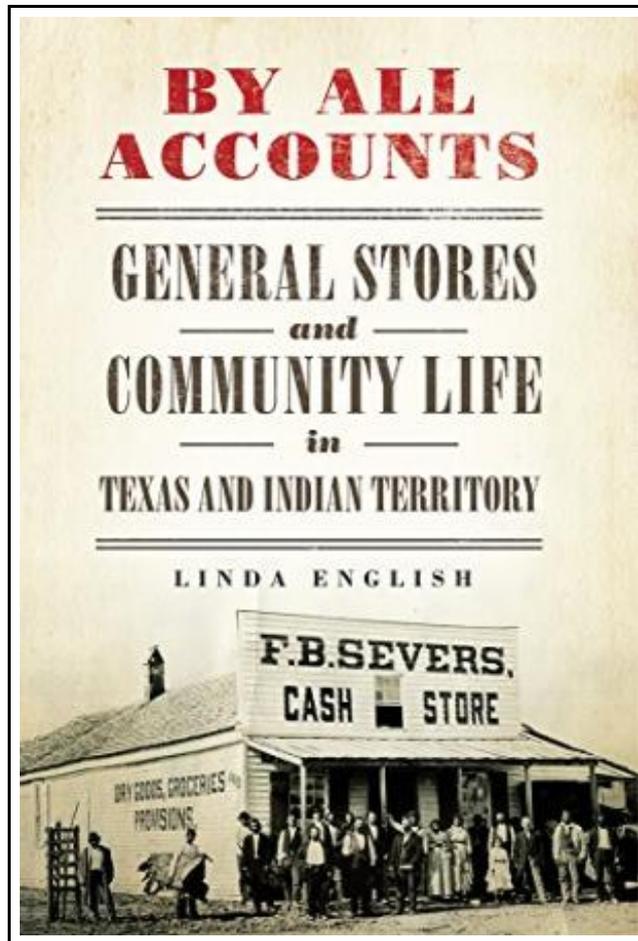


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University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 2013. Hardcover. Book Condition: New. 256 pages. Hardcover with dustjacket. New book. UNITED STATES HISTORY. A fine-grained examination of small-town society and daily life in the late 1800s. The general store in late-nineteenth-century America was often the economic heart of a small town. Merchants sold goods necessary for residents' daily survival and extended credit to many of their customers; cash-poor farmers relied on merchants for their economic well-being just as the retailers needed customers to purchase their wares. But there was more to this mutual dependence than economics. Store owners often helped found churches and other institutions, and they and their customers worshiped together, sent their children to the same schools, and in times of crisis, came to one another's assistance. For this social and cultural history, Linda English combed store account ledgers from the 1870s and 1880s and found in them the experiences of thousands of people in Texas and Indian Territory. Particularly revealing are her insights into the everyday lives of women, immigrants, and ethnic and racial minorities, especially African Americans and American Indians. A store's ledger entries yield a wealth of detail about its proprietor, customers, and merchandise. As a local gathering place, the general store witnessed many aspects of residents' daily lives—many of them recorded, if hastily, in account books. In a small community with only one store, the clientele would include white, black, and Indian shoppers and, in some locales, Mexican American and other immigrants. Flour, coffee, salt, potatoes, tobacco, domestic fabrics, and other staples typified most purchases, but occasional luxury items reflected the buyer's desire for refinement and upward mobility. Recognizing that townspeople often accessed the wider world through the general store, English also traces the impact of national concerns on remote rural areas—including Reconstruction, race relations, women's rights,...



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