



Fort Worth Characters

Richard F. Selcer

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Fort Worth history is far more than the handful of familiar names that every true-blue Fort Worthers hears growing up: leaders such as Amon Carter, B. B. Paddock, J. Frank Norris, and William McDonald. Their names are indexed in the history books for ready reference. But the drama that is Fort Worth history contains other, less famous characters who played important roles, like Judge James Swayne, Madam Mary Porter, and Marshal Sam Farmer: well known enough in their day but since forgotten. Others, like Al Hayne, lived their lives in the shadows until one, spectacular moment of heroism. Then there are the lawmen, Jim Courtright, Jeff Daggett, and Thomas Finch. They wore badges, but did not always represent the best of law and order. These seven plus five others are gathered together between the covers of this book. Each has a story that deserves to be told. If they did not all make history, they certainly lived in historic times. The jury is still out on whether they shaped their times or merely reflected those times. Either way, their stories add new perspectives to the familiar Fort Worth story, revealing how the law worked in the old days and what life was like for persons of color and for women living in a man's world. As the old TV show used to say, "There are a million stories in the 'Naked City.'" There may not be quite as many stories in Cowtown, but there are plenty waiting to be told—enough for future volumes of Fort Worth Characters. But this is a good starting point.

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