

HERITAGE OF THE TEXAS HILL COUNTRY

ENCHANTED ROCK

MAGAZINE

HILL COUNTRY
MAP INSIDE PAGE 21

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

VOL. 2, No. 11 January, 1996

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COMPLIMENTARY

SIX MILE LIGHT

COME AND TAKE IT!

ON THE TEXAS REVOLUTION

JOURNEY TO CIOXLAN

LONDON ON THE LLANO



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EAGLE COUNT



LAKE BUCHANAN BALD EAGLE. PHOTO BY BUCK BURKLE

Eagle watchers are making plans and making tracks to Lake Buchanan to get a good look at the living symbol of our country. Voyagers of every age, description and origin come together aboard the crafts of the Vanishing Texas River Cruise to marvel at the majesty of Bald Eagles wild and free above some of the finest wild canyons Texas has to offer.

The official mid-winter Bald Eagle count will be carried out on Lake Buchanan on Saturday January 6, as a combined effort of private citizens, conservation groups, The Texas Parks and Wildlife, and the Lower Colorado River Authority Rangers. This is an integral part of the nationwide mid-winter Bald Eagle Survey that will be carried out during the first two weeks of the year at hundreds of locations in the 48 contiguous states.

This information will come together and be tabulated at the Raptor Preservation Headquarters in Idaho, as part of the U.S. Biological Survey under the auspices of the U. S. Department of the Interior.

A special official Eagle Count Cruise will participate in the official survey process, allowing a limited number of people interested in participating to accompany the official counters. Departure for this special cruise is 8 a. m. SHARP!

Enchanted Rock Magazine Publisher Ira Kennedy will address those aboard on the significance of the Bald Eagle to the Native Americans who called the area home for thousands of years. — Call the Cruise at (512) 756-6986 and join us.

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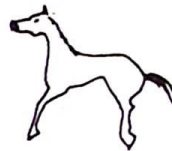
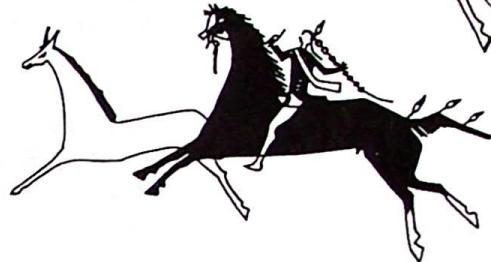
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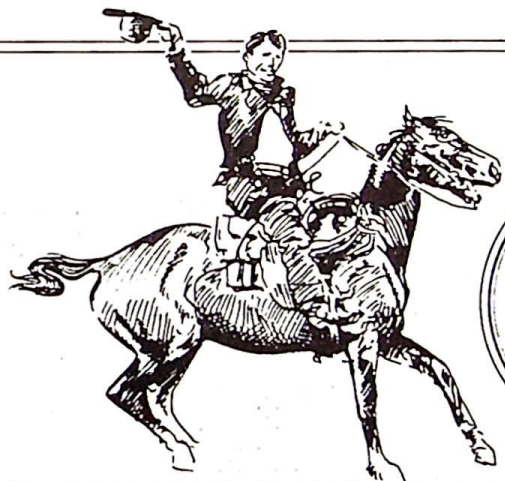
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by Buck Burkle



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STARTING OUR SECOND YEAR

Ira was too sick to write the editorial as we're going to print, so it fell to me. We've all gotten the cold or what ever it was that blew through the region during the last few days of the year.

What a month! We have been reaping the benefits of press coverage in the *Austin Chronicle*, the *Austin American Statesman* and on K-EYE Channel 42 in Austin, where we've been featured by Rosenda Rios on her K-EYE OPENER News program. Our subscription list has grown past the requirements for a Bulk Mailing Permit. It sure was a lot of help . . . we just don't know what we'da done without it.

We've had the pleasant task of visiting with avid readers who have dropped by our headquarters here on Main Street.

All of us on the editorial side are well pleased with the way this issue has come together. We hope you will enjoy reading it as much as we have building it.

As it is every month, this issue brings a broad and unique array of Hill Country reading, leading those of you who dare, into the long-gone tracks of Spanish explorers, Texas Revolutionaries, pioneers, and adventurers . . . from the events leading toward the fight for Texas Independence against Mexico, through the historical accounts of those who paid the ultimate price for the privilege of calling the Hill Country home, to light-hearted accounts of journeys to places you can try to find on your own sometime.

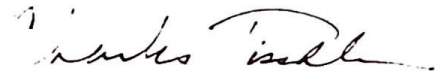
And at the same time, we just remembered that, with this issue *Enchanted Rock Magazine* is celebrating its first birthday. Our Open House is scheduled for Saturday January 13 (see details on page 6). Gang up and come over to help us celebrate. This event will feature Ira's "slash and burn" chocolate chip cookies and strange offerings from the kitchen of the Dabbs Railroad Hotel.

Publishing the magazine here in downtown Llano has allowed us to start getting more closely acquainted with our neighbors and the

feeling of home is creeping in. Ira's two boys, Brian and Kevin, came in from New York City for the holidays and it has been a pleasure watching these two young adventurers grow street-wise as to the location of the Pizzeria, the Family Dollar Store, and the video rental shop (a trip to which requires a crossing of the Llano River on the old metal bridge). At night we relax to the rushing sounds of falling waters breaking over the downtown dam, some two-hundred yards from our back door, and on the hour bells toll in the old courthouse tower telling us the time.

We have enjoyed the resplendent Christmas lights on the old courthouse square.

In the upcoming months we are going to schedule more special events that will allow the growing *Enchanted Rock Magazine* family of subscribers, readers and friends to come together again.



CHARLES TISCHLER

ENCHANTED ROCK MAGAZINE

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LUCKENBACH GOODTIME SATURDAY NIGHT

by FRANK HILL

It's fifteen years since Hondo died and we laid his soul to rest.
That song Waylon and Willie sang, we turn down that request.
The Good Lord knows how the Sheriff cried; now, she's back tendin' bar.
And through it all we kept our pride, dancin' beneath the stars.

Goin' to Luckenbach Saturday night and dance with Gary P.
Sing them "London Homesick Blues," they're as blue as me.
Two-step my lady all around that hundred year old hall.
Luckenbach Goodtime Saturday Night, 'n' I'm bouncin' off the wall!

Pull-in early in the afternoon, so I can get my fill.
If Ken won't play no dominoes, Armin Engle will.
Just a friendly game, no championship like they have in Hallettsville.
Drink a few beers and sing a few songs, 'n' brother, that's a thrill.

City life in San Antone sure can be a drag;
'N' them lawyers over 't Austin ain't got much room to brag.
Some peace of mind while I unwind on those Farm-To-Market roads.
Hey! This is it. No Micro-chip! The best I've ever know'd.

These fifteen years since Hondo died and we laid his soul to rest.
That song Waylon and Willie tried, we deny that request.
Got a Lady Sheriff tendin' bar—Number One in all the west.
Circles of love and fam'ly pride 'n' cowboy ways are best.

Goin' to Luckenbach Saturday night and dance with Gary P.
Sing them "London Homesick Blues," they're as blue as me.
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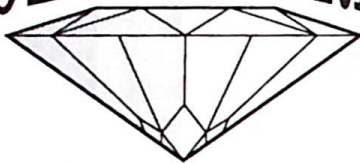
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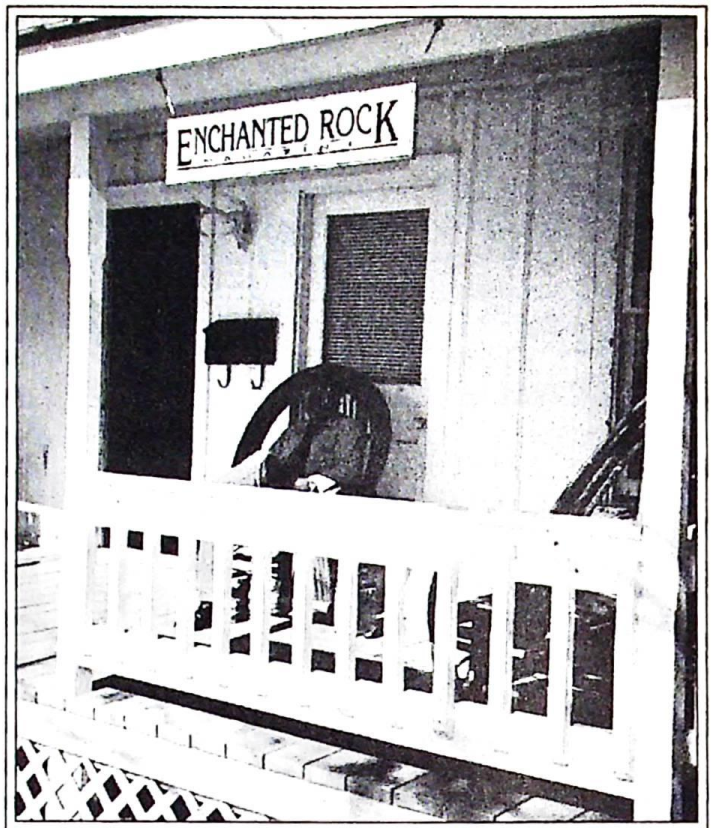
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OPEN HOUSE



After producing and publishing *Enchanted Rock Magazine* for almost two years from a travel trailer, hunters cabin, and utility building, the publication has found a new home. In celebration of the event, *Enchanted Rock Magazine* will hold an Open House on Saturday, January 13 to celebrate the move.

The doors will open from 10 a.m. till 10 p.m. and the public is invited. A door prize of a complete set of back issues will be given away to one lucky visitor.

So come on by, bring your family and friends, and meet the artists, writers, and sales staff of *Enchanted Rock Magazine*. Coffee, cookies and punch will be available.

The magazine offices are located at 209 East Main, Llano, Texas. For further information phone: 915/247-3708.

UFOs on ERock?

by Kevin Kennedy (Age 8)

There have been many sightings of strange lights on and by ERock. Also, there have been more sightings in the country than any city, big town, or small town. In fact, there have been numerous sightings by people who live in the country where no one else lives—like Ira Kennedy, my dad. He saw a strange light once as it left ERock while he lived on the XLN Ranch nearby. That was about three years ago.

LETTERS

TO THE STAFF

I have been enjoying reading your enchanting folklores, legendary stories, and fine ads.

Lixiong Li,
Austin, Texas

A SUGGESTION

I'd like to send *Enchanted Rock Magazine* to my mother-in-law, Dorothy, as a Christmas gift. Her ranch is about 30 miles past San Saba in a little "town" called Holt, Texas. I understand it used to be a hustling little town which is no longer but just a quaint remote place now. It would be interesting to find out the history of Holt for your magazine. Just an idea.

Esther Andrews
Austin, Texas

THANKS MR. KENNEDY

Troop 55 thanks you for taking the time and effort to enlighten us on the fascinating history of Enchanted Rock and the Indians that surrounded it. We truly enjoyed your presentation.

Sincerely,
(Signed by the scouts)
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LONDON ON THE LLANO

by Charles Tischler Editor-at-Large

The White Trooper 4X4 eased to a stop on the low bridge crossing the Llano River on the ranch road southwest of Mason. My guide that sunshine afternoon was Gary Smith, owner and operator of the Dabbs Railroad Hotel in Llano. He was leading me west, following the long-gone tracks of the Wells Fargo Stage Line toward the hamlet of London . . . partially because of the revered name, but mostly because this is the sliver of the Hill Country (Enchanted Rock Magazine's editorial territory) where Gary lived when he was little. We had been talking for sometime about exploring out there. The sometime was now.

The crystal clear Llano River was rushing clean over strange water-sculpted limestone formations, below old eroded hills speckled with cedars, beneath a clean autumn sky.

I walked to the back of the trooper and extracted the camera bag. The old Nikon F and my 20mm lens soon came together.

Camera in hand I looked to the sky. Full sun with 400 ASA film that's 1/500 of a second at f/16. I fired a round upstream, walked to the other side of the bridge and fired a round into the afternoon glare and reflections downstream and then got back in the car.

We hadn't seen another car in a while. The feeling on the back of my neck told me we were entering that traveling place where you know you're way out yonder.

Just a little earlier we had passed through Mason. Suffering cottonmouth we had pulled up in front of the Dallas Stevens Grocery Market and eased in for something big to drink and a box of crackers. I spied some ziplock bags of Mason peanut brittle, two dollars and fifty nine cents. I grabbed a bag and turned toward the cash register, upon which was afixed a felt-tipped notice: GET YOUR TRAPPING LICENSE BEFORE YOU GO.

From there we rolled up out of town to old Fort Mason on the ridge overlooking the valley town.

Crabapple Crossing

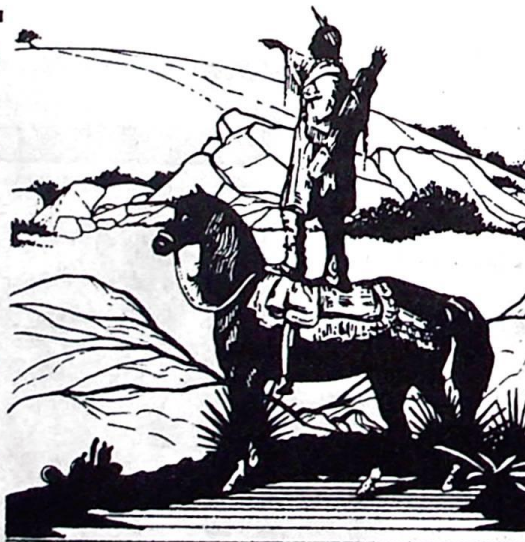
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Gary and I stood there on the open porch of the dog run building and looked out over the valley. I worked to erase all the evidence of a 20th Century Hill Country town and envision the way it was during the early years following the establishment of this outpost on the Frontier of Texas . . . 1851.

In my mind's eye I could see a more open country . . . off to the southeast a hundred tepees and over to the north brush arbors and a horizon of campfire smoke dissecting the wall of hills a couple of hundred feet above the river valley floor. We headed away from the fort on a ranch road, and soon found ourselves on that low bridge across the Llano River.

We eased back into the trooper and headed west. We came upon a road junction . . . Harper to the left, London to the right. Then toward London another junction. Junction 17 miles. I really felt way out yonder. We turned right and rolled on into London.

London, Texas, with its general store, the London Hall and just a scattering of little buildings along Highway 377. Beyond the main road there are only a couple of dusty streets with modest homes. London seems to be napping now . . . not like the early days when the local-area ranchers depended on the little town for groceries, supplies and entertainment. You can still read the lettering on the McKinney Windmill and Pump company on the galvanized facade.

We crisscrossed 377, taking in all London had to offer. In a few minutes we started heading back toward Mason.

We stopped in Mason and enjoyed fine Tex-Mex *Platos de Comida* at Zavala's with fresh steaming *Tortillas de Harina*.

From where I was sitting, through the front windows looking out across Highway 29, I could clearly read a neatly printed sign on a full sheet of plywood, "WE BUY DEER HIDES." I thought back to all the tales of this country that Gary had been telling me. Stories far to wild to be true, it seemed . . . stories about the lost cities of the Chanas River (known today as the Llano River) before the Spanish, before the horse when the permanent cities of round domed houses of more than a thousand strong snuggled along the Llano and her tributaries that come together in the upper end of the Valley of Crystals, where the inhabitants raised furbearing animals and conversed with ancient travelers along the Anastasi, and later Aztec trails and . . . even a breed of white fox. This was the country of the three rivers, just down from the Seven Hundred Springs. And he says they are still there. Those lost tribes . . . he himself boasts Chana-stained blood.

As I gazed across that wide road toward that sign it hit me. The grinding truth. Gary was right. Even today, when the world turns away from furs, Mason still peddles hides. Not only was Gary right, but another thunderbolt of realization crashed upon me. A whole bunch of that lost world is still alive . . . hidden way out yonder in them little rocky mountains dern near all the way to Junction.

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COME AND TAKE IT!

THE TEXICANS CHALLENGE THE SANTANISTAS

BY STEVE GOODSON

**"THE UNITED STATES, AS WE UNDERSTAND,
TOOK SICK AND DID VOMIT THE DREGS OF THE LAND.
HER MURDERERS, BANKRUPT AND ROGUES YOU MAY SEE,
ALL CONGREGATED IN SAN FELIPE" —ANON**

The couplets above, recalled by Noah Smithwick, refer to some of the first settlers who came to Texas and settled in Stephen F. Austin's colony at San Felipe. We often would like to think that all of the events and characters surrounding the Texas War of Independence were noble people fighting for honorable causes. To some extent, this is true. But we do ourselves and our forebearers a disservice when we attempt to make them appear more honorable and agreeable than they actually were. We often fail to discriminate between the true colonists, who came to make homes and settle their families, from the outlaws and adventurers who followed them in order to take advantage of the occurrence of war.

People came to Texas for different reasons. Many came for the abundance of cheap land that could be had and for the opportunities they could not find on the frontier of the United States. Many left to avoid the financial and legal troubles that plagued them, seeking a place where U.S. jurisdiction could not reach them. Whatever their motivation, Texas was their place to find a new start. The truth is that these people were much like ourselves, motivated to improve conditions for themselves and their families. Looking back, we have to admire their ability to adapt and their courage to accept risks to improve their fortunes.

At the same time, these colonists who had come and found success in establishing their homesteads and farms, were the least willing participants in the revolution. They had lived under Mexican rule for some time, had obeyed the laws and enjoyed the benefits that were due them as citizens. Many of the people who were the first to call for armed conflict had little to lose and more to gain from war due to the stricter colonization laws which did not grant them citizenship and land.

So there was an intense disagreement between these factions as to the wisdom of overthrowing the existing government.

In an attempt to repeal these new strict colonization laws Stephen F. Austin traveled to Mexico City, arriving in July, 1833. He also represented the colonists' desire for separate statehood from Coahuila. After much delay he met with the acting president, Gomez Farias. After these discussions ended with no positive results, Austin wrote a letter to the governing body in San Antonio telling them that they should take the lead in making preparations for a government separate from Coahuila.

Meanwhile, in November, Austin, along with Lorenzo De Zavala, met with Santa Anna, who was the real power in Mexico at that time. He refused to grant Texas separate statehood but did repeal the strict colonization laws against the Anglo settlers. Austin left Mexico City in December, content to be returning to

AUTHOR'S NOTE: In this article, instead of referring to the existing government of Mexico as "Mexican" I wish to refer to it as "Santanista". This results from the political climate of the time. Mexico was in a period of extreme political turmoil between liberal and conservative forms of government. In this period Santa Anna was the central political figure in Mexico whether he was president or not.

In 1835, everyone in Texas could quite correctly be referred to as Mexican whether they were Hispanic or Anglo, as Texas was legally a state of Mexico. Residents of Texas, whether Hispanic or

Anglo, are referred to here as Texican, a form previously used quite extensively.

The Texas Revolution was not a war fought between nationalities as there were people of Hispanic descent willing to fight (and die) for the cause of Texas. Though in number they were fewer than the Anglos, they served an integral part in the conflict with their knowledge of the terrain, climate, and language. Their role in this war has been too long belittled, and thus forgotten.



his colony. He stopped in Saltillo, Coahuila in January to transact some business there at the state capitol. Here he was arrested by presidential order, sent back to Mexico City and imprisoned. His letter to San Antonio had been intercepted and considered treasonous, which resulted in his arrest.

Austin's arrest with no trial caused great concern back in Texas. The colonists respected Austin and had entrusted him to represent their interests. The War Party still did not gain popular support, however. After William Travis led a revolt in Anahuac, refusing to pay tariffs and basically baiting the Santanista authorities there, he was denounced as a fool, a traitor and a dangerous idiot. Seven Texas communities passed resolutions censuring his and his followers' conduct.

In July 1835 a majority of the settlers expressed loyalty to Mexico, denounced the recent conflict and sent peace commissioners to the authorities in Matamoros. The extreme members of the Peace Party went so far as to offer up a list of names of troublemakers to Colonel Ugartachea in command at San Antonio. This list included William "Buck" Travis and Robert "Three Legged Willie" Williamson. Evidently the Peace Party was willing to give up these radicals in return for peace.

Word now came to the Texas settlers of a revolt in the Mexican State of Zacatecas. This rich silver mining state had long been a stronghold of the liberalist Mexican government which had now fallen out of favor in Mexico City. Contrary to government orders, Zacatecas revived its militia, filled its arsenals with arms and munitions and constructed a citadel. This state of 300,000 occupants fielded a force of 17,000 men.

In May, 1835 Santa Anna led a force of 3,500 against 13,000 of the Zacatecan militia. Dividing his forces, Santa Anna attacked the front of the rebels and sent the rest of his army to attack the rear, creating panic in the rebel ranks. Within two hours, the battle of Zacatecas was over with Santa Anna losing fewer than 100 dead or wounded.

The rebel forces lost 4,000 in the field. This was followed by executions and repression throughout the state. This reduction of Zacatecas is still recalled as a dark, shameful period by Mexican historians.

At this time, internal strife broke out in Coahuila, to which Texas was linked by statehood. Coahuila had enjoyed self-

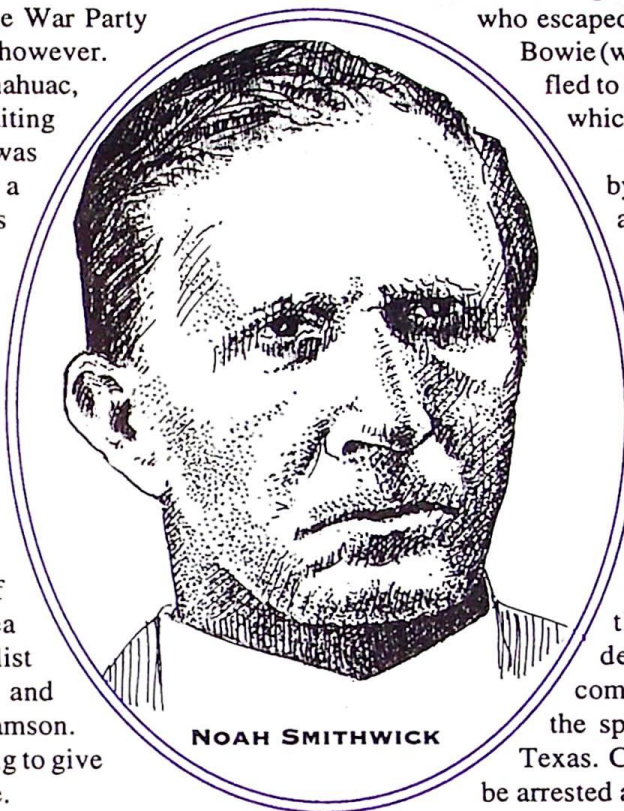
government up to this time, but it was a government marked by excess. This legislature began to fight among itself over the location of the state capitol and over land speculation. Santa Anna sent Martin Perfecto de C6s to dissolve the state government and effect obedience to the centralist Santanista government. He arrested the governor and other officials, disbanded the legislature and closed the state courts. Two who escaped arrest, Lorenzo de Zavala and James Bowie (who was a member of the state legislature) fled to Texas, where they recounted the events which had taken place in Texas' sister state.

Martin Perfecto de C6s was a *criollo* by birth from Tehuantepec who had run away from home to join the revolutionary forces under Jos6 Morelos during Mexico's War of Independence. After Mexico gained its independence from Spain, C6s joined the regular army and rose to the rank of brigadier general. He became one of Santa Anna's closest advisors due to his marriage to the general's sister and his political influence in his native state.

C6s was a capable soldier but he should never have been entrusted with the delicate political and military department of Texas. Upon taking command of Coahuila (Texas), he supplied the spark which led to open insurrection in Texas. C6s ordered that all troublemakers should be arrested and handed over by the Texican settlers, something which the majority of them were unwilling to do. He also ordered all colonists disarmed. This, along with Stephen Austin's release from prison, pushed the Texicans over the brink into open rebellion.

Santa Anna released Austin in July of 1835 after a two-year imprisonment. Austin boarded a ship for New Orleans and from there took a schooner to Velasco, arriving September 2. After working for cooperation with Mexico for twelve years, Austin, the most widely respected man in Texas, issued a call to arms. As C6s arrived at Copano Bay with 400 men to assure order in Texas, Austin declared, "Every man in Texas is called upon to take up arms in defence of his country and his rights . . . War is our only recourse."

At this point, in late September, 1835, Colonel Ugartachea, the commander at San Antonio, decided that a show of force was in order. The small community of Gonzales, about 60 miles east of San Antonio, had a cannon, an iron six pounder, which had been loaned to them from the San Antonio garrison to protect them from Indian attacks. This gun had dwindled



NOAH SMITHWICK

"I CANNOT REMEMBER THAT THERE WAS ANY DISTINCT UNDERSTANDING AS TO THE POSITION WE WERE TO ASSUME TOWARD MEXICO. SOME WERE FOR INDEPENDENCE; SOME FOR THE CONSTITUTION OF 1824; AND SOME FOR ANYTHING, JUST SO IT WAS A ROW."

—NOAH SMITHWICK

behind Magee's army in 1813 during the Green Flag Revolt. Its touch hole had been spiked and a blacksmith, attempting to repair it, had gouged the touch hole out to about the size of a man's thumb, seriously affecting the ballistic force of the weapon. It could make a lot of noise, which scared the Indians, but it was of little use for anything more. Colonel Ugartachea dispatched a detachment of about 80 cavalymen to reclaim this little piece of ordnance. He subsequently set off the first engagement of the Texas Revolution.

Upon hearing of the approaching Santanista cavalry, the citizens of Gonzales sent for help and buried the cannon in a peach orchard. The alcalde, Andre Ponton, sent the women and children to hide in the river bottoms and positioned his 18 men at the only practical ford across the Guadalupe River. The Captain of the Santanista cavalry, Francisco Castañeda, sent a patrol to check the crossing at the ford. The Texicans opened fire upon them but failed to hit anybody. The patrol withdrew, raided a nearby watermelon patch and camped nearby after sending a report back to San Antonio.

Meanwhile, alerted by Ponton's messengers, men from the area began to filter into Gonzales. By the afternoon of the next day, October 1, their strength was at 150 men. Emboldened by these reinforcements, the Texicans determined to take the fight to the enemy. They dug up the cannon, mounted it on some wheels made from tree trunks, and placed it under the command of the local blacksmith Almerston Dickinson, a former artilleryman in the U.S. Army.

Two local women, Sarah Seeley and Evaline DeWitt, made a flag from cloth cut from the latter's wedding dress. On it they painted a cannon under a single star with the words "Come and Take It" beneath.

By dawn the next day the Texicans located the Santanista camp. Sunrise brought a thick fog which rose from the river bottom. The fog rose to about three feet off the ground and the men, peering beneath it, saw the Santanista position. They deployed in a wide crescent, placing the cannon in the middle. The little army moved forward through the fog to almost 350 yards from the enemy camp and halted. Dickinson then fired his cannon. Alerted to the attacking force, Castañeda deployed his men into defensive positions and called for a parley. John Moore, who had been elected to command the Texicans, rode out and conferred with Castañeda. Castañeda wanted to know why he was being attacked. Moore replied that the Captain had demanded a cannon given to the settlers for their defense and that he, Castañeda, "was acting under the orders of the tyrant Santa

Anna." Castañeda replied that he was not there to start a war, but that if the cannon was refused he was ordered to take a position nearby and await further orders. With this the parley ended.

Moore returned to his lines, waved his hat and cried, "Charge 'em boys, and give 'em hell." Dickinson fired a shot from the cannon and the Texicans surged forward, stopping to fire their rifles once or twice. The battle took less time than the talking did before it. The Santanistas retreated after firing off a few rounds, taking several casualties that included one or two dead. The Texican casualties amounted to one man who had been pitched off his horse. He landed on his face, which resulted in a very bloody nose.

Noah Smithwick, Texas' writing, fighting blacksmith, arrived the day after the fight and recalled the mood of the Texans that day: "I cannot remember that there was any distinct understanding as to the position we were to assume toward Mexico. Some were for independence; some for the constitution of 1824; and some for anything, just so it was a row."

Smithwick set to work brushing the old cannon, cutting up

horseshoes and bar iron for ammunition and converting files into lance heads, which he mounted on poles taken from the surrounding riverbottoms. Reinforcements continued to arrive, and these were formed into companies, resulting in more officers than men (as it continues to be with most militias).

A column of 50 men under the command of Captain James Collingsworth marched on Goliad 60 miles to the south. After a brief skirmish on October 9, the Texicans accepted the surrender of the 40-man garrison there. The Texicans paroled the captives, having little ability and supplies to deal with prisoners, and sent them on to San Antonio.

Ben Milam showed up at Goliad and assisted in the capture of the presidio there. He had escaped arrest in Coahuila and headed cross country to Goliad, where he showed up with his clothes literally shredded by the miles of prickly pear-infested country he had crossed. He replenished his clothes from the supplies taken there and arrived in Gonzales with pants and sleeves "at least six inches too short, cutting a rather unmilitary figure."

When Stephen Austin arrived on October 11, the men promptly elected him to command the army. James W. Fannin, who had attended West Point for seventeen months, was elected captain. On October 13 the men decamped and headed for San Antonio.

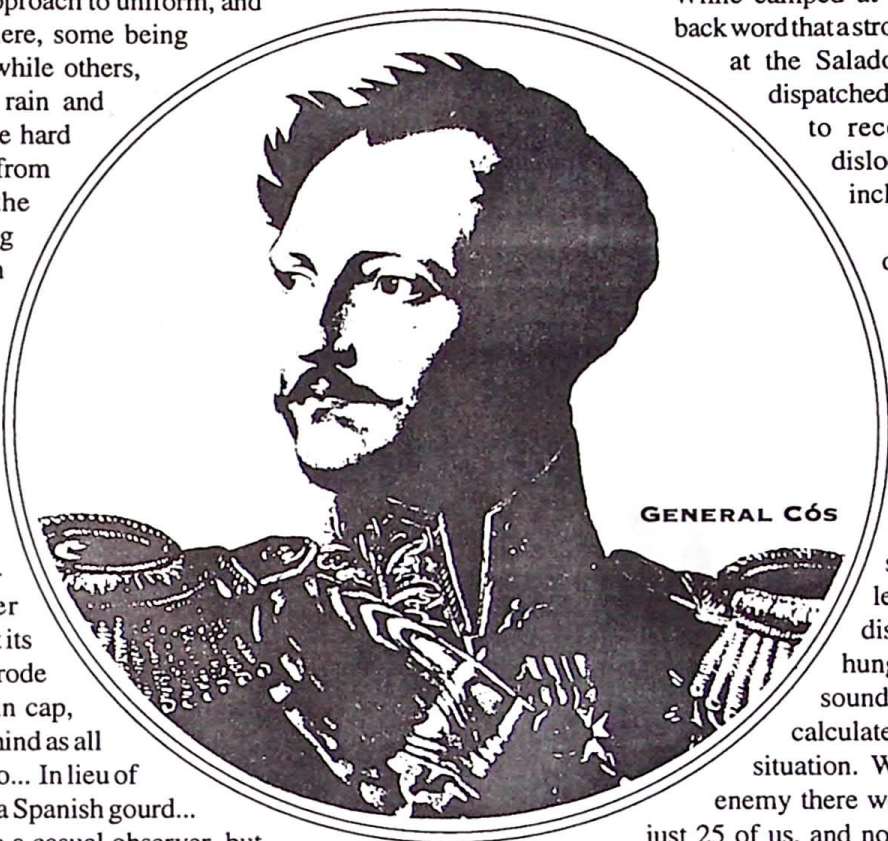


Noah Smithwick, in his remembrances of these events, recalled, "Words are inadequate to convey an impression of the appearance of the first Texas army as it formed in marching order. Nothing short of ocular demonstration could do it justice. It certainly bore little resemblance to the army of my childhood dreams. Buckskin breeches were the nearest approach to uniform, and there was diversity even there, some being new and soft and yellow, while others, from long familiarity with rain and grease and dirt, had become hard and black and shiny. Some, from having passed through the process of wetting and drying on the wearer while he sat on the ground... had assumed an advanced position at the knee, followed by a corresponding shortening of the length, exposing shins guiltless of socks. Boots being an unknown quantity; some wore shoes and some moccasins. Here a broad-brimmed sombrero over shadowed the military cap at its side; there a tall 'beegum' rode familiarly beside a coonskin cap, with a tail hanging down behind as all well regulated tails should do... In lieu of a canteen, each man carried a Spanish gourd... A fantastic military array to a casual observer, but the one great purpose animating every heart clothed us in a uniform more perfect in our eyes than was ever donned by regulars on dress parade. So with the Old Cannon Flag at the heels of two yokes of long-horned Texas steers . . . we filed out of Gonzales and took up the line of march for San Antonio."

As the wheels and axles on the cannon heated up, they began to smoke and the volunteers tried to lubricate them with water and tallow. Finally, because of the slow pace caused by the oxen and cannon, it was abandoned and buried near Sandies Creek more than half way to San Antonio.

At Cibolo Creek Sam Houston met the Texican army. Smithwick remembered, "It was my first sight of the man who more than all the others was destined to win enduring fame from the struggle we were inaugurating. I have a vivid picture of him in my mind's eye as he rode into our camp alone, mounted on a little yellow Spanish stallion so diminutive that old Sam's long legs, encased in the conventional buckskin, almost touched the ground." Houston made a speech and then immediately returned to

San Felipe to take part in the convention. Jim Bowie and six Louisianans also joined the army at Cibolo Creek. Bowie's reputation as a fighter had proceeded him, making him doubly welcome. Austin placed him on his staff as a volunteer aide at the rank of colonel.



While camped at the Cibolo, scouts brought back word that a strong picket force was stationed at the Salado Creek crossing. Austin dispatched a squad of 25 men at nightfall to reconnoiter and if possible, dislodge them. Smithwick was included in this patrol.

"We crossed the creek some distance below the ford," Smithwick recounted, "and dismounting, crept along under the bank on foot. Occasionally a dry twig would snap with a report seemingly as loud as a pistol shot, and we would pause to listen; but we heard no other sound save the rustling of leaves, with now and then the dismal hoot of an owl, or long hungry howl of a wolf—uncanny sounds at anytime, and certainly not calculated to cheer us in our critical situation. We knew not how many of the enemy there were, but we knew there were just 25 of us, and no reinforcements at hand. At

length, when we were nearing the site of the supposed camp, one fellow began to weaken. 'Boys,' he said in a shaky whisper, 'I don't like this. Ef thar's a big force of 'em they'll whop us.' Thereupon Conrad Rohrer, a big Pennsylvania Dutchman who never realized the meaning of the word fear, hissed half under his breath: 'Shet up; don't say they'll weep us; you're weeped already!' The logical inference . . . provoked a smothered laugh despite the peril in which we stood. A careful reconnoissance failed to discover any enemy, so with lighter hearts—if somewhat heavier step—we returned to our horses and galloped back to camp."

CÓS ORDERED THAT ALL TROUBLEMAKERS SHOULD BE ARRESTED AND HANDED OVER BY THE TEXICAN SETTLERS, SOMETHING WHICH THE MAJORITY OF THEM WERE UNWILLING TO DO. HE ALSO ORDERED ALL COLONISTS DISARMED. THIS, ALONG WITH STEPHEN AUSTIN'S RELEASE FROM PRISON, PUSHED THE TEXICANS OVER THE BRINK INTO OPEN REBELLION.

On October 22, Austin sent Bowie and Fannin to the Missions Espada and San Jose in order to procure supplies for the army. Juan Sequin, a wealthy Tejano from San Antonio and a captain in the Texican army, had given Austin permission to use his ranch south of town as a source of provisions. On the 27th, Bowie, with the companies of Fannin and Coleman (in all about 92 men) went forward to select a suitable site from which operations against the

garrison could begin.

Bowie's party proceeded and camped in a bend of the San Antonio River on the east side above the Mission Concepción, two miles from San Antonio. They expected Austin to join them there, but this did not happen. About sundown the Texicans were fired upon by a cannon mounted in the tower of the San Fernando Church, with no effect save frightening the unsuspecting Texicans. The next morning the army awoke to the musket fire of the pickets. They subsequently returned to camp, reporting an enemy force moving forward to engage them.

Noah Smithwick, being a friend of Bowie's, was a member of this party.

He wrote, "Dense fog masked the strength of the enemy. They crossed the river, which was very low, down at the mission and moved up on the plain fronting our camp. We got our horses down out of range and, drawing close under the bank, which was five or six feet high, took up positions on the arms of the bend so as to get in a crossfire; Fannin's company occupying the lower arm and Coleman's the upper. When the fog lifted we found ourselves pretty well surrounded; though the bluff and heavy timber on the west side of the river secured us against attack in the rear. In front was a field piece flanked by several companies of infantry; and across the river, to cut off retreat, were two companies of cavalry... They now opened on us with cannon, but we lay low and their grape and cannister crashed through the pecan trees overhead, raining the shower of ripe nuts down on us, and I saw men picking them up and eating them with as little concern as if they were being shaken down by a norther. Bowie was a born leader; never needlessly spending a bullet or imperiling a life. His voice is still ringing in my deaf old ears as he repeatedly admonished us, 'Keep under cover, boys, and reserve your fire; we haven't a man to spare...'"

The Santanistas moved up within range of Fannin's company, which opened fire. They halted and formed for a charge. Seeing this, Bowie ordered Coleman's men to support Fannin. In so doing, some of the men mounted the riverbank and cut across the prairie instead of staying under the cover of the riverbanks, needlessly exposing themselves to the fire of the Santanista infantry. One man, Richard Andrews, fell mortally wounded, the only loss the Texicans

suffered.

The attacking force numbered some 230 men. They repeatedly charged the Texicans, who rose up the riverbank in platoons, firing and loading in turn. Bowie commanded the men firing on the cannon. They picked off the gunners three times and at this point the Santanista attack broke. Bowie led a charge that resulted in the cannon's capture. Enemy loss was 67 killed along with as many wounded.

At this point something occurred which struck the Texicans as odd. The wounded Santanista soldiers began to plead for mercy. They remembered what Santa Anna had done in the Battle of Zacatecas.

"Having no knowledge of civilized warfare", Smithwick recounts, "the poor wounded wretches thought they were to be summarily dispatched, and it was pitiful to hear them begging for the lives that no one thought of taking."

Flushed with their success at what came to be known as the Battle of Concepción, many Texicans called for an immediate assault on San Antonio and the Alamo, which would require artillery, something the army sorely lacked. There was some cause for concern as C6s had some 1400 men under arms at San Antonio.

What followed was a forty-one day siege, the monotony being broken

by intermittent raids and artillery duels. On November 26, C6s sent 100 men out to cut grass for the horses. They were on their way back when Deaf Smith spotted them and reported the party to his officers. Everyone figured it was reinforcements with silver to pay the garrison in San Antonio. Bowie led a contingent of 100 mounted soldiers and, in a running fight which both sides reinforced, the Texicans lost two wounded, capturing 70 horses. The Santanistas lost half their force, killed or wounded.

Austin now wrote a letter to the consultation meeting at San Felipe requesting that he be relieved of command. This being done, Sam Houston was elected major-general and commander-in-chief of all Texican forces. He was given authority to appoint officers to his personal staff; the council retained authority to appoint all other commissions.

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EIGHT HUNDRED ACRES OF LAND.

On the 21st of February, a force of 1000 Mexicans came to the aid of the Alamo, and on the 23rd Gen. Santa Anna arrived at that place with 2000 more men, and demanded a surrender of the fort held by 100 Texicans, and on the refusal, he attempted to storm the fort, twice, with his whole force, but was repulsed with the loss of 500 men, and the Americans lost none. Many of his troops, the Liberals of Zacatecas, are brought on to Texas in loose and are urged forward with the promise of the women and plunder of Texas.

The Texican forces were marching to relieve St. Antonio, March the 2d. The Government of Texas is supplied with plenty of arms, ammunition, provisions, &c. &c.

Jim Bowie was never granted commission from the council. James Fannin became a colonel of artillery and William Travis became a lieutenant colonel of cavalry. Sam Houston, a long-time friend of Bowie's, offered him a commission as an officer on his staff. Bowie turned it down, wishing to command a regiment in the line of battle.

Houston always said that the council's refusal to commission Bowie as an officer was due to the dislike of Houston by Wyatt Hanks, the chairman of the military affair's committee. Other reasons could be the jealousy of council members for Bowie's fame and the adulation among the people of Texas. Furthermore they never forgave Bowie for his land speculations authorized by the state of Coahuila. This dislike had plagued Bowie for years in Texas, as Stephen Austin admitted in a letter dated March 21, 1832: "A great deal of pain has been taken by some one to foment discord between Bowie and his connections and me, one of them has told me who he thinks it is — he thinks him to be an aspiring man, an enemy at least to both Bowie and myself."

This episode is typical of the petty intrigues which plagued the governing body of Texas even with the enemy at the door. However, in Bowie's case it didn't prevent him from taking command in battle.

With Austin's departure from San Antonio, the volunteers elected Colonel Edward Burleson to command them. The troops were readied for an attack on December 4, but Burleson delayed, fearing that the Santanista forces had learned of the impending attack. Ben Milam confronted Burleson in his tent, and, unhappy with his decision, decided to mutiny. Milam stepped outside Burleson's tent, scratched a line in the dirt and called out, "Boys! Who'll go with old Ben Milam into San Antonio de Bexar?" The volunteers answered with a roar and crossed the line, some 300 in all. The next morning 210 men answered roll call for the assault on the town. A small diversionary party attacked the Alamo while the main attacking force began their assault on the other end of town. Two divisions were dispatched to move into position in order to work their way to the two plazas in the center of town. After suffering from friendly fire between the divisions the Texicans moved forward from house to house for two days. The combatants suffered terribly from the cold winds of a norther that had blown in and from thirst, since the only source of water was the

San Antonio River some 100 yards distance, whose banks were well covered by snipers.

On the third day of battle, Henry Karnes, one of Deaf Smith's scouts, attacked a large stone house full of Santanistas. Tearing the door down with a crowbar and calling for men to accompany him, Karnes took the house.

At this point the Texicans took a new approach to their assault.

They began to burrow through the walls of the houses with picks and crowbars, proceeding house-by-house to the main plaza. Here on Soledad Street Deaf Smith was wounded on the roof of the Veramendi house, and Milam died in the courtyard after being shot in the head by a sniper.

About this time the Texicans learned from some of their wounded prisoners that Cós was near surrender. General Cós had more than 1,000 men in the Alamo, but morale was so low that most of these planned to desert during the night. Cós was manhandled by his own army as he tried to maintain order.

On the morning of December 9, the white flag of surrender went up over the fortress of the Alamo.

Negotiations took two days and upon receiving the promise of the Santanistas to evacuate Texas and never oppose the Constitution of 1824, the Texicans accepted the surrender of the last remaining opposing force in the state. On December 13, Cós started with his remaining force of 1100 to the presidio at Laredo, located on the Rio Grande 200 miles to the south.



MILAM STEPPED OUTSIDE BURLESON'S TENT, SCRATCHED A LINE IN THE DIRT AND CALLED OUT, "BOYS! WHO'LL GO WITH OLD BEN MILAM INTO SAN ANTONIO DE BEXAR?" THE VOLUNTEERS ANSWERED WITH A ROAR AND CROSSED THE LINE, SOME 300 IN ALL. THE NEXT MORNING 210 MEN ANSWERED ROLL CALL FOR THE ASSAULT ON THE TOWN.

Those interested in learning more about the Revolution should go to their local bookstore or library and consider reading any of the following books:

The Evolution of a State by Noah Smithwick
Duel of Eagles by Jeff Long
Lone Star by T. R. Fehrenbach

Rendezvous at the Alamo by Virgil Baugh

The Alamo and the Texas War of Independence by Albert Nofi.

This is only a short list of many obvious selections available to interested readers. Enjoy them and learn about our history and those who came before us.

Next: The siege of the Alamo with particular emphasis on the plight of women and children inside.

SIX MILE LIGHT

By DALE FRY

Llano County history is replete with folks who have seen the light. Not the enlightenment of a religious experience, but the eerie—and unexplainable—ball of light that many have claimed would suddenly appear out of nowhere, travel in an erratic pattern, then mysteriously disappear, sometimes with an audible popping sound when it struck an object.

Oral history amply documents the undeniable fact that over the years, many people saw this light clearly. When *Enchanted Rock Magazine* began investigating this eerie phenomenon, the list of reports grew long—so long, in fact, that it became immediately apparent that space would not permit us to record all of them.

They call it the Six-Mile Light.

Folks called it that originally because in the early days, most of the sightings were by citizens who lived in the vicinity of Six-Mile, a tiny rural community located—not six miles, oddly, but some nine miles—southwest of Llano on Ranch Road 2323 (the old Fredericksburg Road).

But even though most of the sightings were in that area, recent research has discovered that other sightings of a similar bright orb of light occurred at two other locations—one in town on the north side of Llano, and the other on Highway 29 some five miles east of town. The objects seen at these sites were so similar in appearance and behavior to the ones seen at Six-Mile, that those reporting these incidences claimed they had also seen the legendary “Six-Mile Light.”

According to local rancher and businesswoman Mada West, owner of the Merle Norman Studio in downtown Llano, the first known sightings of the mysterious light occurred in the early-to-mid 1800s on her ranch near the Six-Mile Cemetery.

Says Mada: “The Old Fredericksburg Road at that time ran right by Blount Well on my property, and by the north side of the Six-Mile Cemetery a little further on down. Blount Well is on the bank of Blount Hollow, a creek fed by Byfield Springs.

The well and the springs have never been known to run dry. The well is so old that nobody knows who dug it, and everyone in the vicinity drew water from it. (There's some speculation that the Spaniards dug it when they were exploring this part of Texas.)

"People traveling the Old Fredericksburg Road would stop at the well to get a drink, and these travelers were the first, so far as I know, to report seeing the light. They said it was a ball of light that would appear at the well, move around and then just disappear."

Mada reports a number of other sightings in that area—one, notably, in 1941, the other as recent as 1965.

"In the fall of 1941 my dad, Oll Smith, was working for Marion Cassiday at the original quarry, the Cassiday Grey Granite Quarry, opened by D.L. Stewart in the late 1890s (in the Six-Mile area). Tools were disappearing from the quarry at night, so Cassiday assigned my dad and another man (either Jake Merkle, Wiley Strange or Cat Behrens, I can't remember which) to watch the quarry at night to see if they could catch the thief.

"One night the Six-Mile Light appeared out of nowhere, hovered, and then landed on the handle of a shovel my dad was holding. It like to have scared him to death. He told me that he spoke to the light and said, 'If you want that shovel, you can have it!' then took off running as fast as he could, the other watchman right behind him. After that, nobody would ever go back to nightwatch again, and they soon moved the whole operation to the D.L. Stewart Quarry about three miles closer into town on the Six-Mile Road."

All of the various reports, except one, relate that the light would appear for only a few moments before disappearing. The one from Mada concerning a sighting in 1965, however, reveals that at that time the light, which she claims was indeed the Six-Mile Light, was visible for a full two hours.

It was the late Alma Stewart, mother of Mada's first husband Herbert Stewart, who told Mada that she observed the two-hour spectacle. It was so spectacular, in fact, that Mada even remembers the exact day Alma told her about it: Sept. 18, 1965.

"Alma said the light appeared on the west side of Blount Mountain near the Six-Mile Community," Mada says. "She said it just kinda bounced around and hovered over the mountain. She watched it for about two hours. She said it was a bright ball of light that illuminated the whole area for about two hours, then disappeared."

Mada added, "Several people have told me that it usually appeared on foggy, misty nights in the fall of the year." [No evidence exists, to date, to support or to refute that claim.]

From the Stewart family comes also the most complete description of the eerie orb uncovered to date. Mada says that her former father-in-law, the late Ed Stewart, said that his sister, the late Sally Rawles, also saw the light and described it as "a bright orange color with an iridescent

"One night the Six-Mile Light appeared out of nowhere, hovered, and then landed on the handle of a shovel my dad was holding. It like to have scared him to death. He told me that he spoke to the light and said, 'If you want that shovel, you can have it!' then took off running as fast as he could, the other watchman right behind him."

glow." Other reports cite the light as ranging in size from that of a large, round balloon to that of an automobile tire and a wagon wheel.

Of all the sites where the glowing, moving object reportedly appeared, the Six-Mile Cemetery vicinity seems to be the most often reported. Llano Realtor Lucille Crecelius, 89, told *Enchanted Rock Magazine* that both of her parents, the late Zack and Nora Stewart, who lived near the cemetery, saw it many, many times through the years.

"My daddy and mother lived just across the road from the Six-Mile Cemetery," she says. "They used to see it every once and awhile, many times through the years. They called it a mineral light at that time. It would go down and up, down and up. It would rise above the tree tops and just drift away—just go on. One time it appeared and started drifting up a little creek that joins to Six-Mile Creek, and my mother wanted to follow it, but Daddy told her, 'I don't want any part of that!' My parents told things about the light that the people back then refused to believe.

"Daddy told me that one time he was walking in his pasture to get some of his mules to haul granite into town from the Stewart Quarry at Six-Mile. It was before daybreak and was still dark. He said the light just suddenly appeared. It was the size of a wagon wheel. He didn't know where it came from. It scared him so bad he turned and went straight back to the house and waited for daylight to get his mules.

"Another time, he was a young boy and had been to a dance on horseback. Coming home around midnight

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with a friend, this "thing" appeared, a ball of light, out of nowhere. He said they like to have run the horses to death, but you couldn't gain on the light: it stayed with them. It finally disappeared. Daddy said, 'You can't imagine how bright it was—it was bright as day.'

"My daddy told me these things, and I know beyond a doubt that he saw that light. It scared him and he wasn't ashamed to admit it. He saw it off and on for at least 30 years while he was living across from the Six-Mile Cemetery."

Thurbert Stewart, 80, a relative of Zack who still lives in the Six-Mile area, tells of the one—and only—encounter he had years ago with the baffling light ball.

"I don't know what I saw, but I saw something," he says. "I saw it just one time. It wasn't controlled by human hands. I don't know how to explain it. It was a real bright light about as big as a full moon. We were in our pickup and were bogged down in sand in Six-Mile Creek and were trying to get out. I looked up and saw this light to the east of us; it looked sorta like the moon coming up over the hill. It went over us and on past us to the west of us.

"We went home and when we got to my gate, the light came down lower and was in the timber—and then it just disappeared. It was real bright. It gave us a sort of a funny feeling..."

Llano historian and author Alline Elliott tells of hair-raising accounts she heard from several relatives who had the misfortune of coming in contact with the infamous light—not only at the cemetery, but in town, as well.

Elliott says that sometime in the 1950s her teenage daughter Barbara Adams and her uncle Shirley Halliburton, along with some other local teenagers, had gone to the old schoolhouse adjacent to the Six-Mile Cemetery "just fooling around" and had parked at the entrance. After leaving the school house, they had gone back to the car and were sitting there when suddenly a great ball of light that looked like "a big old balloon" appeared at the base of an oak tree in the cemetery and began to quickly rise. It traveled to the car and hovered menacingly in front of the windshield.

"It like to have scared them to death," Alline says. "They backed the car out as fast as they could and turned around real quick and headed back to town, scared to death. They said they thought a ghost was after them. I'd heard rumours of the light before then, but nothing that would signify the light was really there. I know she (Barbara) saw it, because when she came home she was absolutely horrified."

Elliott relates also a story that her former boss, the late Jack Sweeney, who owned a Llano restaurant called The Hut (known today as the Burger Bar), told her.

"At that time, Jack lived across the highway from the Six-Mile Cemetery on Will Gray's ranch," Elliott

“Another time, he was a young boy and had been to a dance on horseback. Coming home around midnight with a friend, this “thing” appeared, a ball of light, out of nowhere. He said they like to have run the horses to death, but you couldn’t gain on the light: it stayed with them. It finally disappeared. Daddy said, ‘You can’t imagine how bright it was—it was bright as day.’ ”

says. “He was coming home from town one night and his car died at the Six-Mile Slab on Six-Mile Creek about two blocks from the cemetery. He was trying to get it started when he looked up and saw a big ball of light coming from the cemetery. It drifted across the highway and settled down on the hood of his car. He was so scared that he jumped out of his car and ran all the way to his house a block away.

“His wife Evelyn said it was funny—he was so scared he could hardly talk. He told her over and over what he saw; he said it was horrible. That’s the only people who ever told me about seeing the light at Six-Mile.”

Alline, however, recalls a story that her late Grandfather Robert Halliburton told her about the sudden appearance of an orb of light similar to the one at Six-Mile, at his home in North Llano when Alline was about ten years old.

“My Grandfather told me that he was digging a well in Jackass Hollow, right behind his house, when he dug into a deposit of what the old-timers called “The Damp.” It was a pocket of sulphur that you could sometimes dig into in damp ground. All of a sudden, gas and a ball of light came up out of the ground at the bottom of the well he was digging. He nearly choked to death. A man who was there pulling the dirt up as my grandfather dug, lowered the windlass real quick and pulled my grandfather up out of the well. By the time he got out, he had almost passed out. After that, he quit digging and put a cover over it.”

The cover, however, did not prevent the light from

Continued on page 22

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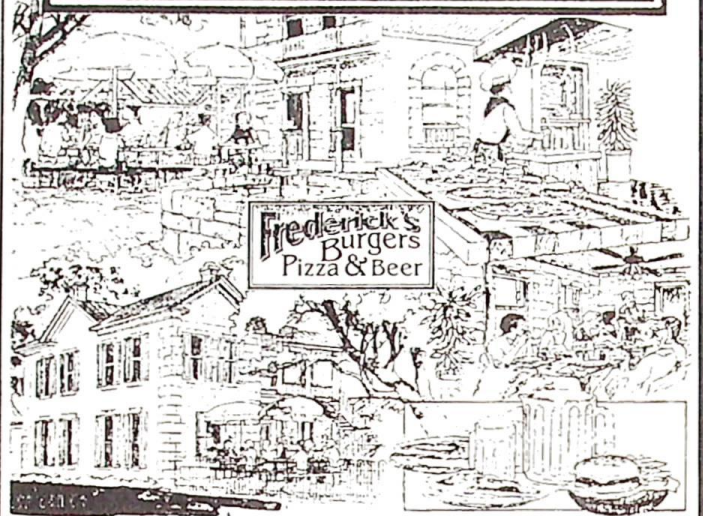
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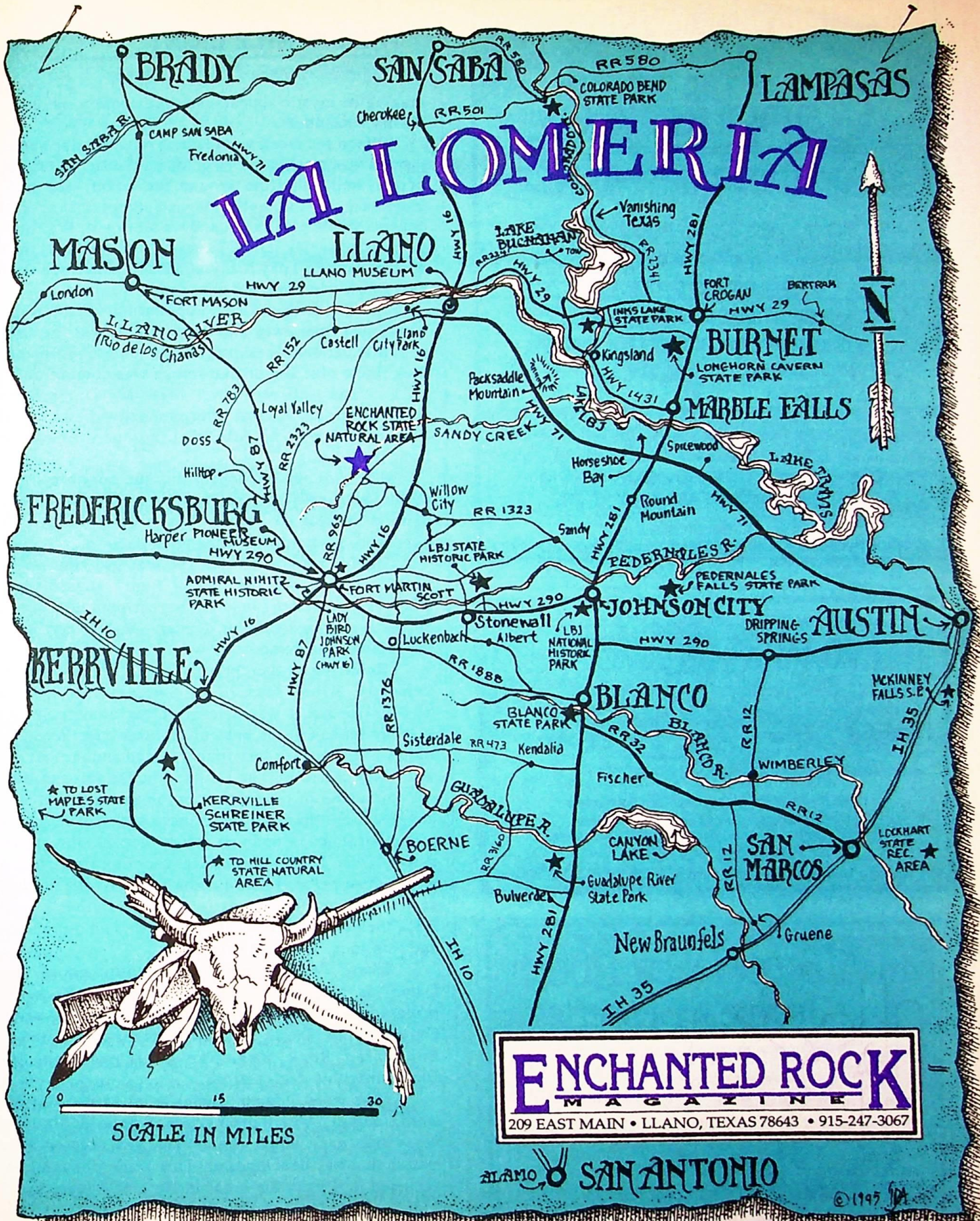
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THE SIX MILE LIGHT

Continued from page 19

making its mystic appearance occasionally thereafter, Alline remembers.

"When the creek would come on a big rise and the ground was wet, us kids would see the light come out of the well and from around the cover. We had a playhouse by the well. Me and about six or eight cousins would play there, and we all saw it. We finally got used to seeing it, and I knew it wouldn't hurt us, so we just wouldn't pay it any mind. We would see it just every now and then, not every time it rained.

"When it would come up and out of the well it would just float away and evaporate. It was the shape of a little balloon—real bright, and sometimes it would look like a blue fog or like smoke was coming out.

"The well was never used. My Uncle Byron Halliburton told me that after grandpaw died in 1941, he filled the well in. After that, no one ever saw the light there again."

Theories abound concerning the possible source of the baffling light, but to date no one—not even experts in related fields—has been able to state positively what produces the phenomenon.

Alline says that when she was growing up she heard a theory that the ball of light, regardless of where it appeared in Llano County, originated from gas emanating from a sulphur deposit—and always when the ground was damp.

Referring to the "ghostly" light at the Six-Mile Cemetery, Alline says, "Jack Sweeney told me that he'd heard that it was a form of gas coming from a sulphur deposit at the base of that oak tree there. The light would appear every time it rained and the soil was wet. They called it "The Damp" The Damp caused the gas to rise out of the sulphur in the ground. When my daughter saw the light there that time, it was a clear night, but it had rained just before then and the ground was still wet. I knew about a light coming from 'damp' a long time before I heard about the Six-Mile Light. I saw it with my own eyes in my grandfather's well. Back then this country was wetter; we had more snow and rain then. It's a lot drier now."

Where Sweeney got his information about "The Damp" is not known, but Dr. Daniel S. Barker, a professor at the School of Economic Geology at the University of Texas in Austin, recently related to *Enchanted Rock Magazine* an interesting fact concerning this designation.

"The word 'damp' comes from an old German word, 'dampf,' which means 'gas,'" he said. "It could be swamp gas, which is methane gas created from matter that has decomposed. This same phenomenon occurred in the mining areas in Germany years ago."

"Jack Sweeney told me that he'd heard that it was a form of gas coming from a sulphur deposit at the base of that oak tree there. The light would appear every time it rained and the soil was wet. They called it "The Damp" The Damp caused the gas to rise out of the sulphur in the ground.

Another U.T. Austin professor, Dr. Robert Gutierrez of the Department of Geological Sciences, discounts the gas-from-sulphur theory, but corroborates Dr. Barker's observation.

"It could be a chemical phenomenon," he says. "For instance, a decomposition, or breakdown of organic matter can release gasses. Since it's a gas, it can reflect light from the atmosphere, such as moonlight, or even sunshine. Gas can be released through the soil, through a fissure or a crack in the earth. If it's a graveyard, there's a lot of decomposition.

"Sometime we can imagine having a sudden release of gas—methane gas—which is produced from decomposition of organic matter, and the gas can become visible if the light is just right. The gas could refract, or bend, the light (and become visible)."

Dr. Gutierrez also theorizes that the light could possibly be ball lightning, a natural phenomenon that is so controversial, many scientists deny that it exists.

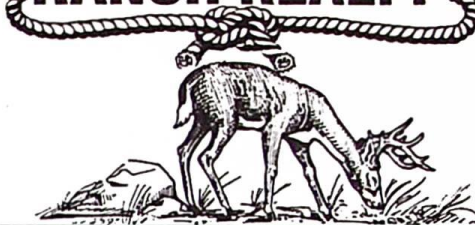
According to the *World Book Encyclopedia*, "Ball lightning seems to consist of balls of fire, as small as walnuts or as large as balloons, that last about three to five seconds. They fall swiftly from clouds until they strike the ground and explode. Sometimes they roll slowly along the ground and do not explode until they hit an obstacle.

"Ball lightning is the least understood of all forms of lightning. Many meteorologists even doubt that it exists. They think it may be an optical illusion. However, so many reliable witnesses have seen it, that scientists have begun to study it. They have produced ball lightning in the laboratory. This kind of lightning does not appear to be dangerous."

Several local accounts include the fact that some

Continued on page 30

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ON THE HISTORIC SQUARE IN LLANO

PART 1: "FRIEDEN UNSER SCHICKSAL" PEACE OUR DESTINY.

THE NATIVE AMERICANS MEET THEIR GERMAN- TEXAN NEIGHBORS

BY KENN KNOPP

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Early in the New Year of 1847 in January, less than a year after founding Friedrichsburg, a party of forty from there led by John O. Musebach set into the San Saba campgrounds to meet face-to-face with the Comanche chieftains. The Friedrichsburgers found, after weeks of making their way into the erie land of bears and batholiths—the pink, grey and green granite country of Central Texas—that their every move had been watched by Comanche scouts since the day they left Friedrichsburg.

Meusebach felt that either a deal would be struck with the Comanches or the new settlement and the vision of a Texas German homeland and trade paradise would go up in smoke, literally.

About 15 days after leaving Friedrichsburg, which included trapping and shooting wild animals for their food and saving the best hides, Muesebach's advance-party spotted a white flag on top of Huegelgipfel, the peak of the hill. The Comanches had decided to end the long days and nights of guessing what this obviously small band of new and rather peculiar people, particularly the one with all the bright red hair and flowing beard, were up to in the Comanche's main hunting grounds. (3.1-A)

Nine or so miles from the present-day town of San Saba, about 50 miles due North of Friedrichsburg, the Comanche scouts led the new German-Texans to the headquarters of the Comanches in the Central Texas Mineral Kingdom. The forty men from Friedrichsburg had met their counterparts, but — no less than three thousand Comanches. (3.1-B)

From the stories handed down through the generations in Friedrichsburg, it is told that the Indians were stunned when they saw Meusebach's flaming red hair, moustache, and a beard that had about reached his belly button. With smooth, classical features, Indians could sport no beards. They kept staring at Meusebach and the remarkable appearance of his bright red hair, which to them, however, was most threatening. Red was the color of war!

To the Indians, surely Meusebach must have painted his hair to reflect the battle he wanted to wage to conquer this area for these strange newcomers who could not speak English . . . or so Meusebach's appearance translated to the wary chiefs. Comanches, in particular, were noted for their creative garb and the colorful way they painted themselves to enhance might and fright.

Finally, the chiefs huddled to confer. Then they asked Meusebach why he came requesting a meeting for peace, when he himself had colored his hair with red war paint. One of Meusebach's guides and interpreters was a Delaware Indian by

the name of Jim Shaw. Shaw tried to explain that Meusebach was born with the red hair. There is an old saying, "You can always tell a German, but you can't tell him much." But now the Germans had met their match. The Indian chiefs pouted and hooted in disbelief.

To settle it once and for all, Meusebach agreed to go down to the creek with the squaws, and with the tribal assistants looking on, tried and tried as best they could. But they were not able to wash the red out of Meusebach's hair. When they reported this to the Comanche chiefs, Old Owl, Buffalo Hump, and Santa Anna, the meeting took a whole new turn.

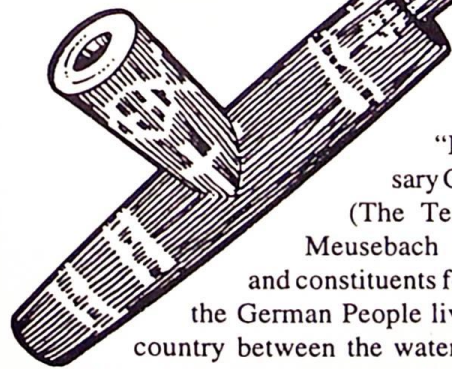
Their conclusion after counciling with one another, was that Meusebach must be one especially blessed by the Great Spirit. They got right down to work on the treaty entitled, "Between the Commissary General of the German Emigration Company, John O. Meusebach for the German people living and settling in the country between the waters of the Llano and the San Saba and the Chiefs of the Comanche Nation in behalf of their people, a treaty of peace and friendship."

The treaty was agreed upon March 2, 1847. Later it was formally signed near Friedrichsburg on the waters of the Rio Piedernales (sic) on the 9th day of May, 1847. Friedrichsburg had been founded exactly one year earlier, plus one day.

(3.1-A): Kennedy, Ira, "Lasting Peace", Enchanted Rock Magazine, Vol. 1, Nr. 6, Dec/Jan 1994-95, pp 4-5, 22-23.

(3.1-B): Reproduction of the words of the Peace Treaty of 1847 between the citizens of Friedrichsburg and the Comanche Indians, produced by the Awani Press, Harper Road, Friedrichsburg, Tx by Douglas Hubbard.

PART 2: THE GERMAN-COMANCHE PEACE TREATY OF 1847



"Between the Commissary General Emigration Company (The Texas Verein) . . . John O. Meusebach for himself, his successors and constituents for the benefit and in behalf of the German People living here and settling in the country between the waters of the Llano and the San Saba of the one part . . . and the Chiefs of the Comanche Nation hereunto named and subscribed for themselves and their people of the other part, the following private treaty of peace and friendship has been entered into and agreed upon:

"The German People and Colonists for the Grant between

the waters of the Llano and San Saba, shall be allowed to visit any part of said country and be protected by the Comanche Nation and the Chiefs thereof, in consideration of which agreement the Comanche may likewise come to the German Colonies towns and settlements, and shall have no cause to fear, but shall go wherever they please — if not counselled otherwise by the special agent of our Great Father — and have protection as long as they walk in the White Path.

"II. In regard to the settlement on the Llano, the Comanches promise not to disturb or in any way molest the German Colonists; on the contrary, to assist them; also to give notice if they see bad Indians about the settlement who come to steal horses or in any way molest the Germans; the Germans likewise promising to aid the Comanches against their enemies (sic), should they be in danger of having their horses stolen or in any way to be injured. And both parties agree, that if there be any difficulties or any wrong done by single bad men, to bring the same before the Chiefs to be finally settled and decided by the agent of Our Great Father.

"III. The Comanches and their Chiefs grant to John O. Meusebach, his successors and constituents the privilege of surveying the country as far as the Concho river and even higher up. If he thinks proper to the Colorado and agree not to disturb or molest any men who my have already gone up or get to be sent for that purpose. In consideration of which agreement the Commissary General, John O. Meusebach will give them presents to the amount of One Thousand Dollar, which with the necessary provisions to be given the Comanches during their stay in Friedrichsburg, will amount to about Two Thousand Dollars worth or more.

"IV. And finally both parties agree mutually to use every exertion to keep up and even enforce peace and friendship between both the Germans and the Comanche People and all other Colonists and to walk in the White Path always and forever.

"In witness whereof we have here unto set our hand, marks and seals. Done at Friedrichsburg on the waters of the Rio Pedernales, this the Ninth Day of A. D. 1847. Signed by: J. O. Meusebach, Texas Verein commissioner; also: R. S. Neighbors, Special Agent of the United States; F. Shubbert, colony director (alias of Friedrich Armand Strubberg) 3.2-B); Jean von Coll,

Meusebach's right-hand man (3.2-C); John F. Torry, and Felix A. von Blucher."

Signing were the War Chiefs of the Delaware Indians: Jim Shaw and John Conners. The War Chiefs of the Comanches signing were: *Santa Anna, Poch-an Sanach-gos, Moora-quitop, Matsane, To-shaw-wheneschke, and Nokawhek.*

This historic treaty was the only Texas Indian treaty not known to be broken by one party or the other. If there were any violations the leaders of the Comanches or Friedrichsburg implemented swift justice. If the culprits were known, the justice was carried out. One result of the treaty was that Indians were allowed to come into Friedrichsburg to buy, sell, or barter, even for beer and whiskey. No self-respecting German would ever want to deny anyone the beneficent sustenance of beer! For this privilege, unknown anywhere else in the United States, the Indian leaders would let the town's authorities know about Indians who stole from the Germans, and particularly Indians who might kidnap German youngsters.

Also, those Indians who started acting peculiar or threatening after drinking alcohol would have to agree to let themselves be tied with a rope by the German authorities to the hitching post until other Indians came to take them back to their campgrounds.

Indians were also to keep an eye out for the health and welfare of any ill Germans living around them in the farms and ranches and in Friedrichsburg. A large number of Germans grew very sick aboard ship while sailing across the ocean. Burials at sea were not unusual. Numerous graves with crosses dotted the countryside from the Texas coast to the Pedernales Valley. Many had developed chronic, debilitating illnesses. Indians faithfully brought bear meat and fat, hides, roasted acorns, berries, other delicacies and herbal remedies.

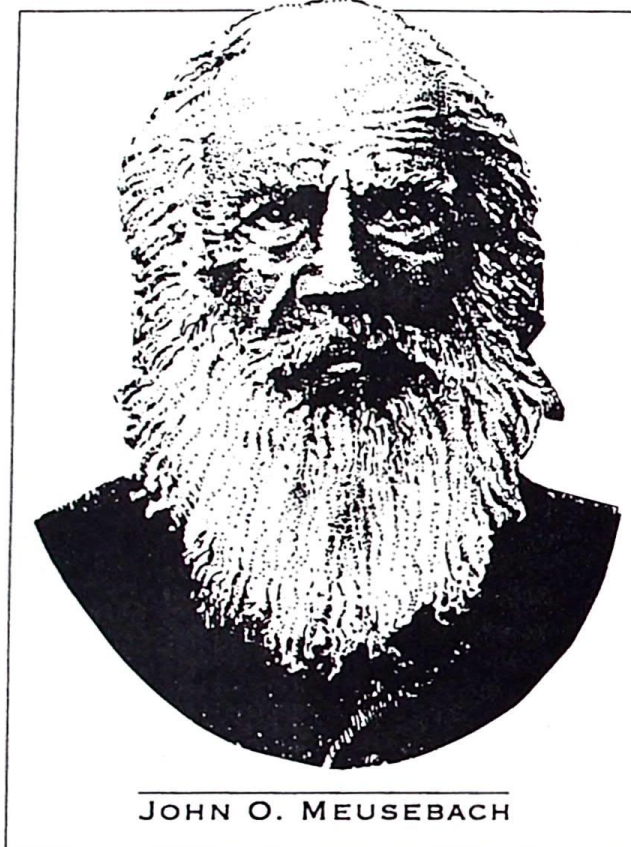
It is also said that the Indians shared with the Germans and the Mormons in nearby Zodiac their interest in their favorite "calming" medicine, peyote. Peyote was made famous when the Comanche chief Quannah Parker proclaimed peyote as an important part of Native American Church worship. A derivative of the cactus plant so plentiful all across Texas, peyote occasionally is talked about here and there. Lyman Wight the great Mormon leader was to have died from a seizure caused from peyote.

The Houy family has passed on the story of one particular

Indian who always made it a point to come into town by way of their house near Baron's Creek on the far west side. The scent of Mrs. Houy's freshly baked breads cooling on the window sill was this Indian's greatest weakness. He would come with beads and hides in hand to offer Mrs. Houy in exchange for her tantalizing, fresh bread.

Mrs. Houy agreed with whatever deal he offered. She gave him bread even when he had nothing to exchange. She simply wanted the Indian to pick up the several loaves of bread with both hands and then leave. She feared he might one day come after the children, but nothing bad ever happened, at least to her family.

Several of the children of the Germans had been kidnapped including a young girl from the family Metzger north of town. One German family hired Kit Carson, it is said, to go into the heart of the Indian lands above the San Saba River to find and rescue one of their children, which Kit Carson did.



JOHN O. MEUSEBACH

(3.1-A): Kennedy, Ira, "Lasting Peace", *Enchanted Rock Magazine*, Vol. 1, Nr. 6, Dec/Jan 1994-95, pp 4-5, 22-23.

(3.1-B): Reproduction of the words of the Peace Treaty of 1847 between the citizens of Friedrichsburg and the Comanche Indians, produced by the Awani Press, Harper Road, Friedrichsburg, Texas, by Douglas Hubbard.

(3.2-A): "Treaty of Peace", handout pamphlet, printed by the Gillespie County Historical Society, Vereinkirche Archive Center, Marktplatz, Friedrichsburg.

(3.2-B): F. Schubert, alias for Friedrich A. Strubberg, Dr. Schubert, Dr. Schubert, Armand, et cetera.

(3.2-C): V. Coll: Jean Jacques von Coll, born in Wiesbaden around 1814, arrived in Texas in 1844. A retired military man, officers of the Texas Verein snapped him up to lead the first group of immigrants to Central Texas from Indianola. He married Margerethe Schertz in 1849. He arrived at the Port of Galveston December 21, 1844, living first in New Braunfels.(a)

Meusebach took a liking to von Coll and along with Ludwig Bene was integral to the Texas Verein's leadership team. "From New Braunfels on April 23, 1846 von Coll lead the 16 wagons, drawn by two or three yoke of oxen and 180 persons, including the mounted convoy, which accompanied the expedition" . . . to the site in the Pedernales River Basin they named Friedrichsburg on May 8, 1846. (b)

(a) Geue, *A New Land Beckoned*, Ibid. p. 86, p. 159.

(b) Roemer, Dr. Ferdinand quoted by Everett A. Fey in his outstanding compendium, *New Braunfels: the First Founders*, Eakin Press, Austin, Texas, 1995, pp. 326-329.

THE REVEREND JONAS DANCER

Reverend Jonas Dancer resided in Llano county, and so far as we know was the first man killed in that county by the Indians. The author first became acquainted with him in Travis county, where he lived in the year 1850. Some two years later, attracted by the mineral resources of Llano, he moved to that county. At the time Mr. Dancer moved into Llano there was but one other American settler in the county.

After prospecting a couple of years, Mr. Dancer finally settled in a romantic little spot called "Honey Creek Cove." Llano county has long since been celebrated for its mineral resources, mountain scenery, fertile valleys, rippling streams and nutritious grasses. The spot selected by Mr. Dancer was one of the most picturesque in the county. Here game of all kinds and wild honey abounded in the greatest quantity.

All of these combined attractions soon drew others to that section, and it was not long until the sound of the ax and hammer of the pioneer could be heard in many directions as the settlers began to construct their rude log cabins. Mr. Dancer was of the Methodist creed, and he soon succeeded in building up quite a large church. He was the first man to introduce the blessed gospel in that wilderness country. For several years these hardy pioneers lived in peace and happiness, pursuing their various avocations, but their dark day came at last.

On the twenty-third day of May, 1859, if we have not been misinformed, Mr. Dancer and others were to meet at



a certain point to cut out a new road from Llano to the city of Austin. Always punctual in his appointments, Mr. Dancer, with tools in hand, repaired to the spot. From some cause the others failed to come. Dancer had a couple of horses which he hopped, and thinking the balance of the party would soon arrive, began work by himself.

Whilst thus engaged he was attacked by a party of five or six Indians. Being

unarmed, Dancer fled to a deep ravine, closely pursued by the savages, who it seems attempted to rope him, but failed. Dancer, having reached the bed of the ravine, the Indians rushed up to the bluffs overlooking the same and poured a volley of arrows into the body of the unfortunate man. Finally overcome with loss of blood from his wounds, he walked around in front of a projecting rock in the bluff, deliberately sat down on a rock bench and there expired. The savages then came upon him, scalped him and otherwise mutilated his body.

Such was the condition in which his body was found the following day by a searching party, who delivered it to his sorrowing widow and now fatherless children. The loss of this good man, who was looked upon as the father of the county, spread profound grief throughout that section. As a minister of the gospel, he was faithful to his charge; as a christian, he was faithful to duty, and as a neighbor, he was kind and obliging. The frontier suffered an irreparable loss in his death.

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DAY TRIPS VOLUME I

by GERALD E. McLEOD
TEXAS TOURS, MAPS & PHOTOS

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Here it is. *Day Trips Volume I* is like no other travel guide. Each of the first 100 installments of Gerald E. McLeod's *Day Trips* columns in the *Austin Chronicle* gives the reader useful travel tips, historical background, and insights into some of the things that make Texas unique. The book covers people, destinations, lodgings, restaurants, and even other guide books, all intended to make exploring easier and more interesting.

In a style that combines storytelling and reporting, Gerald McLeod takes the reader to the State Fair, the Alamo Village, the horse races, and the Terlingua chili cookoffs. The book explores small towns like Brenham, Comfort, Smithville, Llano, and Lockhart. McLeod even divulges the secret of his five favorite swimming holes.

Day trippers do not travel for fun alone. They must have food, too. The book guides travelers to some of the best small town restaurants. Here's the history and directions to PoPo Family Restaurant (their collection of plates is as large as the German food, and chicken fried steaks are good), Cele General Store (the store is closed except on weekends when they serve some of the best

In a style that combines storytelling and reporting, Gerald McLeod takes the reader to the State Fair, Alamo Village, the horse races, and the Terlingua chili cookoffs. The book explores small towns like Brenham, Comfort, Smithville, Llano, and Lockhart. McLeod even divulges the secret of his five favorite swimming holes.

barbecue in Central Texas), and LocuStreet Bakery (a San Antonio neighborhood bakery with a world-class menu). No where else can you find an interview with Bob Roberts, the man who began the Taylor International Barbecue Cookoff and get his advice on finding the best Texas barbecue joints ("Never stop at a place that doesn't have a wood pile out back.")

All of the trips originate from Austin, but can begin from anywhere. In a state the size of Texas, not every trip can comfortably be completed in a day. Sometimes the lodgings can be an interesting part of the trip. The book visits the resort at Fort Clark Springs (a former cavalry fort), the Dabbs Hotel (a former railroad hotel), Mountain View Hotel, (with spectacular views of the Hill Country, and Hotel Lafite (a bed & breakfast inn overlooking San Antonio Bay). And of course, there are plenty of Texas parks and campgrounds included. McLeod takes the reader with him as he looks for the perfect place to view the sunset, visits Central Texas wineries, and searches for spring wildflowers.

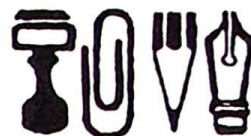
Day Trips first appeared in the *Austin Chronicle* on April 12, 1991, and continues to be one of the most popular columns in the weekly news magazine. In the "Coming up..." section of each day trip is a list of festivals and special events keyed to a particular time of year.

Gerald E. McLeod is a graduate of the University of Texas and has worked at newspapers around Texas. In his eleven years with the *Austin Chronicle* he has contributed to 101 Swimming Holes, a Hill Country barbecue guide, a guide to Barton Creek, and the Hill Country Guide.

Day Trips Volume 1 is available at local bookstores or by mail for \$6.95 and \$3.05 for shipping, handling and tax. Write: Day Trips, 1712 E. Riverside Drive, Box 156, Austin, Texas 78741

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THE SIX MILE LIGHT

Continued from page 23

of those who saw the Six-Mile Light also saw it disappear with an audible popping sound as it struck an object.

In a recent telephone conversation with Austin KXAN-TV Meteorologist Jim Spencer, Spencer told *Enchanted Rock Magazine*, "While I do believe that the ball lightning phenomenon probably does exist, I have not heard of any incidences of ball lightning occurring outside of the context of a thunderstorm. In other words, there's no reason to believe ball lightning could occur on a clear night, unless there's a thunderstorm nearby."

(Spencer said also that he had heard of the Six-Mile Light, and that a number of locals had asked him what could possibly cause it. Spencer said he has not investigated the occurrence and at present has no firm answer to the question.)

Herein lies a portion of the mystery: Of all the sightings of the light to date, none have occurred during a thunderstorm—or at least, no one has mentioned the fact that a thunderstorm was underway at the time, if indeed there was.

Two other reports of the sudden appearance of the legendary Llano County light is worthy of mention. According to Abby Najar, owner of Abby's Mexican Food Restaurant in

Llano, her late husband Catarino saw the bright object twice—once when he was a young man, and once many years later with two of their children.

Abby says that the first time Catarino saw the light he was 28 years old and working on a ranch at Six-Mile. After finishing work one day, he was walking home to another ranch nearby—the Slator Ranch—where his parents worked and where he was raised as a boy. Catarino told Abby that twilight had just set in when out of nowhere a brilliant ball of light streaked across the road in front of him and sped into a pasture, where it suddenly disappeared.

"He told me that it scared him so bad that he ran the rest of the way home and told his mother, Tibursia Najar, about it," Abby says.

The second and last time Catarino witnessed the light—or one similar to the one at Six-Mile—was in the 1950s, along with their son Joe Najar and their daughter Dodie Henderson. This time, however, the sighting occurred nowhere near Six-Mile, but near a rest stop on Highway 29, some five miles east of Llano.

"My husband and children were coming home from Buchanan Dam about 8:30 at night when a ball of light appeared in front of the car. Catarino threw on the brakes, and when he did, the light turned to the left and headed toward the Llano River, then disappeared. He said it was the size of an automobile tire."

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"My husband and children were coming home from Buchanan Dam about 8:30 at night when a ball of light appeared in front of the car. Catarino threw on the brakes, and when he did, the light turned to the left and headed toward the Llano River, then disappeared. He said it was the size of an automobile tire."

Dodie added, "Joe and I saw it, too. It was huge and bright—and hot. You could feel the heat through the open window as it turned and headed toward the river."

And so, thus go only a few of the reports surrounding the strange light of Llano County.

One possible solution to the puzzle could perhaps lie in this county's wealth of mineral deposits. Llano County, long renown in scientific circles for its amazing diversity of minerals—some of them the rarest in the world—is located in a huge natural formation known as the Llano Uplift. Since no agency has ever conducted a complete survey of the county, it is not known how many other minerals exist here, besides the reputedly 240 already discovered.

Are all of the sightings of the mystifying light the result of the activity of the same mineral element or combination of mineral elements possibly unknown to science? Did some or all of them derive from The Damp? Or is the light merely a manifestation of ball lightning? To this day, no one has been able to satisfactorily answer those questions.

But when you're traveling at night in Llano County, especially on Ranch Road 2323 near Six-Mile, keep a sharp eye out. You could well come face-to-face with the mysterious Six-Mile Light—or with something uncannily similar.

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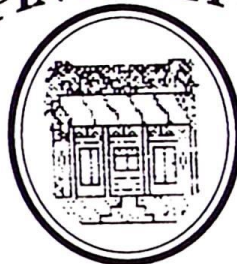
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JOURNEY TO CLICKLAN

Part One by CORK MORRIS
and Part Two by HARRY HICKMAN II



One of the best kept secrets in the travel lore of the Texas Hill Country is "The Click Route." Years ago Willow City Loop had the same reputation, but as more and more people discover the Texas Frontier such places become prime destinations and they are secrets no longer.

PART ONE

All journeys, spiritual or statute, begin with a belief. It doesn't even matter if one even believes in the belief; it is just good form to have one.

We began our journey believing that there was a Click, Texas. It was rumored to exist in that nether land where Gillespie, Llano, and Blanco counties blur into each other. I have heard that tax assessors who blunder in there are never seen again. Hunters who stalk these grounds become the huntee, and in time become vegetarians.

A journey must also have a starting place. This began, as many do, at Harrys' on the Loop.

It was a beautiful fall day; clear and breezy enough for a jacket. The full beaver moon had risen the night before, so all of the

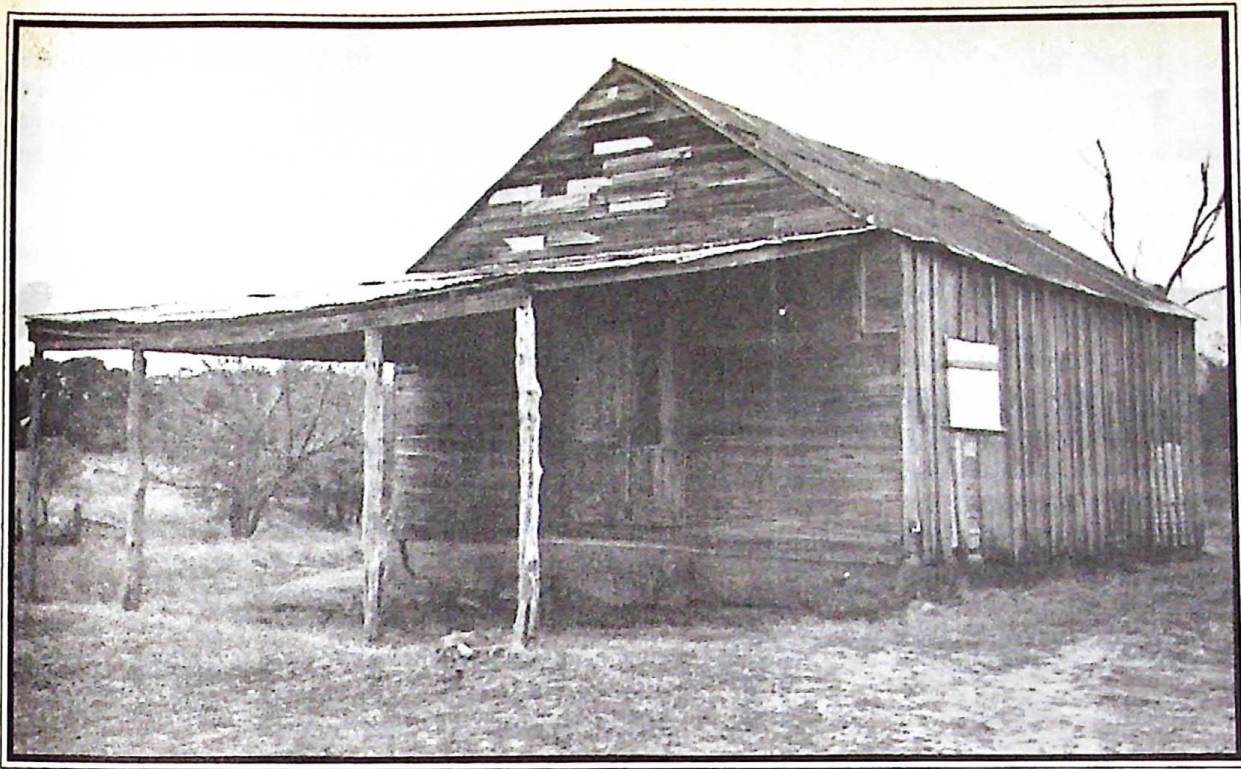
somewhat odd had met, purely by accident at Harry's. We were listening to Harry tell of a rumor he had heard about the Click Store.

"It's just full of old Texas collectibles and priceless antiques," he panted, the gleam of non-spiritual notions dancing in his eyes. "How do you get to Click?" he asked no one in particular.

The question sparked a half-hour harangue among the patrons as to how one might go, and if it really existed.

I, having spent way too much time looking for Bowie's lost silver mine, listened but did not offer an opinion. I had a small secret; I had been to Click. It was years ago, and I could not say that I could find it again. At the moment I was uncertain as to whether I was still in Texas. Panic had faded the memories.

"Bring a boat," a deep gravelly voice from the darkened corner table whispered.



All was still. All eyes flicked toward the corner.

"Pardon me? Harry responded.

The stranger deliberately rolled the ash from his cigarette on the edge of the ashtray.

"The road will end in water, and appear on the other side." The stranger leaned out of the shadow. He seemed young, but his hair was white, and the lines on his face seemed frozen there.

"Going to Click is easy. Leaving is something else. You may want a boat." He slowly sought each face in the room. Even Harry's son, Wyatt, was still.

Finally, as I knew it would, his eyes met mine. "Isn't that right?" the stranger asked as he leaned back into the shadows.

"You've been to Click?" Harry asked me, chidingly.

"Yep."

"Is there a store there?"

"Yep."

"How far off the pavement is it?"

The man in the corner laughed softly.

I sighed, "There is no pavement in Click, Harry. There is just dirt."

Harry scratched his jaw thoughtfully. One could almost hear the wheels turning. "Let's go," he said, finally.

Nietzsche had said, 'That which does not kill you, makes you stronger.' The man had obviously never been to Click.

"Ok," I said

As Harry gathered up provisions, I recalled what I had heard of Click. When cotton was king, and going anywhere was a major production, little stores popped up everywhere. Click was one of those. In their day these stores were the hub of communication and commerce for an area. There is little left in Click to tell one how big she might have been. But once there was a post office there, so

When cotton was king, and going anywhere was a major production, little stores popped up everywhere. Click was one of those. In their day these stores were the hub of communication and commerce for an area.

sooner or later everyone in the area dropped by. It was located, for lack of a better term, by an intersection of two ranch roads. The road from Llano was the dark gray of crushed shale and granite. The one from everywhere else was the white caliche we all know and love. The intersection was a whiter shade of pale.

We climbed in the truck and went around the corner to a surviving post office at Homann's store in Willow City to get all the gas we could carry.

As we slipped into traffic on Highway 16, I felt that I should be honest with Harry if we were to tread the path to Click.

"Uh, Harry?"

He raised his eyebrows, naively.

"I'm not sure I remember how to get to Click." I confessed.

"I thought you said you did."

"No, you assumed I did. I just said that I have been there."

"So, now what?"

"I think there is a sign up by the Oxford Cemetery."

"Are you saying that we have to go through a graveyard to get to Click?"

I had to be careful how I phrased my answer. The signs of panic were obvious. He was realizing the true nature of our task.

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"Yep."

Silence filled the space around us for the next few miles. We crossed the county line into Llano, then 965, Legion Creek and closed on Oxford. As the cemetery sign came closer we slowed. We looked around but there was no sign for Click. An old weathered sign said 'Abandon hope all...' but the rest was unreadable.

We went on hoping for a sign (road sign), that might show us another way. Llano was getting closer and our hopes dimmed.

"Dabbs," Harry shouted.

I leaned away from him, thinking that the pressure might be causing him to crack. Many brave and fearless men have been reduced to mush and gibberish by Click.

"Take it easy Harry, everything's ok."

He looked at me oddly. "The Dabbs Railroad Hotel. It's in Llano. Someone there will know another way."

With renewed hope we rode onward to the Dabbs.

It was a peaceful scene on the back porch of the hotel overlooking the river. A young couple was playing checkers with beer bottle caps. Their cute young dog bit Harry, as someone went to find Gary, the owner.

He was, it seems, asleep, but he greeted Harry enthusiastically, and introductions were made all around. We sat at the table and chatted amiably for several minutes. Finally Harry asked the question:

"How the hell do you get to Click?"

What sleep that was left in Gary's face was swept away.

"Why do you want to go... there?" It was as if he didn't dare say the name.

Harry shrugged. I shrugged. The dog shrugged.

Gary must have seen the determination in our faces. He seemed to sigh as he said, "I'll draw you a map." He spoke as he drew. "You could have gone down the Oxford Cemetery road..."

Harry and I nodded sagely at each other.

"But the quickest way from here is to head down Highway 71. I'm not sure how far it is, but there is a road to the right that has a sign that says, Something Cemetery."

"Are you saying there is a cemetery named Something?" I asked incredulously.

"No," Gary said calmly. "I'm saying that I don't know the name of it."

"Who cares what the name of it is," Harry almost shouted. "Are you saying that if we want to get to Click from any direction, we have to go through a graveyard?"

"Why... yes. I thought you knew." Gary said, though with great concern. "I have heard that there is a third way to escape from, I mean, get to... that place. But, I don't know what it is."

Faith in a higher power, I thought to myself, might be handy.

"We've come this far," Harry said as he stood, "let's see it through."

I had to admire his bravado—and he was my only ride back to Harry's on the Loop. So we headed for Something Cemetery road. The sun was heading down as we finally

Silence filled the space around us for the next few miles. We crossed the county line into Llano, then 965, Legion Creek and closed on Oxford. As the cemetery sign came closer we slowed. We looked around but there was no sign for Click. An old weathered sign said 'Abandon hope all...' but the rest was unreadable.

spotted Honey Creek Cemetery Road. Harry turned onto it without hesitation. It was smoothly paved, and the county or someone had recently mowed.

"I thought you said it was all dirt. Sometimes I think you're full of..."

We trembled over a cattle guard and landed hard on the dirt, sending up a cloud of dust. Harry had to immediately swerve to miss several deer on the road.

"Holy moley," he said.

"Yep." We were on the Gray Dirt Road.

INTERMISSION: From the Editor

I showed up at Harry's on the Loop not long after the Click trip. "Would you be interested in an article about a road trip to Click Cork and I took?"

"Sure," I said. And a week or so later Harry presented Cork's piece to me for publication. I liked what I read, but...

"Where's the rest of it?" I asked Harry.

"That's it."

"Well, it stops in the middle of nowhere, and there's no Click in sight." After reading Cork's article, I was beginning to see Click as a Hill Country Bermuda Triangle where expectations and explanations go awry. I hadn't thought of it that way before; but it is an easy place to lose yourself.

I explained to Harry that a road trip has to, at least, reach a destination. I persuaded Harry to write enough words to get us to Click. In time I received Harry's part and realized I needed a picture or two to accompany the article(s), plus a little explanation. I don't know why, but sometimes it takes two or three people to write a story.

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We drove for quite some distance until we ran out of pavement. From there the road turned to gravel, then to dirt, then gravel again. And then back to dirt. About the time I decided we were lost in Clickland two wooden buildings appeared alongside the road.

PART TWO

I heard there was an old store out in the middle of nowhere in a community called Click. I began asking around but nobody knew where it was. Then I became really interested. So when my friend Cork informed me he had actually been to the place, at my insistence, we planned a day trip.

When the day came we didn't get started until late in the afternoon. After icing down plenty of provisions we were ready to roll. All the while, Cork had been acting kinda mysterious about the place. I knew we were in for an adventure when he suggested we bring a reserve ice chest.

Six miles out of Llano, on Highway 16, Cork fesses up that we missed the turn because someone had stolen the sign.

"Not to fear," I said and suggested to Cork, that we go to the Dabbs Hotel. "Gary can tell us how to get there."

Well, Gary was asleep on our arrival; so after several threats to wake him myself, someone volunteered while I was getting bit by this young lady's dog. After defending myself, the lady moved her checker game and the dog to the front porch. After a short conversation with Gary, he made us a map (of sorts) and we were on our way.

We drove for quite some distance until we ran out of pavement. From there the road turned to gravel, then to dirt, then gravel again. And then back to dirt. About the time I decided we were lost in Clickland two wooden buildings appeared alongside the road.

This was the place but it was deserted. One building, judging from the double doorway set high off the ground, looked as though it was used to unload wagons into the store, which is one large room, a few windows, cracks in the walls, bricks strewn around the foundation. The ramshackle appearance gave the place plenty of character. The other building was in far better shape with a fine porch.

We found the mysterious community of Click. It was so quiet I wondered what it was like a hundred years ago, and I pondered what was here now and what could be here tomorrow. People evidently left Click for the big city and progress. Now people leave the big city to seek out places like Click where there is no progress.

But, what if there were just a little progress in Click—a place for a cold drink, a domino table, and some music. I wonder if people would wander back to Click and back one hundred years to the way it was, and the way it could still be. Alive.

FINDING CLICK

by IRA KENNEDY

One of the best kept secrets in the travel lore of the Texas Hill Country is "The Click Route." Years ago Willow City Loop had the same reputation, but as more and more people discover the Texas Frontier such places become prime destinations and they are secrets no longer. Here at *Enchanted Rock Magazine* we have dedicated ourselves to the mission of revealing the secrets of the Hill Country. Anyway, I let the cat out of the bag a little while back when I took Gerald E. McLeod, the Day Trip writer for the *Austin Chronicle*, on the route.

"If you take me I'll have to write about it," Gerald warned me. Well, he hasn't reported on the route yet, so I decided to get the jump on the *Chronicle*.

The easy way to find Click is to get out your map; draw a line from Llano to Johnson City, then another from Fredericksburg to Kingsland. Where the lines intersect is Click. X does mark the spot.

To get to Click by car you'll need a four-wheel drive if it's rained recently, cause you'll have to cross the Big Sandy Creek two or three times, depending on the route you take. Of course, you could get to Click without crossing the Big Sandy at all, but that's not near as much fun.

Coming from Fredericksburg on Highway 16, take the first right after the Oxford Cemetery—that's Llano County Road 315. At the intersection of County Road 308 turn right again, and you're there.

To find Click from Highway 71, turn on County Road 308 which is located just west of Packsaddle Mountain at the Honey Creek Cemetery turnoff. Stay on 308 and you're there. From Click there are many adventurous ways out. The best map of the area is found in *The Roads of Texas* published by Shearer Publishing of Fredericksburg. You'll find the map on page 121 of that publication.

A word to the wise: You'll be driving a little public roadway through private property the whole time, so stay in the car—getting shot at or arrested by a disgruntled citizen can ruin your whole day. It's their land and you're fair game. And, by all means, don't litter. This is pristine Texas Hill Country.

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NATURAL AREA DESIGNATION HAS POSITIVE IMPACT ON EROCK'S ECOLOGY

by IRA KENNEDY

Enchanted Rock is a place of significant ecological interest. It is here that desert and wetland species meet. A visitor can stand in one place and see examples of the entire evolution of plant life on the planet—from lichens, mosses, ferns, annuals and perennials, to shrubs and trees.

Within its 1,643 acres are over five hundred species of plants. Over one hundred of these inhabit the vernal pools, weathered pits which impound soil and water on the summit of Enchanted Rock and the surrounding outcrops. Almost a dozen of the native plants are unique to the area. The Hammock fern, *Blechnum occidentale* L.; the Basin bellflower, *Campanula reverchonii*; and the Rock quillwort, *Isoetes lithophylla*, can be found here, all of which are considered either threatened or endangered by the Smithsonian Institution.

In the twenty-five years prior to becoming a state natural area, twenty native plants became extinct within its present boundaries. However, the good news is that, according to research by botanist Bob O'Kennon, during the ten years that the park has been under state supervision, twenty-three of those species have returned, and over one hundred species have been added to the list. Beyond that, O'Kennon has located a previously unidentified species belonging to the sunflower family.

It is believed that the primary reason for such a remarkable recovery is due to the removal of cattle, which were a perennial presence when the area was operated as a private park. However, with over 300,000 visitors annually there can be little doubt that humans are impacting the ecology of the park. All visitors are individually responsible for their actions. Please, do not pick flowers, harvest plants, and watch where you are walking. The plant you save could be endangered.

A NOTE ON VERNAL POOLS

The vernal pools are very delicate ecosystems, supporting a wide variety of plant life plus a unique invertebrate, the fairy shrimp. Whether the pools appear as bare rock depressions or filled with plant life, all the pools are in a process of evolution which has required thousands of years. The subject of ongoing research by environmentalists, the pools are easily impacted by careless visitors. Avoid walking through or otherwise disturbing these areas. Stay on the rock.

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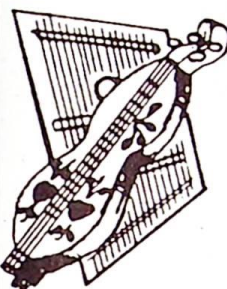
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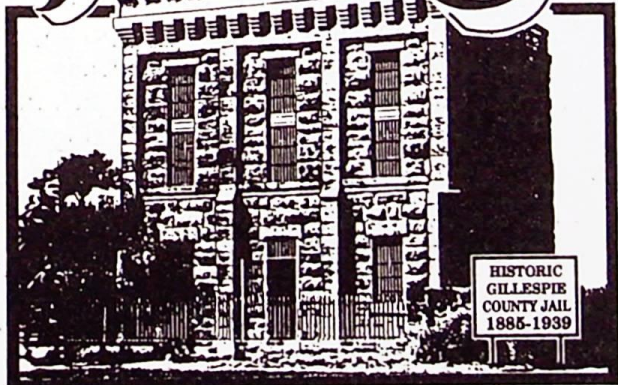
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