



**Texas' Last Frontier: Fort Stockton and the
Trans-Pecos, 1861-1895 (Centennial Series of the
Association of Former Students, Texas a & M
University)**

Clayton W. Williams

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For almost three hundred miles, the Pecos River cuts across far West Texas. It is an arid land, a land that in the last century offered danger and hardship to those who crossed it and those who settled it. Yet they came—army posts like Fort Stockton to challenge the Apaches' claim to the rugged land, settlers to supply the posts, cattlemen to eke out a living from the vast but sparse grazing ranges. They came and they stayed because the land held one overriding appeal: it was Texas' last frontier.

The newcomers—cattlemen and sheepmen, individuals and corporations—included sturdy, law-abiding, industrious citizens, such as O.W. Williams, a renowned surveyor, jurist, and historian with a law degree from Harvard; Mexicans, both poor laborers and well-to-do entrepreneurs; kindly German merchants; fighting Irishmen; and fearless Anglo cowboys. There were also the gunslingers, including Sheriff A.J. Royal, who terrorized the citizenry, even after Texas Rangers had arrived, until he was mysteriously shot to death one afternoon, possibly by one of the town's leading men.

The most detailed and thorough account available of the history of far West Texas, this tale is colored with human interest and drama. It will prove invaluable to scholars and richly rewarding to all those interested in the history of Texas and of the West.

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