



Cedar Crossing

Mark Busby

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The Trans-Cedar lynching is an infamous tale buried deep in the subconscious of rural Texas history—although it made front-page headlines in the *Dallas Morning News* and even in national newspapers from May through November of 1899. This horrifying event is at the center of a compelling novel by author Mark Busby. He has not only researched original documents but has used family oral histories to probe the mysteries that still shroud a lynching that is as horrifying and baffling now as it must have been over a hundred years ago. The "War of Northern Aggression" was still fresh in the memory of those who lived through it; hog-stealing, moonshine, secret meetings, and the lore of the Texas Rangers were part of the fabric of country life, and there were many who refused to believe the war was really over. Against this backdrop, a running feud between the Humphries and the Wilkinsons exploded into a triple murder.

When young Jefferson Bowie Adams II is given an assignment for a college course in 1964, President Kennedy has just been assassinated, the movement for civil rights is beginning to stir, and developments in Vietnam barely make the back pages of the newspaper. Setting out to record a story from his family's history, Jeff discovers—sitting in his grandfather's hideout while Pampaw smokes a forbidden cigar—a story that is as mesmerizing as it is shocking: the tale of a triple lynching in Henderson County in the late spring of 1899, an event Pampaw himself witnessed. Even as the scene of the crime is slowly being submerged by the filling of the Cedar Creek Reservoir, Jeff struggles to uncover the truths of what really happened that fateful night in 1899. Through the various recollections of his aging kin, Adams begins to uncover a web of relationships and a love story that ultimately leads him to a missing girl, a country graveyard, and a realization that he and his family are part and parcel of the stained history of the South.

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