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Book Review

Texas Through Time: Lone Star Geology, Landscapes, and Resources (2016), by Thomas E. Ewing

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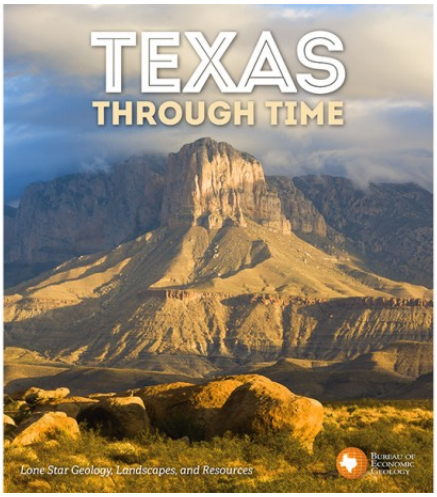
For more than 80 years, geoscientists involved in Texas geology, as well as other interested Texans, relied on the 1933 classic, oft-reprinted Bulletin 3232, Geology of Texas (Stratigraphy) for general information about the geology of the state. Companion volume 3401 covered structural and economic geology. Since the mid-1930s, almost every other state geological survey published at least one summary of its own unique geology – except Texas.



No more. With the 2016 publication of Texas Through Time: Lone Star Geology, Landscapes, and Resources, the Texas Bureau of Economic Geology has far eclipsed Bulletins 3232 and 3401, generating a spectacular, innovative, and wide-ranging summary of Texas geology, written by Dr. Tom Ewing, with stellar support from the TBEG staff. It was worth the wait.

Lavishly illustrated, with more than 150 arresting color photographs and 225 superb color diagrams, Texas Through Time is visually compelling. Tom Ewing's authoritative text is clear, current, comprehensive, yet remarkably concise (467 pages), presented in a 9.5 x 11" coffee-table format. The volume is available in both hard-back ($49.95) and soft-back ($35.00) versions). Either way, it is a bargain.

From its inception, Texas Through Time was designed to be used by high-school science teachers and students, literate laypeople, as well as practicing geologists looking for the regional "big picture". It incorporates all important current geological concepts throughout the text, such as

plate-tectonics, sequence stratigraphy, “deep time”, depositional models, petroleum systems, petroleum generation-migration, evolution of the Gulf of Mexico basin, and global anoxic events. Innovative approaches include the presentation of important concepts and questions (in offset text-boxes) as they are needed, and the frequent insertion throughout the text of “Great Places to View Texas Rocks”, listing specially apt localities, with descriptions and photos.

In addition to introductory and concluding essays, Texas Through Time comprises ten chapters:

1. Landscapes of Texas: Journeys across Texas, landscapes and ecoregions
2. What is Geology? Goals, methods, key concepts
3. Texas in space and time: How old is Texas, where has it been, and its neighbors
4. A long time ago in a world not so far away: Texas in the Proterozoic
5. Buried mountains and salt seas: Texas in the Paleozoic
6. Life in a newborn Gulf: Mesozoic seas of Texas
7. A world re-formed: Texas Cenozoic
8. Humans in the geological landscape: the last 20,000 years
9. Earth resources: Soils, minerals, water and energy
10. Earth impacts and hazards: Geology and the environment

The book concludes with an Appendix, “Great places to view Texas geology”, a full Glossary, additional sources of information, and a thorough Index.

I was especially impressed with the seamless transition from geological history to archeological history to contemporaneous history, and the commendable balance between resources and the environment, which previous chapters had laid a solid factual basis for.

Texas Through Time represents a major scientific contribution and a long-needed resource concerning the geology of the state, useful to teachers, students, laypersons and, above all, geologists who work and/or live in the state. It is a credit to the Director and Staff of the Texas Bureau of Economic Geology, and an impressive intellectual achievement by its distinguished author, Thomas E. Ewing.

To Purchase Texas Through Time, contact the UT Bureau of Economic Geology Bookstore:

1) By phone: 512/471-7144;
2) By E-mail: pubsales@beg.utexas.edu;
3) Online: http://begstore.beg.utexas.edu/store/

Reference

Ewing, Thomas E., 2016, Texas Through Time: Lone Start Geology, Landscapes, and Resources (2016); Texas Bureau of Economic Geology, Austin TX; 431 p.; ISBN 978-1-970007-09-1 (hardcover); ISBN:978-1-970007-09-1 (paperback).