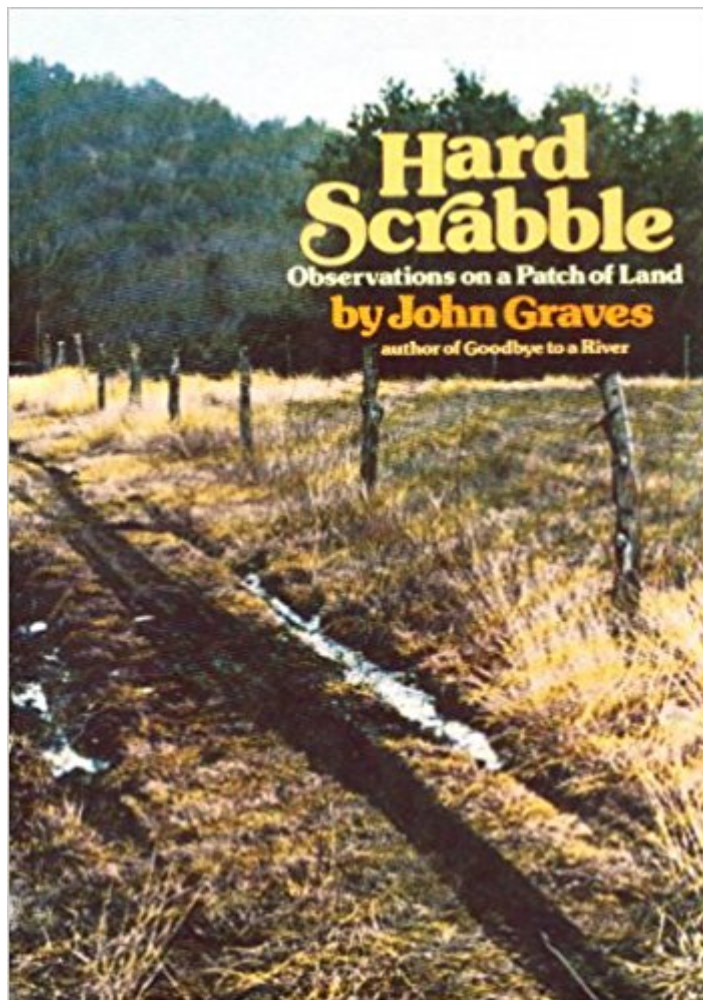


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# Hard Scrabble



## Synopsis

This text takes its title from the author's farm, "Hard Scrabble" where he lived and worked as a farmer and writer, since the 1950s. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 267 pages

Publisher: Alfred A. Knopf; 1st edition (April 12, 1974)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0394483863

ISBN-13: 978-0394483863

Package Dimensions: 8.1 x 5.5 x 1.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 13 customer reviews

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## Customer Reviews

“A kind of home-made book” imperfect like a handmade thing, a prize. It’s a galloping, spontaneous book, on occasion within whooping distance of that greatest and sweetest of country books, Ivan Turgenev’s *A Sportsman’s Notebook*. • --The New York Times Book Review  
“Hard Scrabble is hard pastoral of the kind we have learned to recognize in Wordsworth, Frost, Hemingway, and Faulkner. It celebrates life in accommodation with a piece of the given creation, a recalcitrant four hundred or so acres of Texas cedar brake, old field, and creek bottom which will require of any genuine resident all the character he can muster.” • --Southwest Review  
“His subjects are trees and brush, hired help, fences, soil, armadillos and other wildlife, flood and drought, local history, sheep and goats . . . and they come to us reshaped and reenlivened by his agreeably individual (and sometimes cranky) notions.” • --The New Yorker  
--This text refers to the Paperback edition.

JOHN GRAVES grew up in Fort Worth, graduated from Rice University, and received his M.A. in English from Columbia University. During World War II as a marine, he saw action in the Pacific and was wounded at Saipan. He taught briefly at the University of Texas in Austin, leaving to become a freelance writer, traveling to exotic places\_Majorca and Tenerife, Spain; New York City; and New Mexico. In the late 1950s Graves returned to Texas, taught for a time at Texas Christian University,

and purchased Hard Scrabble, the four hundred acres in Somervell County near Glen Rose where he has worked both as a farmer and a writer ever since. His stories and articles have appeared in such venues as The New Yorker, Town and Country, The Atlantic, Holiday, American Heritage, and Esquire. His best known work, Goodbye to a River, a personal and historical book based on an autumn canoe trip down a part of the Brazos about to be radically altered, was published by Knopf in 1960 and has been in print ever since. In 1980 Knopf brought out From a Limestone Ledge (now available from SMU Press), a collection of personal essays. In 2000, John Graves and the Making of Goodbye to a River: Selected Letters, 1957\_60 (now available from SMU Press) came out to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the publication of Goodbye to a River. Graves is a past president, senior member, and fellow of the Texas Institute of Letters, which honored him with the Carr P. Collins Award for both Goodbye to a River and Hard Scrabble. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Texan John Graves is not a man to shy away from challenges: he invites them. When he bought his little piece of Texas, he clearly knew he was in for a big one, but I am not sure if he was aware of how his accumulated knowledge of this land would shape the man he was becoming. This book takes you through the process of a bumpy courtship and the resulting marriage between a man and his land. Already armed with a deep appreciation of Nature, he was able to slowly coax renewed vigor into this misused patch of land through his gentle nurturing of it. The book is full of his personal adventures such as stone masonry, animal husbandry, carpentry, and all the hazards inherent in farm life. All presented without regret, with humor and modesty. Inevitably he laments the encroachment of more urban activities as they threaten his bucolic existence. Yet he speaks of the duality of his own urban interactions and compares them to the realities of his rural lifestyle. This book to me was as much about the man John Graves as it is about his subject, "Hard Scrabble". Tough and complex, like his Patch of Land, he personifies the best Texas has to offer.

I got this book for my husband who is a voracious reader. He loves history and stories about life in our country...whether these stories are based on true accounts of early explorers or people who wrote about their experiences living on the land and so on. He says it was a "good read" and really enjoyed it.

Very good book. I live only 20 miles or so from Hard Scrabble, and grew up on the Brazos river ( Goodbye To A River, John Graves ). John Graves wrote with humor, wisdom, history, folklore, and

poetry. He died just over a year ago but left use with some wonderful books.

John Graves is a man who loves the land. His description of his patch makes you see exactly what he is talking about. The work on the property has become his therapy in a way. Be prepared to want to try this form of therapy for yourself. This is a book to read, absorb, and read again.

great book. great writer. a classic of Texas literature

Wonderful book.

While not familiar with John Graves' work until his passing I found this book to be an enjoyable almost hard to put down book.

great book

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