

The brownsville raid



In the first part of the book, John Weaver, gives background information, which leads up to the event. Weaver talks about how the Texans felt when it came to the 25th Infantrymen arriving at Fort Brown. Instead of being rather accepting of the arrival of a US battalion, the townspeople were racist stating, “ The colored fellows will have to behave themselves or we will get rid of them. ”(22) Weaver goes on to explain other racial prejudices the soldiers faced at Fort Brown.

The town’s bars, which were ran by white men, set up certain Jim Crow laws banning the soldiers from drinking there. Despite this a few Mexican bars allowed the soldiers to make business. Weaver notes that these bars were packed on payday, but fights or incidents were rarely reported. Weaver next goes on to explain the events which occurred on the night of August 13, 1906. Weaver goes into great detail about the events of the night and the days to follow. A major point brought out is the fact that every man in the 25th was present and accounted for during the shooting.

Despite this information a white man was killed and another injured, someone had to take the blame. Weaver then goes into detail about the trial, which took place along with the investigation of the night’s events. President Roosevelt, it is explained, seemingly sided with the town’s men in placing the blame on the 25th without sufficient evidence to produce a rightful conviction of the crime. He signed an order, which dishonorably discharged 167 men of the 25th. The most prevalent theme in this book is clearly pointed out all through out the book.

Racial prejudice of not just the town's men, but also of President Roosevelt is made evident through Weaver's writings. Despite serving in the U. S. Military the men of the 25th were denied the right of a trial. They had no way to defend themselves against their accusations. The people of Brownsville despised the fact that a black regiment was coming to town long before the men got there. This prejudice seemingly led to the framing of the 25th in order to remove their unwanted presence. The second theme brought up by Weaver is the injustice served to the 167 men of the 25th. A dishonorable discharge is considered the lowest act in the military. All 167 men were no longer able to gain a job, which pertained to the government or the military. Most of the men had been life long veterans with no other skill or trade. Their lives were ruined. The evidence, which was apparently set up to frame the men, should have held no weight since all the men were present and accounted for at the time of the shootings. Finally the third theme brought out by Weaver is violence. Whites, for some reason, seem to associate black men with violence.

Weaver attests this fact with evidence that at the bars fights and altercations rarely broke out between the soldiers. The men were peaceful and went about their own business. Whites, on the other hand, despised the black men and jumped straight to arms as soon as something little came up. Weaver to me is trying to imply how whites jump to conclusions without attaining all the facts. Overall the book was difficult to get through. Weaver presented a lot of information that seemed to backtrack throughout time. However, I feel like his case of innocence is very well presented.

Facts, which show the men being innocent, are clearly stated and the injustice served these men is also well presented. President Roosevelt used to be a man, which I held in high regard. After reading how the 25th was denied a trial and wrongly accused of the crime, Roosevelt takes a huge fall in my book. Weaver's writings also helped gain back the honor the men lost, however for some reason this is left out of the history pages. I knew the event at Brownsville occurred but the injustice, which accompanied it, must have gotten lost before the final copy of my textbook was mass-produced.