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Backwoodsmen: Stockmen and Hunters Along a Big Thicket River Valley

By Thad Sitton

University of Oklahoma Press. Paperback. Book Condition:

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0.9in. Backwoodsmen: Stockmen and Hunters along a Big

Thicket Valley presents a detailed social history of the back-

country stockmen, hunters, and woodsmen of the Neches River

in southeastern Texas. Labeled crackers, pineys, sandhillers,

and nesters by townspeople across the upland South, southern

backwoodsmen have often been dismissed by historians. One

of the first works to challenge these stereotypes was Frank

Owsleys Plain Folk of the Old South (1949). In Backwoodsmen,

Thad Sitton follows Owsleys stockmen and small farmers into

the twentieth century. As in parts of Appalachia, many

elements of centuries-old herding and hunting lifeways

survived in the Neches Valley into the 1960s. In what early

settlers called the Big Thicket or Big Woods, everything outside

fenced fields was, by long established custom, open range, a

wooded commons in which hogs, cattle, and backwoodsmen

were free to roam. And roam they did--not only stockmen, with

their rooter hogs and woods cattle, but also tir cutters, grey-

moss gatherers, hunters, trappers, fishermen, and

moonshiners. Sitton details their daily activities, relying mainly

on oral history interviews he conducted with dozens of Neches

Valley woodsmen. Along the edge of...



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