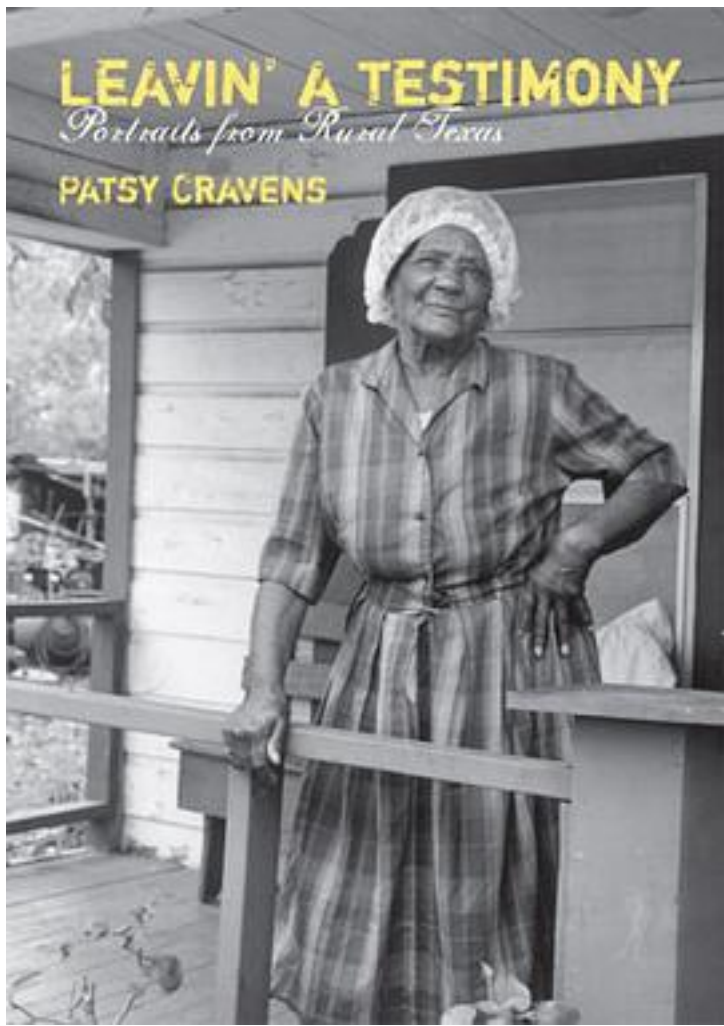


Leavin' a Testimony



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First settled by Stephen F. Austin's colonists in the early nineteenth century, Colorado

County has deep roots in Texas history. Mainly rural and agrarian until late in the twentieth century, Colorado County was a cotton-growing region whose population was about evenly divided between blacks and whites. These life-long neighbors led separate and unequal lives, memories of which still linger today. To preserve those memories, Patsy Cravens began interviewing and photographing the older residents of Colorado County in the 1980s. In this book, she presents photographs and recollections of the last generation, black and white, who grew up in the era of Jim Crow segregation. The folks in Colorado County have engrossing stories to tell. They recall grinding poverty and rollicking fun in the Great Depression, losing crops and livestock to floods, working for the WPA, romances gone wrong and love gone right, dirty dancing, church and faith, sharecropping, quilting, raising children, racism and bigotry, and even the horrific lynching of two African American teenagers in 1935. The Colorado County residents' stories reveal an amazing resiliency and generosity of spirit, despite the hardships that have filled most of their lives. They also capture a rural way of life that was once common across the South, but is now gone forever.

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