

TEXAS ★ HISTORY & ADVENTURE

ENCHANTED ROCK

MAGAZINE

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3 Cen-Tex Maps Inside

THE TEX FILES

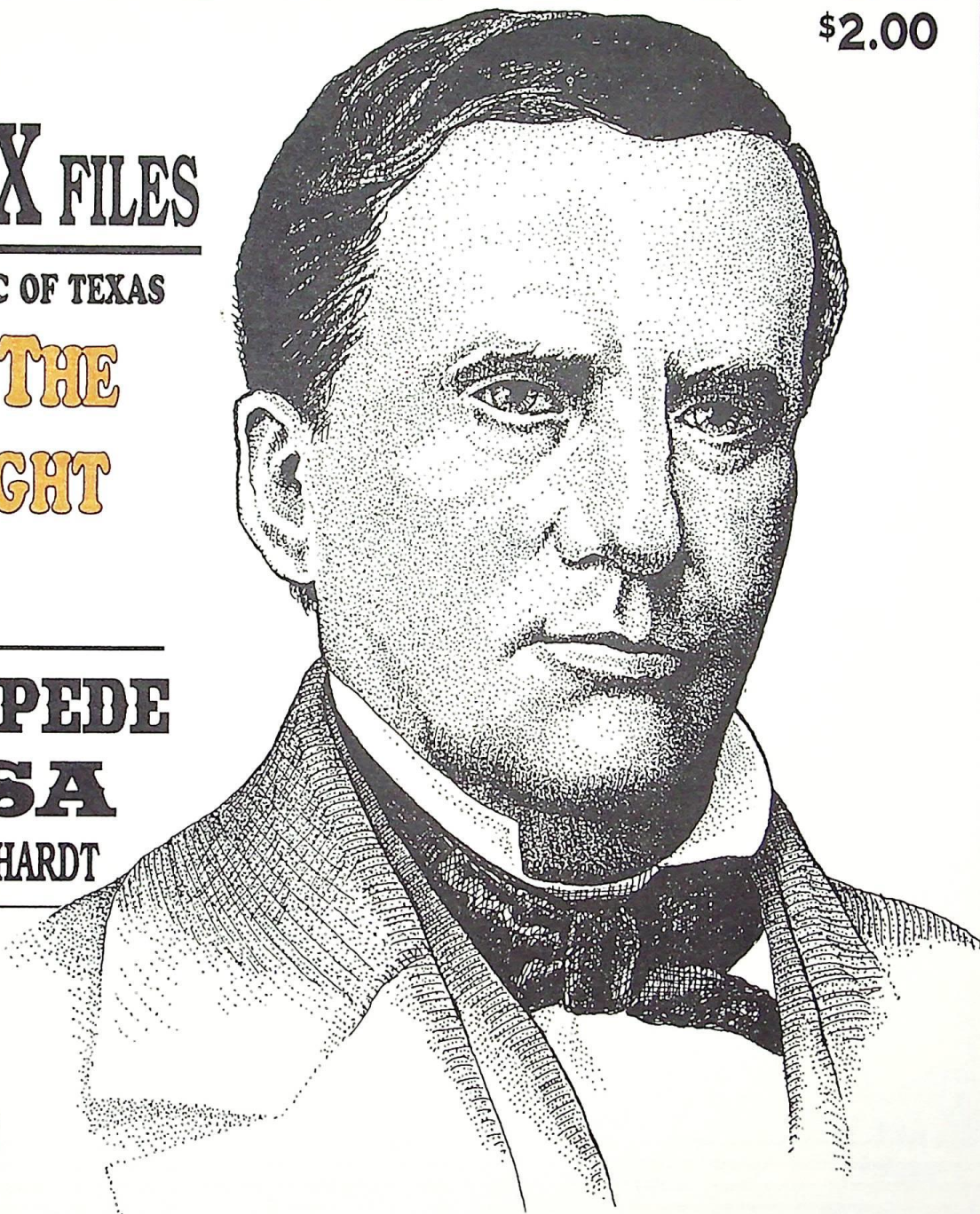
THE REPUBLIC OF TEXAS

1845, THE
TWILIGHT
YEAR

STAMPEDE MESA

by C.F. ECKHARDT

WAS HENRY
GRAVES A
CRIMINAL
OR A HERO?



ANSON JONES

THE LAST PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TEXAS
BY IRA KENNEDY



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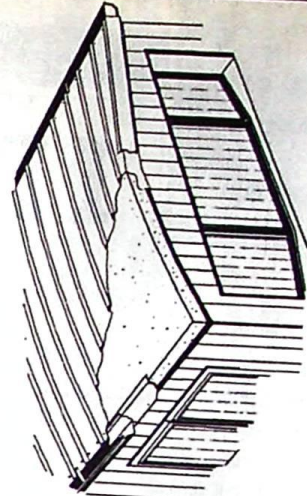
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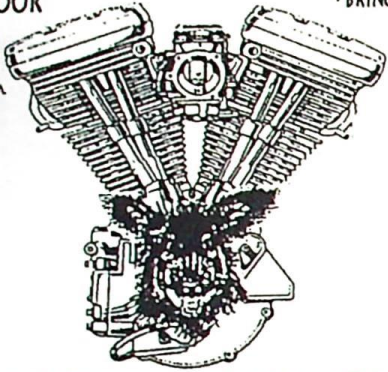
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GOLD

I have enjoyed your recent articles on gold panning in the Hill Country. They brought to mind a true story I want to share with you. Several years I dug up a small portion of yellow colored gravel on my property on the Llano River and had it assayed. The assay report showed it had a small amount of gold in it but not enough to make panning or mining profitable. A short time later my six year old granddaughter was walking around with me when she noticed the hole I had extracted the gravel sample from. She said "look granddad, something has been digging here." I replied, "yes, darling, I did that." She looked carefully at the gravel around the hole and said "Granddad, this looks like gold." I replied "yes, there is some gold there." Excited, she said "Granddad you are a rich man!" Then she added, "and I am so happy to be a member of this family."

Could she be called a six year old gold digger?
I enjoy your magazine.

Yours very truly,
Waggoner Carr
Austin, Texas

SOLD

I am Laura Lewis, mother of our generous, big mouth Warren—He gave me the pleasure of filling his promise to our Marble Falls Library. As you might guess this is not the first selling job he has done on me. Nor the last, I expect. Anyway, I love him and am happy to do it.

If you please, one year subscription to Marble Falls Library. Our new building will soon be finished. When you are in our city, stop in and enjoy it.

I enjoy the magazine. However, I often wonder what makes some of the writers tick.—One comes to mind... Warren L.

Best wishes,
Laura Lewis
Marble Falls, Texas


IMPRESSED

Enclosed please find a copy of The Devil's Backbone with permission to use several of the stories in a series if you wish. Enjoy your magazine and impressed with what you are doing. Send me your ad rates for one time and a standing ad.

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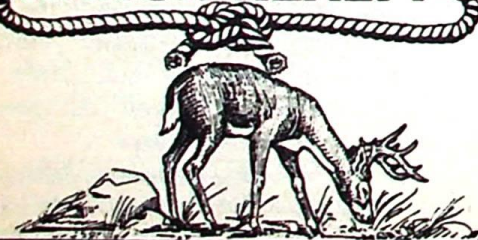
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NEXT TO TRUE WEST

Thank you so much for the invitation to the *Enchanted Rock* Writer's Rendezvous. Unfortunately we have back-to-back deadlines culminating that weekend so I'm afraid my presence will be needed here at the rancho. Maybe next year I can scoot on down and meet you fine folks. I will, however, be in Killeen July 23-26 and I may drive over for a short visit.

Enchanted Rock is truly a fine publication. I don't often brag on things from Texas, (Okie pride, ya know) but your mag is doing a great job of keeping the West alive. Plus it looks great on the newsstand next to *True West*.

Don't squat with your spurs on,
Sincerely,
Marcus Huff
Editor, Western Publications
Stillwater, Oklahoma

THANKS

I just received the May issue of *Enchanted Rock* and I wanted to tell you how pleased I was with the editorial you wrote about the InfoNet Presentation. I have enclosed a copy of the video tape for you. I haven't watched, although I have watched a couple of tapes I have done in the past and took a solemn vow never to do that again. I have no doubt your performance came out much better than mine.

The Creativity Day is still on, I just don't know when it is, but it will happen. I want to talk with you about it and will give you a call when I know something more definite.

Hey, Ira, did you hear the one about the skeleton who walked in to the bar and ordered a beer and a mop?

Sincerely,
James L. Coffey
San Angelo, Texas

[Maybe he should switch to dry martinis.—Ira]

STILL ALIVE

I want you to know how much I enjoy reading the L. Kelly Down stories. Even though Jim is gone and rounding up cattle with Daddy in God's pastures, his written word is still alive here on earth in the pages of the *Enchanted Rock Magazine*.

Sincerely,
John O. Cornett
Houston, Texas

WHERE ON EARTH?

We extend our welcome this month to readers in Fubois, Wyoming; and in Dallas, Nacogdoches, Bedford, Waco (2), Richland Springs, San Angelo, Houston, Robstown, Mission, Burnet, Fredericksburg, Johnson City, Kingsland, Leander, Llano (6), Valley Springs, Buda, Pflugerville, Austin (4), and San Marcos, Texas.

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THE TEX FILES

A Specific Inquiry Into the Republican Period of Texas

by CORK MORRIS

Supporting Sam Houston was a deadly serious business alienating Lamar and summoning the dread curse which possessed the advocates of annexation and invokes new meaning to the word "Allegedly."



There is a plethora of information out there about the period of time when the Republic of Texas actually existed (1836-1845). This article is concerned with a specific series of seemingly, unrelated events. As I read about the period, in general, a number of common factors reared their ugly heads.

Let's begin with a list of names:

Peter Grayson
James Collinsworth
George Childress
Thomas Rusk
Anson Jones

What do these people have in common? Two correct answers is good; three correct answers makes you a Jeopardy Champion.

Time's up. They were all in the Revolutionary Army (Texas). They were all officers in the Government of the

Republic. They all went to Washington, D. C. at one point of another to entreat over the annexation issue. They were all supporters of Sam Houston, and they all committed suicide.

Excuseme! They all committed suicide?
Allegedly.

Before we call Mulder and Scully, let's take a look at the life and times of these men.

It was chaotic. The Mexican Army had retreated to the Rio Grande, but it wasn't as if they had given up. They were quiet because we had Santa Anna under lock and key.

The Texan Army, with no one to fight, started to fall apart. Sam Houston gave command to Thomas Rusk, with orders to make a well disciplined force out of them. There was barely enough money in the treasury to feed and house the men, much less, to buy arms and army stuff. To make it more difficult, there was a faction within the army that

wanted to invade Mexico, but there was certainly not enough money to mount an invasion. (More on that.)

A constitutional convention was held and a constitution ratified. It was much along the lines of the U. S. Constitution.

Sam Houston was elected first President for a term of two years, and he started to build a bureaucracy to govern.

Money, as it so often is, was the critical matter. Resolutions were passed to offer for sale, public lands at \$.25 an acre. The price would eventually fall to \$.06 per acre, but it didn't matter anyway cause no one was buying. Murphy's Law dictated that it was going to get bad. Hence, the Great Depression of 1837.

It was caused partially by the lousy fiscal measures of Andy Jackson, who was just completing his second term as U. S. President, but in all fairness, it started in Europe and the Mediterranean in the early 1830's. This lack of money anywhere on the planet would frustrate Texas' attempts for independence or annexation.

Those were the options open to Texas, though. In order to remain (or become) a true republic, they had to be recognized by another republic (i.e. England, France, Belgium, anybody). In this way they could treat for trade agreements and loans.

If they chose to apply for annexation to the U. S., the U. S. would have to want them, and frankly, Texas didn't have much to offer. Texas had no firm southern or western border, no agricultural surplus (it was still survival farming for the most part). It did have some abundance though: Comanches, Apaches, Delaware and the Mexican Army (twice, during this period they invaded as far as San Antonio—burned it—and went back to the Rio Grande). Another burr in the mix was Texas' being below 36 degrees 30 minutes longitude . . . Come on American History 101. The Missouri Compromise (1821)

Anything south of that line could own slaves, anything north could not. The Northern States, who held congress-

sional majority didn't want another slave state to upset their balance of power.

Politically, Texas became factionalized along those options. Sam Houston and his side were for annexation. Mirabeau Lamar and his buds, wanted an independent country. (As an aside, I can find no evidence that any Lamarite committed suicide, and they were the losers.)

At the end of Houston's term (1838) things were looking up. The bureaucracy was in place. A Supreme Court and its lesser divisions were up and running. Congress met in regular session and elections were held and well attended. (Lest I paint too rosy a picture, Congress met in a big mud hut and most members slept on the floor. The presidential mansion was two mud huts with a dog run.) Tariffs and customs duties were being charged and collected along the coast. This eased the money situation a little. The army, albeit grumpily, was trained and set for duty along the frontier. The Texas State Department was doing whatever state departments do, in England and France, as well as Washington, D. C.

However, the Texas' Constitution prohibited the

first President to run consecutive terms, so Houston was out.

Mirabeau Lamar was campaigning with gusto. He was a very bright guy, a poet and scholar, in fact and apparently was a whiz with the sound bite. His platform was mostly that Houston was a coward and a fool.

Lamar had a lot of support, but Houston's reputation was hard to beat.

Sam's problem was finding someone to run in his stead who would further the annexation gambit. This was really no problem either, because he had lots of smart, personable young fellows on his team.

Peter Grayson was his first choice. He was a lawyer and had been a commander at San Jacinto. He served Houston in office as Attorney-General and, at the time of Houston's "call" was acting Texas Minister to the U. S. in Washington. He was replaced in Washington by Anson Jones, and headed back to Texas.

Think about the U. S. in the 1840's: Canada was run by England, Florida was run by Spain, the Northwest Territories were run by France, California was run by Mexico, and these nut-case Texans were ready to deal with anybody for cash. The United States would have been surrounded.

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On July 8, 1838 he stopped at a popular way station, Bean's Station, Tennessee, and blew his brains out—allegedly.

The Houston camp was obviously shocked by this event, but they pressed on. He asked James Collinsworth to pick up the gauntlet.

Collinsworth had been the chairman of the Texas Revolutionary Council during the fight with Mexico, and had appointed Houston Commander in Chief of the army. When Houston was elected President of the Republic, he asked Collinsworth to be Secretary of War, but Collinsworth asked for the Chief Justice spot, and got it, of course. He also served stints as Secretary of State and Minister to the U. S.

In late July of 1838, Collinsworth was in Galveston when Houston sent word. He committed suicide by jumping off a ship in Galveston Bay. Witnesses said he was drunk—allegedly.

Lamar won the election virtually unopposed.

Things changed under Lamar. He was a bit of a dreamer, which is a good thing generally, but the realities of running a country cannot be dreamed into completion. He set down the ground rules for the educational system in the state, parts of which still exist. He moved the capital from Houston to Austin, which made some people nervous. People were still getting killed by Indians out there—as well as every cutthroat, backstabbin bushwacker that snuck in from the U. S. It was a rough place.

He also made a couple of tragic mistakes.

Lamar didn't like Indians, so early in his office he started a series of Indian wars in order to drive them out of their lands. Obviously the Indians suffered from these little fights, but the settlers in the outlying areas also came under attack by the angered Indians. In what became known as the Cherokee War, Lamar sent troops into lands guaranteed to the Cherokee by several treaties, and tried to force the residents out. The Cherokees tried to negotiate a settlement, but it ended up in a fight. Several of Sam Houston's Cherokee friends were killed as a result. As if Houston needed more reasons to dislike Lamar.

Mirabeau wanted Texas to be a BIG country, so he decided to invade Santa Fe (New Mexico) which was in the disputed western boarder area, and under Mexico's control. Congress wouldn't declare war or otherwise antagonize Mexico, so Lamar illegally appropriated some funds and gathered some volunteers and invaded. (He did not personally attend.) Driving a car through West Texas is more than most can take, can you imagine walking? Van Horn, as little help as it is, wasn't even there.

Those who survived the trek were promptly captured by the Mexicans and shipped into Mexico proper.

On September 6, 1841 Sam Houston was President again, just in time to deal with Mexican reprisals about the Santa Fe thing.

They invaded San Antonio with 1400 soldiers, and the Texans were ready to fight back. The public outcry was to invade Mexico.

Let me dump into this, George Childress. He wrote, literally with his own hand, the Texas Declaration of Independence. He designed the five pointed star that we all know and love. He was the first representative of the Republic to go to

Washington and talk to, then President, Andy Jackson, who was an old family friend. On October 6, 1841, he disembowelled himself in a Galveston boarding house—allegedly.

Mulder would jump at this stuff, Scully would shake her head.

The common factor seems to be the republic/annexation debate and those people who were for annexation and went to Washington to fight for it.

Sam Houston was no dope. He could have given Machievelli a lesson in government manipulation. His representatives entreated, at once, with the United States, England and France.

He had his people ask for annexation on one hand, and spread a rumor about a 10 million dollar loan from Europe on the other.

To the Europeans he offered reduced tariffs and duties on products they usually had to get through U. S. ports (with resulting high tariffs) because the Republic of Texas had a free-trade agreement with the U. S. (Childress got that on his visit with Andy. Remember that Andy taught Houston everything.)

Then, the Houstonians, suggested to the Europeans, that a place to park your navy in the Western Hemisphere could be nice, and he made sure that Washington heard about it.

Annexation bills started flying through the U. S. Congress in 1844. Think about the U. S. in the 1840's: Canada was run by England, Florida was run by Spain, the Northwest Territories were run by France, California was run by Mexico, and these nut-case Texans were ready to deal with anybody for cash. The United States would have been surrounded.

The final nail was driven by the then Minister from Texas to the U. S., Issac Van Zandt, who asked Secretary of State (U. S.) Abel Upshur if Texas could recall their application for annexation. (I don't want to confuse you, but Upshur was "killed" two days later in a boating accident.)

In late December 1845, the U. S. Congress granted approval for the annexation of Texas, and it entered the Union in 1846.

Anson Jones (no, I'm not done yet) was the last President of the Republic. He was also the Surgeon-General during the revolution, a Minister to the U. S., Member of Congress (Texas), Secretary of State under Houston, and crazy. Toward the end of his life his correspondence to friends became more rambling and disjointed. He lost the use of his right arm, and finally his wife of thirty years dies. He shot himself on January 8, 1858.

Thomas Rusk, however was not crazy. He went with Houston after annexation as the junior Senator from the State of Texas and served until the death of his wife in 1857. He shot himself shortly after.

Fox Mulder might find a conspiracy in all of this, or at least part of this. I can certainly see some odd coincidences (a word I hate). Dana Scully on the other hand, might just say that it's really hard work to build a country.

Perhaps all of this should be viewed in the context of the boundaries of the United States shortly after Texas' annexation; from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Which was just what Andy Jackson always wanted.



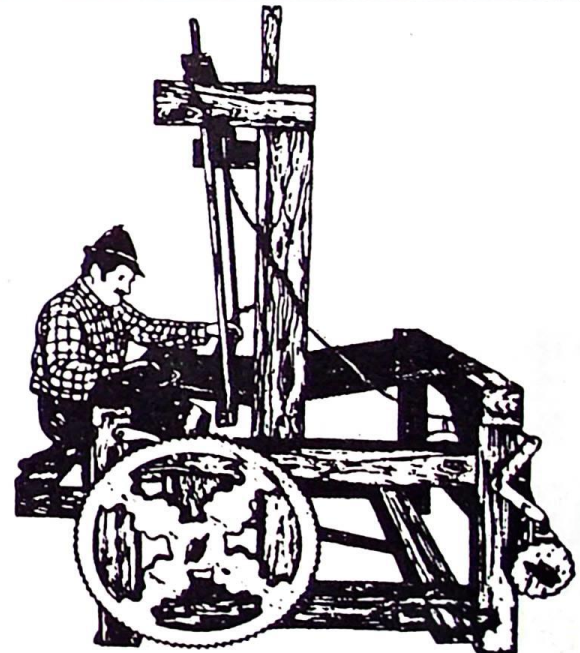
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THE REPUBLIC OF TEXAS:

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

by **IRA KENNEDY**



Rumors, gossip, lies, and dreams. Conspiracies, intrigues, plots and counter plots. This must be the Republic of Texas. From 1830 to 1845, the eyes of the world turned toward Texas. Stretching from the Rio Grande to Wyoming, and from Louisiana to Santa Fe (New Mexico), Texas was enormous, and her potential to expand all the way to the Pacific Ocean was under serious discussion. In 1844 General Duff Green, President Tyler's ambassador-at-large, began lobbying for a scheme to conquer California and northern Mexico for Texas with the aid of the United States Indians. According to the plan, Texas would then be annexed by the United States. With slight modifications to accommodate the shifting political winds, this plan was born as early as 1830.

That year, according to Dr. Robert Mayo, Sam Houston confided to him that the general was preparing an expedition to establish an independent Republic in Texas. Although Mayo was offered a position as surgeon in Houston's army the doctor declined. Mayo then contacted the President Andrew Jackson in November and again in December of 1830 to warn the president that such action would be a breach of neutrality laws with Mexico.

DEC. 10, 1830: FROM PRESIDENT ANDREW JACKSON TO WILLIAM FULTON, SECRETARY OF THE TERRITORY OF ARKANSAS:

"It has been stated to me that an extensive expedition against Texas is organizing in the United States, with a view to the establishment of an independent government in that Province and that Genl Houston is to be at the head of it... It is said that enlistments have been made for the enterprisae in various parts of the Union—That the confederates are to repair as travellers to different points of the Mississippi, where they have already chartered steam Boats on which to embark—That the point of rendezvous is to be in the Arkansas Territory, and that the cooperation of the Indians is looked to by those engaged in the contemplated expedition."

Although Jackson denied any knowledge of the plan in his letter of December 10, he also declined to take any action against Houston. "No movements have been made, nor have any facts been established which would require, or would justify the adoption of official proceedings against individuals implicated..." Ironically, two years later Jackson sent his friend and protege, Sam Houston, on a mission to Texas that would, at least on its surface, correspond to the alleged plot to enlist the aid of the Indians, and others to overthrow the Mexican government.

In 1832 Sam Houston was issued a passport by President Andrew Jackson and, as his emissary, traveled to Texas to assess the strength, etc. of the Comanche and other tribes of the southern Plains. Houston was either on a fact-finding mission, a peace-treaty mission, or, as a Louisiana newspaper claimed, Sam Houston had gone to Texas to incite rebellion.

Enroute to Nacogdoches, a hotbed of political rebellion against Mexico, Houston visited the Texas Cherokee who had settled in northeast Texas in 1810. Members of this band were involved in the ill-fated Fredonian Rebellion which sought to overthrow the Mexican government with an alliance of Indian and whites in Texas.

Arriving in Nacogdoches, Houston called on the Mexican commandant to whom he presented his credentials. And then renewed his friendship

with old acquaintance, Adolphus Sterne, a Texan revolutionary who had supplied arms and ammunition to members of the Fredonian Rebellion. Sterne was arrested and sentenced to death by the Mexican government for his involvement in the revolt. Later his sentence was commuted, but Sterne was still under suspicion and his movements carefully watched. When Houston was baptized a Catholic, Adolphus and his wife Eva Stern acted as his godfather and godmother.

When Houston went to San Antonio, in 1833, to meet with the Indians he was greeted with suspicion by Mexican officials. Exactly what was Houston's mission on behalf of the U.S. government with the Indians of Texas? Was Houston trying to rally their support in a war against Mexico? President Jackson had more than a passing interest in Texas. Apart from receiving regular dispatches from Houston on the possibilities of annexation; Jackson sent Anthony Butler on a secret mission to Mexico. Butler was authorized by Jackson to offer Mexico \$5 million for their Texas colony. The offer was turned down; thereafter Butler started using the purchase money to bribe officials into selling Texas. Butler's suggestion to Jackson they call the bribes "gifts," but his recommendation fell on deaf ears and he was recalled.

On April 1, 1833 the Texans held a Constitutional Convention, apart from petitioning for a resumption of immigration from the U.S. which had been forbidden by the decree of April 6, 1830, the convention elected President Andrew Jackson's protege Sam Houston as chairman of the constitutional committee. Needless-to-say, everything the Texans did appeared to be an effort, by increments, to establish total independence. When Stephen F. Austin went to Mexico to present the plan to the authorities he was given accommodations in the Prison of Inquisition.

While Stephen F. Austin cooled his heels in a Mexican prison, Sam Houston dropped out of sight. Suddenly he turned up in Cincinnati, then Nashville, Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia and New York before heading back to Texas. In his wake, militias were formed and trained before heading west. Arms and munitions were being shipped and warehoused along the Texas border.

In December, 1834, G.W. Featherstonhaugh, author of *Excursion Through the Slave States* was in the village of Washington, near the Texas border in Arkansas Territory—the very region which in 1830 Mayo said Houston was organizing a revolutionary force to enter Texas.

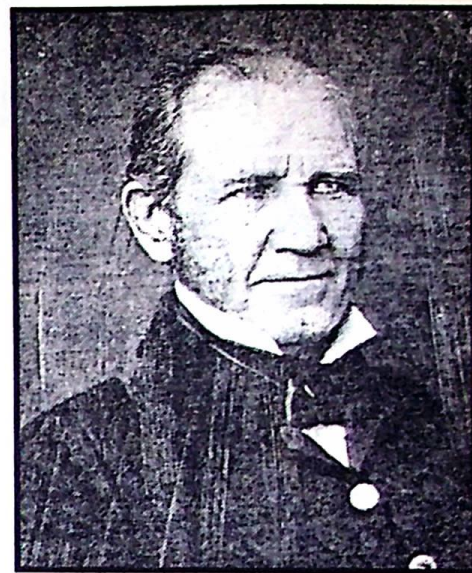
"I was not desirous of remaining long at this place." Featherstonhaugh wrote, "General Houston was here, leading a mysterious sort of life, shut up in a small tavern, seeing nobody by day and sitting up all night... I had seen too much passing before my eyes, to be ignorant that this little place was the rendezvous where a much deeper game than faro... was playing. There were many persons at this time in the village from the States lying adjacent to the Mississippi, under the pretence of purchasing government lands, but whose real object was to encourage the settlers in Texas to throw off their allegiance to the Mexican government."

Despite the 1830 decree to halt immigration, between 1830 and 1835 as many as 10,000 U.S. citizens entered Texas illegally, and more than a few were spoiling for a fight. Even Austin, the go-along to get-along empresario, had a change of heart and mind in Mexico. After his release from prison in July, 1835, Austin penned a letter in New Orleans to a cousin:

"A great immigration from Kentucky, Tennessee, etc., *each man with his rifle...* would be of great use to us—very great indeed... I wish a great immigration this fall and winter from Kentucky, Tennessee, everywhere; passports or no passports, *anyhow*. For fourteen years I have had a hard time of it, but nothing shall daunt my courage or abate my exertions to complete the main object of my labors to *Americanize* Texas. This fall and winter will fix our fate—a great immigration will settle the question."

Although Austin was five years behind the invasion plan, he was, at last, on board and the Texas Revolution had begun.

★



SAM HOUSTON

It has been stated to me that an extensive expedition against Texas is organizing in the United States, with a view to the establishment of an independent government in that Province and that Genl Houston is to be at the head of it.

—Pres. Andrew Jackson, 1830

THE REPUBLIC OF TEXAS

1845, THE TWILIGHT YEAR

by IRA KENNEDY

Lamar's dream to mark "with the sword" the western boundary of Texas at the Pacific Ocean was as foolhardy as it was visionary. When Anson Jones ascended to the presidency of the Republic on the first Monday of September, 1844, he sought to attain by treaty what was impossible with the sword. With the assistance of diplomats Charles Elliot of England, and Count de Saligny of France, Mexico agreed to recognize Texas as an independent republic. And President Polk's invasion of Texas and his undeclared war against Mexico began.



Pease with Mexico, and the diplomatic recognition of the Republic of Texas by the nations of Europe presented an almost insurmountable obstacle to the westward expansion of the United States. Add to this the fact that if the southern states joined the Republic the boundary of Texas would have stretched across half of the continent and the U.S. would face, not a civil war, which many saw on the horizon, but a world war. In its twilight year, the Republic of Texas held in its hands the balance of power in world affairs and the fate of the North American Continent.

"Texas was then a rich jewel lying derelict by the way," Anson Jones wrote. "She was without a friend who thought her of sufficient consequence to take her by the hand and assist her in her accumulated misfortunes. Guided by her interests and by a far-reaching policy, England had resolved to become such a friend. During two years she conferred important benefits upon the country, and in 1845, in conjunction with France, procured an unconditional acknowledgment of our independence from Mexico. This was the secret of the immense change which so suddenly took place throughout the United States on the subject of annexation."

The official offer from France and England on January 12, 1845 to negotiate a peace treaty with Mexico caused an immediate reaction in the U.S. On January 25, 1845 the U.S. passed a joint resolution for the annexation of Texas. The deal, however still required approval by the Texas legislature, a special convention, and a popular vote. Plus the state constitution had to be approved by the U.S. Congress.

A most unusual meeting was held in February between Ashbel Smith, President Jones's Secretary of State and the Mexican Consul General who was travelling home from New Orleans. They met in Col. Forstall's office. No introductions were made nor were either Senor Arrangoiz's or Smith's names uttered during the conversation. After the extended and comprehensive meeting, Smith came away satisfied that Mexico would make peace on the basis of independence.

While secret negotiations with Mexico were moving forward as rapidly as diplomatic relations between England, France, Texas, and Mexico allowed given the distances involved, annexation fever had gripped both the U.S. and Texas. It was the news of the day.

The secret maneuverers of all the principals involved is worthy of a modern spy novel. In a private meeting between

Jones and the Charge' de' Affaires of England and France, Charles Elliot and Count de Salginy respectively, Jones agreed to delay any action for annexation for ninety days while the diplomats put in place the conditions for independence.

With that understanding, Charles Elliot sailed from Galveston on April aboard the *Electra*. Then, out of sight of land he changed ships. Aboard the *Eurydice* he sailed to Mexico while the *Electra* headed for Charleston. Little did Elliot know that George Wilkins Kendall of the New Orleans *Picayune* "dogged him to Galveston, and when in every grocery and bowling alley he proclaimed that he was going to Charleston, on the British Frigate *Eurydice*, I suspected that he was going to the City of Mexico, to prevent annexation if in his power. I was right, [and] came out in the *Picayune* with the mysterious movements of the "Man in the White Hat."

Meanwhile, both official and covert agents of the U.S. swarmed over Texas stirring up the population for the purpose of annexation and against independence. Anson Jones was burned in effigy.

Because President Jones was following a clear and steady diplomatic course, the results of which would be to offer the citizens of Texas a choice between annexation and independence; and because he had agreed with Elliot to delay any action for annexation—which agreed to, and held, in secrecy—he was seen by many Texans as a puppet of England at best, and a traitor at worst. The rabble rousers made sure of that. Of course



ANSON JONES

A VIEW FROM THE PRESIDENCY

from *The History of Annexation*

by ANSON JONES

Texas declared her independence of Mexico in March, 1836,—in the same month adopted a constitution and provisional government, and virtually achieved her Independence at San Jacinto in April following. The people soon after proceeded to organize a permanent government, by the election of a President, etc., at which election the question of annexation was submitted to a vote, and with almost entire unanimity, decided in the affirmative. The measure however, met with but little favor or encouragement from the American Government... In October, 1838, the proposition was formally withdrawn...

The Executive of Texas, inaugurated in December, 1838, (Gen. Lamar) took decided ground against the whole policy of annexation, present and prospective, and the Representatives of the people, by a joint Resolution of Congress as unanimous as had been the vote in 1836 for the measure appeared to sustain the President's opinions against it.

But in the three years... the country was brought to the extremist point of depression—her means exhausted—her credit utterly prostrated—the loan, sought all over the U. States and Europe, refused on any terms—pressed and oppressed with debts—her currency at a discount of 97 1/2% per cent.—the Navy gone to Yucatan—the army to Santa Fe and captivity—the frontiers of a thousand miles assailed by hostile Indians...

It was thought best to pursue an acknowledgment of our

independence from Mexico, as well to favor the success of annexation, as an alternative, in the event that should fail. The apparently insurmountable objection urged by the United States, that "she could not annex Texas so long as it involved the risk of a war with Mexico," would have been obviated by procuring this acknowledgment...

Under the economical and prudent administration of the government, conducted by Gen. Houston, the finances of the country had improved, and by the close of 1842, credit and confidence had become somewhat restored...

The year 1843 dawned on Texas with brightening prospects. A jealousy and rivalry began to exist between the U. States on the one hand, and Great Britain and France on the other, in relation to Texas, which was daily gaining strength, and it was not her policy to endeavor to abate or suppress it...

[By 1844] Texas had recovered from her embarrassments, and was rapidly emerging from her difficulties. Her credit was restored, her currency almost at par, her resources nearly adequate to the wants of her government, and the country rapidly filling up with an intelligent, enterprising and industrious population. She had enjoyed an interval of nearly two years of peace. The Indians, with few exceptions conciliated, no longer harassed our frontiers. She had become an object of lively interest to three of the greatest powers of the world who were vying with each other for her favor. Other nations too were seeking her friendship. No longer depressed, hopeless and weak, she felt able to stand alone.



**The missions had but one object—
that of persuading or compelling me to
assist Mr. Polk in manufacturing a war
with Mexico, covered up, however,
under a professed zeal to accomplish
annexation, which stood in no need of
their aid, and of protecting Texas from
Mexican invasion when there was
no danger of such an invasion,
except from their intrigues.**

his close friendship with Elliot didn't help matters—Elliot was the godfather of Jones's second son.

On April 21, 1845, Elliot wrote from Mexico to Anson Jones: "I hasten to send you the official paper of to-day, announcing the demand of this [the Mexican] Government to Congress for authority to treat with Texas, upon the basis of the preliminary conditions... there is no doubt that Congress will accede to the proposal of the Government, and that the conditions themselves will be signed by the Secretary of State before the close of this week. They will be forwarded *direct* to Texas without delay, by a French vessel of war, and I will come on with Sanligny by the first opportunity, after I reach New Orleans."

In the past, the annexation of Texas was rejected because of the U.S. concern that Texas would pull them into a war with Mexico. At that time Texas did not have well established diplomatic relations with the European powers. The U.S. under Andrew Jackson held out hope they could but the maverick colony; however, once diplomatic relations were set in place Texas became a player in international affairs.

The diplomatic relationship between Texas and Mexico, and the friendship between Elliot and Jones proved unsettling in the states. On May 1, 1845, Ashbel Smith, Texas's Charge' d' Affaires to England wrote to Anson Jones from Boston:

"The American papers are full of speculations, too, on the chances of a war between the Unites States and England. I do not think there is any likelihood or prospect of a war to grow out of the Oregon question. [Texas, however, was another issue.]

"It appears to me, from such observation as I have had, that it is expected by the people of this country that the measures of annexation will be ratified by the next Congress, if acceded to by Texas."

Actually President Polk had another plan that could have resulted in a war with England. If Texas chose independence over annexation the only way the U.S. could maintain control over the affairs of the republic, and keep their options of westward expansion open, was by sabotaging the Texas/Mexico treaty.

On May 2, 1845 the U.S. offered military "protection" to Texas through Andrew Jackson Donelson, the nephew of Andrew Jackson and charge' d' affaires of the United States to

the Republic of Texas.

"I send you the correspondence with Gen. Almonte, and late accounts from Mexico," Donelson wrote, "as the basis of the suggestion from Mr. Allen respecting the obligation of the United States to protect the western frontier of Texas in case of invasion.

"If you sanction the letter from Mr. Allen, I can make it the basis of an immediate application to the President of the United States, who, I doubt not, will order the troops, as soon as Congress accepts the terms submitted by me, or leave a provisional power in my hands to convey the order as soon as the exigency arises."

Ebenezer Allen served as attorney general of Texas under Anson Jones in December 1844, and for a time as secretary of state, and assisted Jones in framing the terms of annexation to the United States. Regarding the offer Jones observed:

"This letter contains the proof that the application for protection to Texas came from the Government of the United States, and not from Texas. Mr. Allen was urged and over-persuaded in the matter; and it had gone so far before it came to my knowledge, I could not refuse a compliance."

At the time, the Mexican army was south of the Rio Grande and their troop movements, as nominal as they were, came about as a result of the aggressive position of the U.S. regarding Texas. As Jones wrote in his book on annexation:

"The missions of Gov. Yell of Arkansas, Gov. Wickliffe of Kentucky, Com. Stockton and Dr. Wright of the U.S. Navy, and Donelson of Tennessee, in 1845 had but one object—that of persuading or compelling me to assist Mr. Polk in manufacturing a war with Mexico, covered up, however, under a professed zeal to accomplish annexation, which stood in no need of their aid, and of protecting Texas from Mexican invasion when there was no danger of such an invasion, except from their intrigues.

"In reference to the subject of "protection" to Texas by the United States, as against Mexico, I always believed the moral force of that Government sufficient; and so I always told their Ministers, and particularly Major Donelson; still in asking their protection I could not officially specify the kind, but left that to their intelligence. What I wanted was, in the event of an invasion of Texas by Mexico, brought on by our negotiations for annexation, that the United States should interpose with the necessary means, fair words at first, and blows, if blows were necessary, and could not be avoided. The protection, therefore, asked for was prospective, and contingent upon an aggressive movement by Mexico."

President Polk had more on his mind than "protecting" Texas. Why would Mexico prepare for invasion when they were busy striking a deal for Texas's independence with England, and France? In early May the Count de Saligny wrote to Jones:

"The *McKim* will be off in half an hour, and I have just time enough to inform you that I have received, five minutes ago, a letter from Capt. Elliot, dated Vera Cruz on the 9th. The House of Deputies of Mexico has declared in favor of Texan independence by a majority of 41 to 13. The Senate, where the Government is stronger, is considered perfectly safe. It was expected all would be done by the 11th or 12th; and the good tidings were to be taken immediately to Galveston by the French man-of-war *LaPerouse*."

The President of the Republic had succeeded beyond measure. After only eight months in office he had achieved, through diplomacy, the impossible. The President's response

was simple and direct:

"I have it now. Eureka!—Annexation *and* independence."

Elliot and Saligny had done their work well. Regarding the efforts of Elliot, Jones noted that the Englishman "in less than four weeks achieved an exploit of which history furnishes no parallel."

By playing the forces for annexation and independence, one against the other, Jones held out for the best proposal from both. And now, the great fear in the U.S. was that Texas was to come under the influence of England and France. Because President Jones was playing his cards close the vest, many in Texas and the U.S. were uncertain of Jones' preference for annexation. For his part, Jones's single-minded plan was to put the choice before the people of Texas. But the U.S. could not wait and was taking no chances. In May a U.S. fleet bent on invading Mexico arrived at Galveston.

The is following Jones's account of the meeting with agents of President Polk:

"In May, 1845, Commodore Stockton, with a fleet of four or five vessels, arrived at Galveston... On the 28th of May, Gen. Sherman for himself and associates in the militia, and Dr. Wright, surgeon of the steamer Princeton, and secretary of the Commodore, (as he informed me,) took three days in unfolding to me the object of their visit. Dr. Wright stated that he was sent by Com. Stockton to propose that I should authorize Major Gen. Sherman to raise a force of two or three thousand men, or as many as might be necessary, and make a descent upon the Mexican town of Matamoras, and capture and hold it; that Com. Stockton would give assistance with the fleet under his command, under the pretext of giving the protection promised by the United States to Texas by Gen. Murphy; that he would undertake to supply the necessary provisions, arms and munitions of war for the expedition, would land them at convenient points on our coast, and would agree to pay the men and officers to be engaged; that he had consulted Gen. Sherman who approved the plan, and was present to say so; and, besides that, the people generally from Galveston to Washington had been spoken about it, that it met their unanimous approval; and all that was now wanting was the sanction of the Government to the scheme...

"I asked him if the Minister of the United States was cognizant of the matter. He then stated to me that the scheme was rather a confidential and secret one, that it was undertaken under the sanction of the United States Government, but that the President did not wish to be known in the matter, but approved Com. Stockton's plan—that as an evidence of that to me, Mr. Wickliffe was associated with the Commodore; that the President of the United States, satisfied that annexation was in effect consummated, wished Texas to place herself in an attitude of active hostility towards Mexico, so that, when Texas was finally brought into the Union, *she might bring a war with her*; and this was the object of the expedition to Matamoras, as now proposed. He further stated that Com. Stockton was known to be, individually, very wealthy; that he had means of his own sufficient to support and carry on the expedition; and that it was desirable it should appear to the world as his individual enterprise, while at the same time I was given to understand that the Government of the United States was, in reality, at the bottom of it, and anxious for its accomplishment and for the reasons stated. I then said, smiling, "So, gentlemen, the Commodore, on the part of the United States, wishes me to *manufacture a war for them*;" to which they

I was given to understand that the Government of the United States was, in reality, at the bottom of it, and anxious for its accomplishment and for the reasons stated. I then said, smiling, "So, gentlemen, the Commodore, on the part of the United States, wishes me to manufacture a war for them;" to which they replied affirmatively...

replied affirmatively...

"I suppressed my feelings, and gave no expression of opinion, but suggested every objection and difficulty which presented themselves to my mind, and for three days kept them answering these objections or obviating difficulties, until they became pretty thoroughly impressed with the belief that I was thinking very seriously on the matter; and so indeed I was, but not in the way they hoped."

Jones did not intend to "be made a scape goat in such an affair. The United States Government" he said, "must take all the responsibility, and all the expense and all the labour of hostile movements upon Mexico. Somebody else must break up the state of peace. It shall not be me."

On June 4, 1845, Anson Jones noted in his diary, "I issued proclamation of Peace with Mexico. Same day received proposals of peace from the Comanche Chief Santa Anna the last enemy which Texas had. Accepted them. Now my country for the first time in ten years is actually *at peace with ALL the World*."

Conditions Preliminary to a Treaty of Peace Between Mexico And Texas were these: First Mexico agreed to acknowledge the independence of Texas, Texas would stipulate in the treaty not to annex herself or become subject to any country whatever, and lastly the Territorial limits would be settled by "the arbitration of umpires." It was understood by England, France, and Mexico that President Jones would present the options for independence or annexation before the government and citizens of Texas

Jones officially offered Texans "the alternatives of peace with the world and Independence, or annexation and its contingencies." Jones was more aware than most that annexation meant war with Mexico.

As Herbert Gambrell observed in his biography of Anson Jones, "One acute danger arose from the combined activity of the United States agents and naval officers and Texan leaders disaffected with Jones. Duff Green was still in Texas, still eager for conquest; Archibald Yell and ex-Postmaster General Wickliffe had come to block British intrigues; and Commodore Stockton, U.S.N., was at Galveston with the *Princeton*, *St Mary's*, *Saratoga*, and *Porpoise*. On the northern and eastern borders of Texas, United States troops were concentrated—all ready to pounce on Mexico if she made a move."

Actually, the U.S. was ready to pounce in any event.

From Secretary of State Ebenezer Allen Jones received the following letter on June 5:

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"I am persuaded that some unaccredited and informal (perhaps self-constituted and unauthorized) agents, acting in pretended behalf of the United States, are endeavoring to take advantage of the crisis to hurry us into hostilities with Mexico. I hope they may be disappointed, and that in spite of their efforts we shall at least be able to preserve peace *at present*, if not the Republic... Gen. Sherman, who returned from Galveston, is going up to-morrow to see Mr. Donelson who, as Gen. S. says, approves of a military occupation forthwith of the territory west of the Nueces by Texas, but not as Minister of the United States. I have only indirect news from Com. Stockton, who, in urging military operation of the part of Texas, seems to act through others, holding himself, in the mean time, wisely aloof.

"Under existing circumstances, I think that the policy of Texas should, for the present, be peaceful; and such a course, I trust, the nation will approve. Gen. Sherman has been strongly urged by the reckless agitators in this vicinity and at Galveston to call out the militia, and commence hostilities against Mexico, without regard to the approval or disapproval of the Executive. But I have no idea that he can be persuaded into so reckless a measure..."

And then Jones received this letter dated June 12, 1845, from England's diplomat Charles Elliot.

"Galveston—The accounts yesterday from New Orleans are rife of *immediate* movement of United States forces, land and sea, to the Rio Grande, and a great deal of the like inflammable matter... It was hugely wished that you should do the work of provoking hostilities, and that somebody else should reap the advantage..."

And then there was this from Elliot on the following day: "It occurs to me that you would do well to cause copies of your proclamation to be forwarded to Gen Arista, without delay; for I am greatly afraid that the news he will hear of military movements from New Orleans may lead to some sudden outbreak..."

"...I have written to Mexico, in the strongest terms, suggesting *complete* abstinence from onward movement, let this Congress and Convention say what they may. The Mexicans had better leave the initiative in hostile proceedings to the United States, which will be no easy nor irresponsible task under present circumstances. I should hope they would pause before they break up a state of peace between Mexico and yourselves. The proclamation is, I think, working sedatively already."

Elliot's advice was well taken. What was unspoken, and possible was that if Texas chose independence, war between England, France, Mexico and Texas on the one hand, and the United States on the other could occur. And if Texas chose annexation, war with Mexico, and possibly England, was on the horizon. After all, Stockton's plan to invade Matamoras, while Texas was at peace with Mexico, reached well beyond the limits of protecting the Republic, to the point of jeopardy.

Despite the fact that the majority of Texans, including Sam Houston and Anson Jones favored annexation, the U.S. under President Polk was taking no chances and was proceeding with his undeclared war with Mexico. The U.S. had troops on foreign soil (The Republic of Texas) and the possibility of impeachment proceedings against Polk was not out of the question. Polk's position, simply put, was that once the annexation bill past in the U.S., Texas was annexed and all the other details, such as approval by the U.S. Congress, plus the government and people of Texas, were mere formalities.

While the President of the United States was acting the pious "mawworm" in reference to pretended "interference" on the part of France and England in the affairs of Texas, he was himself actively engaged in carrying on the most disgraceful system of intrigue.

—Anson Jones

As Congress met at Washington-on-the-Brazos in Texas on June 16, the mood against Jones was volatile.

"I felt its blasts all around me," he wrote. "Demagogues, emissaries, factionists, disorganizers, and personal and political enemies, all, all united against me."

The annexation resolution was unanimously approved by the Senate and the House. They rejected the Mexican treaty, and agreed on a tribute to Andrew Jackson and a vote of thanks to ex-President Tyler. As for President Jones, who labored to attain the best conditions for annexation or independence for the Republic of Texas, his opponents had only this:

General McLeod in the House proclaimed "the course of the Executive in relation to the question of annexation unpatriotic and unwise." McLeod then asked that Jones's tenure as President be ended. Jones must not be "enabled to throw further obstacles in the way of this great measure, and ultimately effect its defeat."

In the Senate, James K. McCreary declared, "The President in this arbitrarily exercising the powers of negotiating a treaty has done an official act unworthy of the Executive of Texas, and degrading to the country, and has set at defiance the known and express will of the people, and therefore justly deserves censure of this body." Evidently, having a change of heart, McCreary moved to table his own motion, and failing that withdrew the motion to censure.

CONTINUED NEXT MONTH

STROLL THROUGH THE PAST

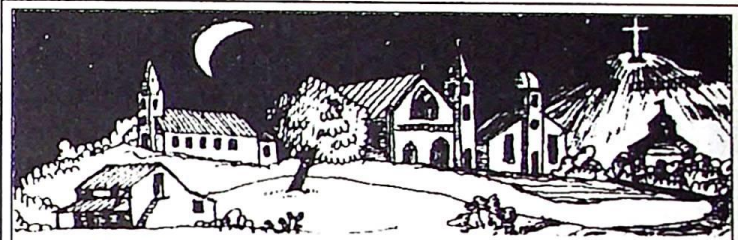
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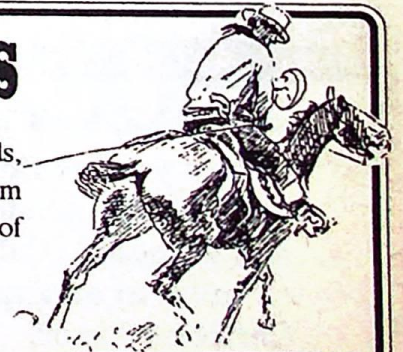
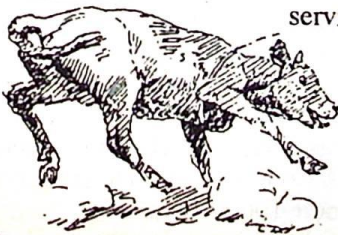
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by **L. KELLY DOWN**



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It's them yapping little dogs fair ladies carry around with a ribbon or three in they hair. Or dogs so dumb they has to be showed where they eats every day. Them dogs is what gets my goat. Seems like the more Old Fool money a mans got, the younger he last wife be and the yappier and littler her "lap" dog be. They done bred them dogs so high now you could put them in a yard full of gophers and fill it with cotton-tails and they would starve plum to death.

In my early days a fair lady that went to get her hair set for a dance as much as these here "lap" dogs has to have they fur done would be the talk of every sewing circle in three counties and she could forget about school teaching, working in a bank—unless she was a bank president typing type person—and better not even try to join no Sunday school class. Now, these here "lap" dogs costs more than it use to to feed a good stud horse—vet bill's, too.

No, I ain't never had any lady friend with no "lap" dog—and don't plan on one that's for sure. You boys know that in my younger more traveling days I didn't pass on no hugging and kissing fair ladies—they seems to likes it fine, too. But you knows how particular I is about how clean my food be—well, can you think old L. Kelly Down is goin to kiss on a fair lady just after she done picked up her lap dog, talked baby talk to that worthless nothing, then lets that dog lick her all over her face—and then expect me to kiss and hug on her?

I ain't too smart like but I don't surmise that them high-class dog breeders done bred out a dogs natural talent for cleaning heself up—and I ain't in no hurry to be close to where a dogs tongue been in the last ten minutes. More like making dutch oven biscuits using cow chips for flour in my estimate.

ON THE ROAD

GREEN'S SAUSAGE HOUSE

ZABCIKVILLE, TEXAS

by RANDY EADS

If you're cruising along Interstate 35 between Dallas and Austin, and begin to get hungry in the vicinity of Temple, I know just the place. Green's Sausage House is a little out of the way, but it offers something different from the normal Fast-food fare you find along the interstate. Whenever I tell someone that I had lunch in Zabcikville, they always ask, "where in the heck is Zabcikville?" I always look at them like I can't believe they don't know and then tell them it's three miles north of Red Ranger.

Green's Sausage House, located 10 miles east of Temple on SH 53, is about all that's going on in Zabcikville these days. For over 50 years now, the Jerome Green family has been making some of the best sausages you ever sank your teeth into. What you have here is your basic Meat Market, sausage Factory, Cafe, Beer Joint, and Country Store all rolled into one unique place.

Green's isn't big on advertising, there isn't even a sign

on the front of the building. However, word has spread and folks from all around Texas now drop in to stock up on their favorites of the 14 varieties of sausage, homemade bread, cookies and kolaches available here.

For a gourmet lunch I recommend a Sausage Burger, beer-battered Onion Rings, and your favorite liquid refreshment. You can get all this for under five bucks. For a great snack food, you can't beat their dried Sausage Sticks. I usually buy 20 of them each visit and they try to resist the urge to eat them all before I get home.

If you would like to share a little bit of Texas with friends and/or relatives living far away, for a nominal fee the fine folks at Green's will be happy to pack their sausages in dry ice and ship them around the country for you.

Green's Sausage House is one of my favorite places to stop whenever I get the chance. You should drop by and see for your self, but please be sure and save some sausage sticks for me.

Green's Sausage House is open Monday through Saturday. Their phone number is (817) 985-2331

THE BLANCO WAS BLAMELESS, OR IT WAS BALCONES FAULT.

THE GREENHOUSE THEATER AT WOODCREEK RESORT

BY MARYBETH GRADZIEL

Texas history buffs will especially enjoy Wimberley's current community theater production, which is set in Wimberley on the banks of the Blanco River at the turn of the century. The Blanco Was Blameless is absolutely wonderful—an entertaining original musical melodrama, written especially for The Wimberley Players and with music by a local, national-award-winning musician.

Erin Mommer is superb as wide-eyed Sugar Sprinkle Smith—the gorgeous, just-orphaned daughter of a Blanco River goat rancher. Sugar is a survivor, with a mind of her own, cared for and preyed upon by the usual suspects: a maiden aunt, a folksy sheriff, a handsome hero, a conniving banker/lawyer and his va-va-voom female companion.

What's unusual is how the plot is interwoven with local history topics. You'll even get to hiss the villain as he tries to destroy our beautiful Hill Country vistas in

pursuit of the almighty dollar.

The Wimberley Players have a well-deserved reputation for professional excellence. Julie Harrison, Rick Nation, Bill Finkles, Reagan Quent and Trish Preston are all outstanding veterans of numerous fine local theater projects. Miss Mommer came to the area to recover from a devastating snowboard accident. She often sings with local band.

Jules Alexander, who lives in Wimberley and has numerous gold and platinum albums, Grammy nominations and a Golden Globe award for the film Good-bye Columbus—all with this band, The Association—wrote the music, acted as music director and produced an album of the soundtrack, which is available in the theater lobby.

As might be expected, this musical melodrama is a sell-out, so be sure to call 512-847-2201 for reservations and directions.

Showtimes are 8 P.M. Fridays and Saturdays through June 14, with a 3 P.M. Sunday matinee June 8.

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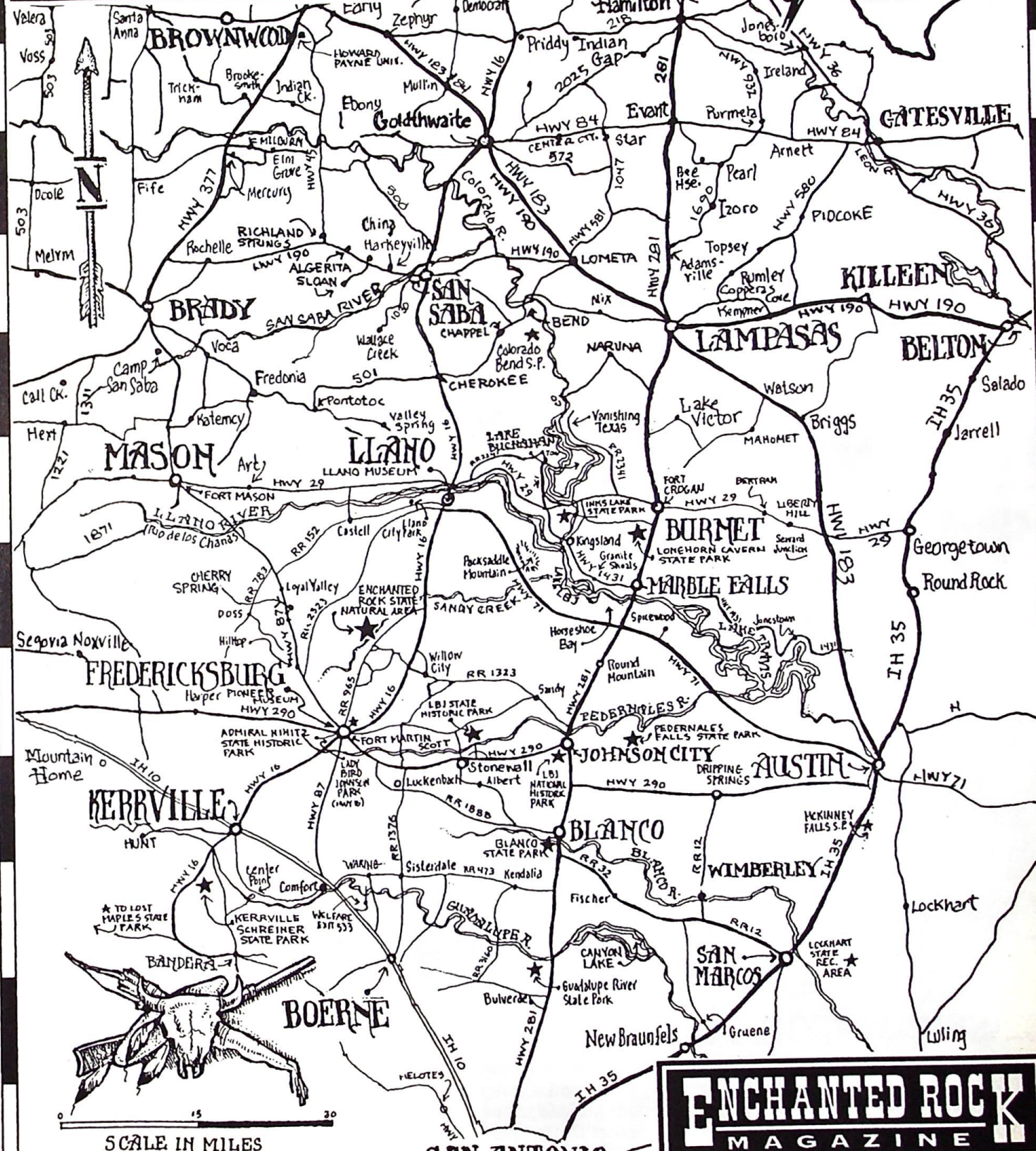


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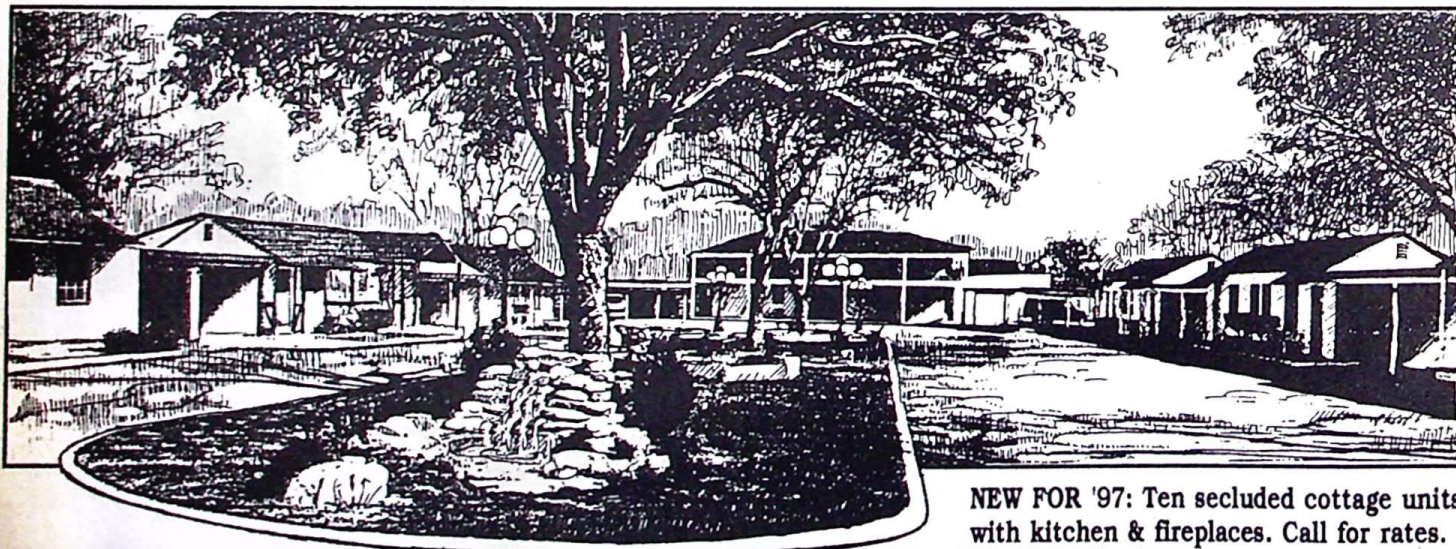


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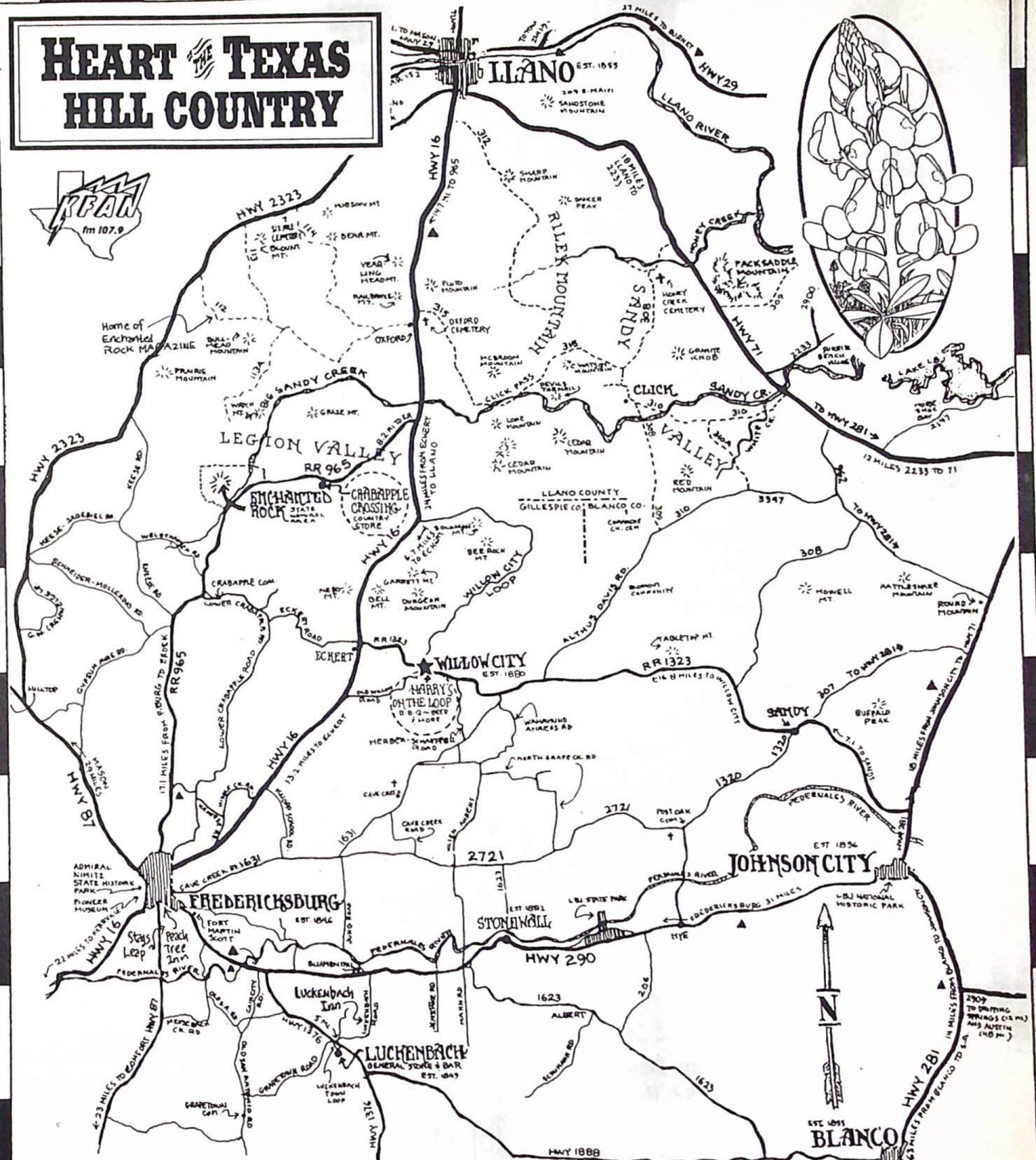
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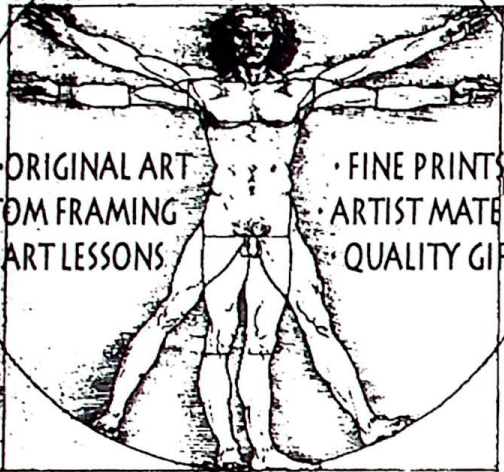
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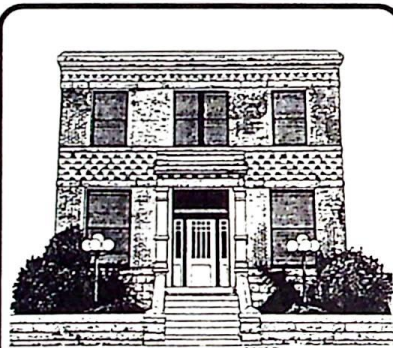
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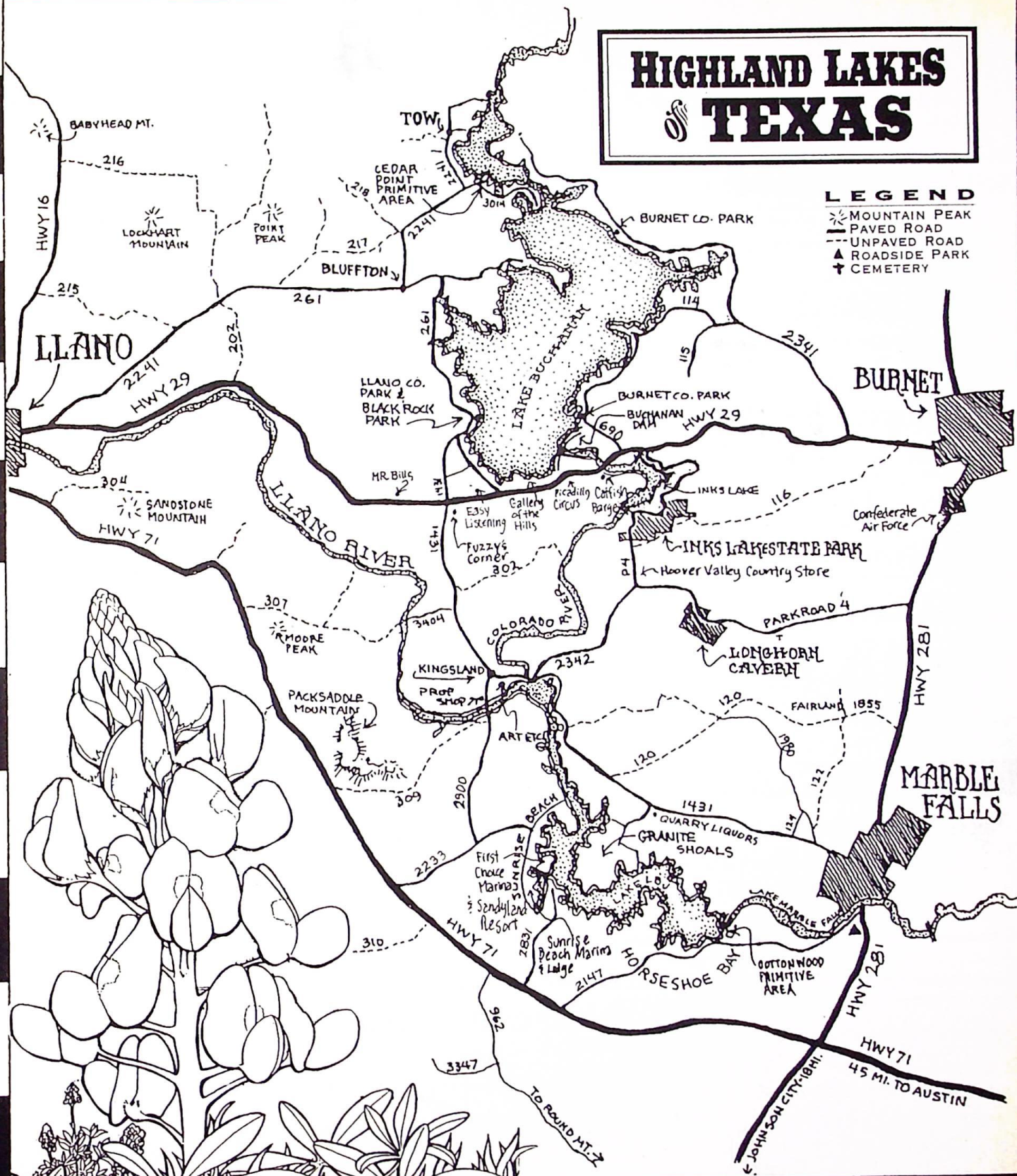
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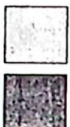
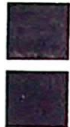
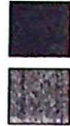
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WAS HENRY GRAVES A CRIMINAL OR A HERO?

by GARY BROWN

Henry North Graves claims to have kidnapped twin sisters from a train station in Harrisburg and drug them down the bank of Brays Bayou where he buried them. If he's telling the truth—and I think he is—I also think he should be declared a true Texas hero.

Henry North Graves claims to have kidnapped twin sisters from a train station in Harrisburg and drug them down the bank of Brays Bayou where he buried them. If he's telling the truth—and I think he is—I also think he should be declared a true Texas hero. Texas has no shortage of lost treasure stories and tales—gold, silver, bullion, artifacts and strongboxes are alleged to have been hidden throughout the state—usually buried.

But, if Graves really did bury the twin sisters one hot, muggy summer night in 1865, he may just have perpetuated the greatest hidden treasure mystery in Texas' colorful history.

According to Graves, he and four fellow Confederate veterans—Ira Pruitt, Sol Thomas, Jack Taylor and John Barnett—along with a black servant named Dan—took the twin sisters from a train depot in Harrisburg to the banks of Brays Bayou and buried them “so deep no damned Yankee will ever find them.”

Graves and his compadres committed no homicide that night but they did break the law and, had they been caught, they would have been severely punished. The Twin Sisters they claimed to have buried that night were not Texian—or even Yankee womenfolk—but, instead were the only two cannon Sam Houston had at the Battle of San Jacinto.

No damned Yankee ever found the Twin Sisters. Trouble is, neither has anybody else. I think Graves was telling the truth, but I can't find them either.

In their brief 20-year history they created a colorful—and sometimes violent—legacy that needs to be recovered.

They were created early in 1836 in Cincinnati, Ohio at the foundry of Messrs. Greenwood & Webb and donated by that city to the rebelling Texians. Carefully observing official U. S. “neutrality”, they were labeled as “hollow ware” and sent by ship to Texas where they arrived on March 16, 1836—ten days after the fall of the Alamo and three days before the Battle of Colleto Creek near Goliad.

At the Alamo, Texas lost approximately twenty cannons ranging for 4 pdrs. to the massive 18 pdr. Fannin lost nine more cannons at Colleto Creek—not counting the unlisted number of pieces he had buried inside La Bahia presidio and sunk in the San Antonio River. Even the tiny “Come and Take It” cannon on Gonzales fame was lost—buried somewhere on the bank of Sandies Creek outside San Antonio.

As a result, Sam Houston had only the Twin Sisters—named in honor of the twin daughters of a prominent physician aboard the ship transporting the cannons to Texas—when he attacked Santa Anna that April afternoon in the brief Battle of San Jacinto.

After the battle, they were used to guard Mexican prisoners and in 1840 they were transferred to the new Republic of Texas capital in Austin to guard against Indian attacks and were fired in observance of Sam Houston's swearing in as the first President.

When Texas joined the Union, they became property of the U.S. Army and were shipped to an arms depot in Louisiana. When Texas became a part of the Confederacy, one of the pieces was located at a Baton Rouge foundry and the other in the Parish of Iberville. Both cannon were described as “in very poor condition”.

Louisiana appropriated \$700 for their refurbishing and the cannon were returned to Texas where they were deployed in defense of Galveston during the Civil War. Then they disappeared.

In July of 1865, the 114th Regiment, Ohio Volunteer Infantry was stationed in Houston as part of the post-war Union occupation force. One member of the unit, M. A. Sweetman reported to a Texas newspaper in 1909 that he had seen a number of old cannon including two with brass plates on their wooden carriages that read in Old English:

TEXAS FOR SALE



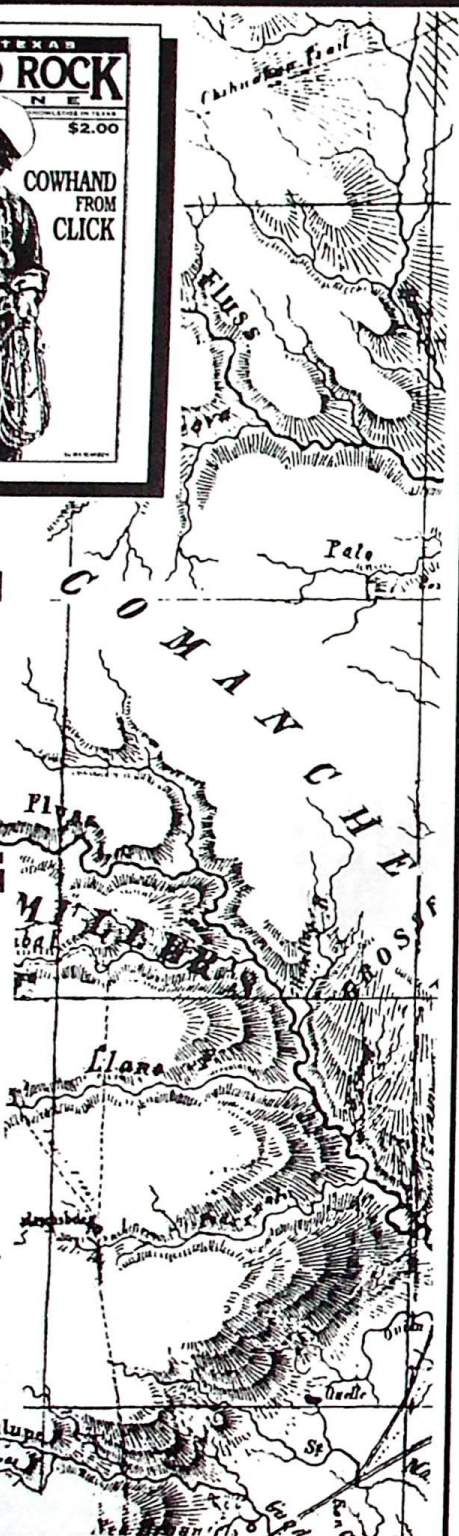
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Graves returned with two of his Confederate companions in 1895 and scouted the area but was unable to locate the cannon. In 1925 he returned alone but was again unable to determine the burial site. Despite the fact that Harrisburg had changed dramatically since the Civil War, he could pinpoint the general vicinity since the railroad tracks had not been rerouted.

"Twin Sisters"

This gun was used with terrible effect at the Battle of San Jacinto. Presented to the State of Texas by the State of Louisiana, March 4, 1861

The plaques on the Twin Sisters were, in fact, so worded so it is generally thought that Sweetman's report was accurate. If so, then they probably were at the Harrisburg depot a few weeks later when Graves claimed to have saved them from shipment to a northern foundry.

Graves returned with two of his Confederate companions in 1895 and scouted the area but was unable to locate the cannon. In 1925 he returned alone but was again unable to determine the burial site. Despite the fact that Harrisburg had changed dramatically since the Civil War, he could pinpoint the general vicinity since the railroad tracks had not been rerouted.

The Galveston, Houston and Henderson Railway Company operated the tracks in 1865 and still does so today, although the GH&H charter has been assumed by Missouri Pacific. The GH&H tracks were completed between Houston and Galveston in January, 1860 and have never been extended or abandoned—meaning the tracks today are located almost exactly where Graves reported stealing the Twin Sisters from a railroad depot in 1865.

Today, Harrisburg has been incorporated into the city of Houston and the area Graves described is located near the Houston Ship Channel in an area prone to flooding—meaning that silt and debris have built up along the banks of Brays Bayou.

Somewhere along those banks—if Graves was telling the truth—lie the Twin Sisters. The cannon were each about 5 feet,



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5 inches in length and had a 4-inch bore. Various reports have listed them as both brass and iron.

Regardless of their composition, both cannon were clearly inscribed in addition to the brass plates described by Sweetman. Graves claimed to have stolen the cannon, burned the wooden carriages, and rolled the barrels down the bank of the bayou before burying them. Because of this, it has been assumed that the brass plaques Sweetman described have also been lost.

Last March, however, I was at Goliad for the annual observance of the Battle of Colleto Creek and subsequent massacre there in 1836 and was talking with Waverly Johnson, a New Orleans Greys artilleryman reenactor. I mentioned the Twin Sisters and he informed me that a lady in Fort Worth claims to have found one of the brass plaques in an antique storage chest she had bought at an auction.

A photocopy she had provided, he told me, was of poor quality but appeared to have many of the words that Sweetman had reported as being on the original plates. He then told me that the lady steadfastly refused to sell the plaque or donate it to a Texas history museum. If she does sell it, he reported, she insists on submitting it to a New York antique auction house "where it will bring big money".

Since I feel strongly about recovering the Twin Sisters, this bothered me for some time afterward. Then, after thinking about it, I thought to myself that maybe that would be fair enough—that maybe a New Yorker should have the plaque.

After all, the Twin Sisters themselves are buried "so deep no damned Yankee will ever find them"—thanks to Henry North Graves.

And, for that, he should be declared a true Texas hero.

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IRA KENNEDY
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STAMPEDE MESA

C. F. ECKHARDT

It was a pretty long way from my home to a ranch I needed to visit near Lampasas. I climbed into the old green Ford pickup and started out, for I knew the road well. That old pickup might have been said to know it, too—we'd traveled it together enough times.

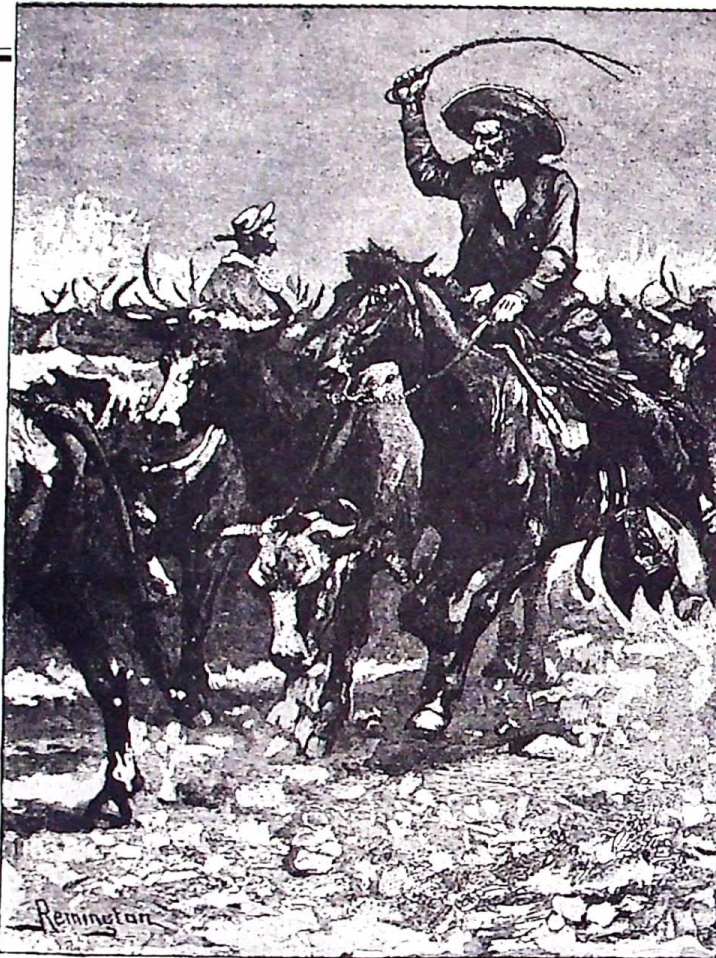
I drove the three miles and four gates from home to the paved road, down through the Middle Gabriel bottom and across the concrete bridge my Dad and I built—and lost—and rebuilt—and lost again—and rebuilt yet again because of particularly violent spring rises on the sluggish, muddy creek early Texans named the Middle San Gabriel River for no more reason than the fact that it was up and big swimming when they first saw it, and it lay between the North and South San Gabriels. On this particular day I could have spit from one bank to the other, and I didn't need a chaw stuck in my cheek to do it. Five months earlier it was over a half-mile wide, forty feet deep in the middle, and choked with the carcasses of livestock and game unlucky enough to be in the way when nature sent Texas weather on a rampage.

Once on the pavement, I turned west for about eight miles, then north and settled back for the ride. I had nearly forty miles to drive.

Would old Lon talk? Well, he'd always liked me and I'd always gotten along with him, and maybe he would. Then again, maybe he wouldn't. It was a long time ago when it happened—sixty-one years come late fall—but some men don't like to talk about experiences they can't explain. They especially don't like to talk about ghosts.

Arn Sanders told me about it first. "You know ol' Lon Schuyler, over betwixt Lampasas and Oak Alley?"

I knew Lon and said so, and I didn't remind Arn that the



name of the place was Okalla, not Oak Alley.

"Ol' Lon, he spent the night on Stampede Mesa. With a herd. Back about 1900, maybe 1901. He was drivin' steers for one of the crazy Limey outfits they had in them days—late fall, which you know ain't no time to be drivin'. Anyway, the way I heard it they lost about nine hunderd head over the side and a couple of cowboys too, an' Lon an' 'em other boys that didn't go over the side, they like to of lynched the trailboss for puttin' 'em on Stampede Mesa after they tol' him about it."

Stampede Mesa. There's not a cowman in Texas—or one that came from Texas—that hasn't heard of the place. Somewhere in the panhandle, it's supposed to be. Haunted—haunted by the ghost of a nester who stampeded a herd over the side of the mesa one night,

and was sent over the side after them next morning by the trailboss of the herd he stampeded. And by the ghost of every cow, bull and steer to go over the side, and a bunch of cowboys as well, all of whom died trying to hold herds on the place.

Well, it's not in the panhandle, and it's not a mesa. There aren't any mesas—at least not like the ones in Arizona—anywhere in Texas. Out west of the Pecos there are some flat topped hills you might call mesas if you wanted to stretch a point, but anybody who's ever seen a real mesa wouldn't make the mistake.

The thing called 'Stampede Mesa' is a point of land, sloping uphill from north to south, between what used to be called the North Blanco River and later came to be called the White River, and a hollow that in dry times was called McNeil Creek by folks who didn't know any better. It's located in Crosby County, just southwest of the southeast corner of the Texas Panhandle. Along the east side of the point there's a

dropoff of twenty-five or thirty feet into McNeil Draw, and along the west side there's a dropoff of nearly two hundred feet into Blanco Canyon, to the banks of the White River. The 'mesa' is about a section—a square mile or six hundred forty acres—in extent.

To look at it, it's the best place in the world to hold driven cattle. The top is rocky but there is a lot of grass, the two bluffs are natural fences, and even when McNeil Draw is dry as old buffalo bones there's water in the White River. A man could throw a herd—anywhere from a few hundred to right at three thousand—up on that point, put a light guard riding the bottom of the north slope so the cattle couldn't drift off, and rest men and animals for the next leg of a drive that, in the old days, might have gone as far north as Montana. Oh, yes—in spite of Zane Grey and about nine hundred other romantic writers about riders of the range, three thousand was as many as anybody ever actually drive in one herd. A bigger herd tended to split itself and was simply too big to handle.

That's to look at the place in the daylight. To look at it at night—well, if I had my druthers, I don't reckon I'd ever look at it at night. Since 1889 there hasn't been a gather of cattle held on that point that didn't stampede, and damn few that didn't lose half or more—and a cowboy or two—over that two hundred foot drop into Blanco Canyon.

The story, as it was first told, is unknown. Two stories have come down, both involving the same people and both having the same end result, but with some differences in the middle. It involved a cowman J. Frank Dobie called 'Tol Sawyer' and a nester of unknown name and unknown antecedents.

The place—it didn't have a name then—was known simply as 'the holding point on the North Blanco.' Every drover who moved cattle by the western trail, whether to railheads or Indian Agency beef, knew and used it. In the spring of '89 the cowman Dobie calls 'Tol Sawyer' brought his herd to the holding point, and here the story forks. In one tale, Sawyer's herd picked up some cows from the small herd of nester who'd settled on Dockum Flat, on the McNeil Draw side of the point. Sawyer never slowed his animals, simply drove them up on the point. It was late afternoon and both men and animals were tired.

The nester took exception to this. He accused Sawyer of trying to steal his cows, and demanded that the herd be cut then and there. This was an old trick, by the way—a nester or small rancher would leave a number of cattle wearing his brand near

where a big herd would pass. The small number of cattle would join with the herd—that's in the nature of cows—and then the nester would demand the herd be cut and lay claim not only to his branded stock but any unbranded stuff he saw in the gather.

Sawyer was hot, tired, thirsty, and probably in no good mood anyway. He told the nester he'd cut the herd when he got damned good and ready, and not before.

That's when the nester made his mistake. He tried to threaten this man Dobie called 'Sawyer,' and he wasn't a good man to try that on. The nester suddenly found himself looking

down the business end of a cocked sixgun. "I done told you," said Sawyer, "I'll cut this herd when I get damn good an' ready an' not a damn minute before. You push me just one more time an' I won't have no need to cut it, on account of you'll be dead an' dead men got no need for cows."

That's one fork in the trail. Here's the other one.

Sawyer and his herd arrived at the holding point late in the afternoon, only to find it fenced. In front of the fence was the nester. "This ain't no free pasture no more," he said. "You wanta pasture here, it'll cost you two bits a head a day."

Sawyer took a long look at the nester and his shotgun. Then he said, "I got upwards of a thousand head here. Thatair Greener'll stop maybe two, three of 'em. After the rest run over your carcass, maybe we'll bury what's left an' maybe we won't."

Whatever really happened, the story comes back together here. Sawyer pastured that night on the holding point. Sometime about midnight or

thereabouts, the nester put on a slicker, mounted his mule, and snuck up on the McNeil Draw side of the point. It is, or was, brushy there, and he could hide. How long he hid we don't know, but when the guards weren't looking he suddenly burst out of the brush, flapping his slicker, yelling, and firing a sixshooter in the air.

The result was predictable. Sawyer's herd made a dash for the other side of the point to get away from whatever that scary thing behind them was. The other side is the White River side, overlooking Blanco Canyon. That's where the two hundred foot drop is.

The cowboys turned about half of them. The other half went over the side. The nester got away in the confusion.

Come morning, Sawyer counted cows and men. He was about 500 cows and one cowboy short. They found what was left of the cowboy, down among the cow carcasses at the bottom of the canyon. They buried him under a big cottonwood down

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at the base of the point, and then the outfit went on a manhunt.

Neither legend, nor, so far as I know, history, records how far the outfit had to chase the nester, but they caught him. There was a discussion about how to do it—make him a cottonwood blossom, drag him on the end of a rope, or just shoot him and be done with it. Sawyer had other ideas.

They brought the nester and his mule back to the holding point. They tied his hands behind him and tied him in the saddle. Then they blindfolded the mule and let it up to face the big drop, about forty or so feet from the edge.

Sawyer took out his pistol and his watch. "You've got thirty second to make your peace," he said, and laid the cocked pistol alongside the mule's behind. When the big pocket turnip had ticked off a half a minute, he pulled the trigger.

The sideflash from the gun powderburned the mule's behind and it bolted—right over the edge, taking the screaming nester with it. They didn't bother to go down and dig the nester's carcass out from among the dead cows.

The next herd to hold on the holding point went over the side. So did the one after that, and the one after that. Cowboys began to talk, and what they talked about was 'things'—things that looked like cows but weren't and something that looked like a man on a horse—or maybe a mule. The 'things' came out of the brush on the McNeil Draw side of the point and went into the herd, and when they did a man was damned lucky to save half his animals and even luckier than that if he didn't lose a man or two with them. By the late 1890's there were several graves under that big cottonwood—some say as many as nine.

And Lon Schuyler had been there once. I'd never known that about Lon. The short, stocky, baldheaded cowboy wasn't all that talkative except once in a while, and the while hadn't come when he felt like talking to me about Stampede Mesa. I hoped it would come this day.

The time to visit an old cowman—cowboy or rancher, makes no difference—is in the late afternoon, before sundown but after chore time. Otherwise, you're liable to be put to work. It's also a good idea to bring something with you—something to loosen a tongue, especially if you want to hear a story. Lon had a taste for sour mash—not an addiction, he never drank much—but a definite taste. He also had a taste for Lobo Negro cigarette tobacco, which I could get on deep East 6th Street in Austin but he couldn't find at all in Lampasas. I don't know where he acquired the latter taste—that stuff's border-country, and as far as I knew, Lon had never cowboied outside the Lampasas and San Saba River country. Nonetheless, I had a half-pint of Jack Daniel's Black Label and three sacks of Lobo Negro in the pickup. I also had my pipe and a pack of Granger—I wasn't about to join Lon in a Lobo Negro quirkly.

I got to his place just as the west was turning red. He was on the porch, sitting in an old rawhide-seat rocker. "Howdy, Lon," I said.

He squinted at me—as far as I know there was never anything wrong with Lon's eyes, and I've seen him drop a chickenhawk with a thirty-thirty at a range I wouldn't have tried to shoot, but for some reason he always squinted when he was looking at someone for the first time. "Well, I'll be damn," he said. "Ain't seen you in a coon's age, boy. What brings you this far north?"

"You," I said.

"If you're workin' for the sheriff an' you're carryin' paper on me I'm gonna get plumb put out with you, boy," he said.

"I'm on my own time an' the only paper I got's blank, an'

The time to visit an old cowman—cowboy or rancher, makes no difference—is in the late afternoon, before sundown but after chore time. Otherwise, you're liable to be put to work. It's also a good idea to bring something with you—something to loosen a tongue, especially if you want to hear a story. Lon had a taste for sour mash—not an addiction, he never drank much—but a definite taste.

I got a pencil to go with it. Besides," I said, reaching inside my brushjacket, "I brought you something. Says something like Jack Somebody on the label."

"Reckon you are on your own time, boy. Plumb wrong for a lawman to drink with a feller an' then serve a paper on him. What's that air blank paper for?"

"Lon, what do you know on Arn Sanders?"

"Purty fair hand, but he's lazy. That's how come he lost his last job."

"Man put stock in what he's got to say?"

"Reckon. He's just lazy, not a liar."

"Lon," I said, "Arn told me he heard tell—or maybe heard you say—you were with a herd that held on Stampede Mesa about 1900 or maybe aught-one."

"He didn't lie. I was there. I was for damn' sure there," Lon said.

"Tell me about it?"

"Lemme go get a couple 'a glasses an' some branchwater to cut it. You got any makins, boy? All I find around here is that Bull Durham heifer dust or Prince Albert." He got up and went in the house, and I pulled out the three packs of Lobo Negro and put them on the rickety table next to his chair. When he come out, he asked how much he owed me for the tobacco.

"Lon," I said, "for a fact I ain't got but a dime in all three of 'em, an' the story'll be worth more'n that."

"Whiskey buys stories. Makins gotta be paid fer," he said, and handed me a dime. I know better than to refuse it.

"We was pushin' a herd to the Crow reservation in aught-one," he said while rolling the first of a seemingly endless chain of the short, brownpapered, powerful cigarettes. "Purty good herd—'bout twenty-five hundred head. We was short-handed, 'course—ain't never a time an outfit cain't use more cowboys 'n its got. I was riding swing most of the time, an' I had the best horse I reckon I ever rode, a little claybank gelding that was about half Injun pony an' half track dog. He could stick with a critter 'till the world come to an end, I reckon. He was my number one horse in my string.

"Well, we got to Crosby County, an' the boss says he figgers on holdin' on the point twixt McNeil Draw an' the North Blanco. We all tells him he's crazy—that's Stampede Mesa he's talkin' about. He says 'By God, I'll hold them if I hafta hold 'em myself. The rest of you ain't got the guts to try, you ain't got the guts to call yourselves cowboys on my payroll.'

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Now, that worried me. Worried me 'cause there oughta been at least a jackrabbit, an' there wasn't one. Animals got a funny sense. Sometimes, if things are gonna get bad, you can see the little animals movin' out of the area 'fore it happens. I checked my cinch an' I saw Mart do the same. Wouldn't do to have a saddle turn if the herd ran.

"There was a couple of the boys that said 'Figure my time—I'm gone,' but I don't reckon I had that much sense. Me an' six others, we stayed. With the boss, the segundo, an' the cook, that made ten.

"That place looks just like they say it does. Best damn place to hold cows God ever put on the range. Couldn't ask for a better. Plenty grass, good water, an' you can hold a good sized bunch just by ridin' the lower end of the point—if they don't go over the side on you.

"We threw the herd on the point about three hours before sundown. Watered 'em first in the North Blanco, then threw 'em up on the point to graze. Boss said they'd get used to the place—he said the reason the other herds run was they all put 'em up there right at dark or after it, an' they was spooky to

start with, bein' in a new place an' all, an' when a jackrabbit jumped they went for the side.

"What about them things the cowboys seen?" we asks.

"Damn' fools spooked theirselves," says he. "Once the run was over they commenced to thinkin' 'bout all them other damn' fools an' the truck they claimed they seen, an' they figgered they had to of seen it too. The only thing they ever really seen was a nighthawk or a jackrabbit or maybe a tumbleweed, and they up an' put horns on it. Ain't you boys ever put ears on a stump on a dark trail at night?"

"Well, it was hard to argue that. I've put ears on a stump more time 'n I reckon I'd wanta claim, an' I heard tell you done it yourself a time or two."

I chuckled and agreed, remembering the cedar stump I'd blown to hell and gone with a shotgun one night because I could swear it was a wolf. It hadn't been that long back, either.

"My pardner was Mart Skinner. Don't reckon you ever knew Mart. He got kilt by lightinin' in '42, up out of Menard, an' you was just a shaver then. Anyway, Mart was about as salty a dog as a man would want to ride with, an' not a spooky sorta feller. All the same, I seen Mart saddlin' a little bay geldin' that I know was the best horse in his string, so I threw my saddle on my claybank. Then he comes up to me an' says 'I reckon we got the same idear.'

"What idear's that?" I says.

"Jus' in case them fellers wasn't seein things an' puttin' ears on stumps, I want the best horseflesh I can lay hands on under me when the run starts," he says.

"Reckon they'll run?" says I.

"Wanta bet your hide they won't?" he says.

"Well, I didn't—didn't care to bet my hide on that or anything else if I could keep from it's. Come night, Mart an' I drew middle round—midnight to three in the mornin'. First round run about nine to midnight, an' last round always went from three to dawn. When the early round boys come in they was laughin' 'bout it—'Nothin' up there,' says they. 'Not a damn thing. Not even a jackrabbit.'

"Now, that worried me. Worried me 'cause there oughta been at least a jackrabbit, an' there wasn't one. Animals got a funny sense. Sometimes, if things are gonna get bad, you can see the little animals movin' out of the area 'fore it happens. I checked my cinch an' I saw Mart do the same. Wouldn't do to have a saddle turn if the herd ran.

"It was right at midnight by the boss's turnip when we got up on the point—he said so later. Me an' Mart, we decided we'd double-circle. He'd go round the heard one way, an' I'd go round it the other. That way we'd cross twice ever' round, an' if we seen anything ought not to be there, there'd be one of us on each side of the herd or close to being there so we could mill 'em. Double-circle's a spooky-herd trick, an' these cows didn't look spooky, but we wasn't takin' no chances.

I reckon we'd circled the herd four or five times—gettin' on for two o'clock or thereabouts, since you ride slow an' twenty-five hundred head spread out a mite when you bed 'em—an' I was comin' up on the brush on the McNeil Draw side when I saw somethin' comin' out of the brush. Boy, it looked like a steer—but it looked like no steer I'd ever seen before. It was plumb white—white as milk, not a drop of color on it anywhere. White horns—an' white eyes, as far as I could see. I couldn't see no feet, though—there was just a sort of smoke down there, like maybe dust or something. It come right outa that brush an' headed straight for the herd.



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"Well, I tapped the claybank with my spurs to get up to it, but when we got close enough—maybe forty foot—he shied. That wasn't no shyin' horse—I'd hauled dead deer on him, an' you know if a horse is gonna shy ain't nothin' gonna make it shy like the smell of fresh blood, an' he never boogered at that. Well, he didn't booger at this thing, but he damn sure didn't want no part of it.

"About that time them things was ever'where. Musta been thousands of 'em come out of that brush. 'Look out, Mart, here they come' I hollers, an' starts tryin' to get where I can work my end of the mill. Like I said, them damn things was ever'where—all around me. I reached out an' taken a slap at one of 'em to try an' turn it, an' my hand went right through it. Felt like hittin' cold smoke, is what it felt like.

"By this time the whole damn bunch was up an' headed for the high side, an' ol' Mart's out there in front of 'em quirtin' 'em on the noses to try an' turn 'em into a mill. I come through as fast as ol' claybank could carry me an' started the same, an' we could hear the other fellers comin' up. 'Bout that time Mart hollers 'Mill what we can, we a-gonna lose a bunch of 'em,' an' I seen it was a fact.

"The rest of the boys got up there—bossman, segundo, cook, an' all—an' we saved 'bout nineteen hundred, but we had to mill the bastards all night. Took all of us to hold 'em. The boss come up to me an' he says 'Damn it, Schuyler, 'twas your fool holler set 'em off. You draw your time in the mornin.'"

"Next thing I knew the boss was lookin' up Mart's sixgun. Don't know where he packed it—like as not in his saddle pocket. 'You sorry s.o.b.,' says Mart, 'that kid never set 'em off. They was already up an' runnin' fore he hollered. He hadn't hollered when he did, I'd be down there with them cows. I seen what set 'em off an' so did he, an' it fer damn sure wasn't no nighthawk, an' it wasn't no jackrabbit, and it wasn't no tumbleweed. It was jus' what them other fellers said they seen—steers, hundreds of 'em, white an quiet, comin' outa the brush on the low side. Now, you s.o.b., you're gonna say you're sorry for bein' a damnfool to this kid an' me an' the rest of these fellers, an' in the mornin' I think I'm gonna take you down there to the bottom of the bluff so you can say you're sorry to them dead cows. An' you're gonna start right now, on accounta if you don't I'm gonna blow your damn head off!' Mart never had been a cussin' man, an' I'd never heard him cuss twice in the same day afore, let alone in the same minute."

"What you reckon you saw?" I asked.

"Reckon, Hell! I know what I saw—an' what I slapped my hand into. Ghosts, boy. Ghosts of all them steers that went over the side. There was some fellers claimed they seen the nester, but I never seen him. All I seen was them milky-colored steers that never made a sound."

Lon's been dead going on a quarter-century now, and he went out like a cowboy should—twisting out a snuffy bronc. I didn't doubt what he said he saw then, and I don't doubt it now.

I've been to Stampede Mesa once, back before they dammed up the White River to make Blanco Canyon Reservoir. I walked the ground under the drop. Every time I kicked the dirt, I kicked up a fragment of bone.

The reservoir—they call it a lake—is a big fishing and boating spot these days, and I hear tell folks even camp overnight on the little point of land that sticks out into it from the east bank. Thanks, but I won't. That little point? That's Stampede Mesa.



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 And there's lots more in the house.

Out in the shed was something
 Way in a corner and it was dusty,
 And I said to Pete, "Hey Pete?
 Will you sell this to me?"

"What'll you take for the saddle
 If you could call it that?"
 He said, "I donno' what'll you give?"
 And then... he spat.

Pete took my twenty dollars,
 Then said the tree was broke.
 "I don't care I'll fix it up."
 Pete thought that was a joke.

Not me, because what I saw
 Was a name tooled in the leather,
 And my heart rate escalated
 Staring at a broke-down ol' Fraiser.

Mr. Thompson over in Bayfield
 Said it would be worthwhile,
 And working on old leather,
 Always made him smile.

About a year ago I got a letter;
 There wasn't a phone at the ranch,
 It read, "Come on by tomorrow
 If you have the chance."

Leather always smells so good,
 And it did when I walked in the door
 And Mr. Thompson yelled "Howdy!"
 From way in the back of the store.

"Every cowboy that's seen it
 Would give me their eye teeth
 To own this little beauty,
 But I told 'em all ...No sireee."

It almost glowed in the dim light,
 Laying across the stand.
 New latigo and sheepskin,
 He'd done all of that by hand.

We shook hands and I paid him.
 And money wouldn't be enough,
 Then he picked it up and carried it
 Out to the Pick-up truck,

Recently someone asked me when it was I first met Ruth. And my mind got stuck on the question, "Which one?" The poet? The artist? The cowgirl? The intellectual? 'Cause she's all that and more, and I wasn't introduced to all of her at once. The first time I saw Ruth's drawings you could of knocked me over with a cigarette paper. They were better than anything I had seen in years, including my own stuff (which I'm kinda partial to).

Ruth's poetry is born out of experience in the mountains and canyons of the west; and like all good poets it is her attention to and selection of detail, and the unexpected turn of phrase, that elevates her work above common prose. On top of that Ruth captures in word and image the elusive magic of the open west, where Saturn's rings and Stetson hats, rainbows and lariats just naturally go together.

You can't live long in cowboy country without meeting your share of characters. Here we have Pete

Now ol' Pete used to be Sheriff
 Down in Farmington,
 But he'd quit and then retired,
 hanging up his gun.

I loved that tall old cowboy
 With his handlebar mustache,
 A worn string tie and faded jeans;
 He never did get fat.

One day when he was talking
 About how it used to be,
 He stopped right in the middle,
 And he was looking at me.

"Where's is that old saddle
 The one you found that day?
 Didja' ever do anything with it?
 Or didja' just leave it lay?"

Well, he was just plain dumb-struck
 And I think I broke his heart;
 For turning that old piece of junk
 Into a work of art.

"Now Pete, I'm not giving it back.
 Fair's fair and you know I'm right
 Just take a' slug of whiskey,
 and don't be all uptight."

"Girl. It's a bee-u-tiful saddle.
 And it's certainly is my pleasure,
 To think that old piece of junk
 Is a genuine, antique, Fraiser.

He got in his truck and waved at me
 And I threw him a great big kiss.
 So happy that we were still friends
 'Cause Pete Chapman, would be

A man
 I'd
 Miss

Chapman the ex-sheriff turned collectible dealer selling fixer-upper dreams; and LuAnn the cliff dweller in a hexagonal house. Naturally, her books include other poems about the land, the weather, and critters with two legs, four legs, and no legs a'tall.

Sometimes I think Ruth knows more about horses and guns than a woman ought to—unless of course they're cowgirls, in which case they're not generally inclined to the arts of poetry and drawing. Ruth is complex that way. A maverick cosmic cowgirl artist with eclectic inclinations and an electric personality, Ruth is top notch in all ways. After pondering over this book for some time you'll likely want to meet Ruth Allan Raymond. If you get the chance, go back for a second or third introduction. She's a person of many parts and without coming back around you've only gone part way. Likely as not, as I'm finding out, you could keep doing that "til forever gets there" and still be surprised. —Ira Kennedy

LUANN'S LOT IN LIFE

LuAnn was gonna' have her way
Of where to build the place.
"I said over in the field, Lu."
She said, "No!" Right in my face.

"It'll go up there" She pointed.
I fell down and laughed
'Cuz where the house would be
LuAnn would have to blast.

Right through solid rock.
A veritable cliff.
But she drew up the plans
To fit on the obelisk.

Now Lu had thirty more acres
Like a pool table all green and flat,
But she wouldn't build on it.
She wouldn't hear of that.

Her plans were for a hexagon
Of logs going up post-haste.
And being six-sided,
It didn't matter which way it faced.

Each side had a window.
Two sides had a door.
And some indoor plumbing,
"But Lu? What about the floor?"

"I'm just gonna' lay rocks
And grout 'em like terrazzo."
She got steel-toed boots on her birthday
It was the perfect gift, I know!

Art King was contracted
To assemble the log hogan,
LuAnn had been influenced
Out on the reservation.

Ol' Art just scratched his head
And went ahead anyway.
Lu's mom and dad were blown-out
When the work got underway.

Lu was born a rebel,
But they had not expected
To see the full reality
Of what she had erected.

The went back to Phoenix.
"Just send pictures when you're through.
We are no, seriously considering,
Dis-inheriting you."

When it was completed
You know that funny postcard?
Where the out-house hangs in space
'Cuz there isn't any yard?

Well going out the front door
Fast and without out thought,
If you missed the first step
You would have overshot

The edge of the Property
And stepped off into space,
There were a few kinks to work out
Lest you fell from grace.

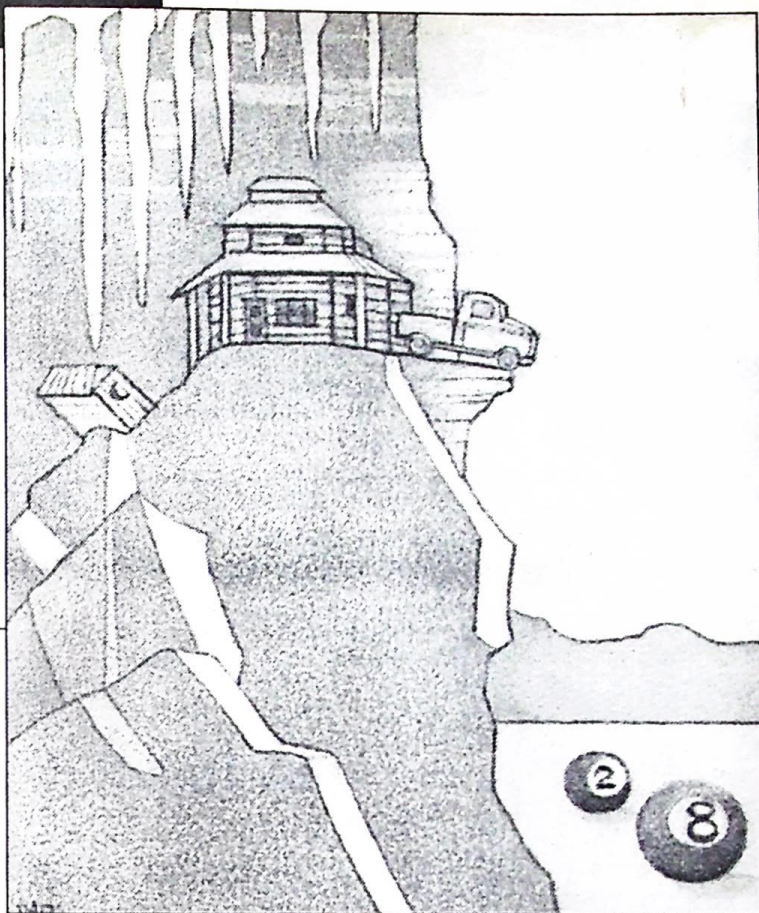
Parking was a problem
Even for a truck, a car or bike
Or otherwise you took oxygen
and got ready for a hike.

The house stayed nice and cool
'Neath a mountain like Shangri-La;
Where icicles hung 'til Mid-July
Causing hyperthermia.

Now the view from the obelisk
Was clear to Caracas Mesa.
"Quite a place ya' got up there."
Tourists would yell with a camera.

I'll never ever forget the house.
Or the rock slide that she lives on.
I moved from Pagosa Junction;
But she's still there and dog-gone

You couldn't move her with a tank.
She'll stay, 'til forever gets there.
Wearing steel-toed boots and coveralls
Going up hill in a wheel chair.



HUNTER'S STORY

FROM THE DEVIL'S BACKBONE, 1996, REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION FROM EAKIN PRESS, AUSTIN, TEXAS

by BERT WALL

Deer season was upon us again, and, as so many past seasons, we had taken out time in selecting the right group of hunters to lease part of our Devil's Backbone ranch for the season. You have to be careful in leasing a ranch. You definitely want the right kind of hunters. Safety is all-important, because the rifles used in hunting large game could also be used in a combat situation.

This particular season was one of those selective years, and by the time we made our choice, we were happy with this new group of hunters. This group were all employees of a rather nice-sized oil company. They had hunted as a group in the past, and with the exception of an occasional beer from time to time, they were very safety-minded, and limited the beer drinking to the evening house after the day's hunt was over.

The group numbered ten people, with only seven members of the group hunting at any given time. This again, was one of the several ranch safety rules which were to be adhered to at all times. Even though the group was employed by one company, there were two husband and wife hunting combinations, with the other three being one woman and two more men.

The opening weekend of deer season is always a full hunt. In other words, every hunter shows up, especially since the weather is generally okay—not too hot, not too cold.

As the season progresses, the hunting parties seem to diminish in number, and by early December we are usually down to true knowledgeable hunters who border on being professionals. That season was no exception. By mid-December we saw the same four hunters every weekend. The two couples now had acclimated themselves to the ranch and were very aware of where they were and what they were doing.

That particular weekend started as any other, with only one difference. The entire Hill Country was preparing for a true, blue norther, which was to blow in at any time.

It was near dark when both couples arrived at camp. Within a short period of time they had the camp-house ready for business. The fire in the wood cook-stove was

now crackling and popping, the kerosene lanterns lit and burning. Their portable radio was playing loudly as all four were truly enjoying themselves. Cathy and Robert had arrived first, with Pete and Sally not far behind.

By dark the four had everything under control. The camp meal of steak, french fries and cole slaw was served. Anticipation was running high. The big deer would certainly move when this arctic blast came in. And if it came in wet with snow and ice, all four hunters might land a large Boone and Crockett trophy.

It was during the night that the cold front blew in. The icy winds shifted to the north, and by the early morning hours a blowing snow started to cover the ground.

Pete had been up several times during the night, adding wood to the fire and checking the cabin doors and windows, yet the other three had slept through the wintry arrival. It was just before daybreak, and Pete prepared a breakfast fit for a king, so with very little encouragement needed, the small group devoured every last morsel.

It was time for them to load up and head out to their stands. A last minute check of several items was made by each hunter. Rifles, cartridges, small knapsack with necessities for such a cold, wintry day, and a small thermos of coffee was included. Both Pete and Robert had started their trucks some thirty minutes prior to departure to be sure that the trucks would be ready when they were.

With little said, all four were on their way to their stand. They decided to spend the entire day hunting and not return until after dark. All four were familiar with good hunting techniques, so for them this gray, cold, snowy day was perfect.

Both trucks were parked in open areas where each of the four hunters could easily return if a problem were to arise. Just after daybreak all four had made their way to their deer stands. These deer stands were definitely unique in their way; they had been built some fifteen to eighteen years prior to this particular deer season, but with annual maintenance they had been kept in good order. It is not to say that they had all the comforts of home in the stands, but they had been built to protect a hunter from the wintry elements.

The day went by quite swiftly, and as Pete sat in his

Within seconds he witnessed a sight that sent him into true shock. Under the feeder, standing tall, he could see a pair of red eyes, large red eyes—they must have been at least eight inches apart. Smoke seemed to billow from this unidentified creature's large nostrils.

high mountain ridge stand, he knew that if he was going to kill a deer, he must take one soon, because dark would come swiftly on a gray, cold day such as that one.

He had heard several shots during the day, and with his knowledge of directions he felt that at least two of the other three had gotten their bucks. Pete had watched several small herds come and go, and at one time he had been tempted to go ahead and take a small-framed, 8-point buck—but it was not really what he had been hunting for. The series of trails which crossed this high ridge stand had to be closely watched, because not all of the deer would walk straight out to the corn feeder. The older animals would tend to stay back in the heavy, brushy cover.

The snow was falling in heavier amounts, yet the winds had died out. A true quiet covered the entire countryside. Pete stared out the small, open window of this rather old deer stand. He placed his full vision and full concentration on the feeder. He knew that if anything was to be harvested today it would have to happen within just a few minutes, or his cold, snowy hunt would be in vain.

Just then he heard a noise he couldn't identify—a snorting, high-pitched sound. A chill went up Pete's neck. He really didn't know what he had heard. Within seconds he witnessed a sight that sent him into true shock. Under the feeder, standing tall, he could see a pair of red eyes, large red eyes—they must have been at least eight inches apart. Smoke seemed to billow from this unidentified creature's large nostrils.

It was dark. Pete slipped the safety forward on his rifle, yet he was not sure of what he was seeing. What the heck was this thing? Where did it come from? It must have been six feet tall. Pete rubbed his eyes with his wet, snowy gloves. He began to shake, yet not from the cold. He looked down at the floor of the stand, shaking his head in disbelief. Finally, he looked back up—the red eyes were gone.

Yes, this creature had left just as quickly as it had appeared. Or had it disappeared? What was it? God only knew.

Pete moved quickly toward the safety of his truck. Continually looking behind him toward the stand and feeder, he crossed a rather narrow area maybe six feet wide and twenty feet long, and for a moment he thought this creature was breathing down his neck.

Pete quickly opened the door of the truck. He threw his rifle in the cab, and without hesitation he slammed the door, started the truck, and was off.

He approached Cathy's stand. Pete's senses seemed to be coming back to him, and the feeling of fear left him bit by bit. His headlights caught a glimpse of Cathy as she stood by the road, waiting for Pete and the warmth of the truck.

She waved and pointed—a large buck lay on the ground beside her. Pete pulled up and stopped, and within minutes the buck was loaded in the back of the truck, and the two headed back to the camp house. Cathy attempted to start a conversation, but Pete just smiled, nodded, and said little.

The hunters broke camp early the next morning and returned to the city.

I didn't see Pete again until early May of the next year. That is when he relayed this story to me.

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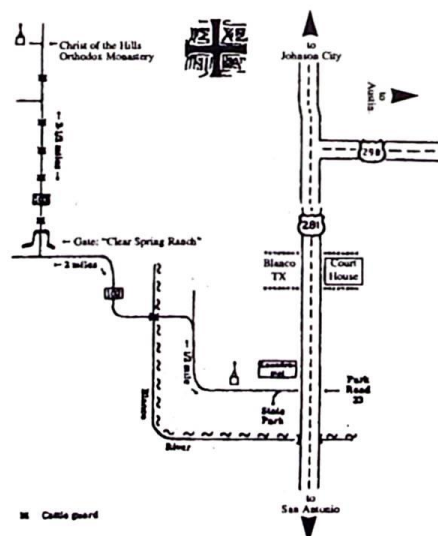
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