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VOL. 2, No. 9 NOVEMBER 1995

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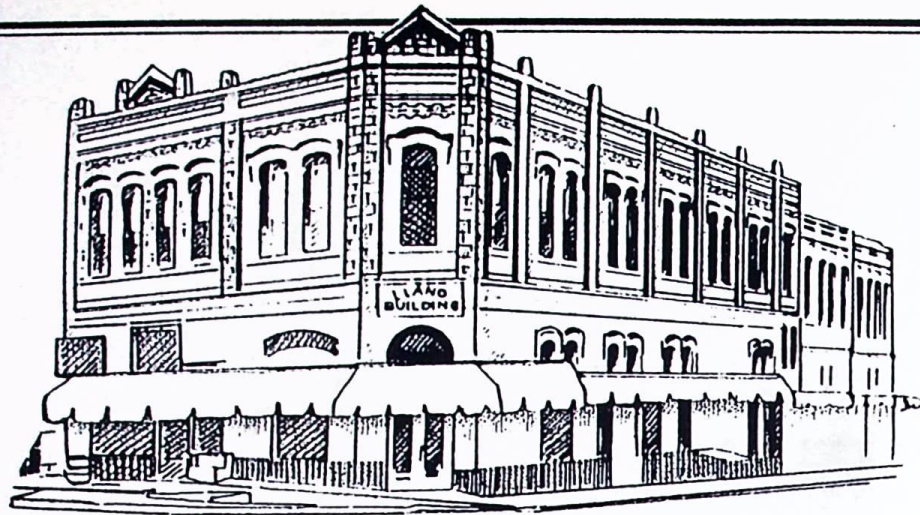
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

A NATURAL RESOURCE FOR ADVENTURE, DISCOVERY, AND KNOWLEDGE IN THE HILL COUNTRY

- 4 **DRAWN TO ADVENTURE**
The Hill Country still provides modern-day explorers with adventure, by Charles Tischler.
- 5 **LEGACY**
Cowboy poetry by the Hill Country's own Frank Hill.
- 6 **LETTERS**
- 10 **THE MUSES OF BULVERDE**
Life on the Texas Frontier in the 1950s, by Ira Kennedy.
- 12 **POOR HOOT'S FUNERAL**
Small town society turns out to help put old Hoot in the ground, by Dale Fry.
- 14 **NO NATURAL DIPLOMAT**
The story of Texas' best known game warden, by Charles Tischler.
- 18 **SHERIFF "SMOKEY" KLAERNER**
Track down outlaws with the legendary Friedrichsburg sheriff, by Kenn Knopp.
- 34 **CHANGELESS STONEWALL**
A brief history of one tiny Hill Country town, by Vicki Griffin.



ON THE COVER: WHAT'SAT? Art by Buck Burkle.



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DRAWN TO ADVENTURE

Yesterday I pulled the Trooper out from the gravel drive at the Crabapple Crossing Store and headed southward toward Fredericksburg. The last cold front had left the atmosphere sparkling in Legion Valley. The fall light and stout north wind turned the thick, high wild grasses into a golden ocean with islands of cedars and oaks. Off to the right Enchanted Rock grew as I made good time, all the while keeping an eye peeled for an overactive cow or skittish doe.

With the finest of scenery zipping by I thought back to the afternoon of the day before when this magazine's publisher and editor, Ira Kennedy and I visited the park. It had been far too long since we had prowled the center of the world together. At one point we sat just off the main dome trail and eavesdropped on the visitors coming off the rock in the evening light.

We listened to the reactions being relayed to their family members who had chosen to enjoy the rock without climbing it, but who had kept a watch on their loved ones as they became more and more ant-like as they neared the top. Ira and I chose not to climb the rock. Instead we walked the lower trail around to the east below Turkey Peak which was crowded with colorfully-clad participants of a rock climbing competition.

We marveled at the wonderful condition of the habitat. And we pondered the old Indian campgrounds that line the creek unnoticed under years of fallen leaves.

Then we found the oak. She stood not far from Sandy Creek. Her huge, tortured double trunk was more than twice the girth Ira and I could span with our arms stretched wide and just our finger tips touching. Oh the tales she could tell, the secrets she could betray. From her position near the creek she has withstood countless sieges of floodwaters, and witnessed centuries of human drama unfold around her.

The serpentine roadway pushed and shoved me back to the present. I was heading to Fredericksburg to meet with *ERock Magazine* contributing editor Kenn Knopp. We were on the hunt of some art to help spruce up Kenn's article on Ol' Smokey Klaerner the Sheriff.

I parked near the Marktplatz and took advantage of the public facilities there. Refreshed, I headed down Hauptstrasse, entered the door with the Kowert Realty sign above it, turned right and found Kenn, as I always had, before at his crowded desk with his laptop computer amidst a jumble of historic notes, pages and documents. He looked up over his half glasses. "Gut' Tag Herr Tischler!"

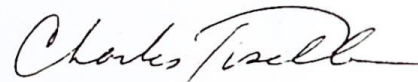
Then he asked if a fine pen-and-ink of the old Jail would serve our needs.

"Of course, but we're going to print in 48 hours." He said, "Don't worry I know an artist. He's good and he's fast."

I said, "Well, he better be . . . fast that is."

Kenn picked up his phone and in a moment was barking German over the line. He hung up and asked me to take coffee with him just up the way. After coffee we boarded his Buick and headed for the jail. There I met artist Horst Woitalla, originally of Berlin. I stood behind his left shoulder and watched the deft movements of his pens across the stretch pad. I have had the fortune to watch masters at work before. Here was another. This work which was done in under an hour appears on page 19.

Moments like these, and there have been many, convince me *Enchanted Rock Magazine* has indeed become an ongoing Hill Country adventure, leading both readers and writers to places we have here-to-fore never explored and sometimes not even imagined. Please join us on this great Hill Country adventure and expect the unexpected.



CHARLES TISCHLER

ENCHANTED ROCK MAGAZINE

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LEGACY

BY FRANK HILL

We'd ride all day an' camp all night;
 Catch a big catfish for breakfast.
 He'd tell me 'bout them Cajun Queens in New Orleans
 Used t' get 'im arrested.
 Played dominoes and picked guitar, pitched horse
 Shoes 'n' nearly always won.
 But sometimes the look in his eye asked, "Why,
 "Is ev'ryone on the run?"

'Course, he's been gone a long time now,
 Since the summer I was 'leven.
 One day it jus' come his time, almost 99,
 In 1947.

'N' through the years as I recollect
 All the mem'ries and the dreams,
 I gotta follow that trail where a man must fail
 With his highfalutin' schemes.

My Granddaddy was a cowboy.
 I always thought he'd win.
 Now there's freeways, towns and cities —
 Everywhere he's been.

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LETTERS

DELIGHTFUL READING

While returning from Austin recently, I stopped in Llano to call on Sally Redford at the Weather Vane who is handling my books, *Out Yonder Revisited* and *Another Look Out Yonder*. While there, I picked up a copy of your publication. It is delightful reading.

Do buy freelance material? If so, could I get a copy of your guidelines. I have a bunch of good stories rolling around in my noggin' that might fit your format. You are familiar with my yarns so let me know if we can do some business. I will entertain most any reasonable offer.

I enjoyed the rehash of your Goddess of Liberty story that appeared in your book. It was a well-done piece — both ways.

Sincerely,
Ross McSwain
SanAngelo
Former editor of the
San Angelo Standard Times

Crabapple Crossing

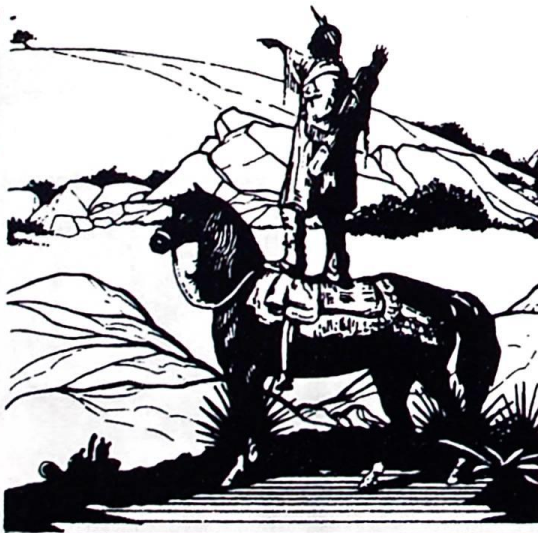
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GREAT GRAPHICS

Enclosed please find a check in the amount of \$25 for a one-year subscription to the *Enchanted Rock Magazine*.

While visiting the antique shops in Llano recently, someone was kind enough to give us a copy of the September issue. We really enjoyed everything about it, from the stories to the great graphics.

Thanks,
B.J. & Renee Maxcey
Richland Springs, Texas

SHARING FRIENDS

Greetings from Ohio; Thank you for the complimentary copy of your *Enchanted Rock Magazine*, and I have already received the first issue of my subscription.

My son "Buck" is your Art Director and I feel as though I already know Charles Tischler from all the stories and videos that Buck has shared with us, his family here, and now through the magazine I can get acquainted with some of his other friends, Ira, Frank Hill, Stephanie, etc —

Being so far away from him has made it hard to be a part of his Texas life so it is a joy to share Buck's friends through reading your magazine.

Keep up the good work —
Elsie Burkle
Eaton, Ohio

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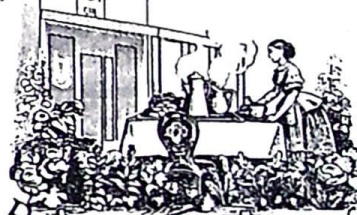
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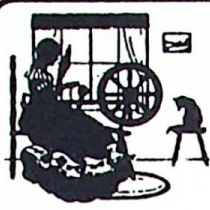
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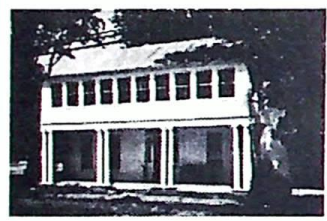
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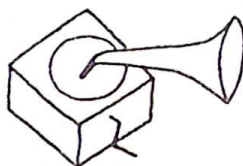
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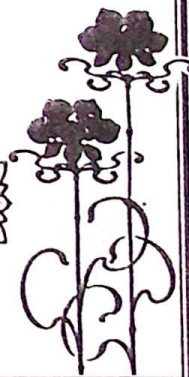
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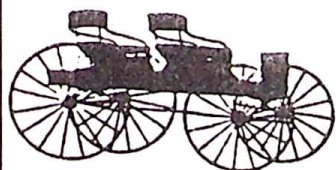


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THE MUSES OF BULVERDE

ON THE TEXAS FRONTIER DURING THE 1950s

Pioneer Texas was alive and well in the early 1950s. I know because I was living that life from time to time, in my 11th and the 12th year. My mother, Lucille, would take me from our home in Blanco to the home of the Muses on a 900-acre ranch near Bulverde. Aunt Mary, Uncle Henry, and their son, who everybody called Uncle Bud, would take me in for a week or two at a stretch during the summers and on other occasions during the year.

BY IRA KENNEDY

The Muses were living in a classic Texas-German limestone house that was just over a hundred years old. There was no electricity, and water was pumped by hand from the well. They had a few chickens, a milk cow, and a ranch abundant with wildlife. For the table, the Muses gathered eggs, churned their own butter, and hunted for dinner every day.

The roundabout experiences that brought me to Aunt Mary's and Uncle Henry's place were incredible in their own right. I was born in a tent in a migrant camp in San Saba. By my fifth year my mother married Owen, an officer in the army. He had two children from a previous marriage, and our new family moved to Japan in 1946. From there we lived in Massachusetts, Virginia, and Staten Island before returning to Texas. At the time there was a "police action" in Korea which needed soldiers. While dad was away, my mother, with five children, needed her mother, Rosa (Kelly) Daniels who was living in Blanco at the time.

I don't remember how long my first visit was, but I do recall getting out of our '49 Ford and being immediately ashamed of the newness of my clothes. Even by standards of the 50s the Muses were "poor folk." The only clue that they lived in the 20th century was the old flatbed truck out front. They chopped cedar on the ranch for their staples, and when they had a full load they would trade at the cedar yard and country store located at the Bulverde turnoff on Hwy 281. But the rest of the time they stayed on, and lived off the land on the Oliver Ranch.

Although I was too small and inexperienced to chop cedar, I did work in the cedar brake clearing the severed limbs of cedars and stacking pickets and posts for hauling. When I'd get caught up, I would roam around looking for arrowheads which were fairly plentiful in the area. It didn't take long for my clothes to show enough wear so I began to fit right in.

Back at the ranchhouse I'd gather eggs, churn butter, bring in firewood for the kitchen stove; and every day, just before sunset, I'd go hunting with Uncle Bud so we would have some meat for supper—all the while I was busy trying to purge myself of any trace of a yankee accent. It wasn't long before I learned to say ain't and git and yonder and y'all, and I would never carry anything but I would tote it.

In the evenings we would sit around the light of a coal oil lamp, or out under the moon and stars, where I would hear stories and yarns aplenty. For me, however, the highlight of our daily routine was hunting for supper with Uncle Bud.

I remember one time, early on, Uncle Bud said, "Come on. Let's get some meat for the table. We're gonna lose daylight pretty quick." With that he picked up a .22 from its resting place in the corner of the room and took down a small box of shells from a kitchen shelf. He took two.

"Don't we need more than that?" I asked. "Why don't we take the whole box?"

Bud looked at me with the slightest of smiles.

"Well," he said pondering the two bright brass shells in his rough hand, "we only need one rabbit."

Out in the fields we'd walk slow and quiet. Hardly a word would pass between us. When he'd raise up one hand like we was warming it off a stove I knew to stop.

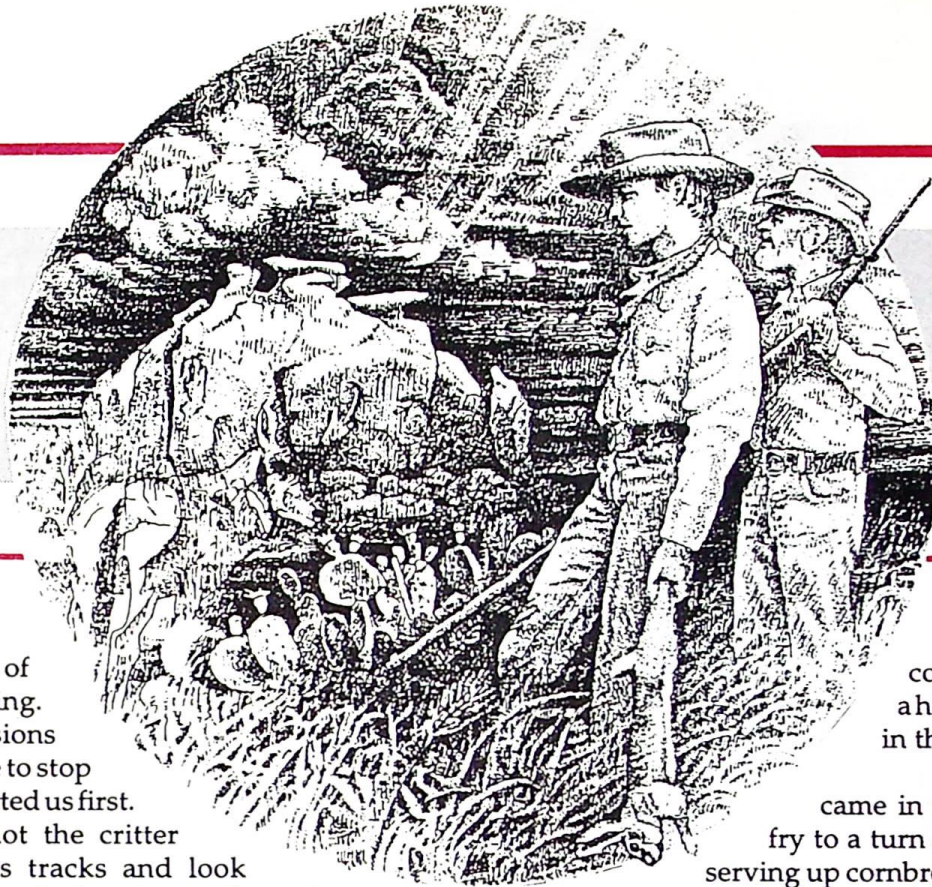
"Look out yonder," he whispered.

"I don't see nothing."

"Don't look for critters, look for movement. Take it all in."

Then I saw what Uncle Bud saw. Out in the flat halfway between us and the treeline of cedars the faintest puff of dust rose a foot or so off the ground catching the late afternoon light. "What's causing that?" I asked softly.

"It's a rabbit wallerin in the dirt. Watch." Suddenly he let out a clear whistle, and the rabbit sat straight up. At that moment Uncle Bud let off a round straight into the rabbit.



ART BY IRA KENNEDY

There was a flurry of dust, and then nothing.

On other occasions he'd use that whistle to stop a rabbit that had spotted us first. More often than not the critter would freeze in its tracks and look around one last time before it was brought down forever.

Mostly we'd eat cottontail, but when none would give themselves to us we'd bring back a jackrabbit. More than once, when our luck was real bad or we started out too late we'd have nothing more to show for our effort than an armadillo. They were always underfoot and too easy to kill.

If we'd scare up a rabbit that was too smart to fall for that whistle trick, we'd always circle back around because, frequently, it would return to the same spot and an entirely different fate. I learned to walk into the wind, keep the sun at my back, and shoot only if I had a clear and certain shot. I learned too that you're not supposed to eat rabbit in a month that doesn't have an "r" in it. In the hotter months, May thru August, there is a higher risk of disease. But since we had to eat in the summer too, Uncle Bud learned long ago what to look for. I remember my shock, and sadness, the first time we had to leave a cottontail in the field. I thought we ought to bury it, but Uncle Bud

I remember my shock, and sadness, the first time we had to leave a cottontail in the field. I thought we ought to bury it, but Uncle Bud convinced me it deserved a higher fate soaring around in the belly of a buzzard.

convinced me it deserved a higher fate soaring around in the belly of a buzzard.

Whatever critter we came in with Aunt Mary would fry to a turn on a wood stove, before serving up cornbread or biscuits and beans or potatoes. From the honey tree there was always honey, complete with honeycomb and a bee or two trapped inside a large Mason jar. For spices there was salt, pepper, and a little jar of pickled chilies. Thick chunks of

fresh churned butter and a bowl of steaming gravy completed the meal which covered their modest kitchen table. Occasionally we'd have wild greens, such as dandelion, topped off with vinegar. In the center a coal oil lamp graced the room with light.

I remember so well the intermingled scents from the food, the wood stove, the lamp and, after each meal, tobacco smoke from Bull Durham which Uncle Henry and Uncle Bud always had on hand. They didn't smoke "ready rolls" and they preferred strike-anywhere kitchen matches to the books of "gofer matches"—strike one and go fer another. Aunt Mary dipped snuff and she always had a spit can

Continued on page 36

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POOR HOOT'S FUNERAL

BY DALE FRY

It'll be a long time before the citizens of a certain small Hill Country town forget the untimely passing of Hoot Henley. His funeral was anything but dull.

Old Hoot was as mean a man as you could find anywhere, who went through so many marriages that folks could never remember which wives he divorced or which ones he killed.

He was sent up several times for such an unsocial attitude toward his spouses, but he always managed to get out for good behavior or something or other. He'd come home, marry and kill another one and back to the Big House he'd go. Well, it was free room and board, and everyone knew that Hoot never cottoned to the idea of honest labor. In fact, it was a mystery to everyone why he ever even got out; he could have managed to stay locked up if he'd just put a little effort into it.

But Hoot solved that problem the last time the warden let him loose. He came home and promptly died.

The day he died, a chorus of mourning from the lips of kinfolks and ex-wives still living hovered over the town like an aria from Dante's *Inferno*. Satisfied they had "done poor Hoot justice," they then set about to give him a going away such as Dullsville had never seen.

Especially his oldest sister, Petal. "Nothin's too good fer MAH brother!" she tearfully swore as she took another swipe at her eyes with an already soaked handkerchief. Petal Briggs was probably better off financially than the rest of the family, since she operated one of the town's most thriving bars, the infamous Road's End Tavern. And so, agreeing that she'd "put poor Hoot away proper," she proceeded to do so with a dedication beyond the reach of most mortals. (From the moment Hoot died Petal never spoke his name without applying "poor" to it.)

She dispatched the funeral arrangements in record time. Ben Haygood, the "funeral parlour man," said he'd never sold a finer casket, and the town's three florists had to close shop because there wasn't a bud left on their premises. Flowers lined the aisles of the funeral home, caressed the casket wondrously and spilled lovingly onto the front porch. One mourner knocked

*But fine as all this may be,
Petal and her sister Blanche
stole the show. It was their
brother who was "layin' in that
coffin," and they were not about
to be outdone. They'd make
"poor Hoot proud."*

over two pots of geraniums—one pink and one red—trying to get in the front door.

But fine as all this may be, Petal and her sister Blanche stole the show. It was their brother who was "layin' in that coffin," and they were not about to be outdone. They'd make "poor Hoot proud."

On the day of the funeral both women struggled into the building, each sporting an incredible array of flowers—poppies, orchids, roses, forget-me-nots, lilies of the Nile, whatever was "befittin' a bereaved"—which reached from shoulder to waist. And to complete the effect they both sported new outfits, had their hair dyed "special fer the occasion" and applied an extra coating of rouge, eyeshadow and lipstick "in the shades poor Hoot liked on his women."

The sisters had no more than settled when the town funeral-goer, Gus Wild, appeared in the front door. Gus usually came dressed as he was, but because he'd known old Hoot so long, he decided he'd dress to the hilt today. He'd donned a blue suit, new tennis shoes and a red and white polka dot baseball cap. And was careful to sit on the front row so everyone would take notice.

It was a toss up which Gus loved the most—funerals or cigarettes. And before the organist had finished playing the first hymn, he had taken six smoking breaks to the front porch, trips which the wooden floor recorded in full volume.

But Hoot's brother Marvin handled the situation with remarkable ease. On Gus' last trip back to the front pew Marvin stood up in the Immediate Family Section across the room, shook a mighty fist and bellowed, "Gus, you better stay put! Cain't you see we're tryin' to have a funeral?"

Gus decided he like funerals better than cigarettes—at least for the time being.

Well, it wasn't long after Gus made his decision that a late-arriving pall bearer, carnation dangling from his lapel, tried to enter the back door discreetly. But Joe Boy Jones was a big man, and Marvin spied him immediately. There had been no love lost

Continued on Page 35

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NO NATURAL DIPLOMAT.

THE STORY OF GROVER SIMPSON

by CHARLES TISCHLER

Right, Wrong or Indifferent, one of the undisputed Legends of twentieth century Hill Country history is that of Game Warden Grover Simpson. I can still remember the very first time I laid eyes on Grover. I was in the first grade at Gullett Elementary School near Shoal Creek in what was, in 1957, North Austin. Grover was waiting for Bubba — that's what we called David his son who was a classmate of mine in Mrs. Cummins class. The flat-roofed one-story building has wings of classrooms and Grover was standing there in his fine khaki uniform with that shiny badge and fine black boots. It was real cold that afternoon, but Grover wasn't wearing a coat and he wasn't wearing his issue black Sam Brown gunbelt and Smith and Wesson .38, but I can distinctly recall his black leather gloves, lined with rabbit fur.

To me his six-foot slim frame topped by his Formosa straw cowboy hat stood like a heroic statue. And that smile and friendly voice made me feel completely at home. Over the intervening twenty five or so years Grover took me in, 'cause I was one of Bubba's very best friends. He'd take me and Bubba out at night in his state car. That's what he called them. The first of Grover's state cars was a 1954 mustard and white Chevy Coupe . . . six cylinder and three on the column. Then there was a Ford and a couple of Plymouth Fury's. All of the later cars were Game Warden Grey.

I'll never be able to write all my Grover stories, that could lay whole forests bare on the paper alone. But through the best of times and the worst of times he was there. And, since his passing, I've fallen into finest conversations with Grover as the centerpiece. Just recently, while passing time at the Crabapple Crossing Store, a Llano County peace officer paused a while to chat. After the usual reciting of personal history, I brought up Grover's name, to which the lawman steeled and visibly straightened and said, "He was the most dedicated law officer I ever met." And so it goes.

People used to say Grover would ticket his own mother. That statement was never doubted by me or Bubba, because during those times people didn't say Game Warden. They just said Grover.

During the Fall of 1973 I reenrolled at The University of Texas at Austin to pursue a degree in journalism. During that first semester I took an expository writing class under Julie Alexander. What follows is a story I wrote for that class (for which I received one of my few A's). Part is historic fact and, part is a pulling together of many tales I was privileged to have heard while growing up with Bubba. Beyond my parents, no one had a more profound affect on my upbringing than did Grover. In a time when I still had them, Grover was my hero. We buried Grover in the early 1980's. His spirit still rides with me as I continue to prow! the Hill Country.

The tall, lean, weather-faced man who had been born in the hills of Tennessee when every day the question of next week was vague and where the question of supper was always important moved to Texas with his mother and his brothers in the years before he was grown and ended up in a "home" in Waco before he was tall.

Raised hell on Christmas Eve and spent that night in the Waco jail because there was no home to return to. Joined the army when everyone else did and in the red clay pine forest of Louisiana stuck a rifle through his lung while training for his country's defense. Didn't go to the front of the war and die with the rest of his company but stayed in the hospital for several months after a man of the cloth had performed the Last Rites. Recovered and returned to Texas, attended game warden school and learned that his natural friends, the wild creatures of the countryside from Tennessee, had relatives in the Hill Country.

Married a Waco girl who bore him two children who missed him at night and cherished him when he was home, Didn't learn much diplomacy in the Texas Hill Country which had taught him patience while talking with his natural friends, and bitterness when they were threatened. Cussed out a United States Senator whom he had caught illegally hunting, whose case was thrown out of court and who later became President. Almost lost his job and would have except the acquaintances of his natural friends who had friends in the state house raised too much hell.

Contracted TB and had Last Rites given by a Catholic bishop who knew his natural friends and didn't care, for they shared the same basic faith. Lived with only one lung and a tube in his back, after receiving pints of blood which went into

his veins and came out his mouth. Never got a raise, because he didn't have diplomacy, because it was not taught by his natural friends.

"And now I've outlasted all those sorry bastards," Grover said, "and lived to see the land tamed."

Those cats are wild and so is this country. Why man, there are canyons and cliffs up here west of Austin that are not even on the map. I can take a man up in some of these parts and lose him in two hours, and it'll take him two days to find his way out if he ever does.



Back in the fifties the land was wild. The low cedar hills were not friendly to those who ventured in. Since '48

Those cats are wild and so is this country. Why man, there are canyons and cliffs up here west of Austin that are not even on the map. I can take a man up in some of these parts and lose him in two hours, and it'll take him two days to find his way out if he ever does.

those hills have been watched over by a man who matched the

country. Tall and weathered, he sat among the rocks surveying the land that he so selfishly protected. The hills were not tame; they haunted the mind and remained aloof.

But the hills are busting up now. The dozers have come. For thirty years Grover has been watching these hills, not as an innocent bystander satisfied to sit back and watch them die, but as an integral part of the very hills that he surveys. Oh how the rumors would fly over the years.

"Grover's in the hospital dyin'."

"He is?"

From behind, "Like hell I am."

Continued on the Next Page

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NO NATURAL DIPLOMAT

Continued from Previous Page

But this is not where the story should start, not here in the low cedar hills of Central Texas, but east, east of the Sabine, on eastward and backward in time to the hills of Tennessee, Obion County, 1920s.

"Get up now, Grover. It's almost dawn."

"Okay, Mama."

The little boy swung his legs down and they came to rest on the worn plank floor. Frank and OreI were already up and about getting the morning moving in its cold and sluggish way. About ten, Grover climbed up into the bed of a worn flat-bed wagon. Above he heard a sound. It wasn't a buzzard up over the eastern hills, for its path was too straight. "It's an aeroplane, Mama, one of those aeroplanes."

Young Grover and his family moved around alot in Tennessee.

"For a while dad had a job of keepin' th' kerosene lamps burnin' on a horseshoe bend on the Mississippi to keep the river boats from runnin' aground and we lived close enough to hear the cotton boats comin' up the river. They'd let out low and mournful comin' upstream through the fog. Part of the time, there in Tennessee, we lived in an old log cabin from back in the pioneer days. On one side of the dog run was where Mama did the cookin' on the old wood burnin' stove and fireplace. On the other side was where we slept. One evenin' I was diggin' 'round in the cabin an' found where dad hid his Ku Klux Klan sheets. I put 'em on an' walked out in front of the whole family. Got the hell beat out of me for it, too.

Down the road from our house there in Obion County lived Aunt Sadie and Uncle Luke. Sometimes they'd take care of me. I'll never forget 'em lettin' me climb up in this big old mulberry tree and pick myself a handful. Then I'd climb on back down an' go an' lay up under their bed on the floor where it was nice and cool and eat them mulberries.

They treated me like their own, and I felt at home. When I went back in '54 I found their cabin (whites were livin' there then). I asked what happened to the old Black couple that lived there before. "There ain't never been a n—— lived in this here house." And I says, "Well there sure as hell was, 'cause I knew 'em."

"They were just some hillbillies and if they'd a believed me, they'd a probly moved out."

For a while Mama and Dad ran a hamburger place down in town. It used to be an old street car, but now they sold hamburgers and pop. Every Saturday mornin' dad would put new straw down in the bottom of the wagon and we'd ride into town all bundled up in blankets. We'd go on down to the wagon yard and stay bundled up in the blankets while mama and dad would start things going in the joint.

One morning I came walking out of the house and saw my sister Connie come running down the road. She stopped in front of me and said, "Something good's happened today, Grover. A man named Charles Lindbergh flew an aeroplane clear across the Atlantic Ocean to Europe. It happened today on your birthday, May 21, 1927." I'll never forget that.

In '27 we moved to Texas. We had a Model T Ford; in the front tires was air, but the back ones were solid rubber.

The back of the truck was covered like a house and dad put the family in there and drove us to Texas. We had to go six miles up the Mississippi to the ferry crossing. There weren't no bridges across then. And I remember standing next to him there on the ferry (they wouldn't let us stay in the truck) and grabbing him by the hand and sayin', "Are we hitting bottom daddy?"

I knew that we had to be; no boat could carry that big old truck and three other cars without sinking out of sight. Along the way we had to cross over a long and rickety bridge. I was scared that it would break and we'd all fall into the water below. Oh, the ignorance of them Tennessee hills. Leaving them was the luckiest thing that ever happened to me.

In '28 Dad died. We were living in Lorena, eleven miles south of Waco, a little east of Yella Dog. I don't know what he died of, probly TB. It was killing lots of folks then.

I started working in the cotton fields when I was just a little boy, no more than seven or eight years old. The happiest time of my life was bringing a dollar and twelve cents home and putting it in my mama's hand and sayin', "Here mama, here is my share from working in the fields." We were getting paid a dollar a hundred then. That means I picked just over a hundred pounds that day. Sometimes I would get two or three pennies together and go down to Yella Dog, a pump station and general store. All the kids would go into the store and buy a whole mess of candy.

Things started gettin' hard about then for mama, and me and Frank and Orel had to go up to Waco. It was called "The Waco Home for Neglected and Dependent Children." We all just called it the Waco Home. I lived there 'til I went to high school at the Corsicana Home.

At Waco each boy had a job. When I was little I had to sweep and mop the floor along the second level, down to the first step of the landing on the first. Sometimes I'd get in a hurry and sweep all the trash from the steps down to the first floor, onto the territory of the boy below. If I got caught I'd get a beating from Mrs. Cashion. She was always there to pick you up onto her lap and let you tell her all your troubles, but if she caught you sweeping your trash into somebody's territory, she'd beat the hell out of you or make you sweep his area too. She was taking care of all the baby boys up 'til they were ten or eleven.

After I got older I'd run around the track right across the street from the baby boys' cottage. Mrs. Cashion would let the baby boys go across and work out with me. They'd run after me for as long as they could, maybe twenty or thirty of 'em at a time and then they'd start falling out, too tired to move. I'd carry them back home. I was kinda their hero 'cause I was going to run in the regional meet. All the rest of the boys had already dropped out. One day when I was resting in the grass after running my laps, the baby boys came up and told me they were having trouble with one of the older boys slapping 'em around.

Continued on Page 22

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THE LIFE AND TIMES OF SHERIFF ALFRED "SMOKEY" KLAERNER (1877 - 1966)

BY KENN KNOPP

Alfred "Smokey" Klaerner served as sheriff longer than any other in the history of Friedrichsburg. He spoke mostly German. The little English he did speak was done in a way that was most humorous . . . at least to those who happened to know the difference. The Klaerner family had long been noted for their friendliness, fairness, humor, and talent of playing the German Volksmusik. Smokey was loved and respected by everyone. He died at the age of 88 years on November 18, 1966.

He was born on December 19, 1877, the son of Philip and Caroline Quindel Klaerner. His grandparents were Philip and Elisabeth Klaerner who sailed on the barque Strabo and landed in Galveston, Texas on November 20, 1845. They came from Nauroth, Upperwesterwald, a village near Hachenburg, Germany very near Friedrichsburg's Sister City of Montabaur.

The Klaerners joined with many others of the area to form the beginning of the great Westerwald immigration to Friedrichsburg, such as Martin Mohr, Johann Meurer, J. Peter Ressmann, and Johann Keller to help found the city of Friedrichsburg. An even greater migration of Westerwalders would land a year later and continue into the next century.

"Smokey" stories abound amongst the Friedrichsburger old timers. While they are humorous, they are repeated in a spirit of absolute love for this hardworking, unrelenting lawman who earned the unqualified respect of the citizenry — and those he pursued. It was a rare case that he did not eventually crack.

Old Smokey & Deputy Danz Chase Bonnie & Clyde

The year might have been 1932 but probably 1933. They started up their Ford, the type of Ford with doors that opened from the front, called winged doors. Sheriff Klaerner had just been notified by the state troopers that the notorious bank robbers and

killers Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow might be heading into Friedrichsburg from Llano. (A.1)

It may very well have been that Bonnie and Clyde were coming from their favorite Hill Country hide-away, The Dabbs Railroad Hotel in Llano, 32 miles North of Friedrichsburg on the spectacular Llano River. In the hotel, as if to bemoan the absence of its Gay-90's and Roaring 20's heydays — and raucous nights . . . today, there hangs in its main hallway a photograph that Bonnie took of Clyde, a dog and three other friends standing next to Clyde's pride and joy, his brand new Ford V-8 in front of the hotel. (A.2)

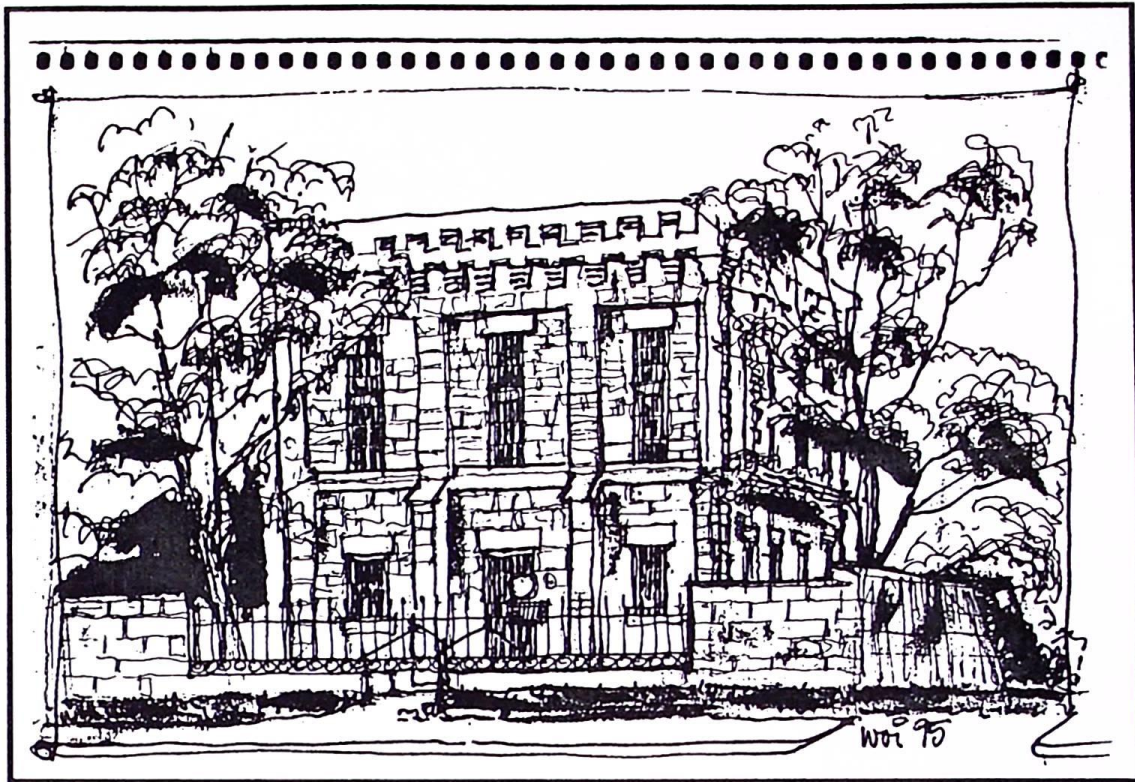
This was nothing new in Friedrichsburg. The duo deperados had criss-crossed the entire state of Texas and had come through Friedrichsburg a number of times.

Deputy Bill "Buck" Danz was the driver for the fabled crusty Gillespie County Sheriff, Alfred "Smokey" Klaerner. Smokey was a mystical man: the director of the Bunkusville Band, a rousing gathering of German oompah-pah brass musicians. Fittingly, Ol' Smokey played a baritone horn and trumpet. He put the oompah in the oompah-pah.

Once, Smokey took some of the prisoners out of the old limestone jail to do some work out on his farm. Suddenly he pulled his pistol out of his holster, took a bead on a scampering jackrabbit . . . and shot the rabbit dead in its tracks. The prisoners looked at one another. Smokey issued his warning, "Vell, now you see dat? You go'head, try to run away like dat rabbit dit . . . 'n you vill get it jest like d'rabbit dit . . . in duh-you-know where!" He got his point across. Lots of work got done that day with Smokey rewarding them with homemade eintopf (stew) and breshly baked German bread.

Buck was chewing up his wad of tobacco even more ferociously than usual as they drove toward the stakeout spot Smokey had in mind to "git" Bonnie and Clyde.

Another person came along with Smokey and Buck, too. (A.3) This person's job, on top of a rise in the road, was to hide



Gillespie County Jail, drawing by Horst Weitalla of Fredericksburg.

behind a tree on the side of the road and wave a flag when Bonnie & Clyde passed by him. Buck and Ol' Smokey parked themselves off to the side of the road where they were somewhat hidden on down the way from the flagman.

Smokey hated wait-outs. He was quickly bored, and was grumbling because they just might have to sit there waiting hour upon hour. Undoubtedly, he was cussing at the boredom of it all. But, he didn't have to worry about waiting very long, because . . .

Sure'nuf, the flagman spotted the infamous couple; and they were driving straight toward him. As they zipped past the flagman, he waved his flag up and down; but Smokey and Buck couldn't see it for all the dust Clyde's Ford had whipped up.

Smokey & Buck caught a quick glimpse of Bonnie & Clyde as they passed them by. Clyde saw them, too and stepped down hard on the gas peddle. At first chance, Clyde wheeled the auto off the main road onto a side road. There, the extra-fine white caliche dust then whirled up in all directions as in a vicious West Texas sandstorm. But the race was now on.

Not too far along in the face of the wall of white dust, Smokey bellowed: "Schlow it up, Buck, got' darnit, kann beinah' kein verdammtes ding mehr sehen!" (Slow down, dad gummit, can't hardly see a damned thing any more!)

"Fiehlt du das nicht? (don't you feel it?) I tink veer get'n a flat — so schtupp, and vie scheck d' Reifen (stop and check the tires)" Smokey ordered.

Buck put on the brakes and came to a stop. They quickly kicked a bit on the tires. Then Smokey announced, "alles okay, weiter! (all o.k., onward). Getting underway again and gradually coming back into the dust clouds again, Buck timidly decided to

make a suggestion, taking care not to sound like he was telling Old Smokey what to do:

"Ich glaube die muessen schon pretty weit wech sein — die koennen viel schneller fahren als wir — ohne Staub 'n Gesicht" (I think they must be pretty far away by now — they can drive alot faster than us without having dust in their face!)"

To which Smokey retorted: "Ganz gewiss . . . es hat kein Zweck in die' sheiss Dreck!" ("You bet . . . it's just no use in all this s----y dirt." . . . except it rhymes nicely in German.)

So Smokey and Buck "turned the road around" — as the expression often goes in Friedrichsburg when the Texas-Germans try their hand with some occasional English. And they drove on back into town. But first they picked up the flagman who was waiting patiently at his duty spot.

It was not too long later when there was another call from the state troopers. Bonnie & Clyde were to be coming through Friedrichsburg again! Smokey barks at the deputy on duty that day, Henry Molberg: "Get yerselp uff (get up) . . . dat dam' vyld bunch ist again 'kommen tru hier. Dis time vie katch'em!" Molberg goes out to get the patrol car, revs it up. Smokey jumps in, pulls his hat over his head . . . and they take off.

They get around the block, when the engine lets out a groan and a sputter . . . the motor dies. Smokey cusses. Deputy Molberg, adept at car fixin' — can't fix it. Smokey keeps cussing. A mechanic has to come haul the car in for repair. So dat vas dat. They go back to their office. Probably relieved.

Not too many more months later, the news gets out that Bonnie & Clyde were gunned down and killed in Louisiana — on May 23, 1934.

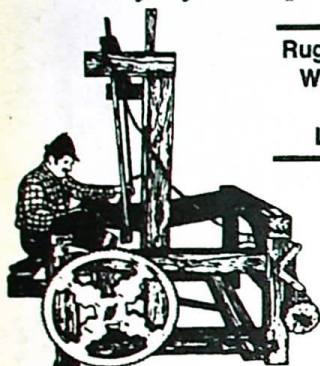
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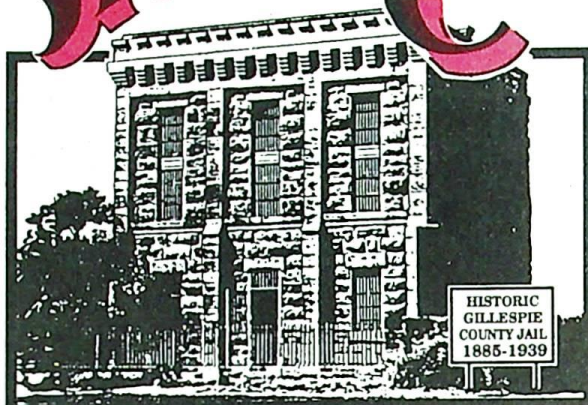
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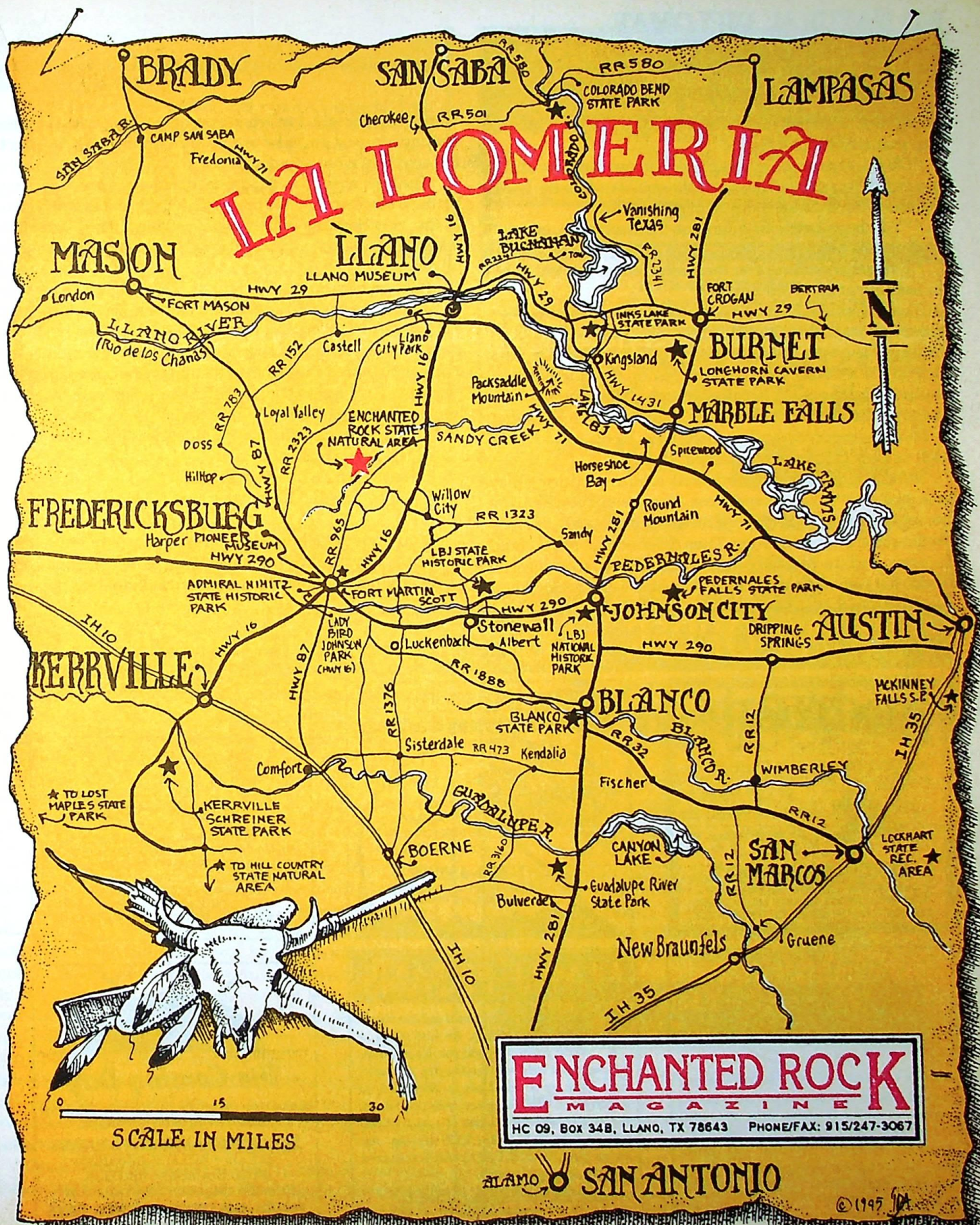
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SCALE IN MILES

ALAMO SAN ANTONIO

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NO NATURAL DIPLOMAT

Continued from Page 17

I said, "But you must of done something to him to make him slap you around like that."

"Oh no, Tennessee, we're playing in our territory and he comes up the sidewalk and knocks one of us into the hedge and the other into the grass next to the road."

"You boys better be tellin' me the truth now, or you'll catch the dickens."

"Oh, we are telling you the truth, Tennessee. We didn't do nothing at all to him, honest."

That afternoon I sat up on the third floor of the big boys' house and watched down the street, clear past the baby boys' cottage. He came a swaggering up the sidewalk in front of the baby boys who were playing out on the sidewalk too. And just like they said, he knocked one of the babies into the hedge and the other into the grass, and just kept on walking.

That afternoon me and the baby boys went around to the back of their cottage and I trained them.

"When he comes up the sidewalk tomorrow during play time, just wait 'til he gets real close. Then one of you jump on one leg and hang on with your feet and hands, like on a tree. Do the same on the other leg. Then three or four of you hold his arms, and the rest of you can beat on him. Now don't be afraid. Hit him right in the face. Use sticks and rocks if you

want to, it's alright, but when you hear a long whistle, stop beating him and go and wash up and comb your hair. Don't tell anybody what you done."

The next afternoon it happened. He came a swaggering up the walk like he owned the whole world. Just as he got near to the baby boys playin', they jumped him. They done just what I told 'em to do. He went down with ten or fifteen boys all over him.

I let 'em beat on him for four or five minutes. They was all using sticks or rocks 'cause their baby hands couldn't hurt anybody. I whistled and they all scattered. They hurt him pretty bad, knocking loose two of his front teeth, and his left eye was all puffed shut. They'd hit him on the bone under his eyebrow. They had to take him up to the hospital there at the home where the nurse fixed him up.

While she was tendin' his wounds she says, "What in the world happened to you?"

He says, "Them baby boys done it."


"Oh, they couldn't have. They aren't strong and tough as you."

You know that boy turned out to be pretty good after those baby boys took care of him. He never hit or slapped any of 'em around anymore. We found out later that his old man

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was in the pen for something and his mother was locked up somewhere for whorin'.

I tried hard in high school, that was in Corsicana. I ran track, played in the band, even made the National Honor Society. When I left the Corsicana Home they gave me a suitcase, a trunk full of clothes and a five dollar bill. They said to hit the road. They'd done everything they could for me; it was time to take care of myself.

When I was running track there at the Corsicana Home, I talked to the coach of the track team up at Northwest Texas College at Denton. That's where I headed with my suitcase, trunk and five dollar bill.

I got a place to stay at the athletic hall, my tuition paid, and for room and board I did cooking and waiting tables for the other athletes. Back then they wouldn't give you a scholarship for the whole year, only during the track season. I made it that semester, but I couldn't get the fifty dollars together for tuition the next, so I hit the road again. I bummed around for awhile, doing odd jobs and sleeping where I could. I spent some of my time trying to find out where my mama was.

I didn't know if she was still back in Tennessee. She and my sister Connie went back after us boys went into the Waco home. I finally found her living in Waco. Connie had died of TB back in Tennessee and mama came on back to Texas all alone.

The year I found mama I joined the army. Me and my brother Frank joined at the same time. One day me and Frank were on duty in Waco. He'd gotten a jeep from somewhere and we'd stopped in at a beer joint. There was a whole mess of them airforce boys from Baylor. They was drinking and raisin' hell. I walked in and dropped a nickel into the nickelodeon and had it play the Aggie War Hymn. One of the big Baylor boys walks over and unplugs the machine while I was up at the bar. I walked over to him and said, "Hey, you screwed up my nickel. Don't you do it again or we're goin' to break necks." I walked back to the machine, plugged it back in and started playing the same piece of music again. Again he comes up and unplugs my nickel. I hit him square in the face, and the whole place blew up. Frank had been in a back room and was coming out when the brawl was going good. Frank looks up into the face of this big Baylor boy and looks around the room. Seeing me with my hands plenty full, he rares back and hits old Baylor right in the face. Baylor just kind of shook all over but didn't go down. Over in the corner the bartender was yelling over the phone for the M.P.s. The air was full of flying bottles and chairs and the fight was still going on strong when Frank and I carried each other out through the back way. We had just got the jeep onto the road when several loads of M.P.s pulled up in front of the joint. We just looked innocent, and shagged ass.

Once before we didn't make out as well and spent Christmas Eve in the Waco jail. Them Baylor boys should

Continued on Following Page



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NO NATURAL DIPLOMAT

Continued from Previous Page

know that you just don't mess up an Aggie fan's nickel.

In the early part of the war Mr. Roosevelt sent everybody down to Louisiana to train. I was in the mortar section. We didn't have the equipment, 'cause nobody had been thinking much about another war. They had us practicing with stove pipes out there in the fields. There was 600,000 men out there in the woods near Leesville, every kind you can think of. For a while we were having trouble with them yankee thugs from New Jersey. They weren't nothing but a pack of gangsters going around cutting up people in what used to be good clean fights. A bunch of the men had got cut up when we decided to get some help. There was a bunch of Mexicans in an anti-tank section down the way. We told 'em 'bout them Yankees. Next Sunday early, one of the Yankees showed up at the infirmary with his ear in his hand. We didn't have no problem any more at all.

It was then in training that I first ran into big trouble. We were running the obstacle course, tryin' to get toughened up for overseas. There was one section that you had to climb up out of some mud, run a ways, jump up on this big barrier that was made out of railroad ties and heave yourself over. I got up out of the mud and shagged toward the ties (I still had my wind from my long distance track running), running smooth to keep my field pack and rifle from flying around. I jumped up and hit the barricade and the whole sonofagun came back on top of me. My Springfield rifle was on my back and the bolt run clean into my lung. Blood shot out of my mouth at least six feet. I thought I was a gonner for sure.

Me and Brent Bergstrom were sitting around on the corral near the main house on the King ranch. All the older wardens were still in the house having another cup of coffee. We were on the King because somebody was killing off the yearling calves and a whole mess of deer. It was cold and grey and we sat and kept looking up that straight road. After a while an old flatbed truck came a lumberin' along. It slowed almost to a stop and a Mexican got out with a burlap bag over his shoulder and jumped the fence and headed into the mesquite. A little ways up the road the truck did the same thing, letting another Mexican out with a burlap bag. It was still, with no breeze at all. Pretty soon away back in the brush we could hear a pip of a .22 going off. A little while later another pip. For awhile we thought about telling the other wardens, but they were all givin' us a hard time about being wet behind the ears and not having made no arrest yet. We had just got out of warden school on June first. "Whaddaya think, Brent?" "I don't know, Grover," "Well we'll just set here and wait and see." Just as the sun was coming up over the mesquites, the old truck come a'lumberin' back up the road again. Well, derned if one of those Mexicans comes back and jumps into the back of the flatbed under a tarp. We sat

tight. A little ways farther along the road they picked up another and another 'til they had five of them guys altogether.

I said, "Let's go, Brent, you got you a gun?"

"Yeah."

I picked up my M-1 carbine that was resting on the fence beside me and got into Brent's Plymouth and eased up the road behind the old truck. She started gaining speed and so did we. Pretty soon we was shaggin' down th' road behind her. Brent pulled along side and I yelled, "Pull that sombitch over." The driver played like he couldn't understand. We was right along side of 'em, as close as I am to you. Agin I says, "Pull this truck over or I'll blow your head off." Well, what do you know. All of a sudden he learned English. The old truck slowed down and pulled into the bar ditch, and we pulled in behind it. With Brent covering me, I pulled back the tarp with one hand, pointing the carbine with the other. I told them to get out and don't fart around any, and they started coming out like flies. Inside the truck I found five burlap bags, each of 'em full of meat, some calf, some deer. In each bag was a single shot .22 that had the stock took off to make it shorter. We took 'em back to the ranch house and set 'em in a corner of the entry hall. I told one of the houseboys to watch 'em. Boy that country near the King is big. Some say that there are people that have gone riding the fence and never returned and the people that went out after them never did neither. After we caught that bunch we didn't get as much crap from the older wardens.

The night was sticky and quiet. From his vantage point near the Round Mountain - Liberty Hill Road junction, he could see the headlights working their way along Nameless Road, pausing near the gate into the Sunset Ranch a little past Kutcher's west oat patch. Grover stubbed out his cigarette and got into the car.

Running without lights, he followed the white gravel road down to the pavement. He pushed the car up to sixty, over the bridge and on to Nameless. At the curve past the junction he pulled over and opened his door. The tires of the oncoming car told him its location before he could see the lights piercing through the dark. Just as they made the curve he switched on the bright high beams and red spot light. He stood next to the door. The lights of the oncoming car flashed against his. And there he stood bright and tall in the beams. Ka-Boom! and a flash from the passenger's side of the car. A bullet passed unseen through the open window of the open door and busted the back glass out over the grey trunk. Grover dropped to the ground as the car turned around in the road and screamed out of sight.

Soon all was quiet again. All quiet except the racing of his heart and the adrenalin that screamed through his veins.

Up past Four Points, a little west on Anderson Mill Road, the Saturday night crew at Bob and Ruth's Enchanted Tavern

are winding down for the night. Leonard Davis and Charley Varner finish off their beers, last in a crowded night of heavy drinking.

"I hate to go home to the old lady. It's only eleven thirty."

"Yeah, I know whatcha mean. What about takin' a ride up Limecreek Road and see if we see something?"

They weave out across the white gravel parking lot and crawl into an ancient Ford pickup that rests against one of the big pecan trees out near the road. After searching through all of his pockets twice, Leonard finds the keys and fumbles them into the ignition. He turns the key to the right and reaches under the dash, searching through the dark with his trembling hands. Sparks fly and the old flat head six roars to life. The old truck gives the tree one last loving nudge and backs out into the road. Gears grind and headlights dim as the old Detroit demon crabcrawls out of the Cypress Creek watershed up past Shultz's ranch, westward toward Dodd City.

"Hey, Leonard, somebody tole me th'uther day that you'd poached over 2,000 deer. I told 'em that's a bunch a'stuff, so what's your side of the lie?"

"What exageratin' piece of trash fed you that? I ain't come anywh'er 'clost to no 2,000 deer At last count it wuz only 1,785. But I been poachin' nigh on to 30 years. Hell, back then them deer were thick as flies an' you could shoot 'em all year an' they just kept on comin'. It ain't that way no more. Sometimes you got to drive for hours 'til you see one an' nobody's around an' they ain't no houses nearby. Then you can shoot, but it ain't as carefree anymore if you get ma meanin'."

"Hold on a minute, Leonard. Look at them eyes up there to th' right past that big cedar."

"Yeah, Charley. There's three of 'em. Two doe and a yearling. That one doe looks kinda bloated, but that yearling would shore be tender. Here, Charley, my .22's under the seat."

"I don't know, Leonard. What if somebody hears the shot? And 'sides, I still got meat left from the last one you left me."

"Oh go ahead, chicken. It's too late for anybody sober to be about, and anyway, Grover's in the hospital."

Charley pulled the loaded .22 out from under the seat and rested it on the door. The headlights were just at the right angle to pick up the blue reflection in the young deer's eyes.

"Try for the head, Charley, so you won't taint the meat."

Charley took aim between the two blue reflectors ("What if somebody's watchin'?... there's something in the breeze that's telling me no.") "I can't, Leonard, I got a bad feelin'. Something ain't right." Charley pulled the gun back into the truck and stuck it under the seat again, trying to close his ears to the ridicule coming from the driver's seat.

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NO NATURAL DIPLOMAT

Continued from Previous Page

"Well you yellow-bellied two-faced . . . What's the matter, you scared?"

"Oh, screw you, Leonard. Something ain't right I'm tellin' you. Let's go on back to your place and have some coffee. It's getting kinda cold."

Leonard turned the truck around, scraping the fender on the steep limestone embankment. A mile out of Dodd City they rounded a curve and saw a car blocking the road. A state seal was shining out in the head lights.

"What did I tell you Leonard. Something is wrong 'cause there's Grover!"

"Just shut up Charley and act drunker than you are." The old truck quivered to a stop in front of the shadow grey car.

"Leonard Davis, what the hell are you up to and who's that with ya'?"

"Oh hell, Grover, it's only ole Charley Varner. We been up to Jonestown drinking and I'm carrying him home."

"You sure you ain't planning on making any side trips on the way are ya'?"

"Well, we was, but you had to come along and screw up our fun."

"Just get on home, Leonard, you old outlaw. I might not have caught you tonight but I will, don't worry, I will." The old pickup groveled around the car, shoving over a small stand of cedar, and grinded on back eastward into the night.

Rare Case Fine Linked to Tragedy

The manager of a Lake Austin boat dock pleaded guilty in a justice of the peace court Thursday to renting a canoe without life preservers to the husband of a young expectant mother who drowned Wed. Laddie Vincik, 52-year-old manager of the Bull Creek Lodge, paid \$42.50 in fine and court costs in J.P. J.H. Watson's court.

The rare charge was brought by Game Warden Grover Simpson.

After fruitless dives for his wife, Hodgson was pulled exhausted from the water by the occupants of a motor boat, Arthur R. Tieman and son. — *Austin American Statesman*

Meanest Warden On Warpath For Fisherman

Game Warden Grover Simpson Tuesday warned that he was "going after" Lake Travis trot-line fishermen who have been robbing the nests of the lake's colorful cliff swallows and using the young birds for bait.

"They must be the meanest men in the world." said Simpson.

"They just stick the hook right through them and let them drown on a trot line," he said.

"Those critters better have \$24 to \$250 per bird ready when I come around. The birds are protected by federal

laws, just like a duck, goose or dove," he said.

Simpson explained that the mother swallows spend all day carrying mud to build their nests for their young.

"Then some stupid trot-line fisherman comes along and takes the young birds. They're wiping them out on the lake, and I'm going to put a stop to it." — *Austin American Statesman*

... While Lyndon (Johnson) was recuperating from his heart attack, he, (Judge A. W.) Moursund and the local banker, Ernest Stubbs, with a negro to pick the birds, hied themselves away one evening for shooting at a private tank on the Moursund ranch properties. As it happened, Captain E. M. Sprott, head of the law enforcement division of the Texas Game and Fish Commission, along with two of his wardens, were hunting on an adjoining preserve. By Texas law shooting stops at sundown, but while Sprott and his boys lingered to pick their birds, bombardment continued on Moursund's range nearby. As the game officials drove out to the public road leading into Johnson City at dusk, the Captain stopped and sent Warden Grover Simpson in by car, as provided by Texas law, to check on the game bags and to see that the neighboring hunters were within their limits. "Shortly Simpson returned to report that he was having trouble; that Judge Moursund and his party, claiming sanctuary of hunting on his own land, would not let him check their bags. Sprott drove back to mediate the controversy, explaining to the Judge, the only hunter so far identified, that the law required them to do so. Moursund still hotly objected and the warden, Grover Simpson, a thoroughly independent Texas officer who strangely believed that when he took an oath to uphold the law he should do so — no matter who was involved, got "hottern' a pistol barrel" as the discussion continued. On the front seat of Moursund's car in the near dark loomed an unidentified figure with hat pulled down over his face and both hands cupped over his ears. Finally the fiery warden, disgusted with the delay, turned to Judge Moursund demanding: "Who is that big-eared s—o—b in the front seat?" That gentleman was the Senate Democratic Majority Leader, Lyndon Baines Johnson." — from *A Texan Look s at Lyndon*, by J. Evetts Haley —

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Continued on Page 32

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SMOKEY KLAERNER

Continued from page 19

Smokey Confronts the Holy Ghost

One evening Smokey responded to a flurry of phone calls about all the noise going on "late" into the night. The problem was coming from what the Catholics and the Lutherans called the "Holy Roller" church on the West End of town. In Friedrichsburg "late" means, anything at all happening after 8p.m. — which made it all the more serious . . . and aggravating!

Catholics and Lutherans are used to getting very happy, sometimes quite boisterous, in their Biergartens and Tanzhalle; but certainly not in the inner sanctums of their somber churches. Their service seemed designed to generate guilt, rather than joy; and certainly not ecstatic rejoicing such as the Holy Rollers.

Not having midweek services every week, the Catholics and Lutherans did not take too kindly to this "errant sect" whooping it up in praise of the Lord into the "all hours" of a Wednesday work night.

Another thing no doubt, that got in their craw: these Holy Rollers were once members of their churches. As the converts of Ephesus in the early days of the Christian church they could also say, "... we didn't know there was such a thing as being baptized in the Holy Ghost" (B.1), much less with evidence of speaking in strange tongues, and other such manifestations they claimed came from the Holy Ghost.

As the hours passed by the Holy Rollers got happier all the more — and louder. In those days the churches had no air conditioning; the windows and doors opened as wide as could be. All the clapping and hand-waving high in the air also helped to chase away the ferocious Texas gnats and mosquitos.

Fearlessly, Ol' Smokey drove up to the church taking care to go to the pastor's entrance in back of the church, politely maneuvering so that the pastor would be sure to notice him.

"Reverent, vie got a proplem. Da peepil 'rout here can't schleep. Don't chew tink it time to say da closing prayer?" asked Smokey in his most gracious way. He was taken aback when the irritated pastor retorted, "Nobody but the Holy Ghost can tell us what to do?"

The sheriff blinked, then blurted back, "Vell den, dat gum it, denn consider me as da Holy Ghost! I take you down to da kaboose, if you don't go home now!"

The Holy Ghost suddenly disappeared, the pastor said the final prayer, and they all went home, including Ol' Smokey. (B.2)

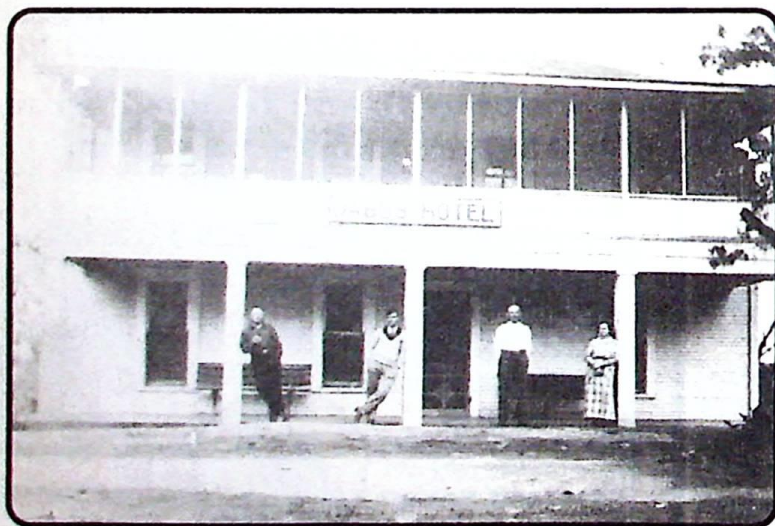
Smokey & Oliver Go Catch the Cigarette Crooks in Austin

Witty, active Citizen Emeritus of Friedrichsburg, Oliver C. W. Kowert was 91 years young in April of 1995, the time of this writing. Mr. Kowert still comes to his office daily in the town's first real estate office he established himself in the venerable Old National Bank Building.

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office almost every day is to give his piano a good workout. One of his first jobs, however, was in the Hauptbahnhof, the main station of the Friedrichsburg & Northern railway about the year 1925.

Suddenly one morning Ol' Smokey the sheriff comes barreling through the door announcing, "Kowert! (pronounced Co-vert in German), pahs ma' auf! (take care!), der's gonna come here come fellas to take you of your cig-retts (cigarettes)! So geh' schreib ma' die carton Nummern runter. (So go write down the numbers on the carton.)"

Smokey left as quickly as he came; always busy chasing down leads. Kowert scratched his head. But, knowing that Smokey was seldom wrong, got right down to it: he wrote down the numbers of each and every one of the cigarette cartons.

The first thing next morning, Smokey pops through the door again. "Vell, Kowert, do you haf da Nummern?" And sure enough when Kowert went to the stockroom, all the cigarette cartons had vanished. Kowert went to his desk and gave Old Smokey the slip with the numbers. He breathed a sigh of relief to himself that he had taken down the numbers.

"Come on, Kowert, vee'r going to Austin and pick up those suckers! It's up to you to put the finger to dose Huschahs (bushwhackers) because dey schtole von duh railrote... 'n you got the nummers."

On the way, Smokey told Oliver that there was a stool pigeon working for the Austin Police Department who had been planted in the gang of thieves. The robber's favorite heist was cigarettes in the freight holding areas of train stations. Then they would fence the stolen cigarettes.

In informer told the Austin police when the gang planned to hit the Friedrichsburg train station. The Austin chief telephoned Smokey, and even gave him the address of the gang leader's home in a very good Austin neighborhood.

They drove the 75 miles to Austin in record time, just at two and a half hours. They pulled in front of a house. "Come on Kowert, go mit me." Smokey ordered. At the front door Smokey banged it three times with his fist, opened the door, and went right in. (Apparently no warrants were need in those days.)

The mouths of the startled husband and wife opened wide. "I'm da scherf!! Iss your name...?" (The surname Smokey is said to have blurted out is the name of a very well known Austin family.)

The man of the house spoke right up: "No we're NOT who you're looking for. He lives next door." Smokey sweetened up, made a thousand pardons, and nodded for Kowert to exit with him fast.

Next door everything clicked. The man there denied everything. Smokey handcuffed him and had him unlock the storeroom in back of the garage. No cigarettes, no empty cartons. But the determined Smokey spotted a trash bin back in the alley way; went to it and opened it up. "Ahah dere dey are... dee cig-ga-ret schachtel (cartons)!" And sure enough, the numbers were on the empty cartons, the cigarettes already fenced.

They brought the man down to the police station. He was booked, and not very long later his cohorts that the informer

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SMOKEY KLAERNER

Continued from Previous Page

had also named were also rounded up.

Ol' Smokey and Oliver accepted the thanks of the Austin police chief, and took their good time on the return trip. They probably stopped at the Hye General Store for some German soda water and a good geschwetz (story or two) with old man Deike, the Oberbuergermeister of Hye (Grand Mayor of the village) before driving the rest of the fifteen miles into Fritztown. (Fritz is the German nickname for Freidrich — it is an endearing term, not a rebuff at all.)

Short Smokey Stories

1. It was an extra-busy time in Friedrichsburg for the law officers this particular weekend. Three or four women were arrested and placed in the jail.

Early the next morning one of the ladies demanded to talk with the sheriff. "Vonder vat she vants?" Smokey grumbled, but walked dutifully up the stairs to the women's section.

"Gut'n Morgen, ma'am; you wanted to schpeak mit me?"

"Yes, sheriff, I want some Kotex." she requested nicely.

"Huh, no vay! You vill eat oatmeal jest like efry-body else is going to eat fer breakfast!"

2. A lady came by Smokey's office, and came straight to his desk asking, "Sheriff, I just have to talk to you about something right now."

'Ol Smokey had already put his hat on just before the woman barged in. "I am very sorry, ma'am; but I jest can't get on you right now. Come back later; I haff to go somewhere right away!"

3. The late Arthur Stehling, Friedrichsburg lawyer and legend in his own right, related this Smokey classic about the time that he stopped by Smokey's office one morning.

"Gut'n Morgen, Stehling. By dah vhey, my son Chester is going to the univers'ty now in Houston. Chester wants to know vhat foreign language he should take. Which do you tink?" Mr. Stehling replied, "Take English, because dey are schtarting to schpeak it more and more around here all duh time!" "Goot idea!" Smokey answered, and thanked Mr. Stehling for the advice.

4. Then one time Smokey, also related by Arthur Stehling, had to put two soldiers spending their leave-time in Friedrichsburg into the hoosgow for picking fights and disturbing the peace. But Smokey started wondering if he had jurisdiction over the soldiers. Deputy Buck Danz suggested he call his good friend, Sheriff Owen Kilday in San Antonio where most of the military bases were located and where the soldiers were stationed.

"Hallo, Owen, dare are two solchers here in my chail. Vhat should I do vit dem?" Sheriff Kilday suggested, "Just let Court Martial take care of them."

Smokey thanked him and hung up. But Smokey was worried all the more asking his deputy, "Buck, do you know Kurt Marshall? I know Edgar Marshall von here and Victor Marshall von Harper. Also der iss a Bill Marshall in Mason. But

I don't know Kurt Marshall."

Deputy Danz realized that Smokey had mixed things up a bit and explained "court martial" was for the military and was in San Antonio." To which Smokey replied, "Vell, I will jest let him take care of dose solchers in Santone before dey tear up my chail!"

References . . .

A. (1) Personal interview in 1987 of the author with William Joseph "Buck" Danz, born in Friedrichsburg on December 9, 1899; died on July 1, 1991. Buck Danz, as is said when a most unique person passes on, was the end of an era . . . chuck full of real, rootin' tootin' German-style cowboy, ranchin' stories that seemed made up it you didn't know Buck first hand. "He" was the story. Rough, sometimes mean, at least on his bubba surface — he just didn't like for people to beat around his bush and mess with his mind . . . that was already well made up anyway.

He could smell a phoney right off the bat. Buck would first ask the author to sit down, shut up, and to say the rosary with him . . . in German! The author did that for a good number of years, once a week. If he didn't show up, Buck would call him up: "Bis du krank?" "Are you sick?" . . . and that would be the only excuse he would allow.

The wondrous array of wild flowers Buck let grow "wild" around his simple frame house and several acres of yard was nature's special way of thanking him for his life-long kindness to beasts and the environment. These were probably the only creatures of God he trusted. After he died, these flowers slowly disappeared . . . and weeds have taken over, especially the bull nettles. His place has a "For Sale" sign on it.

A.(2) Smith, Gary, personal interview 1995, owner of the historic Dabbs Railroad Hotel, 112 E. Burnet St., Llano, Texas 78643. 1-915-247-7905. Gary is a history buff born in nearby Mason County. He is a collector and teller of the stories of history. His place is noted for chuchwagon-style breakfasts and delectable Saturday evening cookouts of fresh vegetables and entrees. He serves his stories as delicious desserts.

A.(3) R. W. "Randy" Zgabay of Friedrichsburg lives on the Old Center Point Road which is thought to be the chase route. He learned of the chase from the stories told him by the old timers in the area . . . but his version is the only one that includes the lone flagman.

B.(1) Good News Study Bible, Thomas Nelson Co., Nashville, Tennessee, 1979, p....., Acts 19:2 — Paul asked some disciples (of Jesus Christ) "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?" They answered, "We have not even heard there is a Holy Spirit . . ." Verse 6: — Paul then placed his hands on them and the Holy Spirit came upon them; they spoke in strange tongues and proclaimed God's message.

B.(2) Kowert, Oliver C. W., Personal interview in his office on April 18, 1995, who heard about the incident the morning after it happened. He also remembers hearing about the Bonnie & Clyde chase, as well as the non-chase that happened, and didn't happen.

c.(1) Kowert, Oliver C.W., *ibid*.

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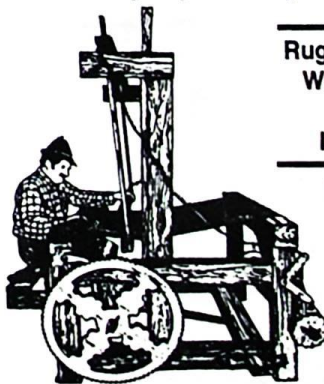
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Continued from Page 27

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"Well I guess we ought to hunt for that car, Mr. Simpson."

"Yeah it ought to be in a parking lot around here somewhere."

"There it is over there behind the dormitory."

"Well, Mr. Whitman has done shot his wad; there's blood here on the bumper."

"Let's go up and see if he's at home."

The three officers rode the elevator up to the seventh floor and walked up to the door with number 707 above it. The door was standing open a crack and from a reflection in the bathroom mirror Grover could see the deer, hanging in the shower stall, freshly field dressed. One police officer rapped gently on the door.

"Come on in — it's open." They did.

"Good evening. Are you Charles Whitman?"

"You've got yourself a right nice lookin' little buck hanging in there."

"Yes sir." Grover walked into the bathroom and examined the deer hanging the shower.

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me how wild it was Papa . . . Now the lights cover them hills, ain't the way it was when me and Papa climbed up here. Those lights over there that's Smithwick, that's where Papa Ross is resting . . . Take it easy Grover, easy, he's running over sixty, can't make that big curve, we'll find the sombitch in the cedar breaks if he don't slow down. There he is, Grover, climbing away from the truck, must of turned over three times, there's the other one, I'll go get him for you Grover, you take the one going up the hill. It's probably good Papa's gone, glad he didn't have to see the way it is. Hell, over thirteen thousand acres right down on Lohman's crossing, gone, no place for the deer to hide. David got to see it, he knows what I feel, thirty years fighting for this damned old Hill Country and look . . . Grandbaby Melissa won't know, they didn't wait. Yes sir, it's my duty to protect the game so our future generations will have fish to catch and game to hunt. I tried, caught lots of 'em shootin' off the road, some leaving 'em lay . . . Giggling bass at night . . . Gave 'em hell for thirty years. Now there's no getting away from people in this central Texas Hill Country, just look at all them lights . . .



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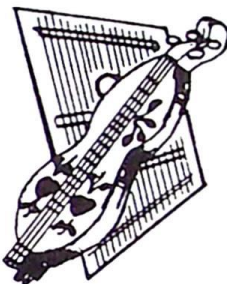
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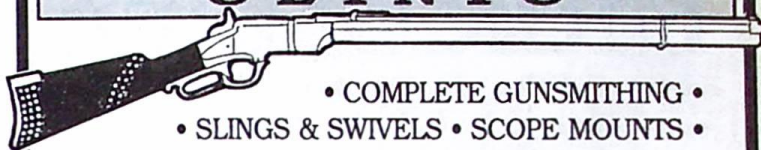


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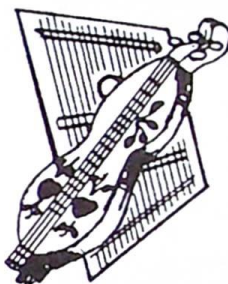
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CHANGELESS STONEWALL

by VICKI GRIFFIN

The sleepy community of Stonewall lies nestled in the fertile Pedernales River valley, taking little notice of the flurry of activity that visits almost daily from the outside world. The earliest visitors to this rustic scene halfway between Johnson City and Fredericksburg were Native Americans, drawn by the abundant hunting and fishing opportunities and the ready supply of flint along the river. The river was actually given the name Pedernales, meaning "flint" or "flinty", by Spanish explorers in the early 1700's.

Around 1840 German immigrants began to settle in the area. Among their various farming endeavors, they established a few vineyards, some of which would eventually become a part of the still-growing Texas wine industry.

In 1874, Mr. Israel Moses Nunez brought his family from Georgia and settled in Gillespie County. He began operating a stage stop and mail service in the community, which at the time was known as "Millville". Mr. Nunez was responsible for several contributions to the community, not the least of which was establishing its name in honor of his former commander, General Stonewall Jackson, when the U.S. Post Office was established on March 5, 1875. He also contributed land for a mill site, a cemetery, and a school. Since Stonewall, a certain peaceful, quiet pace pervades even the busiest scenes. Whether it's the anxiety of a peach farmer over a late spring freeze, or the furrowed brow of a rancher during a seemingly endless summer drought, nothing seems to shake the steady determination gained by grappling out a living in this sometimes perverse heart of the Texas Hill Country.

All around, the activities of the "ordinary" world go on. Visitors from around the world who come to visit the LBJ State Park and National Historical Park seem to have no more impact on the Stonewall pace than having a President of the United States live "on a place just across the river". In the fall, hunters come from great distance to partake of the abundance of white-tail deer, the native turkey and even some exotic game. Farmers and ranchers in the area participate in the hunting scene, taking just enough of the plentiful game for sausage-making and to stock the freezer, but taking little notice of the influx of activity around them. In spring the "hunt" is on for the amazing Texas wildflowers. The country roads are full of travelers straining to get the best vantage point for the incredible display of natural beauty that bursts forth. Local citizens make their way along the same roads, waving as if meeting another vehicle is as rare as usual.

Things don't change much from day to day in Stonewall: not even from year to year, actually. Reminders of times gone by still stand along the river; the dairy, the Weinheimer Dance Hall, the old Weinheimer Store. (The 'new' highway was built in 1954 and the 'old' highway became Ranch Road 1.) Stonewall is not a 'transient' community as is much of 1990's America. Not many people come to Stonewall looking for a home, but even fewer, having made their home here, ever move on. As the commonplace world spins around them, Stonewall citizens make their usual rounds, the "coffee table" at Lindig's Cafe before the rest of the world had its eyes open, the post office for local news and whatever secondary news the might bring, and on to their individual roles in the microcosm that is Stonewall, Texas, U.S.A.

POOR HOOT'S FUNERAL

Continued from Page 13

between the two ever since Joe Boy had stolen Marvin's girl years before and Marvin had come gunning for him.

Suddenly Marvin jumped to his feet and, pointing a finger at the late-arriver, screamed, "Joe Boy Jones ain't gonna be no pall bearer fer MAH brother!"

Joe Boy wheeled about, jerked the flower from his lapel and, flinging it to the floor, hollered with equal intensity, "Well, you got to be pretty low-down sorry if you can't be a pall bearer for a Henley!" And to emphasize the finality of his decision, the big man stomped out and resolutely slammed the door behind him.

No one ever knew for sure who had asked Joe Boy to serve as pall bearer. After that incident nobody would own up to it.

At last the grand moment came when everyone could file past the coffin for a last look at Poor Hoot. Petal, brushing a poppy out of her face, was the first in line, naturally, since she was "the eldest"—and besides that, she'd footed the bill. Behind her came Blanche followed by two tearful ex-wives who had suffered only divorce and were " beholden to Hoot."

But as the entourage neared the coffin, one of the exes could restrain herself no longer. In an emotional dash she arrived at the casket ahead of Petal, bent over, and, wrapping her arms around a milk-faced Hoot, hung on for dear life.

The matronly Petal knew "an outpourin' of love" when she heard it, but she couldn't have the woman messing up the half-suit placed over Hoot's body. So a magnanimous Petal pried her loose and managed to hold her back while she tucked the garment back under Hoot with the other hand, "makin' him neat."

"I knowed you loved Poor Hoot all along, honey," cooed a consoling Petal, tucking all the while. "So did I—but we got to let him go."

Well, let him go they did—finally, but not without mighty wailings of reserve. And not until Petal, Blanch and Hoot's ex-wives saw the last shovel of dirt placed on his grave. Marvin couldn't make it to the gravesite because he was thirsty and said he'd "wait fer 'em over at the Road's End."

When the women arrived at the tavern, Marvin was well on his way into an alcoholic stupor of mourning. But it didn't take them long to catch up, because they knew "Hoot would've grieved just as hard" over them.

Such intense grieving, however, has its drawbacks. As they were getting ready to leave, Blanch's car refused to start. When an unsteady Petal got out and began pushing the vehicle by hand it accidentally rolled over her right foot, breaking some of the bones.

Any other time Petal would've cursed her luck. But she didn't mind the mishap at all. Since it occurred on the day of the funeral, she would always associate a pain in whatever part of her anatomy with "the passin' of Poor Hoot."



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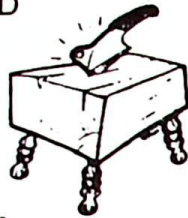
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THE MUSES OF BULVERDE

Continued from page 11

(usually an empty coffee can) within easy reach.

Let me describe the Muses to you starting with Uncle Henry. What I remember most was his black cowboy hat stained to perfection, with a leather hatband studded every inch or so with red and blue rhinestones. Underneath that was a lean man, well into his sixties but looking older. He never said much, but when he spoke it was worth hearing. And everyone said he never went back on his word. He never spoke ill of another and never cussed, even in the worst of times.

In her youth, Aunt Mary was a striking woman, half Cherokee and half Texan, with a face deserving a cameo. But life had been more than hard on her. When she was young, a riding accident left her permanently blind in one eye which was always crossed. Aged by years of labor in the sun her deeply wrinkled face gave no hint of its former beauty. She chopped cedar every day, right along with the men, but whether in the field or in the kitchen, her manner was gentle and caring.

Uncle Bud was as much a father to me as a friend. His once grey cowboy hat was shorter in the brim than most and beat to within an inch of its life. Underneath it was a head as bald as a doorknob, and a face that nearly always held a four-day growth of whiskers. He had a few teeth missing and when he talked his jaw would slip out of joint and he'd wiggle it sideways till it lined up right, then he'd continue as if nothing had happened. He had a fair limp which got worse after he accidentally cut clean through his boot while chopping cedar. Fortunately the injury was on the already gimpy limb. When that happened we went home where Aunt Mary cut up a bedsheet which she wrapped around her son's foot after it received a good dose of kerosene. Uncle Bud was back chopping cedar that afternoon.

Despite the fact that they all looked older than dirt and were considered just as poor, they never complained against their fate, and I never heard a quarrel. Despite my total ignorance of country ways, they were good teachers, patient and tolerant of a young boy's foolishness. For instance:

With all the rabbit killing going on, it wasn't long before I decided what I really needed was a rabbit's foot, for luck. When I introduced the idea to Uncle Bud he held the dead cottontail up by its ears and asked, "Which one do you want?"

I had never carried the idea that far so I didn't have a clue. "Which one would you take?" I asked, knowing Uncle Bud would have the answer.

"Well," he said, studying the lifeless animal, "this doesn't appear to be one of your luckier rabbits. But if I was you I'd take the right rear, it has most of the hop in it."

So the right rear it was. I deposited the severed paw in a Bull Durham bag which I tied around my belt. In the

Uncle Bud walked into the house and back out again without saying a word. He was carrying the .22, and as he reached the fence he raised the rifle and fired almost without aiming. The rooster dropped to the ground, flopped around, and got up again, ready for more. And more he received.

following days I had rabbits feet packed in that bag like cordwood. In time my mother came out to visit and while we were all sitting around the kitchen table she sniffed the air.

"What's that smell?"

"Oh, that," Uncle Bud said after a moment. With a nod in my direction he explained, "that's them rabbit's feet he's got dangling offa his belt. Sposed to be lucky."

The odor, it seems, grew up around me kinda gradual and I never really took note. That same evening I buried my sack at the base of a tree beside the house. Nothing else was ever said.

I almost forgot, the other family member—a dog named Roy. I don't remember what kind he was, probably a little of many, but he was intelligent and obedient. One evening Roy came up to the house dragging a nearly lifeless fawn. We took it in and tended to its wounds. The next day Uncle Bud and I followed Roy's trail back to a fenceline where tiny pieces of hair were still caught in the barbed wire. We kept the deer in an unused pen were it began healing rapidly.

Within a few days a game warden came out to the place on good word that we had a captive deer. He told Uncle Henry the deer looked well enough to him and that if it wasn't released in two days he'd have to pay a fine. Coincidentally, the following day the owner of the ranch, Mr. Oliver, came out for a visit. Mr. Oliver was a lawyer in San Antonio, and after he heard the whole story he gave his card to Uncle Henry.

"Here," he said, "give this to the warden and tell him you think the deer might have rabies and you're going to keep it penned up for two weeks to make sure it's o.k., after that the deer (which we had already named Billy) won't leave anyway. If the warden has a problem with that have him call me."

Billy was soon right at home and was always trying to come in the house right behind Roy. As long as their was daylight Billy stayed around the house, but every evening he'd meander out to the big field in the west where he would join the herd that grazed

Continued on following page

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THE MUSES OF BULVERDE

Continued from previous page

there most every evening. Just after sunrise Billy would show up at the house again and make himself at home. One evening, during deer season, Billy stayed gone.

I had a reasonable amount of chores to do on the place, and most were easy. Churning butter was tiresome and boring. Gathering eggs was the most fun, until the rooster, which didn't have a name, decided attacking me was its principal duty. Around that time I had just bought a new straw cowboy hat which cost forty nine cents. I was proud of that hat. Soon it became my main line of defense against the rooster which would sneak around trying to corner me. Once he thought he had me cornered, here he'd come, a flying mass of claws and feathers. At first a good whack from my hat somewhere alongside his head would knock sense either into or out of it. Either way, I could walk away. But he was getting meaner by the day. In no time he had me running and wouldn't stop until I reached the safety of the fenced yard.

Finally, it all came to a head. I had just gathered up a basket full of eggs in the main barn when the rooster came wheeling around the corner ready to fight. He had me cornered for sure this time, and we fought till I beat the top out of my hat while clearing an escape route. Then I ran so fast I don't remember what happened 'till I jumped the yard fence.

By then Aunt Mary, Uncle Henry, and Uncle Bud were all gathered on the front porch to see what all the commotion was. Before I could explain, Uncle Bud walked into the house and back out again without saying a word. He was carrying the .22, and as he reached the fence he raised the rifle and fired almost without aiming. The rooster dropped to the ground, flopped around, and got up again ready for more. And more he received. By the third shot only the wind was moving the rooster's feathers. Uncle Bud turned and walked back to the house. Passing me he put his hand on my shoulder and said, "Go get them eggs."

Looking back, so much seemed to happen on the ranch with the Muses—stories pile on top of stories—it hardly seems possible that I didn't live with them all the time instead of just a few months out of the year. They took me into their home and showed me what life was like on the Texas frontier. They're all gone now, but they memories they made . . . they truly were the Muses.

From the Oliver Ranch, like one of those rabbits we hunted, I made some pretty wide loops—to Germany and back, to California and back, to New York City and back. But I always came back home to the Texas hills. After all. After all I need to be as close as I can get to my lucky rabbits feet.



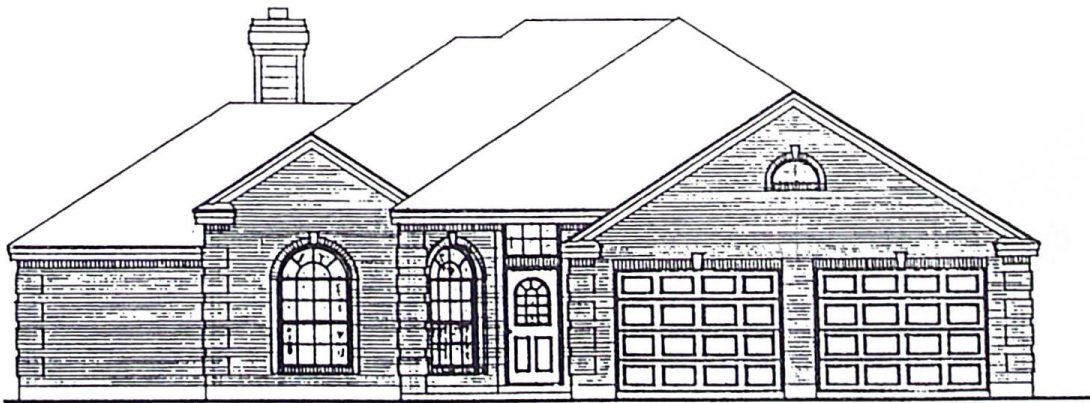
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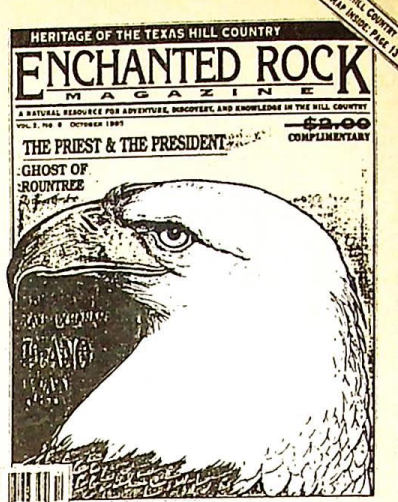
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I am an avid reader of your magazine and have read every issue since it was first published in 1982. I am particularly interested in the history of the Hill Country area and the people who lived there. I have been fortunate to have met several of the people mentioned in your magazine and have been able to see the places they lived in. I am sure that your magazine is a valuable resource for anyone interested in the history of the Hill Country area.



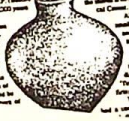
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I have been reading your magazine for several years and have enjoyed it very much. I am particularly interested in the history of the Hill Country area and the people who lived there. I have been fortunate to have met several of the people mentioned in your magazine and have been able to see the places they lived in. I am sure that your magazine is a valuable resource for anyone interested in the history of the Hill Country area.

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