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VOL. 3, No. 8 ★ OCTOBER 1996

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**THE TRUE STORY  
OF PECOS BILL &  
SLUE-FOOT SUE**

**COWHAND  
FROM  
CLICK**

**LOOKING  
FOR  
LEMON  
SQUEEZER**



by IRA KENNEDY



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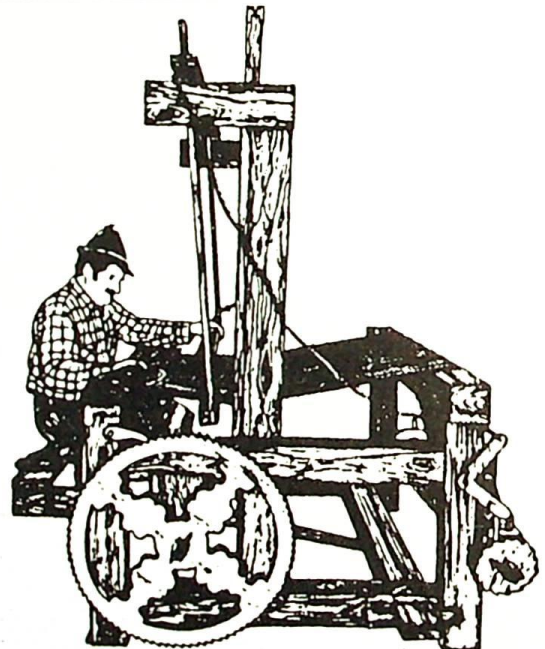
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**ON THE COVER:** Nat Love. Born in slavery in 1854, Nat left his home in Davidson County, Tennessee at the age of fifteen and made his way west where he became a cowhand with an outfit on the Palo Duro River in the Texas Panhandle. As a cowhand, he drove cattle from Mexico to the Dakotas. Eventually, Nat laid claim to the title "Deadwood Dick" the hero of a series of popular dime novels in the late 1800's. Although there were several contenders to the honor, only Nat made his claim in print with, *The Life and Adventures of Nat Love: Better Known in the Cattle Country as "Deadwood Dick"*—by Himself. Drawing by Ira Kennedy.

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## FROM THE EDITOR

"A people that take no pride in the achievements of remote ancestors will never achieve anything worthy to be remembered with pride by their descendants." —Macaulay.

# NATION WIDE

If you had told me two and a half years ago, while I was distributing my four page newsletter by hand to visitors at Enchanted Rock, that the publication was going to become a magazine with national distribution, I would have called you crazy. But the fact is, thanks to Fine Print distributors we're in 163 outlets nationwide—from Key West, Florida to Seattle, Washington; from Derby Lane, Vermont to West Hollywood, California; from Laredo, Texas to Grand Maris, Minnesota. We're also in places like Santa Fe, and Denver which is great too. It's about time folks out yonder learned more about us Texans than our football stars and oil barons.

I've always held the notion that the character of Texas took shape in the Hill Country of central Texas back in the mid 1800's. After the Civil War, when all the menfolk returned home they discovered their herds of cattle were all mixed up and greatly multiplied. From this came the great cattle drives, and the words "cowboy" and "Texas" were linked forever in the American psyche. Western movies turned these men into bushwhackers and barroom brawlers, or, at best, men incapable of commitment who always rode off into the sunset, never to marry or rear a family. Neither of these versions are faithful to the facts. Perhaps, as more readers pick up on our publication a clearer image will emerge.

### PECOS BILL AND SLUE FOOT SUE

Of course, one aspect of being Texan is our penchant for hyperbole, and nowhere is that more clearly personified than in the legendary characters of Pecos Bill and Slue Foot Sue. As fortune would have it, I received a phone call last month from Warren Lewis, a former resident of Smithwick located just east of Marble Falls. He was back home visiting relations when he picked up a copy of the magazine. We chatted for an hour on the phone that day; and it was then he told me of his book-length manuscript on Bill and Sue. I know how difficult it is to write a book, so I held on to my scepticism until I received his manuscript in the mail. *Partners Together* is the best unpublished book I have ever had the pleasure to read. We will be printing it, chapter by chapter, in the magazine. Unfortunately, due to space limitations a few chapters will be edited for length. Hopefully, a book publisher will read *Partners Together* in *Enchanted Rock Magazine* and offer Warren a contract.

### ABOUT LEMON SQUEEZER

Recently I had the occasion to talk on the phone to Patsy Marshall Stewart, great granddaughter of John O. Meusebach. She was the person who provided us with the real identity of Lemon Squeezer of Sloan, Texas. In our previous issues we spelled his first name Jim. We stand corrected. His real name is Jym Sloan. Our gratitude to Ms. Stewart for setting us straight.

### VISIT THE ROCK

The weather is definitely cooling down and it is the absolutely best time of year to visit Enchanted Rock State Natural Area. For those who haven't heard me say it before, Enchanted Rock is the geologic center of Texas. It is the hard core around which the land mass of Texas formed. As sacred ground to the Native Americans, it is considered the center of the world; and pilgrimages to The Rock were considered essential for a healthy spirit. If you've never been there you're in for a remarkable surprise.

IRA KENNEDY

# ENCHANTED ROCK MAGAZINE

209 EAST MAIN, LLANO, TEXAS 78643 PHONE/FAX 915/247-3708

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# Open Letter to All Texas Naturalists & Historians

Dear Friends:

Everybody in Texas, and even a few foreigners, have heard about armadillos and horny toads, by now, and some even know what a mountain boomer is. Nevertheless, there remains a serious and pervasive ignorance concerning some of Texas's other, possibly more fabled, creatures, such as the godaphroe, the glyptodont, and—everyone's favorite—the shy Milamo bird.

*Enchanted Rock Magazine* has, therefore, commissioned a study of the natural history of some of these less-well-known denizens of the Lone Star State. In the interest of authentic Texas history and the furtherance of scientific knowledge, we hereby appeal to the readership of this fine journal to correspond at the address of the Magazine and communicate to us any empirically verified sightings, actual descriptions (whether personal or reliably in print), and bona fide anecdotes concerning the following list of highly endangered Texas critters:

Agrapelter	Amphisbaena	Snipe
Carcajou	Carvanna carnivorosus	Squank
Club-tailed Glyptodont	Godaphroe	Jackelope
Hide-behind Bird	Hoop Snake	Rooter Hog
Shy Milamo Bird	Wampus Kitty	Whangdoodle

Gwinter (a.k.a. Sideswiper, Prock, Mountain Stemminder, Side-hill Saugus, and Binder)

Please do not send any myths, stories, legends, tall tales, windies, or other lies about these splendid Texas residents; we are interested only in hard scientific evidence. (Any letters alleging that any of the above are in any way associated with members of the Texas State Legislature will be strictly disregarded.)

It may be that we have overlooked one or two names of similarly elusive Texas fauna. We will be greatly appreciative to receive similar intelligence concerning any other critters that ought to have been mentioned.

Friendly,  
Warren Lewis  
Texas Naturalist and Historian  
Chair of Humanities  
Martin University, Indianapolis, IN



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# OLD RIP

BY EDWIN GIBSON

## A true Texas tale about a 32 year-old horned toad

I was at home in Eastland, Texas the day the cornerstone was opened, when the old courthouse was torn down to make room for a new courthouse. Unfortunately, I had not gone downtown to witness the ceremony. The cornerstone had been laid down in 1897 when the old courthouse was built. The old building was demolished in early 1928 after standing for thirty one years.

In 1928 before the cornerstone was opened, some one revealed that in 1897 a bottle of whiskey, a newspaper, a Bible, and a horned toad had been placed in the cornerstone. There was a general belief that horned toads could live for years without air or water or food.

A large crowd gathered to witness the ceremony. Word had already spread abroad about the horned toad and many curious people came to see whether there really was a horned toad in the cornerstone, and if so, whether it was dead or alive.

The Methodist minister was the first to peer into the cavity. He spotted a dried up dusty looking horned toad. Some one lifted the desiccated creature by one hind leg and raised it aloft for the crowd to see. To the amazement of the onlookers, one leg moved. The creature was alive after thirty one years without air or food or water.

When found, Old Rip was not only dried out and looking like a dead leaf, his horns had been worn down badly. Some speculated that he wore the horns out in the early days of his confinement trying to dig his way out of the cornerstone before going into a form of estivation.

Newspapers throughout the world headlined stories of Old Rip, named for Rip Van Winkle. The tiny creature was taken to the St. Louis Zoo for exhibition and to Washington, D. C. to meet President Calvin Coolidge. Movies of it were made to be shown on newsreels. Old Rip was featured in Ripley's *Believe It Or Not*.

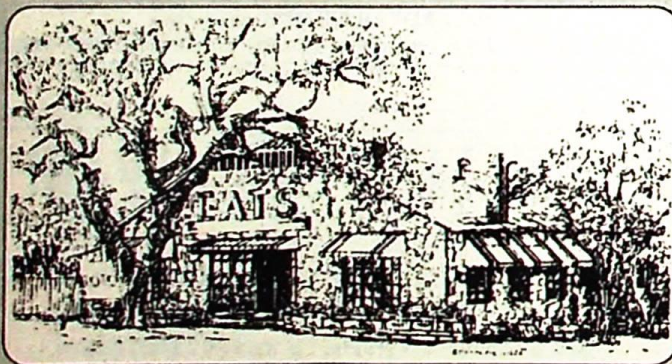
Old Rip lived on. What happened to the newspaper no one knows. The Bible was probably inherited by the Methodist Minister. What happened to the bottle of whiskey? Don't ask. Later on, when the publicity died down, Old Man Sheppard received permission to take Old Rip to California to be exhibited. Before he reached Abilene, Texas by car, a self-appointed posse caught up with him and returned Old Rip to Eastland.

Old Rip died in 1929 and his embalmed body is still to be seen in the lobby of the new courthouse. If you ever drive through Eastland, Texas, try to find a parking space near the courthouse and go into the lobby to see the remains of the oldest living prisoner of solitary confinement.

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# LETTERS

## MAGAZINE TO MAGAZINE

Here's a couple of samples of our publication (please note page 7, September issue). We were crammed for space but wanted it to appear this month.

We enjoyed your publication very much and feel you and your staff deserve a big "hurray". Our staff is just the two of us, but maybe we get a "ho hum" at least. Sorry we couldn't do more but we postponed some stuff to get it in and that was the available space to work with.

Once again, thank you for sharing your magazine with us and we hope to visit you in the future.

Sincerely,  
Dancer & Jill Davis  
*Cowboy Gazette*  
Dublin, Texas

**Editor's Note:** The *Gazette* published on page 7 of their Sept. issue an article on *Enchanted Rock Magazine*. IK

## CORRECTION

The June 1996 article "Treasures of the San Saba" was of great interest.

One part titled "John Haas. November 10, 1899" has Maximilian invading Mexico in the seventeenth century.

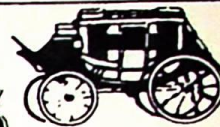
Archduke Maximilian of Austria was put on the throne of Mexico, as emperor, by Napoleon III of France to establish a puppet monarchy in Mexico. Maximilian entered Mexico in May, 1864. He was executed by the government of Benito Juarez in about 1867.

References for this are "Lone Star" by T. R. Ferenbach and "Modern European Civilization" by Hutton Webster.

Sincerely,  
John H. Kothmann  
Fredericksburg, Texas

**Editor's Note:** The *San Saba County News* of 1899 stands corrected. We printed the item as published and should have noted their error. We thank you for the facts. IK

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## FROM THE OOPS DEPT.

IN OUR AUGUST ISSUE WE INADVERTENTLY LEFT OFF THE CONCLUSION OF THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE. SO HERE IT IS; AND TO OUR READERS WE REGRET THE ERROR. IK

## FOUND IN MENARD

—FROM THE MASON HERALD, 1902

IN THE SUMMER OF 1891, AN OLD VETERAN MINER OF SOME 60 YEARS EXPERIENCE FOUND IN MENARD COUNTY A MINE THAT IS SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN WORKED BY THE SPANIARDS. THE MINE IS IN THE BLUFF OF LAS MORAS CREEK ON THE EAST SIDE AND SOME THREE MILES FROM WHERE THE STREAM EMPTIES INTO THE SAN SABA RIVER.

THE MINERAL IS A CLAY FORMATION OF DIFFERENT COLORS, BUT PRINCIPALLY IN A RED. YELLOW AND PINK CAN BE SEEN IN THE MINE, WHICH IS A TUNNEL RUNNING ON A LEVEL FROM THE MOUTH AND AT DIFFERENT ANGLES. THIS TUNNEL IS ABOUT 240 FEET DEEP AND CUT FROM 4 TO 10 FEET WIDE BY 6 TO 15 FEET DEEP, PRINCIPALLY THRU THIS CLAY FORMATION. THE TOP OF THIS TUNNEL IS BLACK DIRT THAT SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN WET, IN TIME, AND DRIED WHICH MAKES A HARD STUFF LIKE ADOBE. UNDER THIS IS A LAYER OF PULVERIZED STUFF DARKER IN COLOR, ABOUT 6 INCHES THICK.

THE TUNNEL IS A TWO STORY AFFAIR, THE BEST MINERAL BEING FOUND IN THE LOWER COMPARTMENT. THIS MINERAL CAN BE PLAINLY SEEN WITH THE NAKED EYE. THE ORE IS FOUND IN IMMENSE QUANTITIES AND THOUGHT TO BE VERY NICE.

**L**ittle Paul Brown heard his dog barking near the house the other night and went to see what was the matter. It proved to be a big o'possum that was trying to catch some little turkeys. The dog caught him on the ground and the boy took him by the tail and carried him to the house to show the folks how big he was.

In showing him around he took him to the room of two young lady school boarders, who happened to have some young lady visitors present. As it was quite heavy and seemingly dead he placed it on the floor, when lo, and behold! he came to life, smiled at the crowd and ran growling around the room and under the bed. Such a chattering and scattering of young folks. One young lady from San Saba perched herself on a trunk, one lady from Austin stood in a chair, another jumped on the bed, to escape the dreadful critter, whose fearful growls they could plainly hear.

One of the girls, whose father fought Indians on the border and killed many wild

animals that infested this county at an early day was not to be frightened by a possum. She crawled under the bed and caught him by the tail and dragged him out while he was growling and clawing the carpet at being compelled to walk backwards. While the fun was going on a little boy who had memorized the hunting song of a Georgian, stood at the door and sang.

"Ketch him! oh, ketch him, lay him low and fetch him.

'Possum meat is mighty sweet. Ketch him, Sallie! Ketch him!"

The marsupial quadruped was very fat and would have been a great delicacy on the table of a Missourian.

This scribe has a weakness for the favorite dish of Missouri and endorses the sentiment of the song.

"Good fat 'possum with tater in the sop, Make a man's mouth go flippy flop."

— by Frontier

"Cherokee Locals"

February 23, 1900

*San Saba County News*

## The Chicken Eating Horse

**A**fter publishing the piece from the *San Saba County News* regarding "The Turkey Eating Frog of Wallace Creek," we put our research staff hard at work looking for stories on other critters and their unusual culinary habits. As luck and oddity would have it, we came up with the following exchange. We can't attest to their veracity; but if you can swallow the frog story you'll find these palatable.

1.

The owner of a horse near here believes that he eats chickens. At any rate chickens have been found in his stable dead and torn all to pieces and portions gone.

"Cherokee Locals"—by Frontier  
*San Saba Co. News*, January 19, 1900

2.

We have a match for Frontier's Chicken eating horse. This is a one or two year old and eats prickly pears.

"Sloan"—by Lemon Squeezer  
*San Saba Co. News*, January 26, 1900

3.

Horses eat chickens and pears, but we have in our community a sheep that eats eggs.

"Wallace Creek"—by Farmer Boy  
*San Saba Co. News*, February 9, 1900

4.

That chicken eating horse has changed his diet. He takes turkey in his now.

"Cherokee Locals"—by Frontier  
*San Saba Co. News*, February 16 1900

5.

A little boy near here has two roosters that hunt mice like cats.

"Cherokee Locals"—by Frontier  
*San Saba Co. News*, March 2, 1900



# WILT THOU TAKE HER FOR THY PARD?

BY A. W. YOUNG

There is one thing about weddings that I have noted, which I have never read anything about or heard any one else mention and that is that when it comes to the ceremony, the bride is always master of herself, does not get excited at all, answers at the right time, and behaves as though the process of marrying was an everyday occurrence with her, while the groom is nearly always ill at ease, acts awkwardly, answers at the wrong time, unless you partially hypnotize him and prevent him from doing so.

I have tried to account for this, and think I have done so. The bride goes through the ordeal of marrying a number of times before she does go through with it. She has her excitement, her fears, her tears, her hesitation, etc. all over with before she meets the groom at the marriage altar and she has thus prepared herself for the ordeal of the ceremony. Mr. Groom, big, self-satisfied, over-confident man, does not get to the place of the ceremony until he does get to it. There is no preparatory going through it for him. All he thinks about is that he is exceedingly anxious to get to it and have it over with. He has no fears that it will bother him, not a little bit. So he goes as a "lamb to the slaughter" in his over-confidence and gets it all "taken out of him" about the time the minister begins to speak. When the preacher says, "Marriage is a sacred obligation, ordained of God and regulated by Civil authority, and when entered into it should be entered into seriously, soberly, solemnly and in the fear of the Lord. Way back in the Garden of Eden, God Himself performed the first marriage ceremony, saying: "for this cause shall a man forsake father and mother and shall cleave unto his wife and they twain shall be one flesh," the groom begins to wish that he was back in the Garden of Eden or somewhere else, as he did not anticipate a historical event when he faced the altar. As he shifts his feet, moves his body a little, and gets in a hurry to say "I do" or "I will" or anything else that he it seems needed to say, and have it all over with. He may have heard that ceremony before but he did not think it was like this, and he will never truthfully say just what he heard this time. His pulse, respiration, blood pressure are full, but his mind is missing on a few cylinders just at this time, and in day to come he could not swear that minister did not say:

"Wilt thou take her for thy pard,  
For better or for worse:  
To have, to hold, to fondly guard,  
Till hauled off in a hearse"

But the brides do not seem to remember the wedding ceremony any better than the men, though they know more about what happened at the wedding. I have been asked to omit the word 'obey' from the obligation

FRONTIER TIMES, FEBRUARY, 1925

of the bride, on several occasions, and where I have not been asked to omit it, the bride has usually attended to the matter, later on. Last summer in a tabernacle meeting in a Texas town, I married a couple one night just before the song service of the meeting. It was a pretty wedding and as it was known that it was to occur at the meeting that night there were more folks in attendance than usual, but my song leader, evidently, had not cared for his mental spark plugs that day, for while the happy couple and their attendants were leaving the tabernacle he started this song:

"Oh! Sometimes the shadows are deep,  
And rough seems the path to the goal;  
And sorrow how oft times they sweep,  
Like tempests down the soul."

It was about as appropriate as the work of another song leader, who after a preacher had delivered a lengthy and fervent discourse on the subject of "hell," started the song, "I Want to Go There, Don't You?"

## SADDLE PALS


By Graham Ward



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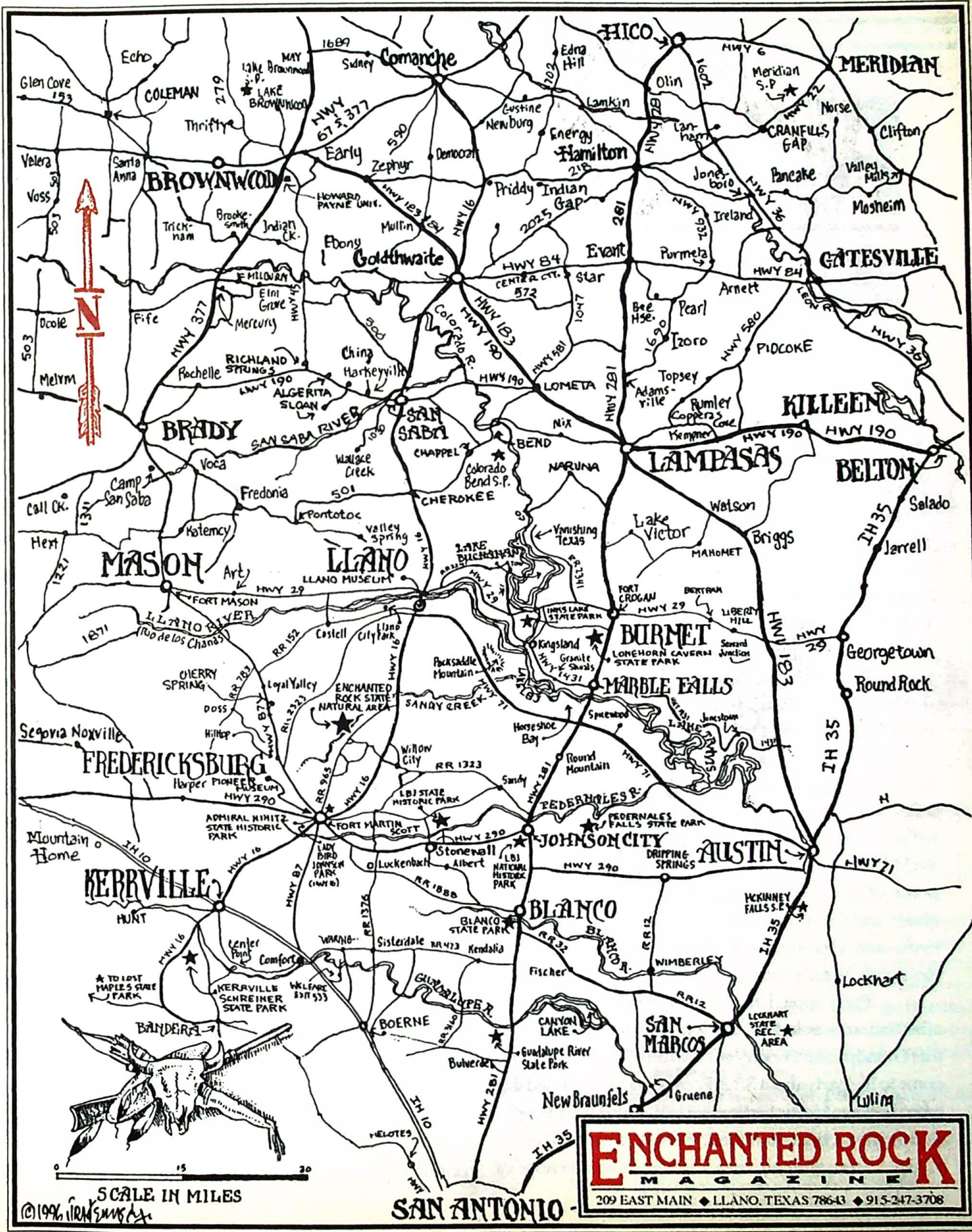


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# PARDNERSTOGETHER

## THE TRUE STORY OF PECOS BILL AND SLUE-FOOT SUE

BY WARREN LEWIS

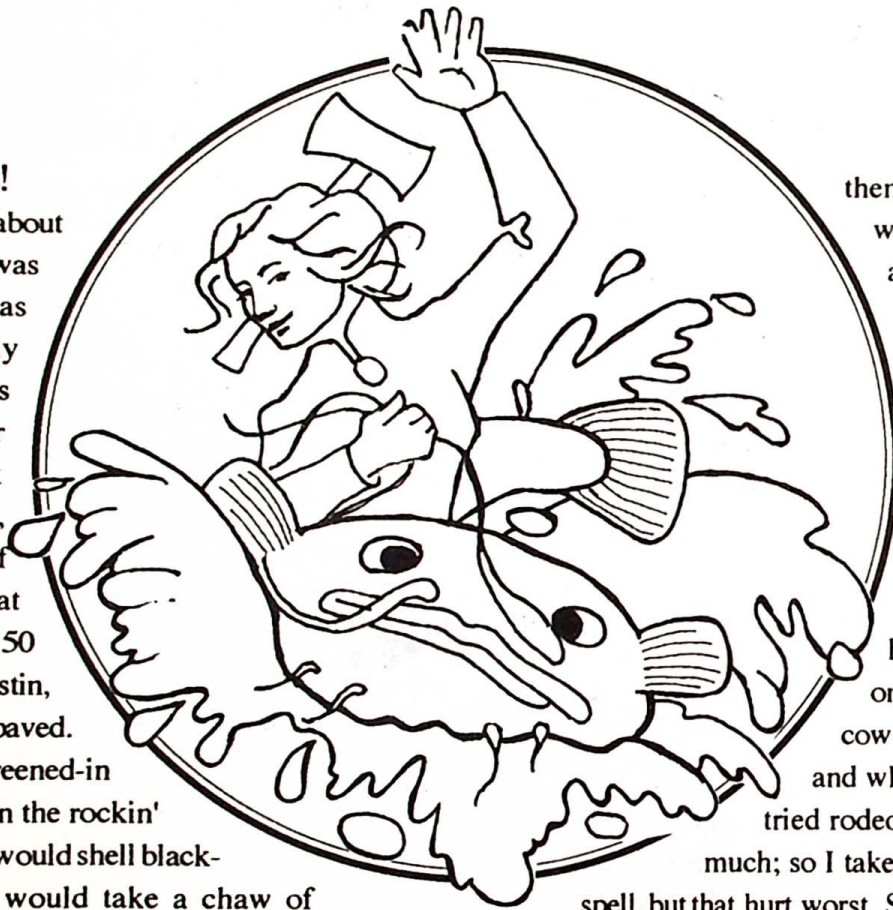
DEDICATION: IN FOND MEMORY OF MY GRANDPA, QWILLER LEWIS, OF SPICEWOOD, TEXAS, AND HIS BROTHER, UNCLE POOCHY, AND THEIR SISTERS, SUE AND EULA, NIG AND ANN, BLANCHE AND ALMA, WHO WERE ALWAYS READY TO SET THE BOYS STRAIGHT ABOUT SLUE-FOOT.

### UP FRONT AND FORWARD

Howdy, Pardner!

These here stories about Slue-Foot and Billy was told to me when I was just a tadpole by my Granddaddy and his brother and their sisters. That was back in the nineteen-forties, in the Hill Country of Central Texas, out at Spicewood, about 50 miles northwest of Austin, before the roads were paved. We'd sit out on the screened-in porch of an evenin' in the rockin' chairs, and Grandma would shell black-eyes, and Grandpa would take a chaw of Reynold's Natural Leaf and set hisself to yarnin'.

Purty soon, Uncle Poochy would chime in, and after that, so would the girls, 'cause they always thought that Grandpa and Poochy got it wrong, specially when it come to the parts about Slue-Foot. Grandpa claimed that when he was a kid, he had knowd Billy, and Uncle Poochy said the same, but I don't think the Sisters believed either of 'em, 'cause, after all, they was there too, and none of



them remembered it that way. Anyhow, they all allowed as how none of 'em had ever met Slue-Foot, though ever'body agreed that the tales told truly.

Now I never was much of a historian myself, though I did enjoy hearin' the yarns. Later on, I tried wranglin' and cow-punchin' fer awhile; and when that played out, I tried rodeoin', but that hurt too much; so I taken up preachin' fer a spell, but that hurt worst. So I tried going back to bein' a cowboy, but there ain't much call fer cowboys, no more. I cain't run a helicopter, they won't let me drive a jeep, and I'm too stove-in to ride my pony, anymore. So, I taken a mind to become a historian, after all. I finally figgered out that you could make a better livin' by tellin' easy lies than you can by workin' hard. All I ask in return fer these here windies is a Lone Star or two to keep my whistle wet. Tellin' lies is pow'rful thirsty work.

# SLUE-FOOT SUE'S WILD AND WOOLY WEDDING DAY

**T**he first time Pecos Bill ever seen Slue-Foot Sue, she was ridin' down the Rio Grandy River on the back of a yeller catfish that was bigger'n a whale and twic't as feisty. Slue-Foot was a-ridin' that brute barebacked, hangin' onto his whiskers fer a bridle, and pourin' it on him with her spurs. Now, as ever'body knows, ol' Bill had loved-up a lot of women in his time; matter of fact, punchin' cows and persuuin' women was our boy Bill's two main reasons fer livin'; and off and on he'd even married some—the women, that is. "But *that*," says Bill to hisself, when he seen Sue come a-bustin' through the river canyon like some faincy rodeo cowboy out of a shoot on the back of a hump-backed Bremmer bull, "is a woman a man could admire to live with."

Sue was a dainty, purty lit'le thing, ridin' that sea monster like that. She'd done already lost her hat, and her hair was a-flyin' out behind her like Gulf clouds a-b'ilin'. Ever' onc't in a while, she'd give that yellercat some more heel, and he'd take another leap and a dive. One thing you could be shur of: That catfish felt it whenever Sue put her spurs to 'im. Sue's feet was so big—that's why they called her "Slue-Foot"—that each one of her boots was made out of one whole hide of a full-growd cow buffalo; and each one of her spurs was one of them new-fangled broad-bladed deep-diggin' ploughshares—all polished-up and shiny, o'course, and with the mud knocked off, so's to be fittin' fer a lady. Whenever that fish would take a mind to go under, Sue'd hawl in on his whiskers, and head 'im up, and keep on sailin' down the river, just a purty as you please.

Quicker'n a bullfrog can lick in a skeeter, Billy whipped out his lariat—that ol' twelve-foot rattler he always kept coiled around his shoulder—and he lasso'd that gal on the spot. Soon as he had her landed, he looked her right in the eye and said: "Woman, I want you to marry me."

Slue-Foot looked right back at ol' Billy, eyeball-to-eyeball. She already had it in mind to ask him the same thing—Sue like a man of action—but seein' as how he'd beat her to the draw, she thought she might as well let Bill take the blame or credit, whichever way things worked out. And while she was thinkin' on the matter, Billy seen somethin' in that woman's eyes he *never* had seen before.

Sue's eyes was purty, all right—as purty as Texas itself; but more'n that, they was changeable—jist like the West Texas weather. First time he looked, Bill seen Sue's eyes was as black as the good rich soil of East Texas—leastways, that's how Billy told it later on, bein' hisself right much of a poet, like most cowboys is. But then Bill blinked and looked agin, and this time Sue's eyes was brown, like sweet ripe acorns that the deers loves so much to eat in the fall of the year. Next time he blinked, they was as dark and everlastin' green as the leaves on a liveoak. Next time he blinked, Sue's eyes had turned blue—as blue as bluebonnets in the Hill-Country springtime. Next time he blinked, her eyes was vi'let, like the evein' sunset sky gits to be out' over the Big Bend country. Next time he

**SHE TAKEN OFF HER BUFFALO BOOTS AND COMBED HER HAIR AND EVERYTHING, AND SHE EVEN MAILED ORDERED HER ONE OF THEM PURTY, WHITE WEDDIN' DRESSES FROM THE SEARS 'N' ROEBUCK CATALOGUE. SUE'S GIT-UP HAD ONE OF THEM E-NORMOUS BUSTLES IN THE BE-HIND—MY LANDS A-LIVIN', BUT THAT WOMAN DID LOOK FINE! SUE LOOKED AS FINE AS FROG HAIRS.**

blinked, Sue's eyes had turned black again—black as a cyclone funnel in the Panhandle—and Sue was sayin', "Why not!" That's when Bill knowd fer shur that he was in love.

Wastin' no time, Slue-Foot and Bill high-tailed it back up to Pecos to git hitched. Sue got all fancied up: She taken off her buffalo boots and combed her hair and ever'thing, and she even mailed-ordered her one of them purty, white weddin' dresses from the Sears 'n' Roebuck catalogue. Sue's git-up had one of them e-normous bustles in the be-hind—my lands a-livin', but that woman did look fine! Sue looked as fine as frog hairs.

Judge Roy Bean come over from Langtry, bringin' some of that "law west of the Pecos" with him, and he tied the knot good 'n' tight 'n' proper. All of Billy's ol' rustlin' buddies and cowpoke sidekicks was there, includin' Curly Joe, Bill's head honcho on his southmost spread.

Now, ol' Joe was almost as famous a liar as Pecos Bill hisself, if that be possible; and after the weddin', he was a-tellin' the tale—and Pecos Bill was a-whoopin' it up and enjoyin' the yarn way too much—that ever'body always tells at weddin's. It was the one about how the bride and groom was headed home fer the first time, ridin' in their buckboard behind the grooms' best mare. They come to a creek that needed crossin' and the mare went and stumbled as she was climbin' up the other side.

"And then," said Joe, "the bridegroom climbed down offa the buckboard an' went around in front of the filly's head, and he looked at her, and he said: 'That's onc't!'" Then he got back up on the driver's seat, and they drove on."

Pecos Bill, he jist hee-hawed when Joey said that, 'cause Billy already knowd what was comin' at the end of the story.

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The way Curly Joe told it, when they come to another crossin', and shur 'nough the ol' gal stumbled and fell agin, that hombre got down outa that buckboard and went around in front of that mare's head agin, and he looked at her, and he said: "That's twic't!"

Pecos Bill, he nearly strangled hisself a-laughin' that time, a-laughin' and a-slappin' his leg.

Then, when the bride and groom come to the last creek to cross, and their cabin was in sight, the pore ol' tired-out ol' mare stumbled and fell fer the last time. Curly Joe said that the groom jumped down from the buckboard and went around in front of the mare's head and he looked at her, and he said: "That's three times!" Then, he drew his shootin iron and killt her dead.

Pecos Bill laughed so hard, he got the hickups — he'd laugh a lot, and hickup some more; laugh and hick and laugh and hick — he was doin' nip-ups, laughin' and hickin' so hard, and makin' sech a commotion that he raised a pow'rful cloud of dust all over the cow-lot where the weddin' was.

Then, Curly Joe finished the yarn: "And that's when the bride commenced to ralin' on the groom. She yelled at him like a pack of Comancheros a-fixin' to scalp the whole danged Union Army: 'What is the matter with you, you sorry son!' she hollered. That was yore best mare! The house is jist up yonder on the hill, no more'n a quarter-mile away! Couldn't you wait at least till we was home to kill her? Now, I've got to walk in my weddin' dress! Yo're the most wasteful, good-fer-nothin', low-down, side-widin', brainless excuse fer a man I ever *did* see. You ain't got the brains God gave a goose! Why, you ain't even got gourd-guts fer brains!" And," Curly Joe went on to say, "them was the kindest words she said."

By this time, pore ol' Billy couldn't hardly draw breath. He had near laughed hisself to death.

"Then," said Curly Joe, "the groom walked around in front of his squawkin' bride, and he looked at her, and he siad: 'That's onc't!'

Judge Roy Bean laughed, and the rustlers all laughed, and the cowpokes all laughed, and Curly Joe laughed at his own joke, and Pecos Bill commenced to laughin' agin so hard, it jist skeered the hickups right out of 'im. And to tell the honest truth, it was better'n that: Bill laughed so hard, it cured 'im of the hickups onc't and fer all — that boy never did ever hickup agin fer the rest of his natural life! The onliest person that wadn't laughin' was Slue-Foot Sue.

Curly Joe's yarn had made Slue-Foot so mad, her eyes was a-poppin' through their changes fastern' a string of 4th-of-July firecrackers. Right there on the spot, Sue taken the idee to teach Billy his manners — somethin' that she would be workin' on fer a considerable time to come. Sue jumped up quick as a jackrabbit, leaped up on the Widdermaker's back, and commenced to ridin' him like she was bustin' that bronco fer the first time.

Widdermaker, as I guess ever'body already knows, was Pecos Bill's prize horse — the meanest, the orneriest, the killin'est cayuse in all of West Texas. Bill hisself had raised 'im from a colt, feedin' that man-eater on special fodder made up of bobwire, nitroglycerine, and prickly pears. Ever' last man — 'cept Bill, o'course — who'd ever tried to ride on 'im had come to a early grave. That devilhorse had turned the wife of ever'one of them sorry suckers into a widd'erwoman, and that's how come they call 'im the Widdermaker, I guess. Nosiree, weren't nobody but Bill allowed

to ride that horse.

Now, Sue was a famous rider herself, but the Widdermaker had more ways of pitchin' and buckin' than Carter had liver pills. Bill's pony went through all his paces, with Sue a-hangin' on as tight as a hungry tick buried up where the sun don't shine. That danged hoss done the end-to-end, the back-flip, the sunfish, the back-throw, and some considerable side-windin'. He plowed up the ground and kicked a hole in the sky; he drove his forelegs like piles into the solid rock, and he made the earth quake. And pore ol' Sue, what with wearin' her weddin' dress and a bustle and all, and her dainty feet without no buffalo-hide boots on, she jist weren't dressed right for this kind of gut-twistin' work.

In about no time a-tall, and without a whole lot of trouble, that murderizin' cow-pony had throwed that gal clean off, and when she hit the ground, she landed on her bustle. And when she done that, Sue's steel-wire bird cage, that ladies used to strap on their rear ends to make 'em pooch out and look purty, started doin' its work. Ever'time Sue would hit the ground, that bustle would spring her back up into the sky a little bit higher. Up and down, and higher 'n' higher she bounced, till she was bouncin' clean outa sight.

Down on the ground, ol' Billy was gittin' plumb worried 'bout his bride, even if she had rode the killer horse. So he flung his ropin' rope up after her, figgerin' that if he'd lasso'ed her onc't before, he could do it agin. This time, howsomever, he didn't use the rattlesnake rope; instead, he used his good ol' long ol' ropin' rope, the one that he could rope a whole herd of longhorns with at a whack. But it wern't no good! Amazin' to tell, but Billy missed, and instead of snarin' the woman, his rope snagged on the low horn of the new moon.

Now, the way you may've heard it before, the story purty much ends right there. But that's why we called this-'ere book the *true* story of Pecos Bill and Slue-Foot Sue. I'm fixin' to tell you how it *really* was. Accordin' to the way some liars tells this yarn, Sue jist kept on a-bouncin' fer three or four days and nights. Some folks—them as don't keers what they says—'ll tell you that she bounced fer ten days, till she landed on the moon. Then—as the highly unlikely story goes—Billy finally took pity on Sue and had to shoot her down to keep her from starvin' to death. And after that—or so the prevaricators tells it—Billy was so tore up over Sue's untimely demise, he wouldn't have nothin' to do with a woman fer more'n two weeks.

But that last part right there ain't nothin' but pure-dee windy, without no grain of gospel in it. Pecos Bill in his whole life never ever did leave the ladies alone fer no two weeks at a stretch, and anybody that ever says that he did—I'm here to tell you—ain't nothin' but a golliderned flat-footed slack-mouthed liar without no respect fer history, and the truth ain't in him!

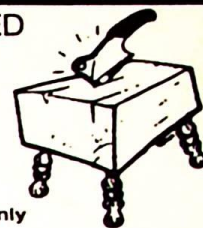
Furthermore, Sue didn't land on no moon, neither—leastways not on the way up. And in the last place, Billy never did do no sech a thing as shoot Slue-Foot Sue. He may've shot *at* her onc't or twice a few times later on, but not on their weddin' day; and he never *did* hit her, nor even intended to.

The true story of what happened to Slue-Foot is this: Sue jist kept on a-keepin' on, like she always done, a-bouncin' higher and higher above this goodly promontory, the earth; and whilom she were at it, Slue-Foot Sue was havin' herself one wonderful time.

Continued on page 37

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# A COWHAND FROM CLICK

by CORA MELTON CROSS

**Talk about speed! When John gave that order out, old Ab, the only one left of the five Blocker brothers, who was foreman of the lead herd, chopped that fence and put those cattle across the line too quick to talk about. There wasn't a shot fired, and I rather think most of us were terribly disappointed, for we sort of felt like feeding a good lose of bullets to that bunch of trouble makers.**



## Trails 3,200 head to North Platte

"In the spring of 1884, I left Tom Green County and that fine Concho River water, the best anywhere in the cow country, chiefly because it had its source in the swiftly flowing springs at the head of Spring and Dove Creeks.

"John Blocker trailed a number of herds to Nebraska that year, stopping on the Platte River to shape them into herds of given numbers and kinds, for delivery on various contracts. There's no argument about John Blocker being the most capable executive in the cattle business that Texas or any other State ever produced. He was far-sighted, cool, deliberate and square to a fault. He calculated all his ventures and deals to a gnat's heel from the beginning to the outcome, and mighty few men outstripped him on the range or trail. He made millions of dollars on Longhorn cattle, and he considered every misfortune, accident or trouble that befell his boys as his own. Nobody ever lost anything working for Johnny Blocker, and when drought and low-priced cattle ruined him financially, he was good a loser as he had been a gainer. He went to Mexico and soon got back into the millionaire class, for no other reason that he was a good judge of cattle and a past master in handling them. But..." here Smith stopped and, slowly sharpening a lead pencil in lieu of a stick to whittle, sat silently thinking several moments before he continued with, "It sorter seems like that when a fellow begins slipping he goes to the bottom, despite everything he does to keep his hold. I saw a fine example of what I'm trying to say on the recreation grounds at a school the other day. A youngster had climbed to the top of one of these slides, you know, covered with zinc or tin, or something like that, and he slid down it in just about half a second. There he stood, looking long at the ladder behind him. Up which he must creep to have his fun over again, and presently he started up the front of it on his knees, with hands gripping the sides. Well, he'd get a little way up and back he'd come over and over again. He tried fifty times or

more, I'm sure, before he gave it up as a bad job and walked off the playground, throwing pebbles at the slide because he couldn't make a go of it. Well, John Blocker never threw rocks at anybody, nor gave them a kick downhill. He took his medicine like the man he was, and not a cattleman, cowboy or ranch hand in the State who did not grieve when he died. But, there; I've stampered worse than a herd of old longhorns.

## Faulty Rope and a Close Call

"I worked there on the North Platte with Blocker's outfit until we had shaped up and shoved out a number of herds to order. Several of them went to Montana, and it was while I was working with the last one scheduled for that Territory that I pretty nearly read my death warrant, all because of weak place in a rope, a smart-alecky calf and a cowboy saddle.

"We were roping calves to brand and I had dropped the loop over a big, strong fellow, when just as my horse, we trained as they make 'em set back on his hind feet to hold him steady, the rope broke, he fell backward, the calf galloped away and I came to earth with the horn of my saddle handing me a great big wallop in the pit of my stomach. When I came to my senses the boss was standing by me, yelling 'Henry, are you hurt?' I said, 'No, not a bit; but I sort of hurt my eye I think, and put a slight crimp in my stomach; that's all.' He helped me on my horse and said 'I'll go with you to camp and bathe your eye.' The end of the rope struck me in the eye, full force, and it was hurting like blazes as I rode into camp. The cook said, 'Hurt Mr. Henry?' I said 'No' again, adding, 'But my eye is.' The boss spoke up quick-like 'Get me a pan of water quick as you can.' The cook went for it, and when he brought it I started bathing my face and eye. Suddenly, I felt my mouth full of something, and when I opened it to spit I found

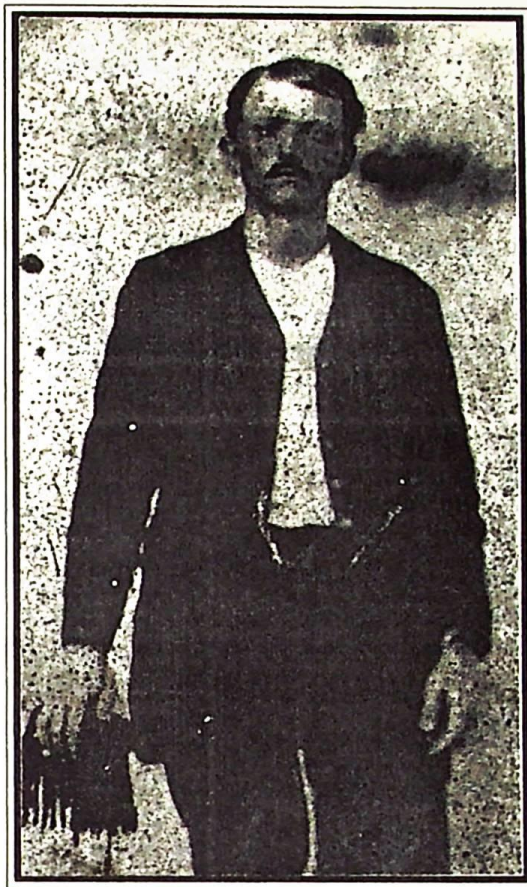


it was full of blood. It ran all over me and down into the pan of water before I realized that it was a hemorrhage, caused by the lick from my saddle horn in my stomach. I laid in that cow camp all winter. Fifteen days of the time I prayed to die, for I never imagined there could be such pain as I endured from the inflammation in my eye. Not a doctor within 150 miles, no remedies, no anything for relief but hot and cold water applications and a bunch of real men, who said little, but meant a lot. Their gruff, 'How do you feel now, Henry?' or 'Eye any better, old scout?' when they rode into camp, helped me mightily, for it made me realize that there was nothing they wouldn't have done if they had been able. I understood they wanted to help and they knew that I did. And that's what counts—sympathetic understanding. When I got so I could open that eye—that is, raise the lid—the sight was gone. Seems like men could stand more then that they can now. I reckon it was because they had to. But it surely told on me, the pain and loss of sleep. I weighed 175 pounds when I lined up for the drive, and I pulled the scales down to an even thirty-five pounds less when I got to where I could ride back home, a year later.

### **Sooners Block Passage of Herds.**

"The Spring following my return to Llano, John Blocker sent to know whether I intended to work the roundups again and if I did, he wanted me to help his outfit gather another herd and go through with it. Well, as the boys said, I was 'slightly disfigured, but still in the ring' and realizing that one good eye was a whole lot better than none, I lined up and was soon going good as ever. Everything started off fine on that trail drive. As well as I can remember, Blocker had seven herds moving at one time, and there wasn't a discordant note until we hit No Man's Land, the strip that caused more trouble to cattlemen for a while than all the Indians and 'rustlers' put together. It lost money for Blocker at the rate of \$1,000 a day for I don't know how long, but as long as the men who built dividing fences of barbed wire to keep Texas herds from passing could make them stick. When they stretched that wire they had fully decided to save the grass it enclosed for northern cattle, so the price would be increased to where it was for Texas longhorns; and to that end they rode a steady patrol up and down the line to prevent wire cutting. When we got there and took in the situation we rode our side of the fence just as zealously.

"Every man of the Blocker outfit was for cutting their way through or shooting it, rather, for that is what it would have amounted to. But John, who was losing a lot of money, as I just said, refused to listen to such a thing. 'No, boys,' he said, 'I appreciate your wanting to help me, but that would only make bad matters worse and it might injure the other fellow. I never have taken advantage



of anybody and I am not going to begin now. Uncle Sam will have to settle this thing as he thinks best.' He wired Washington authorities for instruction as to what he should do. Seemed like he never would get a reply to that message, but he did, and it was as sweet (to us) as it was short. It read, 'Cut fence and pass cattle; sending troops for protection.' Talk about speed! When John gave that order out, old Ab, the only one left of the five Blocker brothers, who was foreman of the lead herd, chopped that fence and put those cattle across the line too quick to talk about. There wasn't a shot fired, and I rather think most of us were terribly disappointed, for we sort of felt like feeding a good dose of bullets to that bunch of trouble makers. As it was we got our consolation in looking back as far as we could see at the thousands of cattle, lines of chuck wagons and cowboys headed at top speed toward that opening. Suddenly, a big, commanding looking sort of man astride a splendid black horse, with a Winchester strapped to his saddle, and a six-shooter and cartridge belt around his waist, rode up to John Blocker and said, 'I

am looking for John Blocker; where is he?' "Well,' Blocker answered, 'you have found the man you're hunting, that happens to be my name. What do you want?' The fellow began talking, sort of swaying back and forth in his saddle to accent what he was saying. And while none of us were close enough to hear the conversation we were not so far away that we couldn't have got to John in case he needed help to handle the situation. He answered John's 'What do you want?' with 'Turn those cattle back right now. If you don't you won't live to get through this pasture.' Blocker looked him straight in the eye and said without batting a wink, 'I have orders from Washington to go through and I am going. If I don't live to do it some of my boys will.' With that he turned toward the herd, whoop-la-ed the cattle, motioned to his hands and rode off. The would-be bad man turned and without a word in reply went the opposite direction. Well, the long and short of it was all of the seven herds went through the forbidden grounds like a blue streak, without molestation. But every boy on that trail had his eyes peeled for trouble from the time we left that line till we were out of sight of the strip. The general supposition was that the onery hounds would try to stampede all the herds at night and get away with the biggest part of the cattle in the run. Orders were to drive hard until 11 o'clock that night, rest two hours, up and at it again till near daybreak another short rest and on to the open trail and good, easy breath, for all concerned. As we got to the several gates en route, we found they had been swung wide open, supposedly for our benefit according to orders from the Washington higher-ups. Anyhow, whether that was the reason, or not, we didn't see a soul excepting Blocker's men till we hit the Chisholm trail again.

**CONTINUED NEXT MONTH**

OCTOBER 1996 17

# THE RANCH HOUSE DEMON & THE DOUBLE CROSS

by A GHOST WRITER

## THE DELIVERANCE SERVICE BEGINS...

As the Catholics remained outside in the yard they prayed the rosary fervently with the Husband and the Wife. A few of the Protestants decided they too would stay outside. Finally, two Protestant couples and a single man, began their ritual. They proclaimed the front porch as a "holy place" and claimed it "...as part of the New Jerusalem under the scepter of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that all unholiness not pleasing to God the Father, the Son Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, leave this place at once!" They all then exclaimed "Amen!" They continued, repeating the procedure in the living room, the kitchen, the rumpus room, the children's room, and then the master bedroom.

Just after their "Amen!" in the Husband -and- Wife's bedroom, those on the outside heard a loud scream — from a man. Concerned, the ranch house owner wanted to go in to see what happened. But the Deacon admonished him to stay put and for the group outside to continue praying the rosary. Then from inside the house there was a long, complete silence that alarmed and puzzled those on the outside.

Those who had gone into the house began coming out, the wife of one couple, we will call Susan, was helping her husband, who we will call Dave. "What happened in there?" The Deacon asked. Susan answered that there was indeed a demon in there but they felt that it had gone elsewhere. "What was the scream?" The Deacon added.

"Dave was hit with something. When he was struck he fell to the floor clutching his chest. We unbuttoned his shirt. We were startled to see what looked like a burn, or rather a brand, in the shape of two side by side crosses, or a double cross, of about two or three inches long. I thought he had a heart attack; but soon Dave was able to get up." Susan explained.

One by one each of the twelve or so members of the prayer group took a close look at Dave's "crosses" on his chest. It appeared to be a welt and that had come from within, such as a large fever blister. Little by little, perhaps as it cooled, the burn turned darker as if to begin to scab. Dave began feeling better and insisted he had taken the fall or "the hit" because he was the one who spoke the prayers; and that made him the target.

The Deacon responded scratching his head, "Perhaps."

The Husband and the Wife were eager to go into the house. When they returned they were smiling, "Something has definitely happened here tonight. It's different in there! And look, I picked up the cat before we went in and carried the cat with us as we went

through each room. When we got to our bedroom the cat was completely calm as we went through it," the Wife declared.

The deacon, saying it was getting late, led in a closing prayer that included "only time would tell if what had taken place would result in something good." Prayers of thanksgiving were said; as well as a prayer for Dave's healing, too. As they bid goodnight to each other a number of the members told Dave he should go to the doctor first thing the next day to get that "burn" looked at. He said he would. Everyone left the ranch together so that only one would have to open the five gates and only one would have to close them. The Husband and the Wife waved them all goodbye with happy smiles; which they returned with gracious smiles--but it was more than obvious from their expressions that perhaps the night's events were not the end of it all.

The last to leave was the deacon, who agreed to close all the gates. Just before getting into his car he shook hands with the couple and added, "God knows what is in our hearts. You have rededicated yourselves to Christ and that means following Him with all your heart. One thing I've studied about the deliverance stories in the Bible, is that if you go back on your word, the demon has every right to return to the home he had found habitable and ungodly. The scripture warns that when that happens he will bring many more demons with him. The church is the church only to help you be full of the grace that the Lord Jesus brings."

"Don't worry, deacon, this is the first day and the best day of the rest of our lives!" the Husband promised. "Gut'n Nacht and Aufwiedersehen!" they said to each other... "Good night and see you again!"

Half a week later the deacon gets a call from the Wife out at their ranch. "We have great news, deacon! We're getting along real well, and the house is always filled with fresh, clean air. It was always so warm and stuffy before. We haven't gotten on each other's nerves since you all came out here. The children are studying better at school. And the pets are going in and out of every room. Do you think we could all come into town for your prayer meeting tomorrow night?"

"Of course!" The deacon responded. "Just keep happy, say your prayers, and we'll see you tomorrow night" the deacon said prior to hanging up and thinking, "Amazing, praise the Lord!"

## AT THE PRAYER MEETING...AND AFTER.....

The Husband and the Wife, along with their kids, were the first to arrive for the Interfaith Prayer Meeting in Friedrichsburg. Those

members who had not been out to the ranch, and those who had, were all there. No one wanted to miss hearing from the couple who lived at the "Five Gate Ranch". But, everyone did a double take when Dave and Susan arrived, a bit late. Dave's leg was in a cast.

Dave explained that he had broken his leg after he had saddled his horse. He tried to get on the horse, but was pitched right off. The horse would have nothing to do with him. He would have to wear the cast on his leg for a number of months. Dave and Sue lived on a small farm just outside the Friedrichsburg city limits.

During the prayer meeting the Husband and the Wife attested to what they were convinced was God's power and love at work in their lives, blessing them, their children, and their ranch: "We feel as if we are babies less than a week old as newly born Christians--starting all over again, this time the Lord's way." The Wife said within all sincerity. Everyone responded with long drawn out "Amens" and "Alleluias." The gathering ended with a special laying on of hands over Dave's bandaged leg in hope that he would recover soon.

In the following weeks the Deacon was happy to greet the ranch couple after the Lord's Day liturgies. The couple were like honeymooners and were eager to share new developments. They had planted a garden, together; were painting the ranchhouse inside and out; and caused the deacon to get a bit red in the face by saying their sex-life was now fantastic—and wonderfully frequent.

As each member of the prayer group went on with their lives, everything seemed to be going along smoothly. The Deacon was very pleased that the ranch couple were so happy, attending mass, and everyone attending Sunday School. The prayer group, too, was growing in numbers. But it was awkward when the new members wanted to see Dave's chest and his permanent "double cross" scar. The more prudent members finally insisted that if anyone wanted to see Dave's chest they would have to do so in another room, which they henceforth did as a group.

All this kept triggering the deacon's analytical thoughts--"double-cross, a brand....what was Dave branded for? Was Dave the new habitat of the Fallen Angel, the demon?" But, if Dave was possessed, surely he would not be allowed by the "strongman" spirit to use the holy name of Jesus, or to pray, or sing holy hymns. Dave was fine singer and guitarist. Rather, he was probably being oppressed by the demon. Perhaps there was a part of Dave that was still covered by the grace of God.

The deacon made a point to discuss the matter with a priest friend in San Antonio during a church meeting, one he deeply respected for personal holiness, a noted biblical scholar, and who was active in the Charismatic Renewal. The priest's answer was that probably at God's own proper time, the meanings of all these events would become clear to whomever in the prayer group the Holy Spirit had given the gift of discernment so that God's will for the group, or others, would unfold.

The priest's wisdom proved correct. A member of the prayer group telephoned the deacon to tell him that Dave and his wife Susan were having serious difficulties getting along. Dave had also just been fired from his job. The deacon, wanting to help in whatever way he could, drove out to Dave and Susan's farm. He was welcomed warmly.

What occurred there completely flabbergasted the deacon.

Continued on page 30

## TRAVEL AND OUTDOOR OUTFITTERS SINCE 1970

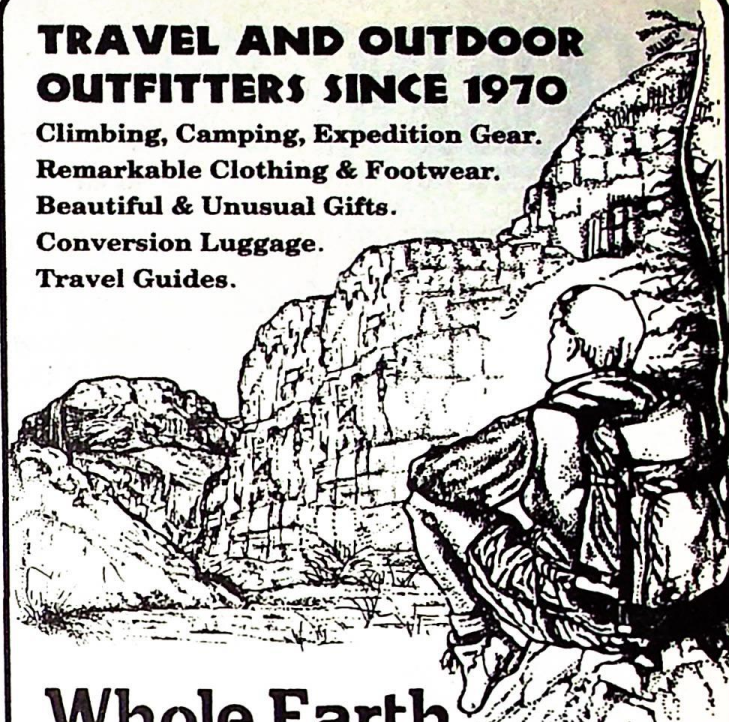
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# LOOKING FOR LEMON SQUEEZER

by IRA KENNEDY



**Call me crazy. I actually decided to take a road trip looking for places that have disappeared—Algerita, China, Wallace Spring, Colony, Sloan and others. These were, around the turn of the century, vital communities where writers for the *San Saba County News* reported the goings-on of their friends and relations. Today, most of these places don't even show up on maps. Talk about ghost towns. You'd be hard-pressed to find buildings in most of them. Well, the truth is, the turn-around destination for the trip, Richland Springs, nearly qualifies as a ghost town. But more on that later.**

**S**o why look for disappeared places? The notion began while reading the old *San Saba County News*. The humorous and esoteric pen names of several "scribes" aroused my curiosity. I knew I might not learn who they really were, but I could visit where they once called home, get the lay of the land, and maybe stumble on a story. I had no clue as to why they tried to conceal their identities—I doubt if that was the point at all. I think they were just having some fun.

There was Santa Claus and Regulus from Bend, Observer from Harkeyville, Frontier wrote "Cherokee Locals", Cherokee

Chief also penned articles from Cherokee, Gimlet provided articles on Lower Cherokee, Uncle Jim hailed from Richland Springs, Tanta Bogus wrote for Latham, XXX was the scribe from Velma, Omnes from Algerita, Bert Bleak from China, Eureka covered the community of Colony, Farmer Boy was from Wallace Creek, and Lemon Squeezer from Sloan.

Our favorite here at the office is Lemon Squeezer, whose real name was Jym Sloan. Patsy Marschall Stewart, great granddaughter of John O. Meusebach—founding father of Fredericksburg—was kind enough to inform us of his true name. Right behind Lemon Squeezer in our esteem is Frontier. Seems



the two of them carried on a regular correspondence through their columns (see "The Chicken Eating Horse" on page 8).

The Intrepid Day Tripper and I made our plans, studied maps and early one September, Sunday morning we headed out from Llano. Ms. Intrepid was driving while I navigated. We had a copy of the Shearer map-book, *Roads of Texas*, which is indispensable for such an adventure.

From Llano we drove up Hwy 16 to Cherokee. A good bit smaller than Richland Springs, it seems less like a ghost town, although there are plenty of empty store fronts which hint of better times, now long past.

Before taking the trip I asked several old-timers in the Llano area regarding the whereabouts of Lower Cherokee. They all said they never knew Cherokee was ever big enough to have an upper and a lower. While poking around in the Llano library I discovered the answer. Lower Cherokee was considered to be the communities of Chappel and Bend, Both on Cherokee Creek downstream from Cherokee proper.

The town is named in remembrance of the Texas Cherokee who, after they were expelled from their lands in east Texas, were attacked near the site of this present community by an army of Texans on Christmas Day, 1839. [See *Enchanted Rock Magazine*, February, 1996.]

There was once a college in Cherokee, commonly called the Cherokee College—which was *the* seat of higher learning in its day. According to *The Gray School and The Cherokee College*, by Frank S. Gray, the school was established as West Texas Normal and Business College by Professor Francis Marion Behrms in 1889; the professor sold the school to Southwestern University in Georgetown in 1901 after which it became Cherokee Junior College. The state historical marker, however, indicates the school was opened in 1895—it "closed in 1903 and the buildings were used by Cherokee Junior College. After 1921 by public schools. In 1945 fire destroyed the old main hall."

History is filled with discrepancies, and these won't be settled here. What is instructive is that this piece of central Texas, just a century ago, was the west Texas frontier.

Today, if you're driving through, about the only places you are likely to turn to are the local gas station, and across the street, the general store.

**Not far ahead we came upon a building rapidly giving itself over to weather and ruin. Like a cadaver opened up to study anatomy, the old frame place peeled away, through time, leaving tin in places on the roof. Exposed were the deeper layers of shingles, beams, and walls. The windows had become wide open wind holes. Scattered around its base were fallen pieces of house where boards warped toward the sun like old bone ribs.**

We stopped to snap a few pictures and headed on to San Saba and the Cactus Cafe for a breakfast of eggs over easy and, hopefully, directions to those places now long gone.

While Ms. Intrepid busied herself decoding the Sunday *Los Angeles Times* crossword puzzle, I surveyed the restaurant looking for the oldest rancher in the room. As fortune would have it, at a nearby table, five folks sat around over morning coffee. Among them was an amiable looking old feller, a kinda clean shaven Santa Claus in a cowboy hat.

I introduced myself, passed around copies of the magazine and then told of my mission to locate all but forgotten communities in the area. Again fortune smiled. One of the places that had vanished from the map was Wallace Creek. Well, not the creek, but the community. It so happened I was talking to Kenneth Wallace and he told me what I had already suspected. There's nothing there anymore, except the creek, and its had a hard summer.

"China?" he responded to my next question. "There's nothing much there anymore. But if you'll turn back toward town and turn left



**As we drove on we found, at Algerita, another cemetery to mark the community and another structure gradually sinking back into the earth. Great dead trees lined up alongside the place like buzzards, waiting. I imagined a time when the trees were full and green, the house alive with the laughter of children playing...**

where they're doing construction, go down to the end of that road and turn left, before long you'll come up on an old suspension bridge that crosses China Creek."

Back on the road we followed Kenneth's directions, turning left on Fentress Street. From there I followed every turn in the road indicated on the map.

The morning had started out with a clear sky, pale in the morning light. I had been hoping for a few clouds, for photography's sake.

"Clouds on command," Ms. Intrepid said.

I looked up from the map, and sure enough, cumulus clouds were building up in the west. Behind us the caliche road billowed a powdery mass as we approached a dense cluster of pecan trees. What else should we have expected near San Saba— The Pecan Capitol of the World? Hidden in the heavily leafed branches was the structure of the old suspension bridge over China Creek. The bridge was in fine shape. We crossed and parked immediately to the left where many a vehicle had parked before. The usual "No Dumping" sign hung on the roadside fence. After stopping for a horizontal and a vertical picture of the bridge I turned back to the car and noticed, on the

ground, the scattered feathers of a dove. I bent down, picked up its blue-grey right wing and returned to the car.

"Look!"

"That," Ms. Intrepid said with a smile and serious eyes, "is staying out there."

"Look," I replied, not even trying to plead my lost cause, "I'll put it in the glove compartment and take out as soon as we get back."

I knew she'd never believe that, so without waiting for a reply I returned it to the earth, a little closer to the underbrush. Back in the car, I noted on the map that a cemetery lay just up the road, so we targeted it for our next stop.

Not far ahead we came upon a building rapidly giving itself over to weather and ruin. Like a cadaver opened up to study anatomy, the old frame place peeled away, through time, leaving tin in places on the roof. Exposed were the deeper layers of shingles, beams, and walls. The windows had become wide open wind holes. Scattered around its base were fallen pieces of house where boards warped toward the sun like old bone ribs.

I know, I could have passed by this description because there is picture of the place in this article. And I've been *told* a picture is worth a thousand words. But if pictures were all that mattered we'd be photographers to the person and we'd toss pictures around instead of words. And there'd be no call for poets. Anyway, the experience put me in just the right mood for the cemetery just ahead.

My reaction to cemeteries may seem strange to some but, despite the common morbid reaction to such places, I find them more like books you can walk through. Or sculpture gardens. Both actually. Also, as a historian, they help fix in my mind names and places, and provide the spatial relationship between communities that are otherwise only dots on a map. In this particular case, the cemetery is the last vestige of a place in Texas called China.

I don't know why it is, but most folks visiting a cemetery where they have no relations, usually look for the oldest marker in the place. I do. I'm not certain which one it was, but B. F. Smith, born in 1823 and died in 1870, must have been pretty close.



**A**s we drove on we found, at Algerita, another cemetery to mark the community and another structure gradually sinking back into the earth. Great dead trees lined up alongside the place like buzzards, waiting. I imagined a time when the trees were full and green, the house alive with the laughter of children playing, and other sounds common to ranch life. Who were the last to live here? When did they leave, and why? And why does it stand empty today?

Leaving Algerita, or where Algerita used to be, we headed for Richland Springs, carefully following every turn of the map.

"There's a paved road just ahead," I told Ms. Intrepid just as we made our next turn. Sure enough, there it was. A paved road, in every way worse than the dirt roads we had been traveling. Here the chug-holes had hard, sharp edges and we longed for the rubberboard roads we had just left.

At high noon we arrived at Richland Springs. Now here is a town begging for new life. The streets were devoid of traffic. The storefronts were empty. The old bank on the corner, with its magnificent stone edifice, had a sign soliciting funds for renovation. Even the city hall was tucked away in a building that had seen better days and far more use. There must be more to Richland Springs that we missed. I must say that, for myself, I found the downtown area elegant in its abandoned state. Some of those Hollywood types ought to check it out for a location.

On our way out of town on Hwy 190 we stopped for gas and a soda next to "El Ranchito—Authentic Homestyle Mexican Cooking." I found an RC Cola there and as we had gone down the road a piece I commented to Ms. Intrepid that it didn't taste as good as I remembered.

"You should have gotten a Moon Pie."

"You're right. And I bet they had them back there too." The soda tasted better just thinking about the Moon Pie, which isn't a pie at all, but a chocolate, graham cracker, and sugar-cream sandwich.

As I get older—I'm fifty-five—I find myself wanting to revisit the places and things of the past. And that's what I found so appealing about Richland Springs. It wasn't all done over in sheet metal and plastic signs, fast food restaurants (isn't that what you call an oxymoron?), and chain stores. I'd like to think that

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the place is abandoned, just holding out for something better.

After Richland Springs we turned off 190, south on County Road 137 toward Sloan. On the way we stopped on the other side of a low water crossing at Brady Creek. This "creek" had more water flowing in its veins than most rivers in Texas. Sycamore trees hung thick over the creek forming a leafy tunnel. It was another occasion to stop for photos (horizontal are the only kind that work here) before continuing on toward Sloan, the home of our favorite correspondent for the old *San Saba News*—Lemon Squeezer, a.k.a. Jym Sloan.

On your standard Texas highway map you'll find Algerita marked, even though there is nothing there. The same holds true for Sloan. These places don't have anything that resembles a post office, gas station, or even a yield sign. But they have a dot and their name on the map. In fact, looking on the standard highway map (not the Shearer map which notes everything) I notice several "communities" that have gone ghost towns one better by disappearing altogether. But they still haunt major highway maps.

Near the intersection where the map indicated Sloan we found another derelict building, the bottom half stone, the top



**On the way we stopped on the other side of a low water crossing at Brady Creek. This "creek" had more water flowing in its veins than most rivers in Texas. Sycamore trees hung thick over the creek forming a leafy tunnel.**

wood frame. It was a handsome, solid structure now long abandoned. After I took another picture conforming with the theme that had developed along the way—that of places dilapidated and going to ruin—we headed down a shortcut to Hwy 71. Anytime I use the word "shortcut" Ms. Intrepid prepares herself for a long haul. Anyway, somewhere near Sloan I took my eyes off of the Shearer map, and we missed a turn, or whatever. Anyway, we found ourselves way out yonder, (or, "ouchonder" as it commonly pronounced) and paused in the road, while I looked down at the map, up the dirt road, back at the map, back down the dirt road, and finally laid the map aside.

"There's enough caliche on this car to pave a road," Ms. Intrepid mused as she scanned the powdery white hood of her once-black car.

"We're lost," I smiled.

"This road must end up somewhere," Ms. Intrepid said without the least bit of concern. "Let's find out where."

"You never know where you are until you're lost," I said quoting myself once again. One thing about Ms. Intrepid, she's no slacker when it comes to adventure. And adventure begins where the certainty flies out the window.

Settling into the occasion, we found ourselves driving along

a beautiful stretch of road high in the hills somewhere southwest of San Saba. Toward the south, (I think) clouds grew in immense proportions toward the sky. Then, just up the road we saw a hunting cabin with several pickups parked out front.

A sign on the building read "WE AINT DIALIN' 911". A pistol hung from a peg on the warning. The door stood wide open and we heard the sounds of a T.V. and conversation from inside.

"Let's ask for directions here," Ms. Intrepid said, earning all rights to her name. With that, we were out of the car and walking through the open door.

"Knock, knock," I said to the dark room waiting for my eyes to adjust. Before we completed our introductions cold beers were pressed in our hands, and we sat on stools by a bar in the corner. We told them what we were up to and why. I passed around copies of the magazine, pleased to know one of the bunch whose name I soon learned was Wade had read and liked the magazine. And he told the others so.

**T**he men in the room were four in all. Friends and neighbors who gathered to watch the football game together. And there were more on the way. There was Curly, Larry, Wade, and Sloan. Periodically, the womenfolk would show up with coolers of beer and more errands to run.

"Sloan?" I asked the man on the seat that once was in a car.

"Sloan Pool." he responded.

"Are you any kin to Jym Sloan who wrote for the *San Saba News* back in the 1890's. He called himself Lemon Squeezer?"

"That was my uncle."

At that moment I realized, quick as lightning, that I had left the tape recorder, pen and pad back in the car. But as I looked down, just beside my beer on the counter, I saw a clean pad, just like a reporter's, and a pen. I picked them up and started making notes.

It seems, besides a ranch, Uncle Jym also left behind a reputation as a maverick.

"He started drinking when he was twelve," Sloan remarked "He lived to be ninety-nine. He would'a lived longer if he hadn't



quit. Uncle Jym, he couldn't hear nothin' and he wrote everything down. Just opposite of what it's sposed to be. He couldn't hear nothin! And then his boy took over, and he couldn't hear nothin either. He was Lemon Squeezer II. Tom Sloan, he's been dead about two or three years.

"That two story house down there—there used to be a two story house where that old barn is—that's where all of them was born. All of the Sloans."

As I listened I learned that the old stone and wood two-story building I had photographed earlier was Jym Sloan's garage. Upstairs was where the servants lived. And it was probably there where, so one story goes, Jym drove his Hudson Terraplane through a barn, knocking off both doors. Jym "Lemon Squeezer" Sloan never bothered to have the Hudson repaired. He just drove it around everywhere, doorless.

"This Sloan Ranch," Curly informed me, "fifty or a hundred years ago took in over a hundred thousand acres. It went plum from Pontotoc through this whole damn country. It was all owned by the Sloans. 'Course it's busted up, sold off, some of them died or whatever. It used to be huge. Sloan and his kids still have about twenty two thousand acres. It used to go to Pontotoc, and to Wallace Creek, and all through this country. And on the other side of the river there's still some Sloan land too. Some of the nephews own it, and a little piece in town. If you go this'a way to the next ranch right here, Bill Sloan still owns it..."

My mind was reeling at the possibility one person could actually lay claim to so much of heaven; and, as I watched Curly spreading his arms out wide to emphasize the extent of the holdings, pointing to directions that were now completely lost on me, my mind reeled some more.

"My daddy married the ranch," Sloan told me a little later, "and they lived down on Wallace Creek. I didn't see him till I was twenty-one. He was always out dancin'." Sloan smiled. And everyone laughed and agreed. Evidently daddy had a reputation



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too. "When I turned twenty-one I went to Llano. There were twenty-one bars there at the time and I made everyone that night."

It may have been in Llano where Sloan first saw his daddy. (Of course, like Sloan, I'm stretching the truth to the breaking point.) But, I figured out pretty quick— from Lemon Squeezer, to Lemon Squeezer II, to daddy and now Sloan—that pecans, season after season, never fall far from the tree.

Continued on page 39

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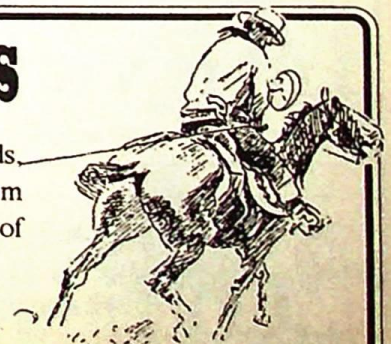
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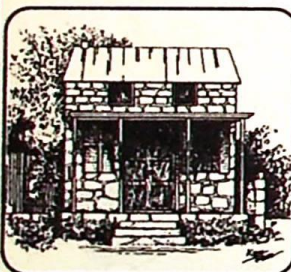
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## HILL COUNTRY DELIGHTS

by MARYBETH GRADZIEL

Even if Salado weren't such a wonderful treasure-trove of traditional Texas buildings, even if it weren't a mecca for the shop-till-you-drop, La Mansion de Salado would be reason enough to visit this historical landmark halfway between Austin and Waco off IH-35. La Mansion is no ordinary "Tex-Mex" restaurant. Their fajitas, enchiladas and rellenos are scrumptious and even the combination platters are gourmet selections. La Mansion is in the historic Tyler House with gorgeous grounds and garden, built in 1857 by Salado's first mayor. You may dine on the patio or by the waterfall overlooking the fish pond, or inside near the colorful murals and sepia photographs of Old Salado scenes and residents.

Salsa and chips are served immediately, and La Mansion is famous for its unique salsa, a mixture of freshly roasted peppers served slightly warm, so full-bodied and rich you'd swear it's a mole sauce. On a previous visit, we had enjoyed superlative fajitas and margaritas. This time we asked Ben, our favorite waiter, for entree recommendations after ordering La Mansion Queso and the Texas Yellow Rose as appetizers. Fortunately, we followed his suggestions for the pasta special and Chicken Relleno, because if we had ordered the enormous fajita plates again, we'd never had been able to waddle out the door. Both the Queso and Texas Yellow Rose could have been a meal in themselves. Indeed, the women at the next table saw our appetizers and promptly ordered theirs as lunch. The Queso, with strips of beef, mushrooms and diced fresh vegetables was smothered in melted Monterey Jack Cheese. The Texas Yellow Rose, an enormous whole Texas-grown yellow onion sliced to look like a flower in full bloom, was dipped in spicy batter and lightly fried. We loved dipping the onion segments into its accompanying fresh garlic-cilantro sauce or into the salsa.

The main courses arrived all too soon—freshly-made pasta dolloped with off-the-vine chunky tomato sauce and julienne garden-fresh vegetables. The Chicken Relleno was an artfully arranged plate of sliced chicken breast stuffed with cheese and vegetables, wrapped in bacon and served with a spicy black bean sauce and smoked mashed potatoes. We had expected something more like chilies stuffed with chicken, but this variation was a pleasant surprise.

Ben's eyes practically popped when we asked him to suggest dessert. We had struggled to do our food justice, to no avail, and were still noshing around the table. But nothing would do but Salado Wild Pecan Pie and a slice of New York Style Cheesecake, with coffee to chase off post-lunch languor. The Wild Pecan Pie is Governor Miriam "Ma" Ferguson's recipe, served slightly warm with a scoop of ice cream and drizzled with cajeta, Mexican caramel sauce. Hints of subtle flavor finally forced us

to ask the chef responsible for our fabulous feast for a few of his secrets. Movie-Star handsome Alex was happy to oblige, as long as we keep his secrets to ourselves.

By now we had lost all semblance of cool food-critic professionalism. Even though we could not possibly finish our meals, there was no way we could leave even one morsel behind. The staff was happy to pack everything left for us to take home, and I suggest you do the same. Either that, or move to Salado to dine at La Mansion anytime you want.

Friendly Melissa Collett of Salado Pottery had first recommended La Mansion de Salado. The pottery shop, owned by artisans Jim and Cindy Dale, is just down Main Street in a comfortable, restored log cabin. Colorful, reasonable-priced and dishwasher-safe original stoneware and ceramic pottery of all shapes begs to come home with you and/or grace your friends' tables. Diagonally across the street from Salado Pottery, internationally-famous designer Grace Jones offers extraordinary clothing for men and women, including very elegant leopard-print ensembles. Salado is full of all manner of shops, including a year-round Christmas Shop. "Christmas in October" fills the civic center with holiday cheer and decorations October 11-12th.

We had a celebration of our own when we were lucky enough to be drawn to Mountain Mary's Tonkawa museum. Mountain Mary's father collected Native American artifacts for seventy five years, and part of his collection is housed in an unassuming but well-marked stone house at the IH-35/West Village Road intersection. Mary is part Cherokee, a life-long student of Native American culture who has worked with the Mescalero Apaches and at Living History centers throughout Texas and Oklahoma. Her museum is a treat for schoolchildren and collectors alike, and she is now selling some of her treasured artifacts to finance continuing studies.

Also, not to be missed since you are so close, is a visit to beautiful old Georgetown, just 18 miles south on the interstate or a pleasant meandering drive down backroads. Georgetown is a college town, home to Southwestern University—Texas' oldest institution of higher learning, chartered in 1840. It, too, is full of quaint shops and home to numerous festivals, including Market Days on the second Saturday of each month, the annual Heritage Antique Show October 19-20 and fun-for-the-family Scarecrow on the Square October 26, complete with trick-or-treating. Williamson County's Greek Revival Courthouse is a gem set in the heart of the Town Square Historic District. And any visit to Georgetown deserves a stop at Polanck's Market on the Courthouse Square, where you'll find all manner of exotic and healthful goodies as well as a well-stocked deli and coffee shop.

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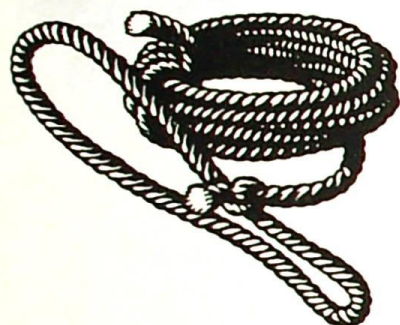
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# COWBOY TALES

by L. KELLY DOWN



## ALL IN A DAY'S WORK

Fellows, when Leroy and me was coming out of the bank this morning, about 9:15, I seen you go by with your gooseneck and horses. Does cattle work start that late or was y'all going to the vet?

I see, I see! O.K. people now a-days starts that late. No I ain't got no axe to grind, just wondering. It do seem like you must work faster than we did long, long ago.

We fell out way early and by the time the sun came up we was in the pasture. Then by the time we got cattle to headquarters and dipped, it was late, so by the time we got them back to the pasture it was near about dark. For sure we rode back in the moon light. Now you ain't got them pesky screw worms, nor that black stuff called Smear 62, so flies wouldn't blow a cut place again. Sometimes I wonder who got helped the most by getting rid of screw worms, cattlemen or deer hunters. Yep, lots more deer now than ever was. Now you spray not dip, you got good medicine, even mixed in cubes, so cows don't get sick near as much. Even common cows throws better calfs now 'cause of good bulls—we didn't have none near as good. I 'bouts fell over down at the ice house yesterday at happy hour, a cowboy whips out one of them laptop computers and did his paper work right there while sipping on a cool one. So, I guess hands is smarter now with more learning than we had long ago.

But you got all these save the world folks, dope and knifings right in the school house, and that don't even speak about the fast cars on the road you got to dodge a going and a coming to work. And most of all, guess it is your night life now, sure glad I'm out of the

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girling business. I'd better stick to the fair ladies who likes Old Spice and knows Studebaker cars, don't you know.

No, thank you very much, I believe I better stick to my times, too late for me to unlearn and start over. Plus I don't know 'bout money now — them car salesmen wants more for a pick-up than I paid for my first house. No, if I recalls right that wife number one had black hair, blond and redheads are the ones that come along later down the line some. Like the Good Book says — we all got our fair share of a load to carry no matter when you live, means work and ex-wives both I guess.

What was I running around with old grumpy Leroy for? Well, he let his catfish mouth overload his peanut brain and bet that Leon couldn't eat a dozen biscuits at the Old Fools Coffee Shop this morning. I dearly hated to do it but had to call his hand. Shoot a monkey, Leon went through them twelve and weren't even warmed up, so Leroy had to go to the bank you see, and I went with him. You know how hard it is to collect if Leroy gets away that first day — may not see him for a month of Sundays. That will learn him not to bet on biscuits!

## CATCHOLD MINK

You fellows sure enough look like you was rode hard and put up wet. Why, if I didn't know you were real feisty when you left here for the dance, I would believe you is only a hoop, a holler and a hound's bay from the Grim Reaper hisself. Them cool ones do make you walk light next day, don't they?

Now down on the Matagorda when I was a feisty pup like you girls, my father had a cure for what is a-ailing this fine morning. He learned it from a old trail boss, Mr. Clay McSparrin of the Pierce Ranch.

My father would call us five boys out way early on a Monday morning just like this one. He would look us over real close. If you had eyes so red they looked bad from both inside and out, you kind of wobbles — stepping real soft, and was a little say — yellowish, then the very worst words you could ever hope to hear was "Catch Old Mink!" Them words were enough to make a growed up man cry, much less us young boys.

Now, Mink was a smallish bay horse. He dearly loved to buck. Took three men to get the saddle on, then one had to bite his ear, two a holdin' while you got on. When they turned him lose he made maybe three or four crow hops then flat broke in two. He jumps so high he seemed to fly, then down with all four feet hitting like he was one of them beer wagon horses. First you lost your breakfast biscuits, then the rest down to your toenails. A real hangover horse. Most spreads got at least one.

Funny, he were a good cowhorse, good even inside cutting calf's out of the herd. But I swear he had three eyes; two like normal, and then one to watch you. Soon as you got to thinking of things like fair ladies, dances and such — so you got loose — he broke in two again. You was sick all day. By dark thirty you was a much, much wiser lad.

So ladies, eat up them biscuits, they're so light this morning a puff would float them off to heaven, smear them in some of the East Texas Cane Syrup. After you ate — got a new horse for you — his name is Mink.



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## THE RANCH HOUSE DEMON

Continued from page 19

Susan blurted it all out: "We are not married. The two boys are mine from a former husband. Dave and I are living together; and both of us know better, being Christians. We know that marriage is a sacrament and holy in God's eyes. But when I bring the subject of marriage up Dave storms out of the house and then comes home half drunk. When I suggest we break up, he also goes into a rage.

Now all these things are happening to us, one thing after the other, that "brand" on his chest, not being able to get on his horse and breaking his leg; and now losing his job. I'm afraid something's going to happen to me and the boys now, too. Why did Dave get the branding, and I didn't?" Susan began sobbing.

"We are really hypocrites talking the Christian talk, but not walking the walk. Then in our false pride we had to go out to the ranch and think we could push that demon around. Please, deacon, we're not Catholics, but we would like to come to the prayer group and confess all this to our friends there. I'm convinced that only then will we be freed of this."

Only Susan showed up at the next prayer group meeting. She announced that Dave had left for California, and they had broken up for good. She had come to the meeting to ask the group to witness her prayer for God's forgiveness and ask for everyone's prayers of blessing. She and the two boys were going to Tennessee to live with her sister's family for awhile.

### MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE RANCH....

Not too many weeks after Dave and Susan had left Friedrichsburg going their own ways, The husband and the Wife out at the ranch were regular participants now in the weekly prayer group. "We have something to share with you all...." The Wife announced, "I am pregnant!"

They both shared with the group that they had completely remodeled their home, the vegetable garden was doing well, the kids were back to being mischievous again, and being active at the church was all the more special to them. But most of all, they knew that God was showering them with blessings; because they were going to have another child, after so many, many years of trying and not being able to have one.

"In fact, to help us celebrate the renewal of our ranch house, and our lives for that matter, we have doubled the size of the rumpus room, bought an old piano, and have enough chairs for all the members of the prayer group, and then some. We'd like to invite you all out and have next week's meeting at our place!" The Husband announced.

Everyone applauded in agreement. The Deacon quipped, "And we'll all promise to open and close all those gates with smiles on our faces!"

Update: About ten years later Susan showed up in Friedrichsburg with a husband, not Dave, and children of their own. They had become members of an organized Christian church. They were heading to their new home in New Mexico.

No one knew where Dave might have gone. But he was always in everyone's prayers. Somewhere, somehow, everyone just knew in their hearts of hearts that God had a moment of deliverance, freedom, and blessing all pre-planned for Dave, too. Dave seemed like such a nice guy. ★



# TEXAS SYMBOLS

Some of the symbols in this puzzle are officially recognized by the State Legislature, some are very unofficial. Words may be spelled up, down, across, or on a diagonal; they may also be sdrawckab. TEXAS EXTRA Clue: a modern symbol of Texas more common than jackrabbits!

B P S O S E S R O H A D Y L  
 S U P A I S A N O E R O O S  
 I I F C N L K R S I B N C A  
 D N U F Z J N E B W E H P X  
 E T D A A E A G O S I T P E  
 O A P E D L N C T L E A I T  
 A O R F P I O A I N M D H R  
 T U R M K E R C N N O A S U  
 S O S C A S N O L O T S D O  
 G G O T T D B D W O U O N S  
 R M N A I E I M E T V G E A  
 A E T I U N L L C N I E I X  
 M E E L W A R A L B C U R E  
 A C B D P E C A N O K E F T

## OFFICIAL

- Austin (capital)
- Lone Star State
- Seal
- Bluebonnet (flower)
- Map
- Sideoats Grama (grass)
- Buffalo clover
- Mockingbird (bird)
- Texas, Our Texas (song)
- Chili (dish)
- Palmwood (stone)
- Topaz (gem)
- Friendship (motto)
- Pecan (tree)

- Independence (Day, March 2)
- San Jacinto (Day, April 21)

## UNOFFICIAL

- Armadillo
- Big
- Cactus
- Cowboy
- Deer
- Ewings
- Horned Frog
- Horses
- Oil
- Paisano (Chapparal bird)
- Sea
- (Ten gallon) Hat

PUZZLE SOLUTION ON PAGE 39

# JIM BERRY

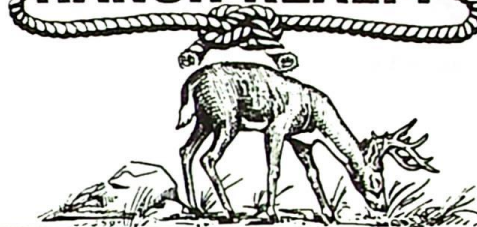
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# Schubbert the Scoundrel

A peek into the politics and gunplay of the early German settlements in Central Texas.

by Cork Morris

Any town in Texas has a Bowie Street, Travis Street and, or, Crockett Street to pay homage to those heroes of the state. Fredericksburg has all those streets and one other—Schubbert Street. It changes directions, stops and starts when cut off by creek beds and ravines, disappears for a few blocks then starts again. It is much like Frederick Armand Schubbert himself. It is there, but hard to determine just where it is going to end up.

Dr. Schubbert was the first administrator of the settlement of Fredericksburg. He was appointed to that position by John O. Meusebach in March of 1846. The Doctor was recommended to Meusebach by Henry Fisher. That should have warned everyone concerned that trouble was coming.

The situation for the German colonists in the mid 1840's was tenuous at best. The Society for the Protection of German Immigrants in Texas was founded in Germany as a means to colonize the Eden that was Texas by German citizens. Land was purchased through agents in America usually in the form of grants by the state of Texas. These grants had stipulations as to the minimum of settlers actually working throughout the grant territory and a time limit by which they must be ensconced.

The first Administrator-General of the Society was Prince Solms-Braunfels (hence New Braunfels. These fellows were nothing, if not real proud of themselves.) The Prince arranged for the purchase of a grant that included the area around present day Llano, Mason and Fredericksburg. It was called the Fisher-Miller Grant after Burkart Miller and Henry Fisher who averred that they intended to have it settled by their own people. Many historians contend that they planned the scam from the start. At any rate, they sold it to the society. The rub came when it was discovered that the terms of the grant had expired. The Prince had in essence bought nothing. Fisher and Miller may have been the first kings of the junk bond.

Not surprisingly a new Administrator-General was appointed. Baron Otto Von Meusebach arrived in March 1845. The Prince, rather than explain the mess he had made, departed before the Baron arrived. They must have passed each other somewhere in the Atlantic.

The mess went like this. The purchase of the Fisher-Miller grant had used up all the Society's money. The colonists were hanging around New Braunfels and needed to be housed, fed and cared for. New people were arriving by the boatload and were piling up in Indianola and Corpus Christi. They needed to be housed, fed and cared for.

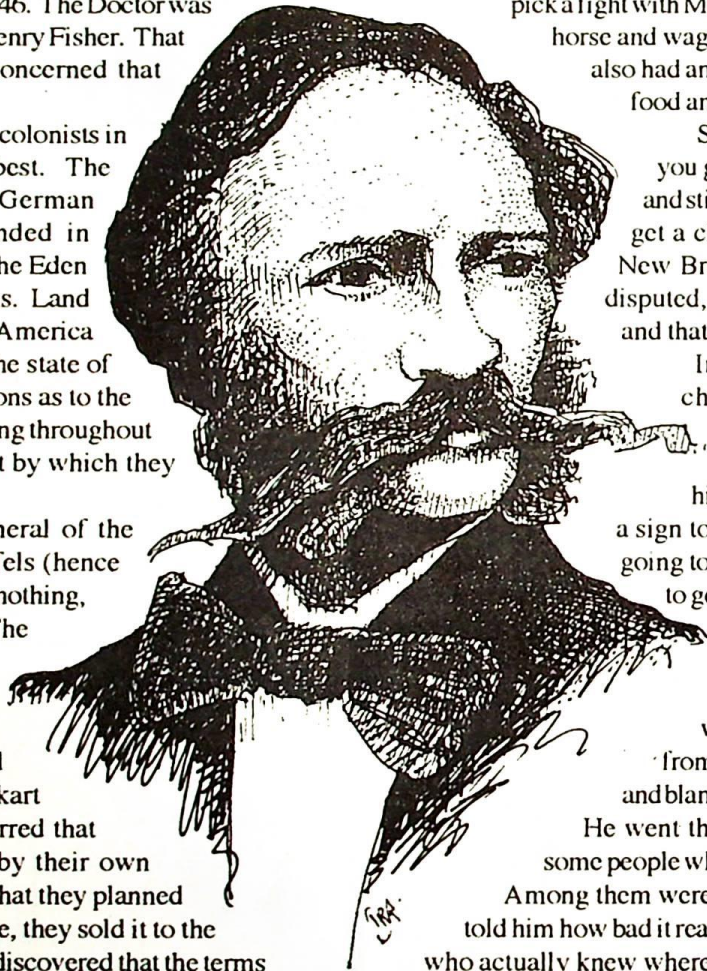
There was no place for the settlers to settle because the land actually owned by the Society was limited. Even if there had been someplace to go, there was no transportation. Murphy's law had taken control. The United States, at this time, had decided to pick a fight with Mexico and they bought or leased every horse and wagon south of Canada. Of course they also had an army to house, feed and care for, so food and medical supplies were short also.

Speaking of medical things, anytime you get overcrowding and poor nutrition and stick it in a wet gooey Texas spring, you get a cholera epidemic from Indianola to New Braunfels. The count of the dead is disputed, but it was between 500 and 1,000, and that was among the colonists alone.

Into this strolls the Baron, who soon changed his name to John O. Meusebach. This lack of pretense suggests a depth of character that his predecessor didn't have, and perhaps a sign to his fellow colonists that he wasn't going to rely on that European royalty stuff to get his job done. Relief from that, was why most of them were there anyway.

The moment he landed he was inundated with bills and demands from creditors, howls from the colonists and blank stares from the Society bureaucrats.

He went through the Society staff and found some people who actually knew what was going on. Among them were Jean Von Coll, a bookkeeper who told him how bad it really was, and Louis Bene, a surveyor, who actually knew where the grant land was. From there he began to sort through the mess and deal with it. He corresponded with banks in New Orleans and Germany and got more money. (There was even a pledge drive back in Germany to aid their countrymen in the wilds of Texas.) He convinced the state of Texas that it was in their best interest to renew the terms of the grant, which they did. Communications among the state bureaucrats seems to lean toward the idea that, why shouldn't they renew, the Germans





As it turns out, the Good Doctor isn't really a doctor at all. Nor did he play one on T.V. He stayed with one in St Louis while recuperating from a boating accident and read some of his books. He may never have had even that opportunity, if the steamboat he was on hadn't sunk, drowning fifty or sixty people. He made it to shore and waited around St. Louis while a salvage team rescued his gun collection. He was, apparently a crack shot.

will never make it, but it could be fun to watch.

Somewhere, he found horses and wagons and sent Bene off with the first party towards what would become Fredericksburg.

As a relief from the hounding, John O. would, from time to time, seek refuge at Nassau Farm in what is now Fayette County, near LaGrange. This was a small German colony set up in 1844 by Count Boos-Waldeck. It was during this period that John O. met Henry Fisher and was introduced to Dr. Schubbert.

So here you have a group of intelligent and daring young bachelors sitting around the dining room table with cultured young ladies, drinking wine and deciding the fate of their colony. Before you know it Schubbert has been sold as a capable administrator and able doctor (Henry! Henry! Henry!). What better man to run Fredericksburg could you find?

So, the second party to Fredericksburg leaves in March of 1846 with Dr. Schubbert at it's head.

As it turns out, the Good Doctor isn't really a doctor at all. Nor did he play one on T.V. He stayed with one in St Louis while recuperating from a boating accident and read some of his books. He may never have had even that opportunity, if the steamboat he was on hadn't sunk, drowning fifty or sixty people. He made it to shore and waited around St. Louis while a salvage team rescued his gun collection. He was, apparently a crack shot.

As a matter of fact, his name wasn't even Schubbert. It was Strubberg. Back in his hometown of Cassel, Germany, it seems, he had a little trouble with the cousin of his fiance, Antoinette Sattler. The cousin landed on the lawn with a 12 mm ball in his chest, the fiance lost interest (she'll pop up again), and Fredrich's daddy thought it might be time for his son to see the world. He roundaboutly landed in New York City where he was an agent for several German firms for about three years.

As a gadabout on Broadway, he got engaged again to a tobacco heiress from Virginia, unfortunately she had a cousin, too. He, too, hits the lawn, she backed out, and the wild west beckoned

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As an immediate result, a thin thinker named Captain Gunst accused Dr. Schubbert of cowardice. Remember that brace of pistols? So here lay Captain Gunst, gut-shot and staring up at the only "medical care" within a hundred miles. The Captain had the good sense, at least, to save himself some agony. He shot himself in the head.

someone named Stroburg.

The New York Police department sent some inquiries to several German colonies (New Braunfels among them) concerning Strubberg's whereabouts. This would cause some embarrassment to the Doctor, as well as giving his opponents ammunition.

So, in the fall of 1846 he took over as administrator for Fredericksburg, relieving Mr. Bene. It seems that Mr. Bene never got over the slight. He liked the position. It also angered Jean Von Coll back in New Braunfels, because he was maneuvering for the position also. It would seem that their anger should have been directed at John O., but it wasn't.

The Doctor had a house built for himself and began administrating. Though the local versions of this period seem to concentrate on the Doctor's fondness for womanizing and drinking

with his cronies, much positive work went on.

The surrounding area was surveyed, fenced, and cultivated. In accordance with the terms of the grant, and the terms of the Society's agreement with the settlers, land was decided to individuals. The deal was for a full section outside of the town proper, and a lot in town. Since crops had just been planted, Dr. Schubbert was also responsible for doling out foodstuffs, seed and feed—everything necessary to survive until a crop could be harvested. He also recognized the need for a civic and spiritual center and designed and had built the six-sided Vereins-Kirche. The Doctor seems to have plagiarized a little. It is miniature of a church in his home town of Cassel in Germany.

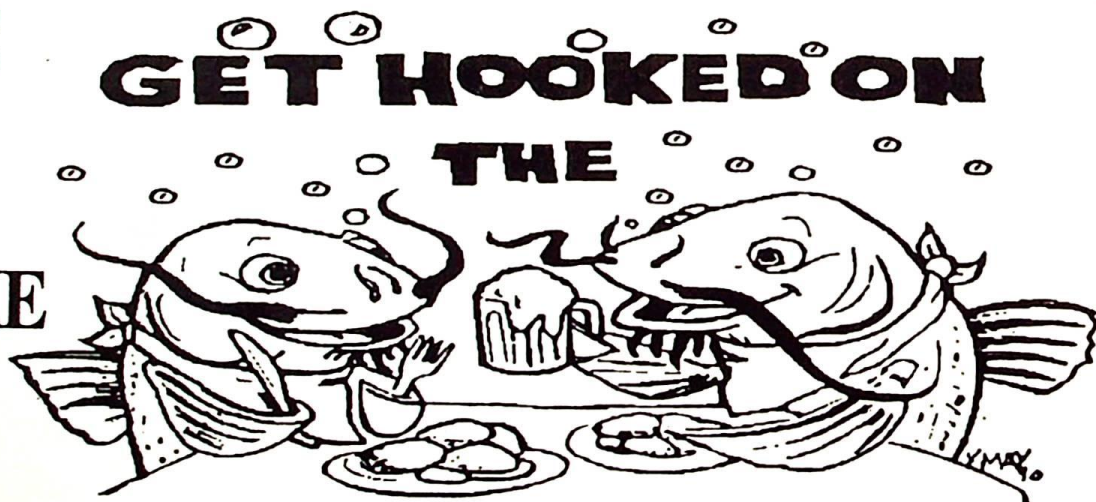
Dr. Schubbert was far from a saint, though. Opinions are generally unanimous that he was vain, arrogant and conceited. Always carrying a brace of pistols, he dressed in pleated shirts, frock coat and tie and sported a large waxed moustache. He surrounded himself with toadies and hangers on, and would broach no criticism. The Doctor also appointed his drinking buddies to government positions (Justice of the Peace, Constable, etc.) without opposition.

One story goes that a gentleman named Bernstein commented on the Doctor's ability, or lack thereof, on his way out of town. Schubbert had his boys grease up their knives and pistols and drag him back to town. After a lengthy chat, Schubbert released the man, but Mr. Bernstein never returned.

Given Schubbert's penchant for trial by fusillade, Mr. Bernstein probably should have considered himself lucky. His opinions were correct, though. Another wave of illness swept through the community, and Dr. Schubbert diagnosed it as scurvy and dysentery.

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Other doctors from the Society treated for Cholera (possibly spinal meningitis) with better results. That the sick survived was probably in spite of Schubbert's ministrations, rather than because of them. One hundred-fifty locals died in that epidemic.

How the Doctor was viewed by the people of Fredericksburg, is hard to weigh, though. In letters home to Germany or within the colony some people liked him, some didn't. There is no clear consensus among the "common folk". The officers of the Society hated his guts; that is clear.

At about that time, Dr. Schubbert decided to see what the rest of the grant looked like. He organized a party of men and, dragging the town's cannon with them, headed off toward the Llano River by way of Legion and Sandy Creeks. They arrived at the Llano and camped for only a short while before scurrying back. The Doctor reported, "40 to 60,000 Comanches there", which scared the entire community. I don't have a Comanche census at hand, but I don't think there were that many of them in all of Texas at that time.

As an immediate result, a thin thinker named Captain Gunst accused Dr. Schubbert of cowardice. Remember that brace of pistols? So here lay Captain Gunst, gut-shot and staring up at the only "medical care" within a hundred miles. The Captain had the good sense, at least, to save himself some agony. He shot himself in the head.

Mr. Bene seemed to want a little satisfaction himself, so he challenged Schubbert to a duel, with a codicil. He suggested to the Doctor that they duel blindfolded to even the odds (I'm not making this up!). I'm sure Dr. Schubbert thought that was pretty funny. At that point Mr. Bene remembered something he had left on the stove in New Braunfels, and left town.

Things were obviously getting out of control in Fredericksburg. Whatever one-sided report Louis Bene gave John Meusebach, Meusebach had to act. The legendary meeting between Meusebach and the Comanche chiefs is well known (I hope). Suffice it to say that the ensuing peace treaty gave the colonists of Fredericksburg one less thing to worry about in their struggle to prosper in the area. It is interesting to note that despite the Doctor's little indiscretions, he is a signatory of that treaty.

Enough was enough, however, and in July of 1847, Meusebach relieved Schubbert and assigned Jean Von Coll as the new administrator of Fredericksburg. That was the last official act of Meusebach, as Administrator-General of the Society. He retired almost immediately and was replaced by a newcomer from Germany by the name of Herman Spiess.

As part of his compensation for looking after Fredericksburg, Dr. Schubbert was promised the lease on the Nassau Farm, so he went to Fayette County and took possession thereof.

That might suffice as an ending to a work of fiction, but history moves in a line without end.

Mr. Spiess, in his new position, inherited a number of things, one of which was Louis Bene. Bene cheerfully reported all the doings of Dr. Schubbert, real and imagined and, as the Nassau Farm had a certain value, Mr. Spiess was convinced that the Doctor had been overpaid.

They began the process of throwing Schubbert off the property with lawyers and the courts, but Schubbert had a real contract and a legitimate claim. The courts agreed.

The next phase involved Mr. Spiess and half-a-dozen well-

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## SCHUBBERT THE SCOUNDREL

Continued from previous page

armed men. (None of which was Bene. Something was still on that stove, I guess.) So, well after midnight, the Administrator-General of the Society for the Protection of German Immigrants in Texas, attacks a bunch of German immigrants in Texas.

Captain Sommers, a guest of Dr. Schubbert's, was sitting on the porch of the main house when fatally hit with the first volley of fire. Schubbert and his other guests jumped out of bed and armed themselves. A short fight occurred in which one of the attackers was killed, and one captured. The rest fled into the woods.

The sheriff of LaGrange was called and the story hit every newspaper in Texas. The captured man named names. Herman Spiess was charged and warrants issued for murder.

Spiess was captured, but every artifice and cent of money the Society had was used to have him acquitted, which he was. The reputation of the Society was dashed. Mr. Spiess was required to retire, and Louis Bene was appointed as the new Administrator-General.

Whatever gratification Bene felt, was short lived. The Society was through, broke and under investigation by the German government. The state government had been right—it had been fun to watch; but wrong also—they did make it. The communities of New Braunfels, Fredericksburg, Castell et al had survived and were prospering. It was, as always the individuals with the grub-hoe and plow that determine the outcome of ventures such as this.

Jean Von Coll left Fredericksburg during the scandal and ran a store in New Braunfels. In 1848 he was shot and killed during a robbery.

Dr. Schubbert stuck it out for a while, but eventually returned to Germany where he made a pretty good living writing romantic adventures about the *Wildnis in Amerika*, under the name of Frederick Armand.

He also ran into Antoinette Sattler his first Fiance and raison d'feu of his first (documented) duel, who had remained unmarried. A romantic until the end, he married her in 1866.

Her found her a short time later, half-naked and raving on the stairs of their home. Apparently she had been in and out of asylums for some time during his absence.

Whether you view him as a Vereins-lump (scamp of society) or would give that name to someone else, Frederick Armand Strubberg lived a life that would shrivel lesser men.

He died on April 2, 1889 in Gelnhausen, Germany. As if he hadn't had enough disquiet in his life, his grave was bulldozed in the 1960's for an urban renewal project.

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## SLUE-FOOT SUE'S WEDDING DAY

Continued from page 15

Up and down she bounced, a-laughin' so hard she flat out ripped her bloomers, and in the meantime, she was a-throwin' kisses down to her distracted lover—and anybody else who could catch 'em. Thing was, like I said, each time she bounced, she bounced on up a little higher. She bounced up past the moon (and Billy's rope). Then she bounced up past the sun, and the planets, and the stars. And then she bounced herself fer a finger right on up into Heaven, smack up against one of them Pearly Gates you've heard tell so much about.

Wellsir, when Sue hit that Higher Ground, she landed flat on one of them Golden Streets, and it like to've busted her bustle. It *did* knock the wind out of her; so Sue caught her breath and rubbed her bustle, and she looked around and she said: "Where the Hell am I?"

Naturly, Saint Peter was a-settin' 'ere on the front porch. So he ups and steps over to give Sue a hand, and he says, right friendly-like: "Howdy-howdy!" And then he goes on to set Sue straight on her geography: "Darlin'," says the good-natured saint, "this ain't Hell, a-tall; this here is Heaven that yo're in. Have a look around and make yerself at home!"

Sue thought that sounded mighty neighborly, so she thanked Saint Peter fer his assist, and commenced to scoutin' out the place. Shur'nough, Sue seen that it mosly looked like Heaven. There was Methodists there a-drinkin' wine, and Babdists a-dancin', and Cam'ellities a-playin' on their harps and organs—ever'body gittin' to do in Heaven whatever it was they hadn't got to enjoy down on earth.

But over in one corner, Sue spotted a double handful of scrawny lookin' cusses, all gagged and tied up in the shade of the Tree o' Life. In fact, they was hog-tied, hands behind their backs, with their feet drawd up bassackwards over their behind, and all trussed up like a passle of Thanksgivin' turkeys who'd fergot how to gobble. Sue was purty shur she reco'nized one or two of 'em, and she was positive that she could tell by the looks of 'em where they'd come from. Their faces was all sunburnt, and their eyes was squinty, and their crows' feets was about a size 16. They was cowboys from West Texas, all right!

"Saint Pete!" Sue calls out. "I thought you said this place was Heaven. Them ol' waddies over there looks like they was in Hell, to me."

"Well, Ma'am," the aged saint stands up from where he'd been pullin' up Johnson grass in a field of seed-clouds, and he says, kind of shamey-like, "It is Heaven fer ever'body else; 'cept fer them, I guess, it's Hell. Them fellers come up here from Texas, you see, and I have to keep 'em hog-tied and hobbled, else they'd go back to where they come from, where they say they like it better." Saint Peter scratched his head and chewed a spell on a weed stalk, and then he added: "I recon after a few thousand years, I'll get 'em range-broke; but it does take a pow'rful long time with their kind."

"Well, that's a fine howdy-do!" exclaims Sue, getherin' up the skirts of her weddin' dress, hitchin' up her bustle, and gittin' ready to take a runnin' jump. "If Heaven ain't good enough fer them other Texicans, I reckon it ain't good enough for me, neither!" And with that, Sue dived right out of Glory, headed home, hell-bent fer Texas. There was one thing that Sue never *did* cotton to, and that was bein' hog-tied or gagged or hobbled; and she did prefer Texas.

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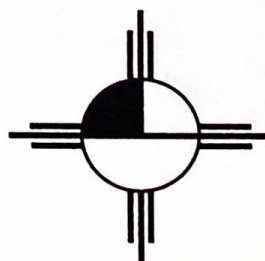
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# SLUE-FOOT SUE'S WEDDING DAY

Continued from previous page

The best Saint Peter could do was wave bye-bye to Sue, and call after her: "Y'all come back, now, ya hear?"

Down she fell, past the stars and the planets and the sun. And then danged if that dad-burned bustle contraption didn't do it to her agin! Only this time, that steel-wire beehive jist reached right out and snagged itself on the high horn of the new moon. Now, that would have been a purty sight, and Sue would've been in a real fix, this time, and I reckon we'd all still be talkin' about the *woman* in the moon, 'cept—as you'll remember—Pecos Bill's long ropin' rope was already a-hangin' right handy-like on the low horn of the moon. So Sue jist reaches down, grabs that rope, ties one end of it in a half-hitch slip-knot around the moonhorn, and commences to lower herself down to earth.

Now, Billy's rope was mighty long—Billy hisself said that on one end, it was as long as the equator; and on the other end, it was a good foot-'n'-a-half longer; but o'course, it weren't long enough fer Sue to hang her warsh out on the moon. So, when Sue had shinned about halfway down the rope, she jist give it a jerk and slipped the half-hitch loose from the moonhorn. Then, as the top half fell past her, she caught it in her teeth, cut the rope in two with her pocket-knife, and kept on a-climbin' down the bottom half. Then, when she got to the end of the bottom half of the rope, Sue tied the top half onto the bottom end, and slud on down without no trouble a-tall.

'Course, makin' downwards progress in this fashion ment that Slue-Foot had to cut the rope a few more times and tie it into several knots, but that didn't make Sue no nevermind. Slue-Foot Sue was that thinkin' kind of a woman that never *did* come to the end

of her rope. Anyhow, in less time than it takes to tell it, Sue had let herself down gently onto the top of El Capitan. After travelin' from Heaven half-way across the universe, and from the moon to the earth, the hardest part of the trip was gettin' from El Paso back to Pecos.

When Sue came a-hikin' in with Bill's knotty rope coiled around her shoulder, Bill was first of all mighty glad to see his gal. But then he recollected how she'd broke his rule and rode on Widdermaker; and then he seen his good ol' long ol' ropin' rope, all cut up in piecces and knotted back together; so Bill commenced to cussin'.

"Woman!" he shouted, "You are without a doubt the goll-dangdest excuse fer a wife a man ever *did* have to put up with! Yo're a horse-thievin', rope-ruinin', low-down, good-fer-nothin', brainless, side-windin' kinder female—" Bill sputtered a bit, right here—"Why, you ain't even got gourd-guts fer brains!" And after Bill'd said that, he went on to complain a little.

Soon as Bill run dry, howsomever, Slue-Foot said: "Pecos William!" And she looked him right in the eyeballs.

That drewed ol' Billy up short, bein' called by the name his ma had give 'im, and he seen Sue's changeable eyes commence to goin' from cyclone black to duststorm brown to lightnin' yeller to Gulf blue-green durin' a hurricane to vi'let like a cloudful of hailstones and back to black agin, only faster than before, and this time Billy heard it thunder.

"Pecos William!" she looked right at him, and she said, "That's onc'!"

And that was the first time that Pecos Bill knowd fer shur that he was married.

**CONTINUED NEXT MONTH**

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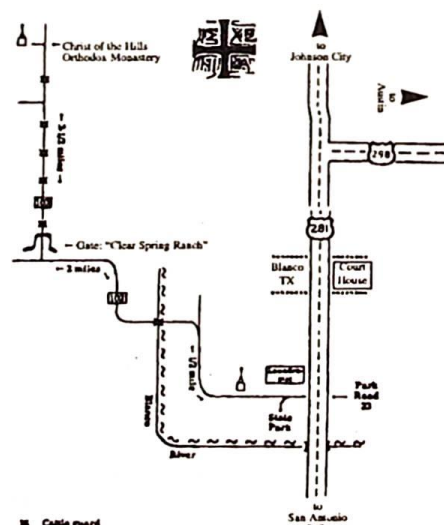
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# LOOKING FOR LEMON SQUEEZER

Continued from page 25

"My momma was born out here and lived to be one hundred-one. I've lived out here all my life. Sixty seven years. I lived in that house that burned down for forty."

Sloan was referring to his house, down the road, which caught fire about a year ago while he was on a fishing trip and his wife, Merleen, was in Vegas. Merleen's brother picked her up at the airport, and she wasn't in the car five minutes before he told her what she was not going to come home to. She just broke into tears.

"Smooth to the ground." Wade commented to explain the extent of the damage.

Earlier, Wade offered Ms. Intrepid and me a jar of his homemade salsa. He didn't make as much salsa this year, he explained, because his tomato crop failed to produce as well as usual. Wade also told us his secret ingredient, which doesn't end up in the jars—about four or five cases of beer. Apart from making salsa, Wade has the distinction of placing second at the Brady Goat Cook-Off.

We had more conversations, most of which I didn't take note of, some of which I'll keep to myself. But, we had miles to go, and we didn't want to wear out our welcome, so we made our move for the door (for the second time).

Just before we walked out the door, while we were saying our good-bys to these friendly folk, Ms. Intrepid and I learned that the barstools we had been sitting on, and the bar, and the bunk beds off at the other end of the room, were all once owned by Hank Thompson who had a cabin on the Pool Ranch. Hank Thompson, for those of you who are unfamiliar with country music, was one of three great Hanks of the genre—the other two being Snow and Williams.

If we had stayed longer we would have rounded up more stories, but just as likely, we'd still be there. Passing through San Saba we stopped at The Saddle House, a convenience store on Hwy 16 north of town just past the railroad trestle, to buy some chips to accompany our salsa, (which was excellent) as we headed on to Fredonia, Pontotoc, Katemey and other disappeared places. But more on that next month.

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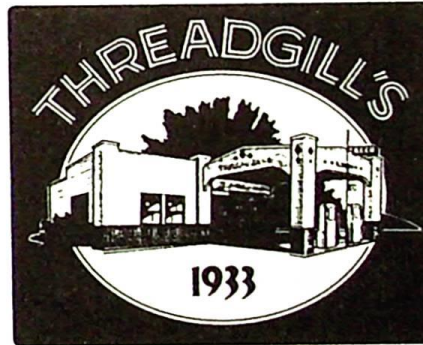
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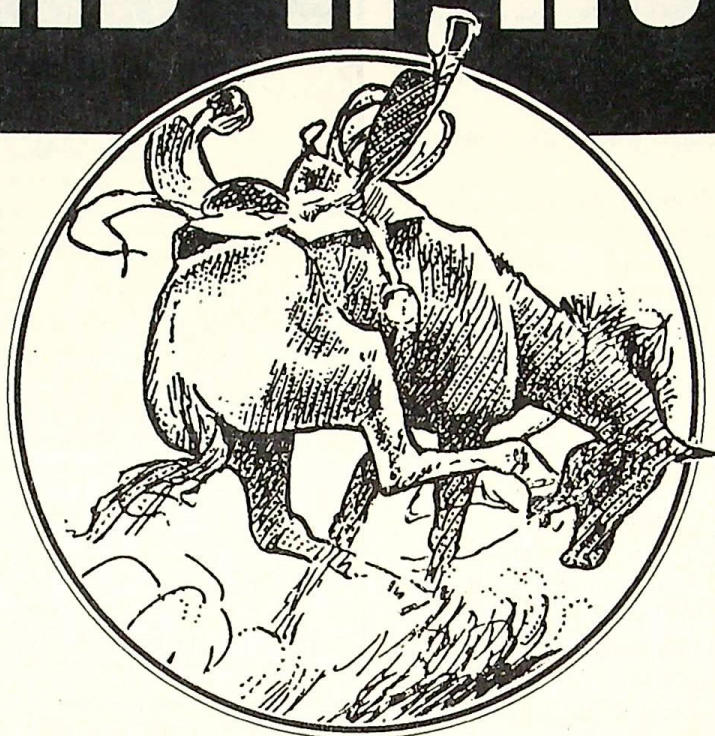
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