work. Average Texans began to accept and even expect direct governmental support, and they elected Pappy O'Daniel in 1938 in part based on his pledge to create an old-age pension. He never delivered on that promise, suggesting division between the electorate's wishes and its leaders' intentions.¹¹

Finally, the term "nodding donkeys" describes the pumpjack (a common oil pumping technology) and reflects the importance of oil to Texas's economy during the 1920s and '30s. As noted above, Texans had hoped that oil would insulate their economy from the Depression, but circumstances determined otherwise. During Sterling's governorship in particular (1931–1933), Texas legislators reasoned that a decline in production would boost prices and save oil companies large and small, but producers in East Texas refused to submit to state mandates. Those producers resisted any and all attempts to cut back on their production, and smaller companies especially feared that larger oil producers would put them out of business. Though some regulation was finally adopted, it was difficult to enforce—and this theme of resisting economic regulation was repeated in other sectors of the Texas economy.¹²

Biscuits, the Dole, and Nodding Donkeys brings into focus the high drama of the aspirations and machinations of leading state political fig-

ures in Texas from 1929 to 1932 as they dealt with challenges old and new. This insular group of white male politicians—with only scant influence from women—governed the state without much consideration of the needs of its black, Latinx, impoverished, or female residents. They understood their political world as a closed system with limited players. Their vision of politics was narrow; the electorate, intentionally restricted to white voters whenever possible, they treated mostly as pawns to be manipulated for votes. With elegance and a keen eye for the perfect quotation, Brown homes in on this world marked by petty jealousies, feats of grandeur, and the schemes of its players.

In the decades since Brown completed this work, scholars have expanded their definition of politics to include political actors outside of the closed system of Texas partisan wrangling. When Brown wrote this manuscript, relatively few studies existed that examined the history of Texas in the twentieth century, let alone the politics of nonwhite men. However, many new works now incorporate this broader view of politics, emphasizing trends toward conservatism, providing insights into the history of racial ideologies, and noting important milestones in the history of civil rights. These works provide a critical context for the high politics that Brown emphasizes.¹³

Historians have shown that openness to state planning and intervention during the Great Depression facilitated modernization in certain aspects of Texas society, especially as the New Deal meant even greater involvement of government bureaucracy in most aspects of society.¹⁴ State agencies—often with federal support—encouraged the adoption of improved cotton growing techniques, regulation of the oil industry, and development of waterways, among other initiatives.¹⁵ The state government even promoted the Texas Centennial as a way to draw attention to the potential of the Texas economy.¹⁶ These state interventions achieved popularity among many Texans.

Despite this popularity, some Texas political leaders began to move in a more conservative direction—a trend that scholars have recently begun to investigate in depth. They have traced how Texas was transformed from a solidly Democratic state, which had supported Lyndon Baines Johnson Jr. in the 1960s, to a Republican-controlled state that boasts several leading figures of the twenty-first century's political far right.¹⁷ Some historians identify the 1930s as the decade in which the seeds for the eventual rise to power of far-right politicians were planted. Many Texas conservatives voted for Herbert Hoover, but they were still a long way from switching parties. Nevertheless, a group of businessmen banded together to oppose the liberal policies of FDR, forming a political core that would push back against

more egalitarian policies (such as civil rights legislation) of the federal government. During this era Protestant evangelicals began to hold sway over not only Texas's religious life but also its political dynamics. These disparate groups would eventually band together under the aegis of the Republican Party, which would become home to the conservative coalition brought together by Barry Goldwater and Ronald Reagan.¹⁸

Scholars of Texas have examined these macro trends in political history, but they have also researched the lives of everyday Texans, especially peoples of color and poor Texans, to see how members of these groups responded to the economic, social, and political challenges posed by the Great Depression. These marginalized groups have had to contend with discriminatory public policies for many generations. Studies of Texas cotton farming, in particular, have revealed how race was constructed uniquely in Texas given its large population of Mexican migrants, Mexican Americans, and African Americans. Whiteness, for Anglo Americans and other European immigrants, was defined by social segregation and state-sanctioned discrimination and was cemented by violent attacks on both black Texans and Texans of Mexican descent.¹⁹ Investigations of the modernization and regulation of cotton production further demonstrate that African Americans, who often worked as sharecroppers, were disproportionately affected by 1930s policies that drastically reduced the number of sharecroppers and tenant farmers in favor of larger-scale commercial production.²⁰ As agricultural employment opportunities decreased, both African Americans and Mexican Americans migrated to urban areas, carving out opportunities for themselves as best they could—some working within the New Deal to make the best of its unfair policies.²¹

Historians have also discovered that Jim Crow Texas, a bastion of white supremacy and its practices of segregation and disfranchisement, nevertheless provided a home for some of the most significant early civil rights battles of the twentieth century. African Americans, working with the NAACP, fought against the white primary, one of the main tools white Texans used to prevent black Texans from voting. In 1923 the Texas legislature passed a statute that explicitly banned African Americans from participating in Democratic primary elections. In 1924 Dr. Lawrence Nixon, a physician living in El Paso, unsuccessfully attempted to vote in the Democratic primary. With the support of the NAACP, Nixon challenged the legality of this statute. The case, *Nixon v. Herndon*, was dismissed by the U.S. District Court in West Texas, but that ruling was later overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court, which determined that the Texas statute was unconstitu-

tional. In 1927 the Texas legislature struck the 1924 statute but immediately passed another that upheld the right of political parties to determine their own membership. The Democratic Party then created a rule explicitly banning black voters' participation in primaries. Nixon brought forward a second suit to challenge the 1927 law (*Nixon v. Condon* [1932]), but the white primary was not overturned for good until the Supreme Court case *Smith v. Allwright* (1944).²² Nevertheless, 1930s Texas was an important site in the history of black civil rights.

Historians have also shown how Mexican Americans living in Texas began organizing to fight for their civil rights in the 1930s. Middle-class Mexican Americans worked under the banner of several fraternal organizations in Texas to create the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), officially founded in Corpus Christi in 1929.²³ Mexican Americans in Texas were often discriminated against in hiring, education, and housing and were subjected to both legal and informal segregation. Because there were not many laws explicitly mandating segregation and other forms of discrimination against Mexicans and Mexican Americans, LULAC did not use the court system to fight their battles as often as did African Americans in the 1930s.²⁴ Instead, they used their connections to white civic leaders to advocate for educational opportunities for Mexican American children in Texas, insisting that they be educated with white children. They also conducted poll-tax drives to encourage Mexican Americans to pay poll taxes and to vote.²⁵

New Deal policies intentionally excluded agricultural laborers from the protections afforded to organized labor in the manufacturing setting. In Texas, as in other parts of the U.S. South, a significant portion of the labor force worked on farms, so New Deal protections largely did not apply to them. Because African Americans and Mexican Americans comprised the bulk of the agricultural labor force, they were essentially excluded from the New Deal.²⁶ Organized labor resistance remained weak throughout the state, especially when viewed in the larger national context of robust union building among automobile and steel workers; still, signs of union activity were not entirely absent from Texas.

Mexican American laborers in particular led the way in organizing and striking for better pay during the Great Depression. In 1938, for example, Emma Tenayuca, a well-known labor organizer, took charge of a spontaneous decision to strike by the women who worked at the Southern Pecan Shelling Company in San Antonio when bosses threatened to cut the workers' already low wages. They succeeded in getting the company to agree

to pay the minimum wage guaranteed by the Fair Labor Standards Act—although the company chose to mechanize their operation a few years later, enabling them to let go ten thousand of their twelve thousand employees. Such were the contradictions of the New Deal: many of its worker-welfare measures did not apply to the most vulnerable Texas workers, and when those workers struck for higher wages they were in danger of being replaced by machines.²⁷

Ultimately, the histories of civil rights organizing of African Americans and Mexican Americans in Texas revealed that conservatism was not the only political movement born in reaction to the New Deal. A liberal, interracial coalition, formed from the activist groups of the 1930s and '40s, made substantial contributions to the cause of civil rights in the 1960s. Indeed, reactions to this interracial coalition and the changes it brought to the Texas Democratic Party help to explain the rise of the Republican Party that Brown alludes to in his epilogue.²⁸

These stories—whether about the long-term changes to Texas's political orientation or about the working conditions of African Americans, Mexican Americans, or poor whites—remain in the background of Brown's narrative. Still, his work intersects with these groups in interesting ways. He shows how racial prejudice motivated white Democrats to prevent black Texans from voting in primaries throughout the 1930s. After the 1928 election Democrats who had remained loyal to the party and voted for Al Smith (no matter how distasteful they might have found the New Yorker's political pedigree) discussed various options to prevent bolters (those who voted Republican) from being allowed to vote in primary elections in 1930. The executive committee of the Democratic Party of Texas passed a rule preventing any bolters from running for office in the 1930 primaries. They did, however, adopt a resolution allowing "all qualified voters" who were willing to take a loyalty pledge to vote in the primary. Leading Democratic Party member and Hoovercrat Tom Love pointed out that this might have the inadvertent effect of enabling black Texans to vote in Democratic primaries again—something to be avoided at all costs in the opinion of white Democrats.²⁹ The issue of race was raised again when white Texans learned that Lou Henry Hoover, wife of President Hoover, had hosted Jessie Stanton DePriest, the wife of Oscar DePriest, an African American congressman from Chicago, at a tea for congressional spouses at the White House.³⁰ Indeed, Brown's narrative shows that it is difficult if not impossible to write about Texas politics without attending to racial ideologies in some form or another.

Overall, Mexican Americans, laborers, and women (aside from Ma Fer-

guson) play a limited role in *Biscuits, the Dole, and Nodding Donkeys*, a neglect that underscores the biases of the insular political system that Brown investigates. He presents Mexican Americans as an easily manipulated voting bloc in the minds of white Democrats, who at various points in the narrative worry about whether Mexican migrants are masquerading as U.S. citizens and therefore as legal voters.³¹ Though labor organizing was an important project among Mexican Americans living in Texas, in this work labor disputes emerge primarily in the context of Texas politicians' opposition to the New Deal's sympathy toward organized labor. In addition, unlike *Hood, Bonnet, and Little Brown Jug*, which describes the political leadership and activities of the newly enfranchised women of Texas, the main narrative of this volume sidesteps women's political leadership and activity, except when women appear to offer ongoing support for Prohibition or otherwise push for reforms considered by male politicians as "womanly," including those in the realms of education or public health.³²

Hints of the eventual rise of Texas's far-right establishment recur throughout these chapters, especially in the person of evangelical minister J. Frank Norris, who became famous for his outspoken speeches and his political involvement—a portent of the significance that conservative Christianity would have in Texas politics and culture.³³ Toward the end of the narrative, Brown writes about the unsuccessful congressional bid of Joe Bailey Jr., who went on to become a key member of the Jeffersonian Democrats, a group of conservative Democrats—generally wealthy businessmen—who hoped to undermine the Roosevelt administration's labor-friendly policies and social welfare reforms. Scholars have in recent years identified groups like Texas's Jeffersonian Democrats as central players in the history of the rise of present-day political conservatism. Brown's inclusion of Norris and Bailey supports the general argument that the 1930s were a foundational period for this rightward trend, a trend that would eventually culminate in the Republican Party's dominance of state politics in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.³⁴

Overall, this work makes a critical contribution to the study of Texas: in telling the story of its political leaders and in bringing together the histories of politics at both state and national levels, Brown writes an account that has yet to be told in its fullness—and must be told to obtain a clear picture of Texas politics in the late 1920s and 1930s. While other scholars have explored the role of Texas in the national political scene in the 1930s, Brown uncovers how the old guard of politicians who supported Woodrow Wilson helped to secure Texas's support for FDR and to ensure the vice presi-

dency for John Nance Garner. Indeed, Brown's blow-by-blow account of Garner's presidential bid in 1932 (see chapter 6) is a highlight of the book.³⁵ Brown also sheds light on how bolters were brought back into the Democratic Party fold and how figures like Tom Love failed to regain control of the party. Despite internal debates and disputes, the Democrats maintained a semblance of unity through the 1930s, even though they disagreed among themselves on issues such as Prohibition, Fergusonism, and reform. Understanding how Democrats kept the party together is an important piece of Texas history, instructive not only of the Lone Star State but also of southern history in general. Finally, scholarly biographies of the Texas governors of this era have not yet been written. This volume, along with *Hood, Bonnet, and Little Brown Jug*, remains the best resource for details of their political careers.³⁶

Brown concludes this book by outlining the limits of the reform impulse in Texas. He cites the work of George Norris Green, who argues in *Establishment Politics* that 1938—the year in which this epilogue concludes—was the critical year in which the hope for a progressive, reformist political leadership was squashed and the foundation for the conservative cohort that would guide Texas politics moving forward was laid. Brown observes that the 1938 Texas primary not only signaled the rise of Green's new establishment but also marked the defeat of New Dealers in Texas. Average Texans may have liked the New Deal, but their leaders largely did not, harboring suspicions that even popular programs such as Social Security and public jobs projects were a form of creeping socialism. Garner rejected the vice presidency in 1940 and put himself forward for the presidential nomination in an effort to subvert FDR's leadership. FDR secured the nomination for himself, but he failed to eliminate other Texas politicians hostile to the New Deal.³⁷ The passing of the Populist mantle to Pappy O'Daniel and, eventually, Lyndon B. Johnson's election to Congress indicated that a new generation of Texas political leaders were coming to prominence. Texas politicians would continue to fight old battles even as they introduced new ones—with forces of liberalism and conservatism striving for dominance in the ensuing decades.

In concluding *Hood, Bonnet, and Little Brown Jug*, Brown suggests that “issues seem to reappear in Texas politics, and conflicts in public values are not finally resolved but only advance and recede in prominence.”³⁸ In the mid-1980s Brown wrote about the continued influence of Prohibition in the

form of blue laws and dry counties, some of which persist to this day.³⁹ By the 1920s the Klan had lost its political clout, and efforts of politicians in 1930s Texas to raise the specter of the Klan were mostly ignored. Nevertheless, racism and nativism continued to shape Texas politics throughout the 1930s and beyond. Indeed, at the end of *Hood, Bonnet, and Little Brown Jug*, Brown describes a group of over five hundred Klan members whose 1983 march along the streets of Austin provoked violence.⁴⁰ Recent national events in Charlottesville, Virginia, reveal that the influence of the Klan lives on in the various newer white supremacist organizations that have joined its ranks.

In Texas the legislative session of 2017 exposed the nativist sentiment of many lawmakers. Republican governor Greg Abbott championed and signed into law SB4, a bill banning the creation of “sanctuary cities” in Texas. The bill makes local law enforcement officers criminally liable if they do not follow federal requests to enforce immigration laws, and it forbids local law enforcement to create any policies to that end. Law enforcement officials in Austin, San Antonio, Houston, and Dallas argued against this bill, saying it deprived police officers of the ability to exercise discretion in deciding when it is necessary to hold undocumented immigrants on behalf of the federal government. Proponents of the law claim that it will make communities safer, but its opponents point out that SB4 requires law enforcement to target members of the Latinx community for verification of their legal status, potentially leading victims to avoid reporting crimes because of fear of potential deportation.⁴¹ In addition, it is difficult to see the desire by some politicians, including the forty-fifth president, Donald Trump, to build a border wall through Texas and other parts of the Southwest in any other light but a nativist one—especially given the hostile language employed by the president and his appointees to describe undocumented immigrants.⁴² Finally, the state’s decision to cut Medicaid funding to Planned Parenthood, though ostensibly done in the name of preventing abortions, will limit access to medical care for thousands of women, especially low-income women. These issues pit more liberal, Democratic cities of the state against the rural Republicans who dominate the state legislature.⁴³

At the same time, Texas Republicans themselves are split between business progressives and rural evangelicals—a split that Brown’s work has located as early as the 1920s. This division was nowhere more evident than in the opposition of business interests to SB6, also known as the “Bathroom Bill.” This bill was designed to require people to use restrooms (and other places where a person “might be in a state of undress”) based on their “bio-

logical sex" as assigned on their birth certificates—and was understood by most to target transgender individuals. The business community perceived that this law might inhibit its profits—and some even speculated that Texas might have lost its bid to bring Amazon to the state because of the specter of the Bathroom Bill's possible reemergence in the next legislative session. Conflict over this bill caused a rift between Texas Senate and House Republicans—and the bill was not passed in the 2017 legislative session.⁴⁴

The final chapters of *Biscuits, the Dole, and Nodding Donkeys* foreshadow the rise of a statewide Republican Party that essentially replaced the Democratic Party in terms of its political and cultural dominance. Even so, a countermovement has arisen—one that Brown did not foresee—that consists of people of color, immigrants, and women.⁴⁵ An inconstant ally of these groups is the federal judiciary. In 2017 a panel of three federal judges in San Antonio ruled that Texas must redraw some of its most flagrantly gerrymandered districts—those that give disproportionate power to rural interests over the growing, more diverse cities. The U.S. Supreme Court put a temporary hold on the order to redraw the districts, but in June 2018 it ruled that all but one of the voting maps currently in use did not need to be redrawn. Prior to this ruling, progressive political forces hoped that, if all nine districts were redrawn, minority voters—often Democratic supporters and members of this progressive movement—would have been able to exercise their voting power more effectively.⁴⁶ After all, the demographic face of Texas continues to change. According to journalist Lawrence Wright, "Texas leads the nation in Latino population growth," and some observers project that "if Latinos voted at the same rate in Texas as they do in California, the state would already be blue."⁴⁷ Whether Wright's prediction is correct remains only to be seen.

In *Hood, Bonnet, and Little Brown Jug* and *Biscuits, the Dole, and Nodding Donkeys*, Norman Brown gives us a clear picture of Texas politics in the 1920s and 1930s—not only of the feuding politicians who cast a suspicious eye on the federal government but also of the issues that proved enduring across the decades. Indeed, politicians today are still debating the efficacy of economic regulations—those affecting the oil industry no less than those affecting controlled substances such as alcohol and drugs—in addition to questioning cultural issues and the meaning of a diverse society. As we make our way toward the uncertain and unknown future of Texas politics, Norman Brown remains a steady guide to inform and instruct us in the history of the state's political maneuverings.

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