

ENCHANTED ROCK

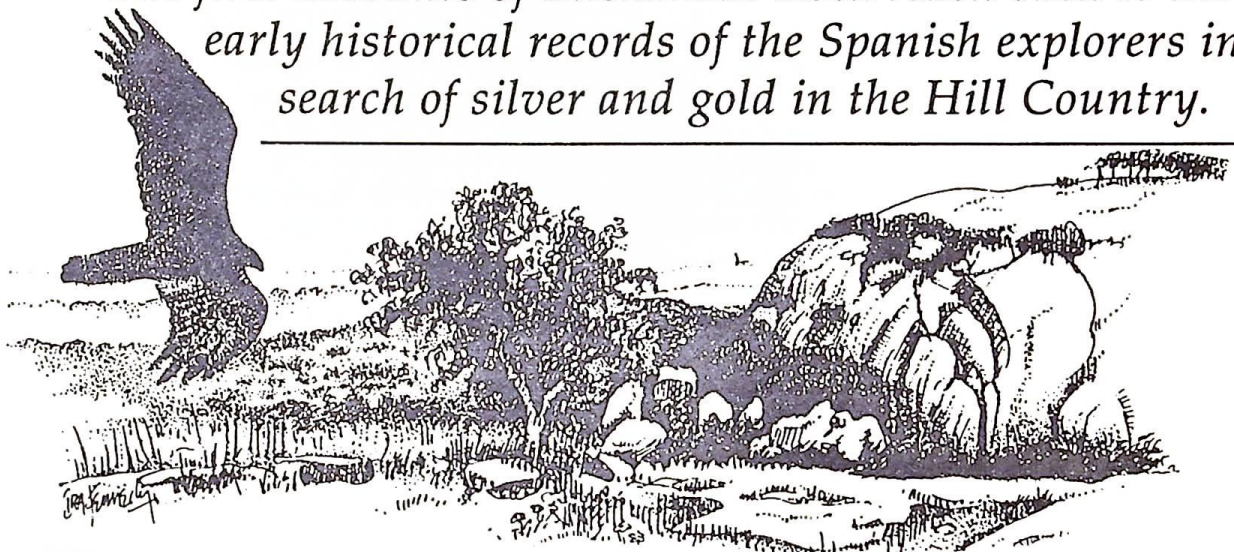
NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 3

JUNE/JULY 1994

THE IMAGINARY FRONTIER

The first accounts of Enchanted Rock reach back to the early historical records of the Spanish explorers in search of silver and gold in the Hill Country.



Although the Spanish expedition of Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca passed through Texas in the sixteenth century, possibly in the vicinity of the present location of Mason County, it would take another two hundred years before the Spanish would make their influence felt in the *Lomeria*, or Hill Country.

In 1700's several missions—Conception, San Jose, San Juan Capistrano, and La Espada—were established in San Antonio. These missions soon became sanctuaries for the Lipan Apache, who were bitter enemies of the Comanche to the north.

The Spanish during this period were increasingly concerned about incursions into Texas by the French, who were supplying arms to the Comanche. In an effort to expand control of what the Spanish considered their territory to the north, they sent expeditionary forces into the Hill Country in search of a suitable site for a mission which was expected to serve several purposes. Apart from establishing an outpost in this unknown frontier, it would be the primary mission for converting the Lipan Apache to Christianity. The mission, with its Apache warriors, would also be

a buffer against Comanche attacks further south, particularly on the settlement in San Antonio.

The area had been known as the *Apacheria*; however, the Comanche were rapidly claiming it as their own. In June 1753 an expedition was sent in search of a location for the proposed mission. Led by Lieutenant Juan Galvan from the Presidio de San Antonio de Bejar, the regions around the Pedernales and Llano Rivers were explored with disappointing results. Finally, along the San Saba River they found what they had been seeking: fertile soil, timber and abundant water.

The cautious Spanish sent another expedition to confirm the recommendation of Galvan. Both reports were in agreement, and the two expeditionary forces returned with even more intriguing information. Their Indian guides spoke of the *Cerro del Amalgre*, or Hill of Red Ochre. Suddenly rumors abounded in San Antonio regarding the potential for gold and silver mines in the region.

Inspired by rumor, ten men with Lipan guides sought to locate the fabled *Cerro del Amalgre*

Continued on page 5

There's (some) Gold in Them There Hills

Tales of lost mines are part of the Hill Country heritage. The legends persist at least in part because there have been virtually continuous mining operations in the Central Mineral Region since the time of the Spanish arrival in the Hill Country. Burnet, San Saba, Llano, and Gillespie counties have all been sites where prospectors have dug for fortunes in silver and gold. Detailed maps today show two creeks just to the north of Enchanted Rock bearing the names Gold Mine Creek and Silver Mine Creek.

One of the earliest "owners" of Enchanted Rock was Sam Maverick who bought the property for its imagined mineral potential. At the time (1844) rumors of gold and silver mines in the vicinity of Enchanted Rock found their way into print—particularly in Stephen F. Austin's promotional booklet published in 1831, and William Kennedy's, *Texas* (1841). Kennedy was a British diplomat whose two-volume book was *the book* on Texas, and very influential in its day, especially in Germany. The Fisher-Miller Grant, purchased by the German Emigration Company, was located between the Llano and San Saba Rivers—the very heartland of the legendary lost Spanish mines.

During the Civil war several residents of Llano county panned for gold in Sandy Creek earning less than a dollar a day for their efforts. Even Gail Borden, the founder of the Borden milk company once owned a gold mine on Sandy Creek.

In *Indian Depredations in Texas* by J. W. Wilbarger (1889), is an account of the last Indian fight in the Hill Country, which occurred on Packsaddle Mountain in 1873. The story is related by a prospector looking for an abandoned Spanish mine on Packsaddle Mountain. The prospector had separated from the rest of his group who were headed up to the

San Saba to search for another lost Spanish mine. The narrator had explored the San Saba area before and was certain his friends were wasting their time.

In 1887 gold was found in a drilling core in Llano county and attracted numerous prospectors to the area. The Heath Mine, located five miles northeast of Llano was opened in 1896 after gold was discovered there.

In *Mineral Resources of the Llano-Burnet Region, Texas*, by Sidney Page, published by the Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. (1911), the author reported the results of twelve gold and silver mining operations in Llano county. "It must be said, however, that in general the quantity is so small as to be valueless from the standpoint of a mining enterprise. Results of many assays made of specimens said to contain gold were decidedly discouraging," Page wrote.

In 1976 *The Highlander* newspaper in Marble Falls published a story by David Crowder on Enchanted Rock. "There is another story of a tunnel which goes completely through the mountain. [Charles] Moss says the old-timers who supposedly knew its location have all died off and though he has personally searched the other caves and crevices for the tunnel, he has never found it.

"One old fella about 80 said he knew where it was so I took him up there to find it but he got all turned around and didn't know where he was," Moss said"

Recently another story came to our attention which relates to the preceding one written by Crowder. A native of Llano county, now in his late forties, was told by his grandfather, who was a prospector in the area, that there is a cave at the base of Enchanted Rock. According to the story, the cave was sealed up by the Spanish to conceal a wagon-load of silver. So, if you find a wagon-load of Spanish silver at Enchanted Rock just remember: Take only pictures, leave only footprints. IK



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Ain't Too Proud to Beg

SONNY SOLIS

PARK SUPERINTENDENT

Ain't too proud to beg begins where our last conversation ended (ERock Newsletter No.2: "Are We Loving Enchanted Rock to Death?"). Ain't too proud to beg. Classic words to a classic old song, but with meaning for us all. We talk today about volunteers and donations for they are the heart and soul of Enchanted Rock, and to a large extent our future.

I begin by personally thanking all of you (men, women, ladies & gentlemen, the young & the old, and all your pets) for the outstanding work that you have done, continue to do, and will continue to do in making Enchanted Rock your home. For those of you that are enlightened, we are on the same wavelength, and I will honor you by speaking of your deeds and your actions.

There are many of you who come to Enchanted Rock SNA for your own reasons. It would be an ideal world to meet each of you, to talk the talk and walk the walk. But I am here to tell you that it is all right. You are not unknown, nor have not been forgotten. In this conversation, I will not touch on everyone, but I know who you are. I begin by thanking James Crump and Ira Kennedy for their life-long work to preserve the natural and cultural resources of Enchanted Rock.

To the hundreds of volunteer hours given by the BSA's in work and eagle projects, thank you all. To Leslie Launer & her Singing Girl Scouts, thank you ladies. To Keith Guillory, Scott Hinton, Mieko Akutsu and all the climbing guides, thank you for promoting an environmental ethic among your students. To the Killeen H.O.G.S. (Harley Davidson Owens Group) I have appreciated your clean-up, fire patrol, and escort services these past two years, thank you. To the unknown woman who weeds our restroom cacti garden, thank you. To Barry "If You Build It They Will Come To The Clivius" Wilson, thank you. To the Alamo Climbing Club for adopting the roadside clean-up duties of Enchanted Rock, thank you. To the many of you who find trash and carry it out in your packs, your pockets, your hands, thank you. To those that make the effort to help no matter how little, for the mere act of thinking about wanting to help is the beginning of a larger sense of duty, thank you. I thank you for myself, it makes me feel good to know that you enjoy your home. I thank you for those that will come behind us, your friends, your family, your neighbors, and they in turn will continue to give. This is truly a magical place to live, to work, to play and it is worthy of all our efforts to maintain its integrity.

Enchanted Rock has begun accepting donations in any form or fashion. We will take your pennies, your nickels, your dimes, your BMW's, your bad jokes, your good nature. We will take it all. We ain't too proud to beg. We are your friends who greet you at the door, who register you in the office, who listen to your complaints, who at times are called in to render a rescue and/or first aid.

If you choose to give, know that your hard-earned money is going back into Enchanted Rock projects and equipment. Your money stays here, and does not

*We will take your pennies,
your nickels, your dimes,
your BMW's, your bad jokes,
your good nature.
We will take it all.*

travel to that "Black Hole", but can only, will only be used to enhance our efforts to make Enchanted Rock a model for all other parks. If you choose to give, the donation box is located in the lobby of park headquarters or send any type of donation c/o Enchanted Rock SNA, Rt. 4, Box 170, Fredericksburg, TX 78624.

Well, thank you for listening to me. I do appreciate all your efforts. We will all do the best we can; we can ask no more of one another. Come to visit me or the ERock staff when you can. There is always time to visit with friends and family.

History & Legends of Enchanted Rock

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FROM THE EDITOR

Keeping to the spirit of the piece by park superintendent, Sonny Solis, in which he gives recognition to the volunteers at Enchanted Rock, I would like to thank five people without whom none of this would have been possible. First, my deepest gratitude to Mark Blumenthal who has generously provided faith, trust, and the computer equipment. And to Bill and Brenda Fleming who have provided encouragement, patience, and assistance, I thank you both. To Loraine McCurry, who has provided more help than she can imagine, thanks. And last but certainly not least, I thank Sonny Solis whose vision, cooperation, and contributions are vital to this enterprise. Each of you have helped me to pursue my dream, and the debt I owe you all is beyond measure.

A word or two about the cover stories. As I mentioned in the last issue, all of the feature articles in the newsletter are from a work in progress on the history of Enchanted Rock. For readers who like their history in chronological order maybe this will help: issue number one on the First Americans of Enchanted Rock is chapter one. The second issue on Jack Hays is chapter four. This issue is the second chapter. The upcoming issue entitled "Gone to Texas" is the third chapter. In subsequent issues I will try (but not promise) they will be in the appropriate sequence.

Those of you who are familiar with the newsletter will notice a major change—advertising. After two issues it was abundantly clear that subscriptions alone would never cover our printing costs. With advertising we are assured a press run of at least one thousand copies per issue. This doesn't mean that everyone who visits the park will receive a free copy. But it does mean that the newsletter will survive and the information it provides—which would otherwise not be available at all—will reach many of the visitors at the park. We still need subscribers. We still need advertisers. Please subscribe, but more importantly, support those businesses you see in these pages. They made the copy you hold in your hands possible. And mention that you saw their ad in this newsletter. IK

COMING EVENTS

Ira Kennedy will be giving talks on Enchanted Rock State Natural Area. The talks are free and open to the public.

July 9 (Saturday at 8 P.M.) on the history and legends of ERock.

August 20 (Saturday at 8 P.M.) on the archaeology of ERock.

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and their fortunes. But fortune turned against them when their guides deserted the expedition to join other Apache on an assault against the Comanche. The Apache were to rendezvous at a landmark called *La Rodilla*, or The Knee. In "Enchanted Rock Country," Robert S. Weddle (1979), states "in the account of the episode, however, occurs the only mention yet found in Spanish documents of a landmark that might be interpreted to mean Enchanted Rock... 'The Knee'... seems a fair description of the prominent feature."

On February 17, 1756, under orders from the governor of Texas, Jacinto de Barrios y Jauregui, Bernardo de Miranda y Flores departed San Antonio with twenty-three men with instructions to locate Cerro del Amalgre. Eight days later, having endured torrential rains, flooded rivers, and rocky terrain, they arrived at the *amalgre*. Camping on Honey Creek, the expedition discovered a red ochre hill on Riley Mountain near the present-day Llano. Within the hill Miranda claimed to have found a tremendous stratum of silver-bearing ore.

"The mines which are in the Cerro del Amalgre," Miranda reported, "are so numerous that I guarantee to give every settler in the province of Texas a full claim... The principal vein is more than two varas in width and in its westward lead appears to be of immeasurable thickness."

While the majority of his party were busy digging for silver, Miranda led a smaller expedition in search of other mines. Near a place called *Cerro de Santiago*, or Hill of the Sacred One, he found additional, but less abundant veins of silver. Roderick Patten in his article "Miranda's Inspection of Los Almagres: his Journal, Report and Petition," (1970) suggests that Cerro de Santiago could well have been Enchanted Rock. Indeed its name comes as close in spirit to describing Enchanted Rock as *La Rodilla* does in describing its appearance.

Miranda returned three weeks later with ore samples which proved promising, but skeptical officials and subsequent events worked against Miranda's discovery. Although the mine was never reopened by the Spanish, it gave birth to numerous legends of lost Spanish mines in the Central Mineral Region which persist to this day.

In 1756, the Mission Santa Cruz de San Saba was established on the banks of the river under the leadership of Father Alonso Giraldo de Terreros. Three miles downstream the Presidio de San Luis de las Amarillas was built to provide protection for the mission. But, as Robert S. Weddle points out in *The San Saba Mission* (1964), "While this placement reduced the likelihood of military meddling in mission affairs, it rendered impossible defense of the mission in case of attack."

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The presidio was under the command of Colonel Don Diego Oritz Parrilla, who considered the location of the mission ill-advised and almost immediately requested it be moved to the Rio de las Chanas (Llano River), where the fabled Cerro del Amalgre would be close at hand. Parrilla's garrison was, at the time, the largest in Texas, with almost four hundred inhabitants, including women and children. Because of the remote location of the mission and its presidio was essentially Comanche territory, and because the Spanish were allies of the Apache, hostility was inevitable.

The mission was beset by problems too numerous to detail here. Although the Apache had encouraged

CONTINUED ON BACK PAGE

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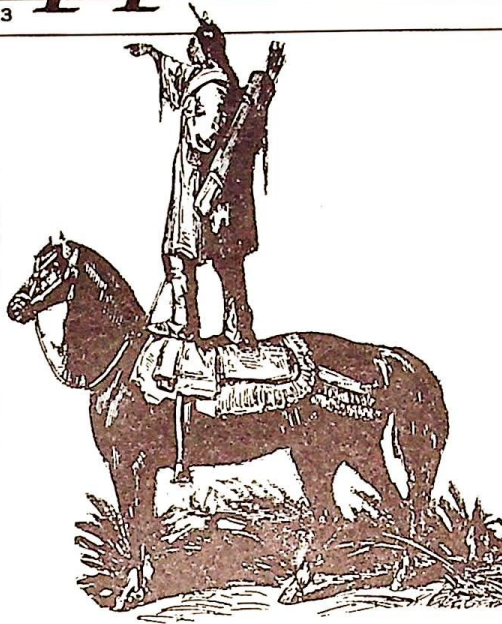
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THE IMAGINARY FRONTIER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

the establishment of a mission, they never lived up to their end of the bargain. Two months after the mission was founded, three thousand Apache arrived there but refused to stay. The Apache were on a mission of their own—enroute to either a buffalo hunt or a campaign against the Comanche, depending upon which chief one listened to. After receiving gifts from the Spanish, they departed, returning a few days later with buffalo meat for the missionaries. But the Apache left again almost immediately. It seems certain they knew that the enterprise, well inside Comanche territory, was doomed. But if it provided the pretext for an all-out conflict between the Spanish and the Comanche, so much the better: why fight an enemy when you can induce a superior force to take up the task? To further that end, the gifts the Apache accepted from the Spanish missionaries were left here and there on the trail in an effort to implicate the Spanish in the raids.

Seven months after being visited by the Apache, Santa Cruz de San Saba was attacked by approximately two thousand Indians, many armed with French rifles. The Comanche, in association with the Tejas, Tonkawa, Bidai, and others, burned the mission to the ground. A few survivors escaped to the presidio, and after a brief siege the Indians abandoned the field of battle.

Although the presidio survived, its defense of the frontier was ineffectual. Colonel Parrilla's interest in the Alcazar Mine of Cerro del Amalgre prompted him to acquire ore from there and smelt it at the presidio. This act was to provide the "evidence" supporting the legend of a Lost San Saba Mine.

In 1776, Marques de Rubi, the inspector general for King Charles III of Spain, was sent to Mexico to report on the condition and viability of the entire Spanish frontier. With the Spanish acquisition of Louisiana, the French threat to the Spanish claims on Texas ceased to exist. According to Rubi, the presidio on the San Saba defended an "imaginary frontier," and its men and material should be put to better use. The presidio was abandoned in 1768.

Despite Rubi's assessment, the frontier was real enough, as was the Comanche's ability to claim it for over a century. But it was the numerous legends of lost Spanish mines that would prove irresistible to future settlers on the frontier and would be Spain's most enduring legacy in the Lomeria.

Even today, Enchanted Rock, Packsaddle Mountain, Riley Mountain, and the San Saba Mission inspire stories of lost treasure and abandoned mines. In effect, Rubi's imaginary frontier became the frontier for the imagination. IK