A Texas Journey



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出版者:

出版时间:2008-4

装帧:

isbn:9780980055702

In 1935, Texas was preparing for its biggest celebration to date: a world's fair to commemorate the centennial of its independence from Mexico. Centennial officials eager to publicize the event needed an abundance of photographic images that would put the state in the best possible light. They hired a young photographer, Polly Smith, who had recently returned from studying in New York, to travel the length and width of the state. Her mission was to capture the people and places that made Texas unique. The result of Smith's journey is a remarkable collection of images that range from the missions of San Antonio to dockworkers in Houston and on to the cotton fields of East Texas. Only twenty-eight when she began the project, Smith traveled alone across the state in a Ford pickup that she converted into a portable darkroom. Since the centennial, the Dallas Historical Society has preserved many of her photographs, and several have been on permanent display in the Hall of State in Fair Park. A Texas Journey: The Centennial Photographs of Polly Smith is the first book-length examination of Smith's life and work. The images presented here offer a revealing portrait of the Lone Star State in 1935.

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