



# Texas Devils: Rangers and Regulars on the Lower Rio Grande, 1846–1861

*Michael L. Collins*

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*Reconsidering the myth of “good guys in white hats”*

The Texas Rangers have been the source of tall tales and the stuff of legend as well as a growing darker reputation. But the story of the Rangers along the Mexican border between Texas statehood and the onset of the Civil War has been largely overlooked—until now.

This engaging history pulls readers back to a chaotic time along the lower Rio Grande in the mid-nineteenth century. *Texas Devils* challenges the time-honored image of “good guys in white hats” to reveal the more complicated and sobering reality behind the Ranger Myth.

Michael L. Collins demonstrates that, rather than bringing peace to the region, the Texas Rangers contributed to the violence and were often brutal in their injustices against Spanish-speaking inhabitants, who dubbed them *los diablos Tejanos*—the Texas devils. Collins goes beyond other, more laudatory Ranger histories to focus on the origins of the legend, casting Ranger immortals such as John Coffee “Jack” Hays, Ben McCulloch, and John S. “Rip” Ford in a new and not always flattering light.

In revealing a barbaric code of conduct on the Rio Grande frontier, Collins shows that much of the Ranger Myth doesn’t hold up to close historical scrutiny. *Texas Devils* offers exciting true stories of the Rangers for anyone captivated by their legend, even as it provides a corrective to that legend.

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