



# At the Heart of Texas: One Hundred Years of the Texas State Historical Association, 1897-1997

*Richard B McCaslin*

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"History like that of Texas is rare. . . . Is it not discreditable to the people of Texas, that they should leave the collection of material for the history of the State to the great endowed Northern libraries? . . . Let Texas arouse herself for very shame, and begin at once the discharge of her filial duty."

So wrote George Pierce Garrison in the first issue of the *Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association*, published in July 1897, just months after the establishment of the organization on March 2. The state of Texas was just half a century old; the city of Austin, going back to the days of the Republic, was a little older—a few years past its half-century; and the University of Texas, where Garrison was "the history professor," was not yet fourteen. Earlier attempts to organize historical societies in Texas, traced in the opening chapter, illuminate the factors that came ultimately to be decisive in the success of the Association: the wisdom in linking the organization with the University of Texas, the inclusion of lay historians, and the continued insistence on high academic standards. And, from the beginning, the Association has established a tradition for publishing in the *Quarterly*, in addition to the Anglo story, the stories of the Indians, the Spanish, and the French. According to author Richard B. McCaslin, "It may be that the Association survived where its predecessors had not because Garrison, who was as much a Progressive historian as any of his contemporaries, understood the value of inclusiveness."

The text is organized in chronological chapters by the tenures of the seven directors, George Garrison to Ron Tyler, all of whom were professors in the UT history department. Within the larger framework of the directors, the programs, and the publications, McCaslin gives shape to the unique interaction of forces—university, political, and the academic/lay membership—that has accorded the Association a character and suppleness that continues to ensure its long endurance. The book is profusely illustrated, and sidebars culled from past issues of the *Quarterly* complement the text.

*Winner of the Award of Merit from the Philosophical Society of Texas*

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