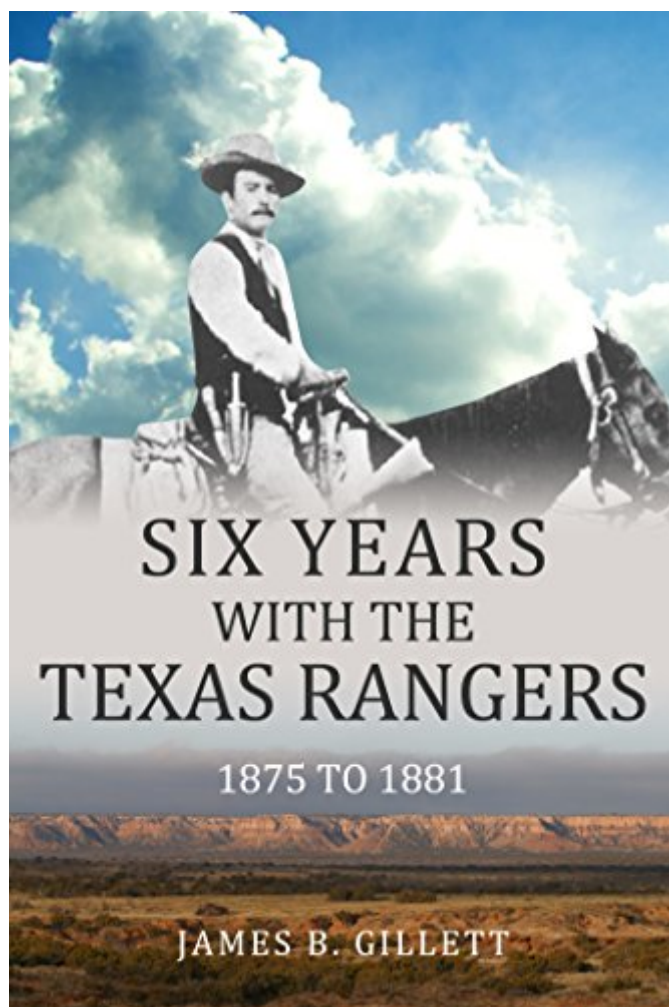


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# Six Years With The Texas Rangers: 1875-1881



## Synopsis

Texas in the nineteenth century was a dangerous place. The Texas Rangers were there to keep people safe. James Gillett joined the rangers in 1875 with the task of repressing domestic foes of this frontier region where banditry flourished and crimes of violence were committed with appalling frequency. He joined Company D of the Texas Rangers at the age of just seventeen. For the next six years he would be combatting horse thieves and murderers, fighting in the Mason County War, capturing vigilantes and providing law and order for the towns. He met and fought against some of the most infamous criminals of his day, from Sam Bass and his train robber gang to the Horrell Brothers and the outlaw Dick Dublin. That is not to say that Gillett only fought against domestic criminals, he was frequently called to combat dangerous Native Americans, particularly the Apaches, who were raiding, threatening or stealing from Texan inhabitants. At points the Rangers would even be drawn across the border into Mexico in order to implement justice against those who had attempted to escape. *Six Years with the Texas Rangers* is a fascinating account of one Ranger's life attempting to maintain law and order on the Texan frontier. "Combines all the excitement of a Western yellowback with the genuineness of a first-hand document" *Saturday Review* After James Gillett left the Texan Rangers he worked as a Deputy Marshal, Marshal, and later cattle rancher. This book was published in 1921 and he died in 1937.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book is a compelling and entertaining first-hand account of one of Texas' most revered lawmen of the old West. James B. Gillett's experiences in the far-western reaches of the Texas frontier make for exciting reading as he takes on the likes of the Apache chieftan Victorio, one of the last and arguably the greatest of the Apache war chiefs. Gillett recounts the day-to-day experiences of those who rode with the Rangers from 1875-1881. From the Mason County War to encounters with the likes of outlaw Sam Bass, this book captures the excitement and the aura of the real Texas near the end of the nineteenth century. For the reader who yearns for the smell of wet saddle leather and gunsmoke, Gillette delivers on a most memorable note.

This is an enduring document of life on the frontier in a company of Texas Rangers. Every laconic sentence has the ring of authenticity from the pursuit of Sam Bass to the last battles with the brilliant Apache war chieftan, Victorio. It is a fine, tough little book, just like its author. And you'll know when you finish why the Texas Rangers were so widely feared and respected in the 1870's and 80's.

Story was short, OR I read it very fast because it was a very good book. I was born in Big Springs West Texas, Howard County in 1955. The oldest picture of myself was taken in black and white film on a box camera. The picture of me was when I was two years old, sitting on a black eighteen hand beautiful Morgan stallion. I was naked except for a cloth diaper and a straw cowboy hat that had been stepped on by many cows HORSES and boots. The bridle was grounded and there was not another human in the picture. I grew up on the stories of the Texas Rangers. I always wanted to be a Ranger. However, I joined the USMC at seventeen because it was my duty as I could not stand the evening news covering the Vietnam war. I'm SIXTY-ONE and I still wish I had been a Ranger. I did serve thirty years in law enforcement. Loved the book. I remember every river and mountain range mentioned in the book as well as the towns. If you are a Texan, then you're proud of the Rangers. That's the straight of this story.

By the end of the book you smell gunpower on the breeze and sense indians behind every tree. A real must for the Texas historian who wants the sensation of "being there."

James B. Gillett became a Texas Ranger in the Frontier Battalion in 1875 at the age of 19 after growing up on ranches near Austin and Lampasas. This book, written long after he had left the Rangers for ranch life mainly near Alpine, Texas, is a reminiscent account of his experiences while serving with the Rangers (1875-1881). He says in the Preface that he will write only about what he personally experienced and not try to write a history of the Texas Rangers, a task he feels unqualified to do; he is mostly faithful to that endeavor, though some events (the "Salt Lake War" near El Paso, for example) were not actually witnessed first-hand by Gillett. Some other major episodes related include the killing of Sam Bass (some of the details regarding Bass appear to be embellishments), the escorting of John Wesley Hardin to prison, capturing the murderous Baca brothers, and conducting numerous raids against the Apaches. Gillett writes in a straightforward, matter-of-fact style, and his memory for events and people encountered decades earlier is impressive. He doesn't embellish too much in his recounting, and he has the knack of telling a story interestingly and with authority. One comes away from the book with a very good idea of what made the Rangers tick and some of the difficulties they were up against. It would be hard to ask for anything more.

A Personal History of the Texas Rangers from the perspective of James Gillet is an eye opening account of being a Texas Ranger during the Old West. Exciting, as well as shocking, this book shows how our culture has changed. Some ways the changes are good, but in other ways, the changes are not so good. Freedom range and roam as one would, the work ethic of those who were pioneers, the wide open spaces of Texas which are disappearing now, and the closeness of friends and families are things that were good and better than now. The gross insensitivity to the American Indian and Negroes (many who were still living as slaves when Mr. Gillet grew up), are things I'm glad have changed for the better.

Jim Gillett wrote a fascinating book about his years with the Texas Rangers. I was in the saddle with him, getting a clear view of every adventure. I do not know if he single handedly wrote this book, but for a boy who dropped out of school early on and went to work, he certainly wrote it very well and somewhere, somehow, he learned to put his thoughts down on paper and made a wonderful biography about Rangering and catching bad guys, and the Tribes which at that time were on the war path in New Mexico, Texas and across into Mexico. The Mexicans were a hardy bunch of outlaws and also gave the Rangers a run for their money. Gave this one five stars!

A fascinating biography covering a six-year span starting with Indian trouble where warriors raided, kidnapped, and killed. Then the focus changed to the gun-men and hard cases who had flocked to Texas from other states as their deeds began catching up with them. And range wars were inevitable as men grabbed as much land as possible, roped the free ranging longhorn cattle and began establishing Texas as a source of meat and hides for the industrial north. A great slice of history, told first person, and well worth the time.

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