



Interwoven: A Pioneer Chronicle (Revised: 4th Edition)

Sallie Reynolds Matthews

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Sallie Reynolds Matthews wrote *Interwoven* so that her children and their children would know how their family and the Lambshead Ranch legacy grew on the Texas frontier. Far beyond her modest intentions, the book became a classic soon after its original publication in 1936.

As Robert Nail wrote in his introduction to the 1958 edition designed by the renowned bookman Carl Hertzog, “When you read her account of the day her family moved into a mysterious, abandoned ranch house on the very edge of the unconquered prairie and see, as her small girl eyes saw, the broken window glass littering the floor, the fang marks left by a wild animal on the door, you sense quite keenly what it must have been like . . . “

Sallie Reynolds was born on May 23, 1861, during a period on the prairie frontier when settlers were almost as nomadic as the Indians and building material was as scarce as trees. Her family moved around Texas, frequently living near the Matthews family, whom they had known in Alabama before both families headed to Texas. In 1867, the first marriage between a Reynolds and a Matthews formally sealed the informal bond between the clans. Four more Reynolds siblings married into the Matthews family, including Sallie Ann in 1876, and other Reynolds relatives followed suit.

As daughter, sister, wife, or mother of three generations of cattle ranchers, Sallie Reynolds Matthews writes from the perspective of a woman intent upon embodying the strength and gentleness required of a wife and business partner. She describes traveling by wagon through the wilds, encountering Indians, and setting up housekeeping with little more than buckets, blankets, and cast-iron cookpots. Tragedy and illness often visited the interwoven Matthews and Reynolds families, but those who settled on the Clear Fork of the Brazos River—the Lambshead range—put down roots that tornadoes, droughts, Indians, and disease could not dislodge. As her memoirs so clearly show, Sallie Reynolds Matthews had an intelligence, warmth, and zest for life that nourished her family through difficult times.

Nine children were born to Sallie and John Matthews. Their first child Annie died in infancy, and their last, Watkins Reynolds Matthews lived to be ninety-eight. This new printing of *Interwoven*, which includes the original E. M. Schiwetz drawings and Sam Newcomb’s diary of his trip through the Clear Fork range in 1864, is dedicated to the memory of Watt Matthews, who did so much to preserve his family’s legacy.

Readers have to be given more than a personal story. Successful memoirs creat a world, a spirit of place, and re-create a time.

Sallie Reynolds Matthews has done just that.

Interwoven is not just Sallie Reynolds Matthews’s personal story. It is a book about two families who built ranches in West Texas and intermarried to form a dynasty. It is the story of pioneering on the Brazos in the years following the Civil War. *Interwoven* is a narrative about the great years of the Cattle Empire in Texas. And woven into this chronicle of the plains is the story of Sallie Reynolds as a girl and Mrs. Sallie Reynolds Matthews as a young wife and mother as Texas entered the twentieth century.

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