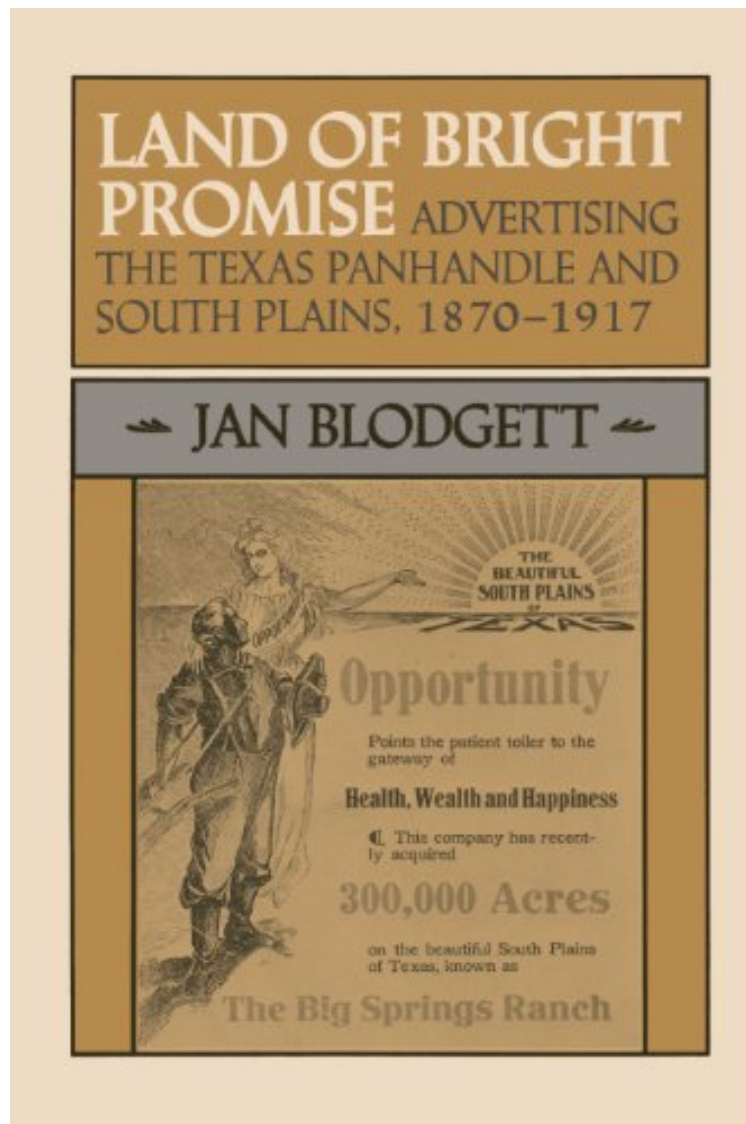


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Land of Bright Promise: Advertising the Texas Panhandle and South Plains, 1870-1917 (M. K. Brown Range Life)

Jan Blodgett

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Jan Blodgett : Land of Bright Promise: Advertising the Texas Panhandle and South Plains, 1870-1917 (M. K. Brown Range Life) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Land of Bright Promise: Advertising the Texas Panhandle and South Plains, 1870-1917 (M. K. Brown Range Life):

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Whatever made you settle here?By B. D. HamiltonFrequently when a person travels through the Panhandle-South Plains region of Texas in the months of February or March, the question

of how a person came to live in such a flat, dry area arises. Blodgett's *Land of Bright Promise: Advertising the Texas Panhandle and South Plains, 1870-1917* very clearly explains how people were attracted to the region once the railroads were laid and the Indians were relegated to reservations. Even though the idea of cheap land was attraction enough, land companies and agents apparently provided a virtual blitz of advertising to sell the unsettled area. While the region is, indeed, beautiful when crops are in full bloom and clear blue skies are visible, survival here has not been easy. Jan Blodgett provides insight into what caused the area to be settled even though only the hardest and persistent remained. While general readers may find the book a bit tedious, as a resident of Texas and historian, I love it and use it frequently for reference.

Land of Bright Promise is a fascinating exploration of the multitude of land promotions and types of advertising that attracted more than 175,000 settlers to the Panhandle and South Plains area of Texas from the late years of the nineteenth century to the early years of the twentieth. Shunned by settlers for decades because of its popular but forbidding image as a desert filled with desperados, savage Indians, and solitary ranchers, the region was seen as an agricultural and cultural wasteland. The territory, consequently, was among the last to be settled in the United States. But from 1890 to 1917, land companies and agents competed to attract new settlers to the plains. To this end, the combined efforts of local residents, ranchers and landowners, railroads, and professional real estate agents were utilized. Through brochures, lectures, articles, letters, fairs, and excursion trips, midwestern farmers were encouraged to find new homes on what was once feared as the "Great American Desert." And successful indeed were these efforts: from 13,787 in 1890, the population grew to 193,371 in 1920, with a corresponding increase in the amount of farms and farm acreage. The book looks at the imagination, enthusiasm, and determination of land promoters as they approached their task, including their special advertisements and displays to show the potential of the area. Treating the important roles of the cattlemen, the railroads, the professional land companies, and local boosters, *Land of Bright Promise* also focuses on the intentions and expectations of the settlers themselves. Of special interest are the fifteen historical photographs and reproductions of promotional pieces from the era used to spur the land boom. What emerges is an engaging look at a critical period in the development of the Texas Panhandle and an overview of the shift from cattle to agriculture as the primary industry in the area.

About the Author Jan Blodgett is College Archivist and Records Management Coordinator at Davidson College in North Carolina.