CENTEX MAP INSIDE

TEXAS ★ HISTORY & ADVENTURE

ENCHANTED ROCK MAGAZINE

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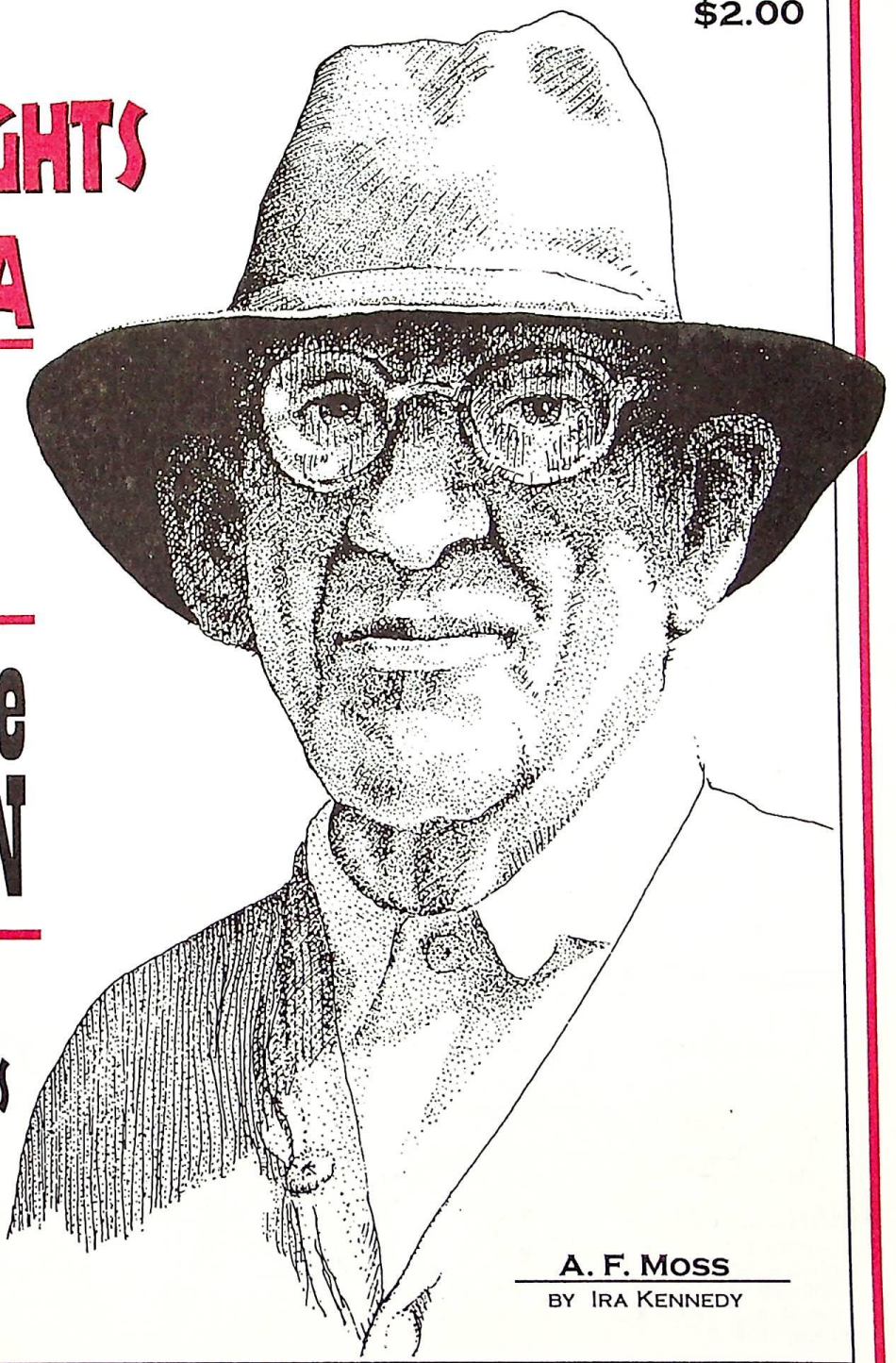
GHOST LIGHTS OF MARFA

SANTA CLAUS IN OVERALLS

A.F. MOSS: THE RANCHMAN

THE KING OF THE TEXAS DEERHUNTERS



A. F. MOSS
BY IRA KENNEDY

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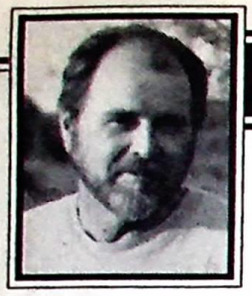

FROM THE EDITOR

HE NEVER SAID "THANK YOU"

You *can* look a Gifthorse in the mouth, just don't inhale. Anyway, that's what Uncle Carl used to say. But he never liked presents. The fact is, Uncle Carl didn't "want any gifts from man or God." To emphasize the matter he'd inform everybody that bothered to hang around when he launched into he topic, "I never cooked a critter I didn't raise myself. Fact is, my first fish dinner came from my own stock tank. Weren't no river fish. I made 'em."

So you can kinda understand how difficult it was to give that blowhard anything. He didn't want to be beholden to any living being, and the sad truth is he never said thank you and he never said grace.

When it comes to giving, especially at Present Time which comes around and around several times annually, my mild anxiety transforms into a pure panic. For me, trying to match a personality, relationship and personal opinion with an *object* is like spitting on the moon. I know it can't be done, I just need to know which way the wind is blowing and aim to get as close as I can.

Grandma used to encourage every living soul that knew Uncle Carl (her dear brother) to cheer him up with a present. One Christmas she started in without letup, demanding to know what gift I had for Uncle Carl.

"Why should I give that old coot anything?"

"Cause he's kin."

Those were her final words.

The fact is, I accepted Grandma's demand as a challenge, like the sound barrier, the four-minute mile, or an adequate income. I determined it was my solemn duty to give him a gift he couldn't refuse, give away or sell. Something he'd be stuck with.

I never have been any smarter than I needed to be, so I decided to spread some of the brainwork around. To that end I consulted my buddies at the Bar None Bar & Barbeque, but they came up empty—except for "a poke in the eye" which I was sure would get me two in return.

Then I talked to womenfolk with less promising results. I knew then and there I was in a fix and Christmas day was approaching faster than the collection plate on Sunday. I even consulted Reverend Wright who rolled his eyes heavenward saying, "Pray, and pray hard." So I prayed for a solid week. Finally, on Christmas Eve the solution presented itself to me and said, "Here I am."

So it was, on Christmas Day, at the very moment Grandma was about to say grace over dinner; and Uncle Carl was poised fork in hand over a plate of food that needed sideboards, I presented the gift—an envelope with "To Uncle Carl, from Ira" on the outside.

He accepted the present with a grunt and laid it down beside his plate.

"Open it. Open it," most everyone said. And, in time, he did just that if only to be left to his meal.

There wasn't anything inside.

"Uncle Carl.," I explained, "I couldn't come up with a single gift I figured you wanted. But Grandma always said, 'It's the thought that counts.'"

"Enough," he said gazing at my intangible gift, "is as good as a feast." And with that he commenced eating while Grandma lead the rest of us in grace.

I played for even and won hands down—or so I thought.

About two days later I received in the mail the same envelope I had given Uncle Carl. He had scratched out everything except my name, wrote my address underneath and mailed the letter—postage due.

Then and there my prejudice against Uncle Carl took wings, for he *never* gave a present to anyone, anywhere, at anytime, before or since.

IRA KENNEDY

Enchanted Rock: Located in Central Texas, Enchanted Rock was, and is, a sacred landmark to the Native Americans. Consisting of some of the oldest rock on Earth (one billion years old) Enchanted Rock is the second largest granite dome in the United States, and is the central core around which the land mass of Texas formed.

ENCHANTED ROCK MAGAZINE

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Dedicated to the Memory of James E. Cornett, aka L. Kelly Down

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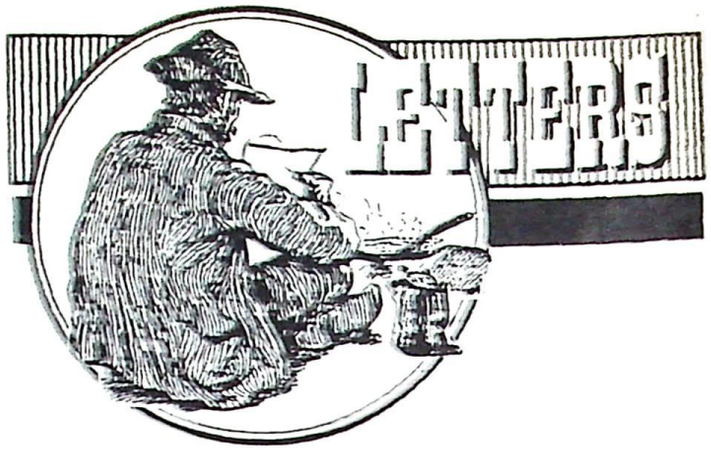


FROM A WESTERN WRITER

When I look around in your magazine, I'm amazed at the really great artist you are. Everything is so real and alive.

Enchanted Rock is my favorite Texas historical site. For many years I've been going there and climb it to celebrate my birthday, 22 October. (I was 50.) Each time when I get back to the office I say to Denise, "Well, you've done it again." Alarmed, she'll ask—"I've done what?" And I'll say, "Since I climbed it last year, you've raised that rock another two hundred feet." Denise is a very nice lady and she's getting used to me.

Capt. Jack Hays of Rock fame was related to me. In Scotland, the Hays and O'Steen clans were intermarried. When they came to South Carolina, early 1700's the O'Steen's dropped the "O" and became Steen. My great (8) grandfather, Wm. David Steen was seriously wounded in the Revolutionary War battle of King's Mountain. Eventually most of them came to Texas. The Steens of DeWitt and Gonzales Counties are kin.

Have you finally found time to read any of the Western stories in my book *Listen Fast When Guns Talk*? My favorite characters are 'those onery saddle tramps'. Three stories on them starting on page 236. When those characters lodged in my mind, all I had to do was hurry and type their misadventures, and I loved it. They wrote their own stories for me. Take time out of your busy twenty-four hours and open to page 236. You won't be able to stop.

[See Mr. Bown's story "The Trailidusters" on page 26—Reprinted with permission.]

Best wishes,
Wm. C. Brown
Kingsland, Texas

ON THE MONOPLANE

As you know, David C. Morrow, author of "The Electra Monoplane", is my wife's first cousin. His father, Carl Morrow, once told me the engine to Bob Richardson's airplane was still around in Electra, in a corner of an old barn or shed, when he was courting David's mother, who was my mother-in-law's older sister. He described it as a Continental Red Seal, and he apparently assumed I'd know what that was so he didn't describe it further.

I later looked it up in some references and found it was an air-cooled four-popper delivering about 25 hp, which was used in home-built automobiles or boats—and, of course, in at least one home-built airplane. I would assume it was in in-line four though the reference didn't say, because the vee-type engine wasn't common then and rotary engines—and later radials—always had uneven numbers of cylinders, usually seven or nine. That means, of course, that the Electra monoplane had about twice the horsepower of the first Wright airplane and, in spite of the fact that it had only one propeller while the Wrights used two, used power far more efficiently. The Wrights used either a ten or twelve horse engine, I believe it was a two-popper, and it spun two props by bicycle chain drive while Daddy Bob's (as we all knew him) propeller seems to have been connected directly to the engine's crankshaft. That avoided a lot of the power loss that the Wright airplane suffered from. All in all it was a far better machine than the one the Wrights flew at Kitty Hawk, and probably a better machine than the two the Wrights delivered to Fort Sam Houston in 1909, when Lieutenant Benjamin Foulois, U. S. Cavalry, was ordered to "report to Fort Sam Houston and teach yourself to fly an aeroplane."

Charley (C. F. Eckhardt)
Seguin, Texas

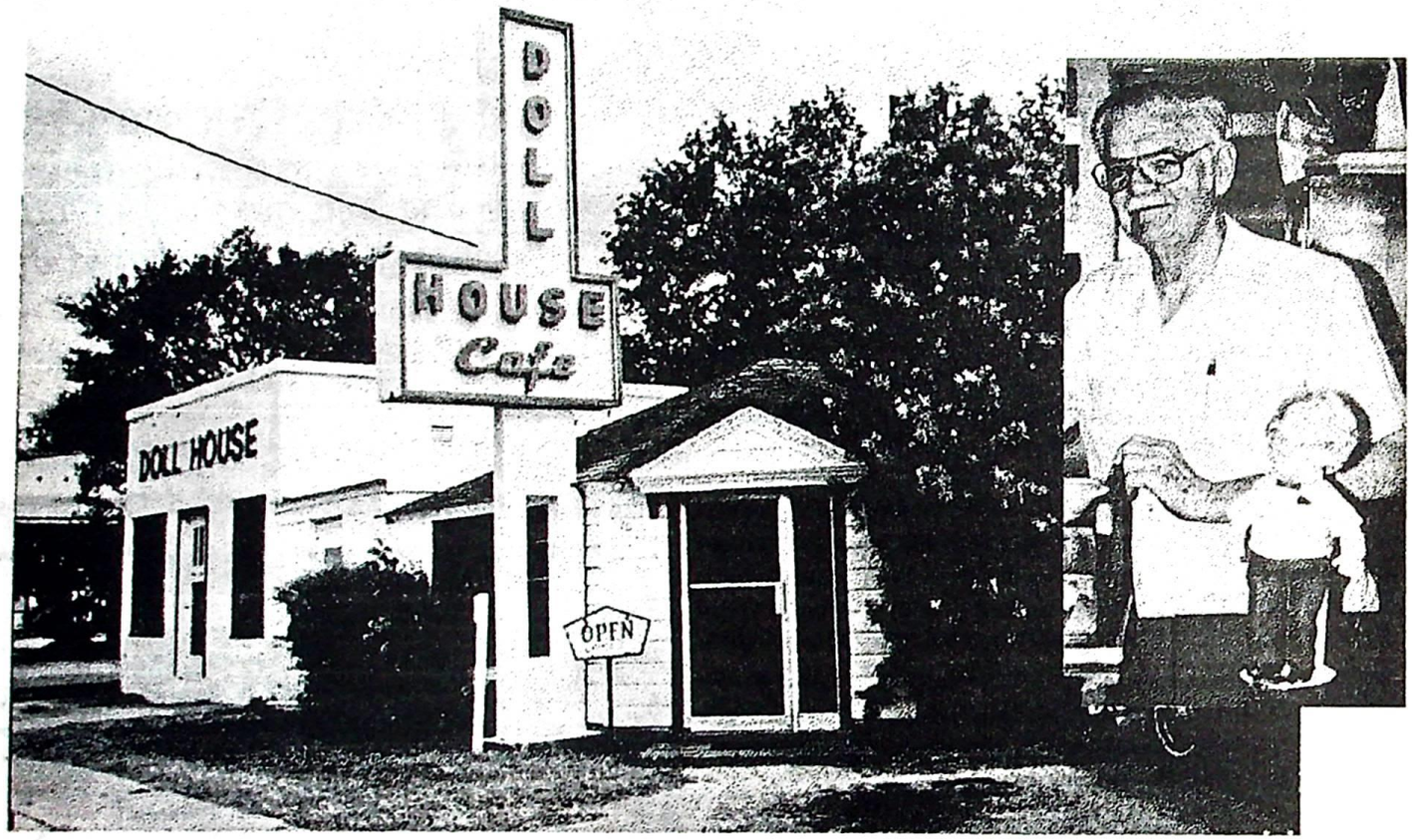
WELCOME

We extend our welcome this month to subscribers in Lawton and Stillwater, Oklahoma; Franktown, Colorado; Bloomington, Indiana; Long Beach and Northridge, California; plus subscribers in Waco, Kingsland (2), Taylor, Leander, Austin (6), Cross Plains, Corpus Christi (2), Mountain Home, Llano, El Paso, Dallas, Texas City, San Antonio (2), Brady, Canyon Lake, Fredericksburg (2), Marble Falls, Houston (2), Converse, Blackwell, Buffalo, Arlington, Fort Worth, Robstown, Cedar Creek, Flower Mound, Dayton, Hewitt and Wheelock, Texas—and Arad, Israel.

CounterCulture of Texas

The Doll House in Cuero

Story and Photos by SUSIE KELLY FLATAU



THE DOLL HOUSE, (ABOVE) LOCATED AT 206 EAST BROADWAY, IS A CUERO LANDMARK. FORMERLY OWNED FOR SIXTY YEARS BY ROLLIE BRANTLELY, IT IS NOW OWNED BY JERRY ROSSETT, A LOCAL RESTAURANTEUR. **ROLLIE BRANTLEY,** (INSET) AND THE "ROLLIE" DOLL, A GIFT FROM A LOCAL RESIDENT.

Cruising down East Broadway in Cuero, Texas, I spotted a small building whose sign read, The Doll House. As quick as a sparrow, my thoughts flew to when I was a little girl growing up in League City, Texas, and, then strangely to weekends spent at the house of my friend, Karen. Images of carefree days danced through my mind of hours upon hours playing childhood games, riding bikes, going on horseback adventures, and after dark, arranging and rearranging furniture and dolls in her custom made doll house.

For years I wished for Santa to bring me one, but the wishes went unanswered. Those days are long gone, yet I still hold a special place in my heart for those tiny abodes. So, as I neared the meticulously painted white building with kelly green trim, I decided to stop and check out this Doll House.

From its manicured exterior, I imagined a cafe filled with local women, sitting about drinking coffee or tea and swapping family tales. Linen tablecloths would compliment dainty glass vases filled with sprigs of fern, baby's breath and carnations. Floral wallpaper would offer a soothing background.

However, as I looked around for a parking space, I soon realized the only vehicles in the lot were trucks. Big trucks. Small trucks. Fancy trucks. Work trucks. New trucks. Old trucks. And the irony of this picture sent a smile across my face.

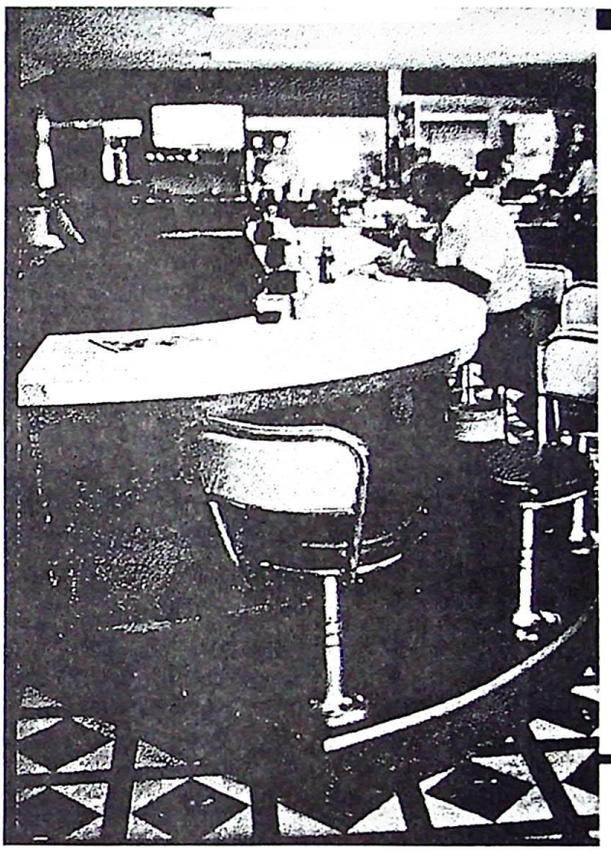
Upon entering through the heavy glass door at the side of the building., the tall man with gray hair and a gray mustache standing behind the cash register nodded and said, "Make yourself comfortable."

I surveyed the room and instantly replaced my initial assumptions with cold, hard reality. First, there were no women customers. Second, there were no linen tablecloths accented with flower-filled vases. And third, there was no floral wallpaper.

Instead, directly in front of me stood a raised, white Formica counter with a sparkling green base and nine green and white swivel barstools, one at which a man sat eating his food. As I walked toward the counter's curved end across a green and white tiled floor laid in a geometric design, a sense of comfort hit me. I took a seat and ordered a cup of coffee from the young waitress, then swiveled around to get a better look.

The rectangular shaped front dining area held small, square tables along with several booths that sat against the right wall. Spattered about the place was a handful of customers, all male. Many of them looked like seasoned ranchers, some wore straw cowboy hats and others were bareheaded. A few in white shirts and dark dress pants had the appearance of local businessmen who had gathered at the diner to discuss the day's forthcoming business. I noted one older man, dressed in all black, sporting dark sunglasses and a milk white straw hat, who sat alone in the middle booth. The ease and flow of conversation spoke of familiarity.

Two men in particular were holding court while the others listened intently, a few chewed on the stubs of unlit cigars, manipulating them from one side of their mouth to the other.



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A SATISFIED CUSTOMER SITS AT THE CURVED COUNTER WHICH WS BUILT IN 1959 BY ONE OF ROLLIE BRANTLEY'S SCHOOL ABUDDIES.

When the young lady returned with the coffee, I asked if she knew how old the counter was. She rubbed her right hand in a small circular motion over the off-white Formica and said, "Well, the original one was built in the early 1930's, but I think it was replaced with this one in 1959. Right, Rollie?" she yelled over to the tall man with gray hair and gray mustache. He smiled and nodded.

Rollie moved carefully about, answering the phone, ringing up tickets and talking not only with those coming and going, but also with those sitting in the dining room. I tilted my head in his direction and asked who he was. I soon learned he ran the place.

Things died down a bit, and I asked him if he would talk with me about the restaurant's history. He grinned and looked over at one of the men sitting at a table near the door who had immediately yelled out , "Oh, go ahead, Rollie, you old movie star." Rollie's eyes brightened and he answered, "Guess you're right."

He poured himself some coffee and came around the counter's end to take a seat next to me. While I explained that I was a writer in search of spots throughout Texas where people gathered over or around counters, I marveled at his large, thick hands Hands that continued to cradle the coffee cup as Rollie Brantly guided me though the first chapter of the Doll House's history.

Back in 1935, he had purchased this place when it was known as The Old Spanish Garden restaurant. The cost: $25. However, when they met to close the deal, record of his payment had been lost, so he had to come up with another $25. "Not bad for an eighteen-year-old right out of high school to get his own business for only $50," he added.

He decided that he needed to rename the restaurant, so he turned to the Cuero residents and held a contest. By the time all suggestions were in and voted on, Rollie's new business was dubbed The Doll House. He shrugged his shoulders and commented, "I guess fair is fair."

In the beginning, the place was tiny, the kitchen appliances few, and a hamburger cost five cents. However, through his efforts business grew and eventually so did Rollie's "doll house".

One of the first major changes he made was to install air conditioning in 1948, which led to the end of the existing outdoor beer garden. In its place, Rollie built a miniature golf course for the families and kids, however, it is no longer here.

Then he swooped his large hands in wide half circle and talked about how he more than doubled the diner's size in 1950, only to be followed almost a decade later with the complete modernization of the place. Today it looks much the same as it did in the 1960's.

Intrigued by this brawny man with the soft face and gentle voice, I asked about his background. There was a short

silence, then he began to talk about his love for Cuero. A love evident through the reels for film, over two hundred, along with the enormous collection of photographs and cassette recordings documenting Cuero's events and people which he has made since the 1940's. He plans to donate them to the local historical archives.

As he rose from the barstool, I followed him over to a mural painted on the wall behind the booths and he pointed to the signature of Jeanie Tidwell in the bottom right-hand corner. "See that, she's my niece, and she's the one who painted this mural." I placed my hands atop one of the booth's formica tables, leaned slightly forward and checked it out, noting it was a street scene depicting one of Cuero's main claims to fame, the Turkey Trot. Rollie extended his arm and pointed at a car painted into the scene. "That's one of my cars and that's me and my family." There was a delicate pride in the tone of his voice.

After that, we walked up the short inclined ramp into the back dining room and he pointed out pictures of the custom cars he built during the 1950's. He talked about the old jukeboxes he restored over the years, and in the same breath casually added that he had served his country for two years during World War II. It was becoming clearer that this jack-of-all-trades with the good heart and soul was one reason The Doll House pulsed with such a positive spirit.

He talked about learning to fly an airplane and then pointed to an aerial photograph of Cuero which he had taken. We walked over to look at it and Rollie grew quiet. Talk then turned briefly to his wife. They had been married for fifty-six years when she died in 1995, and shortly after her death, he decided it was time to retire.

He sold The Doll House to a successful, local restaurateur, Jerry Rossett, who has asked Rollie to keep coming in to work as long as he wants. At that point, he looked at his watch and remarked it was time for him to go home.

I followed him back into the front dining room and over to the cash register where he pointed to the "Rollie" doll which stood on the counter. He lifted it to let me get a closer look as he explained that one of the local women, a regular customer for years, had created it just for him. The resemblance was uncanny.

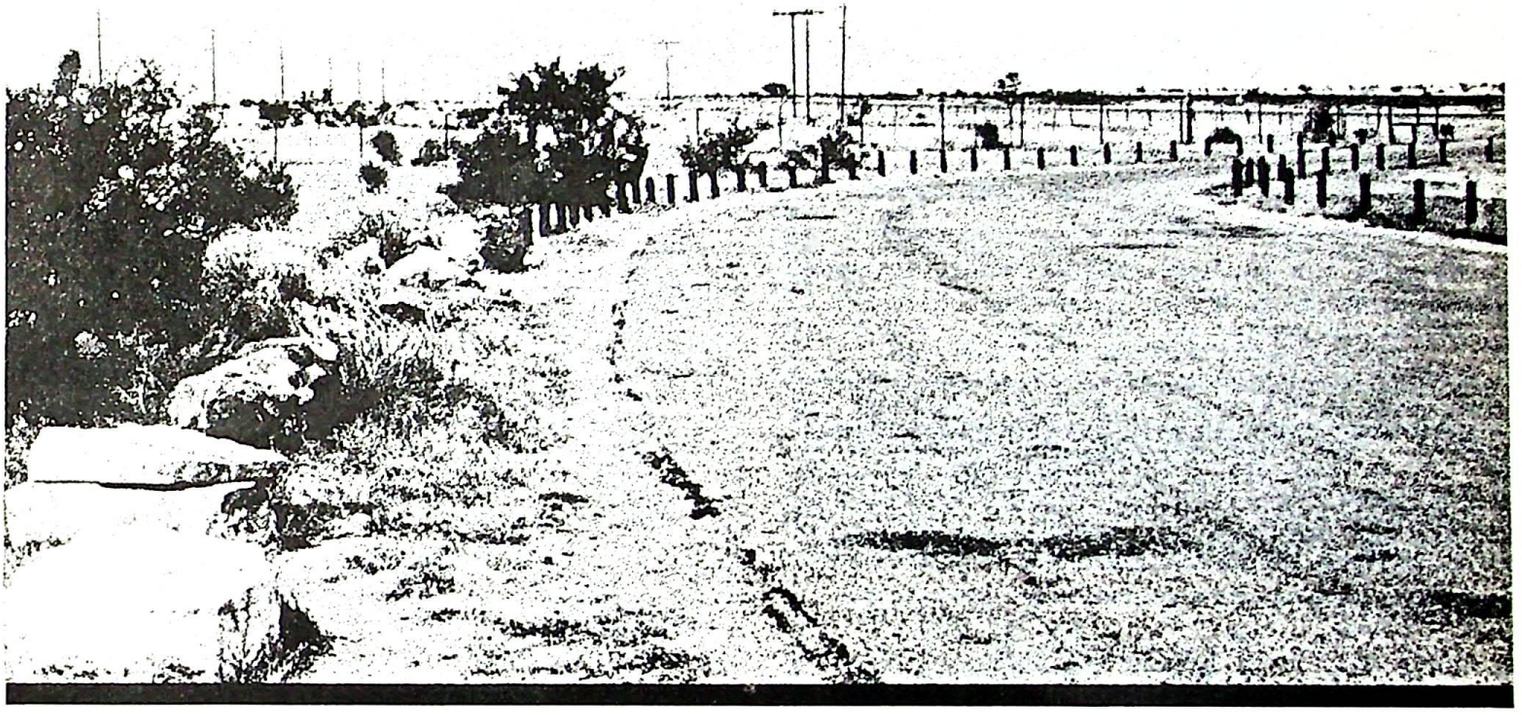
With him standing there behind the counter holding his doll next to his left shoulder, with the rising and falling of easy conversation behind me, and with the clinking of dishes breaking into the chatter as the cooks prepared orders, I was filled with a giddy sense. I realized life couldn't get any better, and at the age of forty-five, I had finally been given a doll house with a real, live, special doll to fulfill my childhood wishes.

Before paying the tab, I commented to Rollie that the fast food restaurants didn't seem to have anything over this place. He just grinned and said, "We always had fast food, we just took a little longer."

The Doll House, is from a forthcoming collection of sketches and photographs entitled, *CounterCulture of Texas*. Susie Kelly Flatau is a free-lance writer out of Austin.

THE GHOST LIGHTS OF MARFA

BY C. F. ECKHARDT



THE MYSTERY LIGHTS VIEWING AREA—THE BEST VANTAGE POINT IS FROM ATOP ONE OF THE LARGE BOULDERS ON THE LEFT OF THE PICTURE. PHOTO BY C.F. ECKHARDT.

'It was a dark and stormy night...' I really was. It was the last Saturday night in June, 1995, moonless, when John Tolleson and I left El Paso headed home in his somewhat decrepit old Lincoln Continental coupe.

By the time we hit the east edge of El Paso a desert thunderstorm had blown in, for the first time in decades an El Paso Diablos baseball game was rained out, and the rain was so heavy we had trouble seeing the hood ornament on the Lincoln. Water was shoe-top deep—that's old fashioned high-top shoe-top—across the road, and the wind threatened to blow the car out into the desert with the next gust.

Sierra Blanca, which is the place where you change your watch to mountain time in Texas, was blacked out—not a light slowing. We pushed on, and in a mile or two ran out from under the storm, through we could tell it was pursuing us. John put his foot on the floorboard, the Lincoln did what big V-8s are built to do, and by the time we got to Van Horn the storm was an hour behind us.

Wes Williams and I watched the Marfa Lights on the night of September 21, 1997, for about two hours. They were exactly as advertised—brilliant white (we saw no pink, orange, or blue, though those are said to appear form time to time) spots of light, low down on the horizon, looking like nothing quite so much as powerful locomotive headlights seen at a great distance, perhaps as much as 20 miles or more.

At Van Horn we turned south, headed for Marfa. It was almost exactly midnight, and the first big drops that heralded the approach of the storm were falling. Twenty miles south on US 90 and we were under cloudless, starlit skies, the storm but a series of low flashes on the northern horizon.

By 2:30 AM we were in Marfa, and—predictably—the town had rolled up the sidewalks. We continued east on US 90 for nine miles, stopping at a roadside park on the south side of the road marked *Marfa Mystery Lights Viewing Area*. We got out of the car, stood on the huge rocks provided, and looked around.

To the west-southwest of us, from 2,000 to about 4,000 yards away in the middle of Mitchell Flat, we saw what we thought were the Marfa Mystery Lights. We observed brilliant flashes of light, pure white, pale blue, pale pink, and pale orange. The actual source of the flashes wasn't clearly visible, but they were bright enough to light up circles 150 to 200 yards across so brilliantly we could distinguish the shapes of individual clumps of brush with the naked eye. The flashes lasted from 5 to 20 seconds, then died and reappeared. Some appeared to be at ground level, some appeared to be about ten to fifteen feet in the air. We watched the flashes for about a half an hour, then got back in the car and went over Paisano Pass to Alpine to find a place to sleep, confident that we had seen the Marfa Mystery Lights.

What we saw that last Sunday in June, 1995, wasn't the

Marfa Lights at all, but something entirely different—something even folks in Marfa have never seen. Exactly what it was John and I saw flashing on Mitchell Flat nine miles east of Marfa on that moonless night in late June of 1995 I cannot say for sure, but it wasn't the Marfa Lights, because I saw them the fourth week in September, 1997, and the 'real' Marfa Lights don't look anything like the phenomenon John and I observed.

Marfa, Texas, population about 2,500, two eating places—the Thunderbird Cafe and Dairy Queen—the county seat of Presidio County, which is bordered by Brewster and Jeff Davis counties and the Rio Grande. It's got an elevation of about 4,700 feet—not much lower than Denver, Colorado, which it likes to point out. (Actually, Fort Davis, county seat of Jeff Davis County, is higher at 5050 feet—the highest county seat in Texas.) The days in mid-September range from warm to hot, the night from cool to downright chilly. There's no ragweed in the air—and very little exhaust smoke, even though it is on Highway 90 and the former Southern Pacific Railroad. Marfa rolls up the sidewalks about 10 PM, and five miles out of town in any direction it's as dark as you're gonna get at night in Texas.

Nine miles east of Marfa on Highway 90 there's a sort of a roadside park on the south side of the highway, and it's officially designated *Marfa Mystery Lights Viewing Area*. For Yankees and others of similar persuasion, there's a note at the bottom of the sign which reads (*Night Time Only*). From that point, if you look southwest across Mitchell Flat (it's *really* flat, about 20,000 acres or so of it)—put your back to the road, then turn about 45° to your right—right down on the horizon you'll see a blinking red light. It's not one of the Marfa Lights, but it's the marker for where to look for them. Any steady, moving, or blinking light to the right of that marker is a Marfa Light.

The marker is a microwave transmission tower for telephone signals. To find it, go south from Marfa on US 67 as though going to Presidio, turn left on the first paved public ranch road past the US Border Patrol's check station, and drive halfway to forever. You'll find the communications tower on your left.

Wes Williams and I watched the Marfa Lights on the night of September 21, 1997, for about two hours. They were exactly as advertised—brilliant white (we saw no pink, orange, or blue, though those are said to appear form time to time) spots of light, low down on the horizon, looking like nothing quite so much as powerful locomotive headlights seen at a great distance, perhaps as much as 20 miles or more. The trouble was, the lights were higher than the top of the red beacon, which is about 150 feet tall, and they moved from side to side, which locomotive headlights don't do. Locomotive headlights also don't fade in and out, and they don't appear in groups of three, lined up in a row like street lights. For the record, there aren't any street lights out there.

How far away were they? I don't know. According to *The Marfa Lights*, by Dr. Judith M. Brueske, published by Ocotillo Enterprises in Alpine, only one serious attempt has been made to determine how far the lights are from Mitchell Flat. In the 1890s a railroad surveyor set up two transits and established a baseline about two and a half miles long, attempting to locate

the source of the light by triangulation. Once he'd done his calculations he threw his papers away. His attempt to survey the location of the light sources indicated they were in Mexico, beyond two considerable mountain ranges, one in Texas and one in Mexico, and at the altitude they appeared they could not possibly be seen from Mitchell Flat because they would be behind the mountains. They are also reported to appear on Mitchell Flat itself, lighting up the ground by their glow. They are reported to appear, close up, as balls of light, fuzzy around the edges, with no definite center. Suggestions that they might be 'swamp gas' seem absurd, as there is no swamp nearer than Ottine Swamp, east of Seguin, and there have been no swamps in the area where they appear for a couple of million years, give or take an eon or two.

There are suggestions that they are reflections from auto headlights, somehow appearing to be in the sky. Wes Williams examined them with ten-power binoculars and pronounced them single sources of light, and I examined them through a 270 mm telephoto lens on my camera and found the same thing. Besides, reports of these lights go back to the 1880s at least, when there were no automobiles at all, and when train headlights were kerosene and not powerful enough to be seen for more than a couple of miles or so.

On our second night, September 22, Wes and I decided to ambush the lights and get a closer look. We drove down 67, turned off on the ranch road, drove to the beacon, and took up a post on a hilltop near it. We saw a mule deer, several jackrabbits, a cottontail, a couple of field rats, some awfully big moths, a *lot* of stars on that moonless night, and what might have been the Russian space-station Mir overhead—Wes used to work at NASA, so he knows about that sort of thing—but no Marfa Mystery Lights. We returned to the viewing area, having earned Frequent Alien Miles for passing the Border Patrol checkpoint so often, and there those suckers were, moving about in the sky just as they'd done before. One of them appeared to be directly over the beacon.

What John and I saw two years previously I believed at the time to be a form of piezoelectric discharge, caused by boulders of crystalline quartz being stressed by earth movement. That was reinforced when Wes and I discovered that John and I should have been reading the papers. There was a 4.0 Richter earthquake in the Alpine-Marfa area in May, 1995, and seismically-

registerable—though not strong enough for humans to notice—aftershocks continued for about four or five months. However, when I talked about what John and I saw to folks in Marfa, they said things like "We never saw anything like *that* out there."

The Marfa Lights are real—or as real as anything that can be seen with the naked eye, through binoculars, and recorded on film can be. They are out there, and they appear about 300 nights every year. Nobody knows what they are, and nobody's likely to find out any time soon.

—To get to Marfa from Central Texas and see the ghost lights for yourself, take either I-10 to Balmorhea, then Texas 17 through Wild Rose Pass and Fort Davis to Marfa, or US 90 to Marfa. Choose the dark of the moon and plan to arrive before nightfall if you intend to stay in Marfa, because the place rolls up the sidewalks about half past dark. There are two motels in Marfa—three, but one of 'em's closed down—and the more modern of the two open ones is the Holiday Capri Inn on US 90. Plan to stay two or three nights, and spend several hours each night at the viewing area nine miles east of town. Take powerful binoculars or a telescope and a single-lens reflex camera with a tripod, a telephoto lens, a locking cable release for long exposures, and at least ASA 400 film. You'll see and be able to photograph one of Texas' most unexplainable phenomena when you do.

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Santa Claus in Overalls

By Marion K. Taylor

Back in the nineteen thirties, almost all the inhabitants of Flo, in Leon County, in East Texas and the surrounding areas were extremely poor. Even the most prosperous families were, by today's standards, operating well below the poverty level. Most of the people in this rural area suffered at times from hunger, lack of medical attention, and inadequate shelter and clothing.

Even more poor than the average family were those families where the father and husband was an outright drunk (the term "alcoholic" had not yet been introduced into the area). These men would not necessarily stay drunk full time, but would usually start drinking on Friday evening or Saturday morning and stay drunk over the weekend. They might work hard all week, but when they got a few dollars together some of them would spend it all on booze for the weekend, leaving no money or very little money for the wife and mother to buy the most basic necessities to feed and clothe the family. There isn't much doubt about what caused some, if not most, of this drunkenness. It had to do with the great depression as well as the low education level of almost all the adults in the area back in those days. Drinking was the means for a man, temporarily at least, to escape from the drudgery and hopelessness of the times. There were a few families scattered about the countryside that were in even worse financial condition than those headed by an alcoholic father and husband. These were the families where the father had either died or abandoned his wife and children. Such a family was usually desperate for the bare necessities of life. One might think that in these cases the relatives, neighbors and acquaintances would band together and help over the years, especially while the children in the family were growing up. This no doubt happened at times, but in most cases no such help was provided. Although everyone was poor, even the poorest neighbors could have helped by providing milk, eggs and pork to the family from time to time. The men could have helped by cutting wood for fires to cook with and to keep warm with and by breaking up the soil in a garden in the spring.

Some of these women had to break up their gardens using a grubbing hoe and sometimes had to chop cotton, pick cotton, cut cord wood, and work in other's homes washing and ironing, cleaning house, cooking and canning vegetables that they had furnished themselves "on the halves" so that they could obtain some glass jars for their own use in canning later. The jars were, of course, considered precious objects after they had worked so hard to obtain them. If the mother of such a family could pick up a cardboard box with a few groceries in it once a month from the local relief agency located at the county seat, Centerville, she considered herself very lucky, but was likely to be frowned upon by others who envied her for the meager rations she received.

No Flo area man worth his salt, not even the drunks, would consider going "on relief" and picking up food or clothing for his family, although they may have desperetely needed it. His pride wouldn't let him. He would have been called "sorry" by the other men in the community and would have considered himself worthless as well. This pride, however, didn't necessarily extend to the point where it prevented him from spending all the family income on booze every week.

One of these fatherless families lived in the Midway area, some five miles southwest of Flo. The father had died from a heart attack in 1932 when the family lived on a farm near Huntsville, forty miles south of Leon County. After his death. his wife and two young children along with a grown dauhter and her baby moved to Midway in the spring of 1933. They lived in a small shack built from rough lumber with no two by four timbers in the walls to provide for an insulation space. No paint was ever applied to the shack either inside or outside. The roof was made of tin. There were cracks in the walls between the boards that let in the "blue whistling northers" or frigid winds that swept across the area in the winter time. A

> MY BED WAS A COT. I SLEPT ALONE ON A THIN MATTRESS FILLED WITH OAK LEAVES WHICH WE HAD GATHERED FROM THE WOODS AROUND OUR PLACE. I HAD A SINGLE BLANKET FOR A COVER THAT WAS TOTALLY INADEQUATE FOR KEEPING ME WARM, SO I LAY THERE AND SHIVERED. I HOPED THE NIGHT WOULD PASS QUICKLY SO THAT SANTA CLAUS COULD COME AND BRING ME A PRESENT.

wood burning heater that stood in the middle of the shack provided heat for the shack. The heater had two cooking plates, or "stove lids," built into its top which provided a place to cook the meals.

This family was very poor indeed. The mother was proud as a queen and somehow managed to raise two daughters, a son and a grandson in a Christian atmosphere in this shack in the woods.

A few days before Christmas in 1935 the mother and children went into the woods where the shack was located and cut a three-foot cedar bush to use as a Christmas tree. When they got home they set it up, but they had no "store bought" decorations to put on it. The mother popped a large bowl of popcorn on the heater. She and the kids ate some of it and proceeded to thread the rest of it on twine strings. They decorated the tree with the strings of popcorn and nothing else. The popcorn she used was her seed corn that she had planned to plant the following spring. She used it this day to not only decorate the tree, but also to feed her hungry children.

I'll now let the family's youngest daughter, a Christian lady now sixty-seven years old who lives in the woods a quarter-mile from where the old shack was located, tell the rest of this Christmas tale. This lady was seven years old in 1935, the year of the story.

"Christmas eve came. A cold north wind, a norther, was blowing and the shack was cold. The heater couldn't put out enough heat to deep it warm. About dark my mother made all the kids get into bed to try to keep warm.

"My bed was a cot. I slept alone on a thin mattress filled with oak leaves which we had gathered from the woods around our place. I had a single blanket for a cover that was totally inadequate for keeping me warm, so I lay there and shivered. I hoped the night would pass quickly so that Santa Claus could come and bring me a present. You see, I still believed in Santa Claus.

"My mother saw me shivering in the bed so she tore an old piece of cloth into strips, and while I watched she took a kitchen knife and went around the room trying to stuff the strip of cloth into the cracks in the walls which were letting in the cold wind. I distinctly remember that some of the cloth strips would fly out of the cracks back into the room after she moved on. I remember thinking that there was a tiger outside the shack that was blowing the cloth out of the cracks trying to slip inside to get us.

"I remember thinking, quite clearly, that he was Santa Claus and that he had been delayed by the cold wind and that the wind had blown his red Santa Claus suit off his body. I noticed that he looked around the interior of our shack before passing the box to my mother and then quickly walking away.

"From time to time I would awaken during the night shivering in my bed. I would look over at the Christmas tree. Santa had not yet come. I remember that mother was up at times putting more wood in the heater.

"I must have finally slept soundly for a while for when I awoke it was daylight outside. I eased back the blanket on my bed and looked over at the Christmas tree. To my great sorrow I saw that there was not a single present, not even an apple, under it. I covered up my head with the blanket and started crying. How could Santa forget? My heart was broken. I lay there for perhaps a half hour with the blanket over my head. I could not bear to remove it because I would see the barren Christmas tree.

"Hearing a knock on the flimsy door of the shack, I looked out from under the covers and watched my mother move across the room to the door and open it.

"A man I had never seen before stood in the doorway. He was a heavy set man about twenty-five years old and not much taller than five feet. He was dressed in a cap, a plaid shirt, brogan shoes and denim overalls that came to a point on his chest just below his chin. In his arms he held a cardboard box.

"I remember thinking, quite clearly, that he was Santa Claus and that he had been delayed by the cold wind and that the wind had blown his red Santa Claus suit off his body. I noticed that he looked around the interior of our shack before passing the box to my mother and then quickly walking away.

"After he had left we all gathered around the box with excitement. It contained, among other food, a ham, More important to me at the time, however, were the trinkets, candy, nuts and fruit that were also in the box.

"My mother immediately began to cut slices off the ham and started frying them on the heater. We were undernourished and half starving at the time (although I did not know it then). I remember that we gathered around the frying pan and were sniffing the delicious aroma rising from it. I got too close and burned the end of my nose when it touched the edge of the hot pan.

"I found out later that the ham and some other things in the box had been provided by Mrs. Emma Page, who lived about two miles from us. She has always occupied a special place in my heart.

"That's the end of my true. hard to believe, 1935 Christmas story," she said with tears in her eyes.

"Where was this shack located?" I asked. I thought I knew for I vaguely remembered a shack from my youth.

"A quarter-mile from here on the one-lane dirt road that just came over on the way to my house," she replied. It was the shack I had remembered.

"Are you willing to identify the man that came to your door on Christmas morning years ago?" I asked.

"With pleasure," she said. "It was Colonel Moore, your neighbor all those years you lived in Flo when you were a boy, Colonel belonged to a Masonic Lodge back then and still does. Don't ever make a disparaging remark within my hearing about Colonel or the Masons. He and Emma Page were God's gift to me and my family that Christmas day in 1935."

About a week later I was talking with Colonel and his wife, Lois, who still live near our old homestead. They are both eighty-four years old now. I asked them if they remembered Colonel taking the box to this widow's house on Christmas day in 1935.

"Of course I remember it," replied Colonel. "It seems like it was yesterday. You don't forget a thing like that for the rest of your days. The thing I remember most vividly was that when I looked around the shack they lived in, I saw that the only thing they had to eat was lying on the table in plain view." He did not continue.

After a time I asked, "What was lying on the table?"

"A small pile of sandjack acorns and a larger pile of hickory nuts picked up from the ground."

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CENTEX MAP INSERT

LEGACY IN STONE

BY IRA KENNEDY

THE ATLATL: A DART OR SPEAR THROWER IS DEPICTED IN THE DRAWING ABOVE. THE MAINSHAFT WAS USUALLY FOUR TO FIVE FEET LONG. UPON IMPACT, THE SHAFT WOULD FLEX TOWARD AND THEN SPRING AWAY FROM THE PREY LEAVING THE STONE-TIPPED FORESHAFT INSIDE. ILLUSTRATION BY IRA KENNEDY.

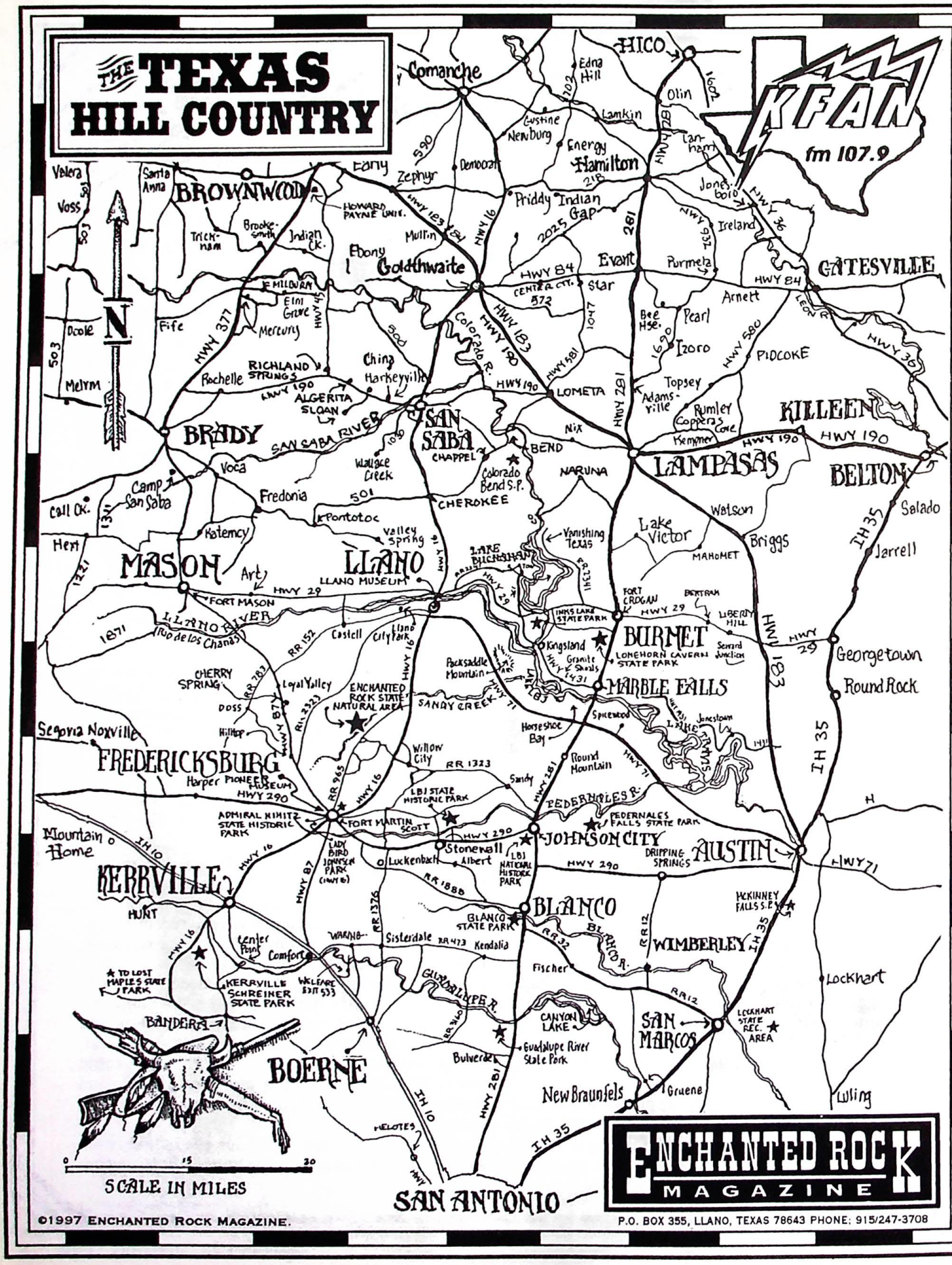
DART AND ARROW POINTS FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: **PEDERNALES** DART POINT (4000-2000 BP–YEARS BEFORE PRESENT). **WASHITA** ARROW POINT, (800-400 BP). **PERDIZ** ARROW POINT, (1000-500 BP).**TOYA** ARROW POINT, (600-400 BP). **FRIO** DART POINT, (2200-1400 BP). **CLOVIS** DART POINT, (1200-9000 BP). ACTUAL SIZE ARTIFACTS FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE AUTHOR.

The human history of the Americas has its roots deep in the soil of Texas. Lacking a written record it is not a history in the true sense of the word, but is a chronological record non-the-less. This documentation exists in the form of unobtrusive stone artifacts lost, buried, or abandoned by their creators. Although the most abundant of these flint tools are scrapers and hand axes, the "arrowheads" are the most sought after and highly prized by collectors.

Many collectors classify the projectile points in one of two categories: "arrowheads" and "bird points"—the arrowheads being the larger points, and the bird points smaller, one inch or less in length. Actually, the arrowheads are dart points, used with an atlatl, a type of spear or dart thrower. The bird points are, in reality, arrow points. The bow and arrow was a comparatively recent invention in the Americas and dates back approximately 1,000 years Before Present (B.P.).

Serviceable projectile points need very little craftsmanship, as the earliest Old Word forms attest. Artful flaking, careful attention to detail, and adherence to demanding cultural standards are all characteristics of the American Indian projectile point. In their sculpting, a marriage of form and function achieved an elegance as ever emerged from stone.

Central Texas, due to the long-standing abundance of water and game, has unusually large con-



P.O. BOX 355, LLANO, TEXAS 78643 PHONE: 915/247-3708

FRAMES FILLED WITH ARTIFACTS LIINE THE WALLS AT CITY JEWELRY REPAIR IN MARBLE FALLS ALL COLLECTED BY STEVE MCCOY. PHOTO: IRA KENNEDY.

centrations of prehistoric artifacts. Over sixty distinctive types of projectile points can be found here, usually on high ground adjacent to creeks or rivers.

When a projectile point is found, one of the first questions one is tempted to ask is, "How old it it?" and, if a knowledgeable person is around to answer the question, the next question invariable is , "How do you know?"

Several methods for dating artifacts have been developed, but the most common one is radiocarbon dating. All that is needed is several grams of organic matter, such as bone or ash. The radioactive isotope in carbon decays at a given rate into nitrogen atoms. One-half of a carbon atom (the "half-life") breaks up every 5,568 years—plus or minus 40 years. Geiger-counting a carbon sample from, say, the fire-pit of an archeological site gives archeologists the approximate age of artifacts found in that strata of soil.

Over the last several decades innumerable sites in Texas and elsewhere have been excavated and their artifacts dated. Archeologists have learned that projectile points fall into several specific stylistic designs which were adhered to for several hundred or even over one thousand years. *A Field Guide to Stone Artifacts of Texas Indians*, by Ellen Sue Turner and Thomas R. Hester, lists over 81 dart points and 36 arrow points created over a period spanning almost 12,000 years.

The earliest cultural artifacts in the Americas, the Clovis points, are named after a location in Clovis, New Mexico where their antiquity was first authenticated. These points have been found in association with mammoth kill-sites dating back to the late Pleistocene (Ice Age) around 11,200 B.P.. Clovis points have been discovered from Canada to Texas, and from Main to Texas.

As a result of extensive archaeological field research and point classification, we are now able to date dart points found on the surface. Looking along dirt roads, dry washes, creekbeds, or following behind bulldozers at construction sites, are some of the easiest ways to find projectile points without destroying the valuable legacy inherent in archaeological sites. Ancient campsites are frequently located in an area where two streams converge, or above a tributary's cutback. Remember, most land in Texas is under private ownership and permission must be obtained beforehand. Collecting artifacts on state or federal property is strictly prohibited by law.

Unless you've seen numerous artifact collections, you're in for a pleasant surprise. The quality of some points is nothing short of exquisite and there are very few museums which offer an extensive display artifacts of quality pieces. If you've never seen a museum-quality collection you owe it to yourself to take a look.

The best display I have ever seen which is accessible to the public is at City Jewelry Repair located at 1612 Highway 281 North in Marble Falls (830-693-8333). Owner, Steve McCoy has been collecting for over forty years and his collection consists of some 10,000 pieces. Steve is very knowledgeable and is always ready to share his interest and experiences with others.

Jimmy's Antiques in Bertram, northwest of Burnet, is owned and operated by Jimmy Nuckles. She is listed in Who's Who in Indian Relics, and her shop has numerous artifacts for sale. There you can view museum quality Precolumbian, Eskimo, and Plains Indian artifacts. Jimmy is planning the 4th Annual Highland Lakes Artifact Show at the Burnet Fair Barn sometime in February, 1998.

RESOURCES: One of the most authoritative books on the topic is, *A Field Guide to Stone Artifacts of Texas Indians*, Gulf Publishing Company, by Ellen Sue Turner and Thomas R. Hester. *The Official Overstreet Price Guide*, Overstreet Publications, Inc., by Robert M. Overstreet and Howard Peake is an extensive publication covering virtually all of the types of points found in the United States.

Texas Cache, "The Texas Artifact Magazine," published quarterly by Bob McWilliams is an excellent publication offering numerous articles and resources for the collector. The Texas Amateur Archeological Association membership (which includes a subscription) is $30.00 per year—A subscription without membership is $25. Write *Texas Cache*, 8901 S. Hwy 67 #10, San Angelo, Texas 76904 or Call toll free 1-800-7-CLOVIS.

A COWBOY CHRISTMAS TURKEY

BY L. KELLY DOWN

Last night I got roped in to writin how I cooked up a turkey back during my ranchin years on the Matagorda. I always figured they was only one way, and everone knew how. I guess not, so here goes.

First off get yourself a turkey—gets some extra giblets. Turkey necks is best, but most turkeys only got one. In a pinch get some big bunch of gizzards—Put them gizzards on as soon as you can, boil 'em with big chunks of celery, onions—skins and all; throw in some livers and hearts—but they ain't for eating—only to add good flavor. Turn you fire down low like—just a bubble now and again. Cut it off at night when you is sleeping, but before you gets you morning coffee get after them again. Strong like at first—then just a bubble like last night.

Clean your turkey some good. Now get your electric portable oven—like the ones that came out about 1950 or so—they is the best. Puts your turkey in it; with oyster dressing shoved as tight inside as you can force in, better put some more in a oven bowl cause that dressing do go fast like.

Get yourself some fresh cranberries, put a couple cups of sugar and cover them plum up with some clean river or well water. Boil them up and when them berries stops going off—pop-pop like popcorn, it be done. Slap it in a good cold icebox, it sets itself up just fine.

Now you got your big pot of gizzard broth on the stove and it's nice and hot, add 2 pounds of butter to that broth and put a clean dishtowel (one that you won't want to use again, but clean) over that whole turkey and wet it down nice with that hot broth. You are going to have to keep doing this every twenty minutes or so while the turkey is roasting. Be sure to check the temperature on your oven, 'cause more 'n likely it's a little off. Get yourself one of those "hanging on the rack inside the oven thermometers" to make sure you are close to 325°. Now you have already put your favorite rubs on that bird, but be sure to put a bunch of butter under the skin of the breast, so it will be just dying to go all over that turkey meat. Sit back and enjoy a cool one 'cause you will need to figger twenty minutes to the pound to cook 'em just right.

While your turkey is a cookin' bake up some sweet potatoes— wrap them in foil and bake them like your mama did for your school lunch. Take them out when they are done and pull off the skin while they are some hot. Slice them up at an angle, about a tad more than one inch, and lay them sweet potatoes like they was not sliced—more like they just growed with them slices. Get you some real good chili powder and put it on top, quarter a pound of butter and some good lean bacon, with enough fat on it so as your doctor would turn up his toes to it. Lay this here bacon on top of all this other stuff. Did I tell you to start with this all in an oven-proof dish—must have—anyways put it in your oven, at about mebbe 350°, Watch it close 'cause you want the bacon done but not crisp—everything else has been cooked so the bacon do tell you when it's ready. This you can cook after the turkey is done, just sittin' on the counter waitin' to be carved.

Next, you gets your giblets and gizzards and chop them up real fine—throw away the tough inside skin—pick all that nice meat off the neck 'cause it is where the goodest part is. Get the drippings from that turkey and use the pan that the turkey roasted in and put this on the stove top with the heat on medium to medium high—least until it gets to bubbling good—then make a slurry of flour and well water and slowly add this along with some of the water from the potatoes you boiled up to mash—where else do you put that good gravy we's makin'. After the gravy gets good and hot and starts to thicken a bit add them chopped up gizzards and neck pickins and cook a little more.

Oh, yeah, you noticed ain't nothing telling how to make oyster dressing, sweet rolls, and dipping red sauce for raw oysters—odd I missed them plus some of the other stuff.

But no worry, just sent your name to *Enchanted Rock Magazine*; I do believe it would jog my old head into recalling the rest of how the best turkey dinner is done—easy like.

[Ed. Note: This story was written on December 26, 1996, after my young sons, myself and Ms. Intrepid were lucky enough to spend Christmas Day with the author. L. Kelly Down passed away Jan. 23, 1997; However, Ms. Intrepid watched every move the author made that day and can help you with your turkey dilemma—Just send a card and we will be happy to oblige.]

ERNST DOSCH:

KING OF THE TEXAS DEERHUNTERS

BY KENN KNOPP

Ernst Dosch, son of the chief justice of Erbach in the Odenwald of Hessen-Darmstadt, was born in 1821. Even in his youth, his greatest delight was deer hunting. He chose the study of forestry and graduated from the University of Giessen in 1844.

During his school years he and his classmates exchanged the booklets written by Dr. August Seitz extolling the virtues of a new nation in North America called the Republic of Texas. Dosch's imagination was sparked by the description of Texas as a vast wilderness with a warm climate and an abundance of deer, bear, panther and a host of other wildlife. Dosch had the recurring dream: Walhalla was an idylic land, densely populated by deer and he had the liberty and his pursuit of happiness —freedom to hunt deer to his heart's content.

Accustomed to the comforts and advantages of a family of means and high position, his family felt sure that young Ernst would soon return from Texas once he got it out of his system. His family gave him their blessing and backed that up with some cash.

Dosch arrived in the Texas Hill Country in 1848, a full year after the villages of Bettina, Schoenburg, Meerholz, Leiningen and Castell had been founded along the Llano River. Dosch found a perfect companion in Ludwig August Freiherr von Lichtenberg, a distinguished military man from Mainz, to help handling deer, large bears or other wild game. Also, having a hunting partner was good for self-defense in case of renegade Indians. They were also business partners.

In a letter to his sister Minna and his family, Ernst extolled the wonders and beauty of the Hill Country and described the progress that his fellow German immigrants were making in establishing the cities of New Braunfels, Freidrichburg and Sisterdale. What's more he gave glowing reviews of the Hill Country and the weather that allowed him to hunt almost any day of the year. He even spoke of "Blue Northers" and how they made hunting even better. The disappointment was palpable in Darmstadt; Ernst wasn't coming home anytime soon.

In later correspondence, he revealed his antipathy for the Adelsverein leaders in Texas as being the same liars as those in Germany. They had failed to back up promises by piling up enormous debt in Texas, and had cut off the immigrants financially and intended to go out of business. But despite this the German colonies and people were sustaining themselves and were doing very well, no thanks to the German leadership.

Dosch loved to call the Hill Country "Wildreichtum" (wildlife kingdom). He wrote his family that on just one hunt he had the taken and processed twenty-six deer. This was truly a hunters paradise. He continued in the same correspondence that he preferred stalking and covering a large amount of terri-

tory and that in this particular year the winter had come early, catching the migrating ducks by surprise, causing the ducks to seek refuge on the small natural lakes. Dosch and von Lichtenberg surprised their neighbors with the huge amount of ducks they were able to shoot.

It is strange that Dosch never mentioned the exact place where he built his Blockhaus or hunter's cabin in the Wildreichtum. I suspect that it was in the triangle of Friedrichburg/Sisterdale/Boerne, as he mentioned how pleased he was to have so many of his Darmstaedter friends around and mentions Dr. med. Ferdinand von Herff, whose ranch was in Boerne and practice in San Antonio, Gustav Schliecher, the area's state representative in the Texas legislature (later a county was named after him: Kreis, in West Texas), Theodore Schleuning a merchant and W. Friedrich a successful surveyor.

Dosch worked in San Antonio along with his hunting companion von Lichtenberg. They had a successful concession business inside the Casino Club, the most elegant social center and performing arts theatre in town. Ernst wrote glowingly regarding the growth of San Antonio that had a population of 10,000. Sadly, in July of 1852 his friend and hunting companion died from a "contagion". We can only guess what it really was. Shortly after this great loss, Dosch went to work for another friend, Adam Voigt. Adam had a large farm near Boerne. It was at about the same time that gold fever gripped the Hill Country, in and around the Llano River Basin, and Ernst went to seek his fortune. He was amazed to find wild bee hives and honey so easily available. The Enchanted Rock area was a whole new world for him. Ernst wrote that he feared rattlesnakes more than Comanches, even though the Comanches were in full control of the area.

Ernst's fears were realized when a rattlesnake bit him; his friends immediately came to his aid and cut the bite area and sucked out the poison quickly. Their fast action saved Dosch's life; it turns out that while his friends were panning for gold, Ernst was manning the kitchen, so there was method for their madness.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, Ernst, along with his friends had a difficult decision to make. They were neither cotton farmers nor slave owners, but the Confederacy was in full control of the state of Texas. Fearing that their views of Union support might get them into trouble, Dosch and the group of friends took off for Piedras Negras, Mexico for the duration of the War. Near the end of the War, Ernst decided that a trip home to the "Fatherland" would be in order. While he was in Germany, Dosch told his stories about the Texas as the ideal Jagdparadies — hunter's paradise, the more he told his tales the more he longed for the Hill Country, so at the end of the War he returned to his beloved Texas.

GOLD FEVER GRIPPED THE HILL COUNTRY, IN AND AROUND THE LLANO RIVER BASIN, AND ERNST WENT TO SEEK HIS FORTUNE. HE WAS AMAZED TO FIND WILD BEE HIVES AND HONEY SO EASILY AVAILABLE. THE ENCHANTED ROCK AREA WAS A WHOLE NEW WORLD FOR HIM. ERNST WROTE THAT HE FEARED RATTLESNAKES MORE THAN COMANCHES, EVEN THOUGH THE COMANCHES WERE IN FULL CONTROL OF THE AREA.

Dosch owned property all over the Hill Country, always gravitating towards San Antonio and the Casino Club, but never forgetting his true love, deer hunting.

He wrote of shooting the biggest buck of his life in the rugged and mountainous area of the Frio River in West Texas, and in the summer of 1899 he participated in the Bundesschuetzenfest, the regional sharpshooting contest in New Braunfels. While there Ernst won the Pot-Shot Contest; each contestant had three shots on the target and would wager "Vier Bitt" (50¢) to see who could hit the bulls eye. Unfortunately, Ernst's reputation preceded him—few would wager against him. They said, "...der alte Herr Kann doch vertefelt gut schiessen." (The old man still shoot damned well.)

As a side note, in 1902 Ernst received notice from the U. S. Government that he would receive a monthly pension as a "Survivor of the Indian Wars". Eight Dollars would be coming his way and at the time he needed the extra income. Ernst did not remember there ever being an Indian conflict.

When 1905 rolled around and Ernst sold off all of his holdings and moved to San Antonio to be with his friend Dr. von Herff. He must have known that his days were numbered to go so far from the deer hunting fields of the Hill Country. He wrote, "All my life I was a hunter...die Jagdblut ist mir ueber alles gegangen und mir auch am laengsten treugeblieben." (...my veins pulsed with hunter's blood through and through and never let me do anything else.)

Just before he died on January 15, 1906, Ernst Dosch wrote that it gave him great joy to reread the letters and his writings he had saved about his amazing life in his wonderful hunting paradise—the Texas Hill Country. Certainly Ernst Dosch can be called and crowned the all-time "King of Texas Deer Hunters".

THE TRAILDUSTERS

BY W. C. BROWN

PULP FICTION WESTERN STYLE FROM A 91YEAR-OLD YARNSPINNER

The pair of dust covered derelicts in faded denims and battered Stetsons halted their lather crusted mounts on the downslope of the cedar crest, and gazed somberly down on the town shimmering in the heat waves of the mesquite flat below.

The sign was sunwarped and the paint was peeling off, but you could still make out "Alkali Flat".

"I hope it ain't as flat as we are," the big one muttered, rubbing the scraggy stubble on his moon-face. "I could eat anything that don't bite back."

"Yeah, and I'd even settle for a drink…of water." The weathered, pint-sized companion replied.

With a weary groan, the big fellow lifted his overflowing paunch to a more comfortable position against the prodding saddle horn. He twisted his ponderous form in the saddle to peer backtrail, the wiry little bronc between his legs bracing himself against the shift in weight.

"Nary a sign of a rider on a gray hoss," he stated with grim satisfaction.

"We sure gave that tin star a good losin' in the Big Bend." The smaller one just chuckled.

"But he'll be along—as usual"

"Yeah. Give 'im a coupla days."

"I wish he'd find that hell-boomin' berg he once said he'd like to find, and settle down with the saloon he'd wished for," fatso fantasized.

"Yeah. That'd get 'im off'n our tail for good."

Kickapoo dragged a soiled sleeve across his brow, blinked his dust reddened eyes, and licked cracked lips. "You know, Lazarus," he said, "if I knew of a town in a thousand miles of here just bustin' at the seams with life—I'd take a long chance to lead that lad on the gray hoss to it."

Lazarus—well, his mother must have carried him everywhere she went when he was small—just to avoid kissing him

good-bye. The fat one's description of his desiccated and derelict appearing partner had a certain degree of accuracy. And Kickapoo—his globe shaped stomach rode forward with a wadded up faded blue denim jumper draped over the saddle horn to ease the friction. The two of them, sort of a old timey version of Laurel and Hardy got into mischief most everywhere they went—not trouble—just mischief.

"When some people travel, they're goin' somewhere," Lazarus observed, "but when we travel, we're always *leavin'* some place."

"And in a hurry, too." Kickapoo added, dryly.

"It's them queer deals you work," Lazarus stated with amused accusation. He tilted his hat against the lowering sun and chuckled at some passing memory. He was both short and thin, his face like a sundried potato, his Adam's apple strongly competing with his beak-like nose for facial prominence. He hunched in the saddle, a grotesque small man atop the big Roman-nosed roan.

"Mebbe," he mused hopefully, "Alkali is too small to support a jail."

Pulling up at Estill's Stables, with the pungent scent of hay and horses riding the sunscorched breeze, they gazed about.

Across from the stables was a smoke-blackened clapboard building with one wall straining against a pile of iron junk, mostly used horse shoes. It smelled of dying coal embers while the listless ring of an anvil competed with the locusts in the mesquites. Farther down, paint peeled signs identified Mrs. Wimple, Boarding House, Haggerty's Merchandise, Greco's Cafe, and four saloons. There was another low, sturdy building, unidentified, which the partners eyed with suspicion. A half-dozen cowponies dozed at hitch racks in front of the saloons. Alkali Flat was in a prolonged siesta.

From his seat on a slick worn nail keg, the stables owner pulled his weathered hat lower over startled eyes as he gazed at the odd pair, and the lethargy flowed from his withered frame and he climbed to his feet.

He pulled the old pipe from between stained teeth and grinned.

"Circus comin' to town?"

"If you're bein' funny," Kickapoo growled, "we're too tired, hungry, and dry to laugh."

"No offence, fellers," Estill said half apologetically, "but, my Gawd!"

"Forget it," the partners said, and slid to the ground.

The big roan sluffed a hip immediately and started dozing. Kickapoo's mesquite-knot of a bronc heaved with relief, then when Estill stepped forward and took the reins, bared his teeth and nipped at his seat. Estill cussed and jumped clear.

"Give 'em lots of hay, oats and a rubdown," Kickapoo said, beating a fog of dust from his shoulders with his hat.

"A dollar a night—each," Estill said, halting.

"A dollar?" Lazarus gasped, incredulously.

"In advance," the hostler completed.

"My Gawd!" Kickapoo exploded. "Who do you think we are—Jay Gould and Coal Oil Johnny?"

"Cash in advance," Estill repeated obstinately.

"Ain't the hosses and tacks good for it?" queried Kickapoo with offended pride.

Estill eyed the mounts critically, hesitated, scratched his ear with his pipe stem. "Okay," he said grudgingly. "But they'll eat themselves up in a week."

The traildusters shot one another a knowing look. They'd never stayed anywhere a whole week—at least not on their own accord.

PAINT PEELED SIGNS IDENTIFIED MRS. WIMPLE, BOARDING HOUSE, HAGGERTY'S MERCHANDISE, GRECO'S CAFE, AND FOUR SALOONS. THERE WAS ANOTHER LOW, STURDY BUILDING, UNIDENTIFIED, WHICH THE PARTNERS EYED WITH SUSPICION. A HALF-DOZEN COWPONIES DOZED AT HITCH RACKS IN FRONT OF THE SALOONS. ALKALI FLAT WAS IN A PROLONGED SIESTA.

"Where can a pair get a decent place to eat and sleep?" Kickapoo asked.

"A *decent* place?" Estill repeated with a hard laugh.

"Oh, well, we're not too particular." Lazarus sighed.

"You can get bunks at Missus Wimples' boardin' House," Estill said, "but the bugs are as big as vampire leaches. And you can eat at Greco's—but if he don't poison you, you'll die of indigestion."

They hadn't eaten since the night before, but neither had they drunk—other than water. They walked down the middle of the street eyeing both Greco's Cafe and the nearest saloon. They passed the building they had eyed with suspicion form afar. It was low, flat, constructed of discarded yet formidably sturdy railroad cross-ties. Small windows were laced with heavy iron bars.

"Don't look now," Lazarus murmured, "but that's a booger of a jail across the street."

"Yeah, and look at that hombre starin' at us from the next buildin'," Kickapoo replied guardedly.

Lazarus sneaked a glance. A flat-crowned black hat set squarely atop the grim fellow's shaggy head. He wore his cartridge belt and big Colt with an air of authority even without the backing of the ominous star on his vest. The sign overhead read:

Sid Rampy, Marshal. Weddings, Hangings & Burials.

The partners stared stiffly ahead and were about the pass when the hoarse, wheezy voice halted them.

"Hey strangers. Check your guns here."

The partners exchanged glances and approached, reluctantly unbuckling their belts.

"Saw you check in at the stables," Rampy wheezed. "Old Estill didn't tell you that guns ain't allowed on the streets here, eh?"

"Why—no he didn't," Kickapoo replied hurriedly.

"Ain't no cooperation in that booger," Rampy rhumely commented. "Probably thought he'd get you into trouble and he'd get your horses."

"He did?" Lazarus gulped.

"He's that kind." Rampy's breath was all out; he gasped for breath and groaned to himself.

Lazarus gazed at him with great sympathy. "I had an uncle that died of asthma," he said, hearteningly.

"Ain't asthma anymore," Rampy coughed as he took their belts.

"This dry climate cured it in a week after I came here twenty

THE HIGH PEAK OF LAZARUS' DUSTY STETSON CAME ABOUT TO T. J.'S MASSIVE SHOULDERS, AND COUNTING BOOTS, DUST AND GREAT THIRST, HE WAS STILL SHY OF ONE HUNDRED TWENTY. IN CONTRAST, T. J. LOOKED LIKE A BALE OF COTTON WITH THE MIDDLE TIES BUSTED.

years ago from Louisiana."

"Then what's eatin' your breathin' apparatus?" Lazarus asked.

"Dust. Just dust. Blamed if it ain't killin' me."

"Which reminds me," Kickapoo said, a bit uncomfortable in the presence of a silver star. "We're pretty dry. Which saloon you recommend?"

"Why recommend one? You'll head for the nearest one anyway." The marshal pulled in a deep breath and grinned.

The nearest saloon was the Horned Toad. As they pushed through the scarred batwings, Lazarus sucked deeply of the familiar smell. "Know something?" He grinned. "That marshal sure knows human nature."

They blinked their eyes against the shadows, and casually eyed the half-dozen partons. A couple of old-timers were dozing over their beers at tables. A listless poker game was going on at one table, and a lanky cowpoke with beer-bleary eyes leaned heavily upon the bar.

"Beer." The dusty partners chorused.

The saloonman stared with disbelief while his hairy hands reached for two mugs.

The high peak of Lazarus' dusty Stetson came about to Kickapoo's massive shoulders, and counting boots, dust and great thirst, he was still shy of one hundred twenty. In contrast, Kickapoo looked like a bale of cotton with the middle ties busted.

Mike held out his hand, palm up, expecting pay. Kickapoo grasped the big paw in his own chubby one and pumped it.

"Glad ta meetcha," he said, "—and this is my podner. Uh—how about a refill?" and the partners pushed empty mugs toward the slightly confused saloonman.

"Is this metropolis dead or just in a long siesta?" Kickapoo asked between gulps of beer.

"One long siesta," the barkeep replied. "Ever since the Texas-Pacific veered over through Pecos to the north."

"Just like old Rip, eh?" Kickapoo grunted with understanding.

"Yeah, but Rip Van Winkle awoke after twenty years," Mike Bigelow said dolefully. "Looks like nothin's ever goin' to wake Alkali again. Me—I'm ready to grab the first sucker and sell."

At those words, Kickapoo and Lazarus exchanged quick glances.

"We got an acquaintance that'll hit town in a day or two that's lookin' for a buy in a *live* town," Kickapoo said.

"Yeah, but this town'll never qualify," Lazarus said sadly. "Alkali Flat just needs a kindly pat in the face with an undertaker's shovel."

Mike's mind was hanging on the partners past words. "This gent that's lookin' for a saloon to buy—"

"He's a wide-roamin' deputy marshal on a gray hoss," Kickapoo said, "that would buy a saloon in a live town."

"Coupla more beers," Lazarus said.

"Forty cents," the saloonman said firmly.

Kickapoo reached toward his hip. He fingered anxiously a moment. His hand came up empty, face slack, then gradually grinned with relief.

"Dern it—I left my purse in my saddle bags," he announced. "Lazarus, trot back to the stable and bring it, huh."

Lazarus shot Kickapoo a searing look, then ambled out. Kickapoo grinned at Mike, and shoved back his empty mug. "Might as well have another one while we wait."

Outside, Lazarus paused and looked about speculatively. Then he calmly sauntered into the next saloon and ordered two beers.

"My podner'll be right in." Lazarus was grinning.

Lazarus drank his beer, throwing a pretended glance occasionally at the bat wings. The barkeep kept one eye on him while shining glasses. Once Lazarus moseyed up front to peer out, returned muttering.

"Might as well drink my podner's beer before it goes flat," he said with a grin. "He can order fresh."

Lazarus finally detected a dawning distrust in the barkeep's eyes, and he figured he'd been gone long enough to have gone to the stable.

"Podner's down the street," he grinned innocently. "I'll get 'im."

Lazarus popped through the Horn Toad's batwings apparently all filled with excitement and emptied of breath. "We been robbed!" he gasped. "There's not one thin dime in them saddlebags."

Kickapoo heaved his ponderous form toward the batwings with amazing sprightliness. "We better get the law." he yelped.

"Damn little help Sid Rampy will be." Mike growled.

As Kickapoo moved toward the next saloon, Lazarus caught his arm.

"Not in there, Podner. I just had a few beers there—on the house."

As they walked hurriedly, Kickapoo frowned in thought. "I've been thinkin' about what that Horn Toad owner said about sellin'," he muttered.

"I've been thinkin' about the whole town," Lazarus added. "I ain't felt so depressed since the time the sheriff spotted that saw blade in them tortillas that pretty little tamale tried to slip us down in Laredo."

"We ought to do something to stir up some excitement," Kickapoo mused, thinking about the rider on the gray horse. Then his eyes settled on Greco's Cafe down the street, and he added: "But not on an empty stomach."

They plodded along the frayed board walk, wafts of chili aroma striking their nostrils, luring them on with a quickened pace.

"Fire causes excitement," Lazarus offered. "Especially when it's a saloon. We could set a saloon afire."

"You crazy?" Kickapoo was aghast. "If we burn anything, it'll be the jail."

Lazarus shot Kickapoo an admiring glance. "Sometimes you're so brainy that you make me look ignerent."

"I ain't no genius, but that ain't hard to do."

Greco's Cafe was both short and narrow. It reeked of a myriad of cooking smells, garlic predominating. A big range at the back had several pots on it, tended by a swarthy chap with a gorilla build and a deeply scarred jowl that looked like it may have stopped a meat cleaver.

The hungry partners settled themselves on the little round stools, rested soiled elbows on the pine slab counter, and looked up.

Greco looked up too—and stared a moment in awe, scratching his chin with a meat cleaver.

"Feed us food fast 'fore we faint."

Greco suddenly grinned and wiped his hands on a greasy apron that once was white.

"I gotta da meatballs and spaghet," he suggested.

"Meatballs, eh? Okay bring me two bowls of chili and a bowl of crackers," Kickapoo said. Lazarus chimed in "A bowl of chili and two bowls of crackers."

"I gotta good meatballs." Greco repeated.

"He's in a rut." Lazarus said under his breath.

"Chili—bring us chili" Kickapoo said with some exasperation.

"Whatsa wrong with a my meatballs?"

"Since I ain't seen them how'n tarnation would I know?" Kickapoo was definitely loosing patience.

Greco groaned, brandishing his meat cleaver. "You insult a me. You cannot have a my meatballs. You will eat a da chili."

Greco waddled back to the greasy iron range, and grabbed two big white bowls, muttering along the way.

"What are we supposed to do for dinero?" Lazarus whispered.

"Who's mentioned money?" Kickapoo said shrugging his massive shoulders.

"That son of a gun is bound to mention it with that meat cleaver before we get outa here." Lazarus was now in full panic.

"We'll pull the old shenanigan," Kickapoo said with a wink.

"You mean the one the got us in jail in Laredo?" Lazarus was really squirming now. "Also, Santone, Piedras Negras, Chihuahua, Ojinaga, El Paso, Pecos..."

"Sure, it done got us in jail so many times the law of averages has got to be on our side now."

"Don't mention law to me, we ain't burned that jail yet."

Greco brought the chili and crackers. The hungry partners grabbed spoons eagerly—then suddenly halted. Greco had clamped a big fist down over each bowl. His narrowed eyes bored into those of the partners.

"You gotta da money? That's fifteen cents apiece."

"Look here," Lazarus exclaimed indignantly. "Do we look like tramps?"

"You looka like a da tramps, all right," Greco reached for that meat cleaver and put it on the counter..

They sat there a moment, the hoarse breath of Greco fanning their cheeks. His hands still covered the bowls of chili, and the aroma escaped through his large fingers.

Hunger dims a man's memory, and the partners couldn't remember their last square meal. Now with that tantalizing aroma torturing their nostrils, even their stomachs set up audible protests at the delay.

"Look, Greco, how do we know that we even like your food—until we eat it?"

Greco's pride was pricked. He flung out his hands, closed his eyes in a swoon, and patted both palms against his sweating forehead.

"So you think I cannot cook, eh—...I'll show you—eat a da chili." With that Greco's meat cleaver made a fast pass close to their startled faces.

Lazarus jabbed his spoon eagerly into the chili, then paused. He looked at the red grease floating an inch thick on top, and recoiled like he'd looked a rattler in the face.

"I ain't no cross between a Messican and a Eskimo—I can't eat all that cayenne loaded blubber."

"I'm worried about Greco," Lazarus whispered. "He's sittin' back there starin' at us with that meat cleaver in his hands and dollar marks in his eyes."

Despite Kickapoo's remarks, Lazarus pushed back his chili, and Kickapoo silently followed suit.

"Bring up them meatballs." They said in unison.

Greco loped forward, "Whatsa wrong with a da chili?"

"Too rich for our blood," Kickapoo said

"How you gonna pay for da meatballs?" Greco persisted.

"We're swappin' you the chili for 'em," Lazarus explained.

"But you no pay for the chili," Greco protested.

"Of course not, we didn't eat the chili, now did we?" Kickapoo chimed in.

Greco brought them the meatballs. They devoured them and were on a second helping when Kickapoo looked up at Greco with a friendly grin, remarking:

"You know, Greco, them are good meatballs. I don't mind sayin' I was a mite shy at first. That old man at the stable said the if you didn't poison us we'd die of indigestion."

Greco flew into a rage "That old man—he eats my food, then stab me inna back. For two months now, he a no pay me."

Kickapoo kicked Lazarus' shin. Lazarus ignored it and kept wolfing down his meatballs. Kickapoo banged them good. Lazarus laid down his fork, slowly pushed back his plate, grabbed his stomach and went double with a groan.

"I'm—I'm—sick." he moaned and rolled on the floor.

Kickapoo sprang up and helped Lazarus to his feet. Lazarus was bent over holding his stomach, whimpering. Kickapoo led him to the door, casting accusing eyes upon the dumbfounded Greco.

"You've poisoned my podner."

"I'm dyin'," shricked Lazarus, while keeping his forward motion towards the door.

Somehow in all the commotion, Kickapoo and Lazarus got a room at Mrs. Wimple's—the emergency had brushed aside such formalities as registration and payment. Mrs. Wimple brought a glass of bicarb and a jug of hot water to press against the patient's stomach. She said that it was no use to call Doc Watkins; after all hadn't he killed Mr. Wimple and doctored on everybody else out there in Alkali's cemetery?

But in the meantime, Greco, seeking vindication of his food, brought in Doc Watkins who said the food was all right, but his trouble was probably caused from drinking some of the local saloons' whisky—cut with lye water.

Lazarus rolled and tossed in convulsed feined agony on the bed until Kickapoo finally got everyone shooed from the room and closed the door.

"I durn sure got the worst of this deal—got both my shins barked by your big boots, you didn't let me finish my meatballs, and that dad burn bottle of medicine there on the dresser tastes like a witch's brew."

"Quityerbellyachin'. You've been wined, dined and bedded down for the night." Kickapoo lectured.

"I've been drenched like a horse," Lazarus whined as he went to the dresser and dumped the contents of the medicine bottle in the white porcelain covered jar in the corner.

Kickapoo grinned while he washed the alkali dust from his face in the basin on the dresser. Lazarus could hear those wheels a-spinnin'.

"Podner, I've got it all figgered out. This town is sufferin' from a complex. It's sufferin' from—well, everybody needs to bust out with what's eatin' 'im—get it off their chests."

"Mebbe I dumped that bottle too soon."

Kickapoo, ignoring Lazarus' jibe, continued, "Here in Alkali, everybody seems to hate everybody else. But none of 'em seems to have enough guts to out with it. What they need is honesty, uh, frankness to wake things up a bit."

Lazarus was beginning to see where Kickapoo was going with this, and his lips parted in a leathery grin. "You mean we supply the—uh, frankness."

The next day Kickapoo and Lazarus made the rounds of Alkali. They gathered opinions and relayed them with just a bit of amplification. Opinions loaded the muzzle with libel and defamation and ultimately primed with mayhem.

Old Haggerty had said that the rats were so bad in Estill's stables that they'd eat the shoes right off a bronc's feet. Doc Watkins had already hinted that the saloons put lye in their cutting water to keep it hot. Cowpokes claimed the bedbugs in Mrs. Wimple's rooming house were so bad they'd haul off a sleeping cowboy to the basement where the big one's would take 'im away from them. But Mrs. Wimple had built her business when they thought the railroad was coming through, and was stuck with it when it went north. She claimed Sid Rampy had owned land in the proposed right-of-way and tried to hold up the railroad company, so it was largely his fault that Alkali Flat lost the railroad.

Big Mike said that Greco was a cross between a fugitive from the old Country and a renegade Apache, and with what he used in his meatballs, no wonder Lazarus had a stomach ache.

The campaign of planned "frankness" gathered momentum. Word of Alkali Flat's unrest seeped out to the ranges, the barren reaches began giving up riders, buckboards and spring wagons. The fuse was lit, and the two traildusters began thinking of making room for the explosion.

They eased around the marshal's office which he'd left in a wheezing rush when riders started trotting by without bothering to check their guns. They saw their own guns hanging on a set of buck horns in the office, and grabbed them; buckling them on as they walked towards the stable.

Estill's stables were bustling with business and the old hostler was busy inside when the partners approached. They slipped off their guns and hid them under some loose hay in order that Estill's suspicions might not be aroused that they were fixing to ride out.

"Guess we'll stick around and see what happens." Kickapoo told Estill, whose once faded eyes now glowed with excitement.

"Never thought I'd live to see old Alkali with so much spunk—and business has never been better." Estill was cackling.

"It seems like everybody is blamin' everybody else for their troubles and it looks like Old Rip's wakin' up with the heebie jeebies," Lazarus was grinning when he said that.

They started peering around in odd corners and under things, ignoring old Estill's curious gaze.

"What the Sam Hill are you galoots lookin' for?"

"I don't see nary a sign of 'em, do you Lazarus?"

"Me neither. 'Mebbe Old Haggarty was just spoofin' about rats bein' so bad here in these stables."

Estill snorted with sudden indignation. "That old rat raiser. Why—if I got rats, they came from his old cracker barrels."

"Well, mebbe we shouldn't a mentioned it." Kickapoo added apologetically.

By then the old hostler was cussin' mad. He hightailed it out of the stables, and headed for Haggerty's Merchandise Company.

The partners grinned at one another, got their guns and saddled up. It felt good to get their full bellies astraddle two rested and well-fed broncs. They touched spurs to flanks.

Pausing on the cedar crested hogsback overlooking Alkali, they looked down a moment. The whole picture in miniature was clear, sharp and violent. Alkali looked like a red ant bed someone had just stomped.

Several fist fights were in progress in the street between the saloons. They saw Greco erupt from his cafe, swinging a meat cleaver at a fleeing form. Mrs. Wimple was beating someone over the head with a broom. Marshal Rampy was behind a rain barrel and someone was taking potshots at him. The bronc of some luckless cowpoke had bogged his head and gone sunfishing. A span of bays coming down the street spooked from the melee of noise and confusion and tore out in a stampede.

And into this maelstrom rode a stranger on a gray horse.

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A. F. MOSS: THE RANCHMAN

BY HAZEL OATMAN BOWMAN

ON THE RANCH: A. F. MOSS, SECOND FROM RIGHT, WITH HIS RANCH HANDS.

Doubtless in every stock raising county or section there is an outstanding character who has been closely identified with the ranching business over a long period of years, and whose career has spanned its entire scope—so much so that his life history seems to epitomize the industry in his particular locality. It is this close relation of interesting characters with an equally intriguing life work that gives the cattle industry of Texas and the Southwest its wealth of color and appeal. Those born and reared in a ranching environment thrill to every thing that pertains to the enterprise—more especially to the personalities behind the scenes, who have given it life and tradition.

In Llano County the number one ranchman, both of the past and the present—a man who literally grew up with and in the business, and who has been an unmistakable part of the industry almost from its beginning until the present time—is A. F. Moss, beloved pioneer of Llano.

PHOTOS COURTSEY JIM MOSS INKS OF LLANO, TEXAS

ORIGINAL TITLE: "A.F. MOSS, DEAN OF LLANO COUNTY CATTLEMEN", PUBLISHED IN *THE CATTLEMAN*, 1941. REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION.

> "I've heard my father say he could have got a league of land for a pair of boots, but he didn't have the boots, and if he had had them, he wouldn't have traded because he could use the boots and the land was worth nothing."—A. F. Moss.

No change or transition has taken place in connection with livestock raising that he has not either witnessed or actually experienced; moreover, he knows the history of the industry in Llano County better perhaps than any other stockman of today, and his knowledge of the business at home, and as it compares with other ranching areas, gives him a breadth of vision which is indeed unusual.

Thus it seems that everyone who is an actual part of this most fascinating calling, the ranching industry, or even those who thrill to its many angles of interest and appeal merely as an onlooker, should know the saga of this well known pioneer, of Llano County, for it, within itself, forms an interesting and informative addition to the collection of Texas ranching history and legends.

A. F. Moss, who is now past 77 years of age, was born on March 7, 1864, in Llano County, on what is commonly known as the old Moss Ranch, where his parents, Matthew and Mary Ann Moss, settled in 1857, when they moved from Williamson County. He is now living at what is called the A. F. Moss lodge, situated about four miles from his birthplace, and is believed to be the oldest native ranchman of Llano County.

A number of years ago A. F. Moss decided to retire from active management of his livestock business, and he and his wife went to San Antonio to reside. However, he was never quite satisfied, as would naturally be expected after more than half a century spent in the broad open spaces of the Llano Hill Country.

"I always wanted to come back," he said. "After we had a cabin built on the ranch, we kept coming to Llano more often and staying longer each time, until finally we didn't want to go back at all."

So, in 1939 Mr. and Mrs. Moss returned to their ranch, and are now living there happily, thus fulfilling a wish Mr.. Moss has often expressed of spending his last days in the Llano hills, which have always been home to him. "We stayed in San Antonio nine years, but lived here all the time," he said, in expressing his joy over being located again on his ranch. His explanation for moving back: "I know Saint Peter would come here first to look for me and I would be easier to find here!"

A division of the well known A. F. Moss Ranch was made about the time he returned to Llano, and he now has living near him, on portions of the A. F. Moss acreage, his two sons, Mark A. and Luke moss; while his only daughter Mrs. Myrtle Inks, resides in Austin, where she moved several years ago after the death of her husband, Roy B. Inks, of Llano [ed. note: See *Enchanted Rock Magazine*, Vol 3, No. 5; July 1996]. In spite of the fact that a division has been made in the property, it will doubtless always be known as the A. F. Moss Ranch, as it has been called for many years. Mark A. Moss is living on the Bar O Sandy Creek Ranch, located on the bank of Sandy Creek; while Luke Moss now resides on the Bull Head Ranch, close by. There, under the interested and watchful eyes of their father, and on land which holds a strong sentimental appeal because of an unbroken history of some 85 years, the Moss ranching industry still goes on—though times and conditions have changed, and the ranch of today is a far cry from its small and unpretentious beginning during the pioneer times.

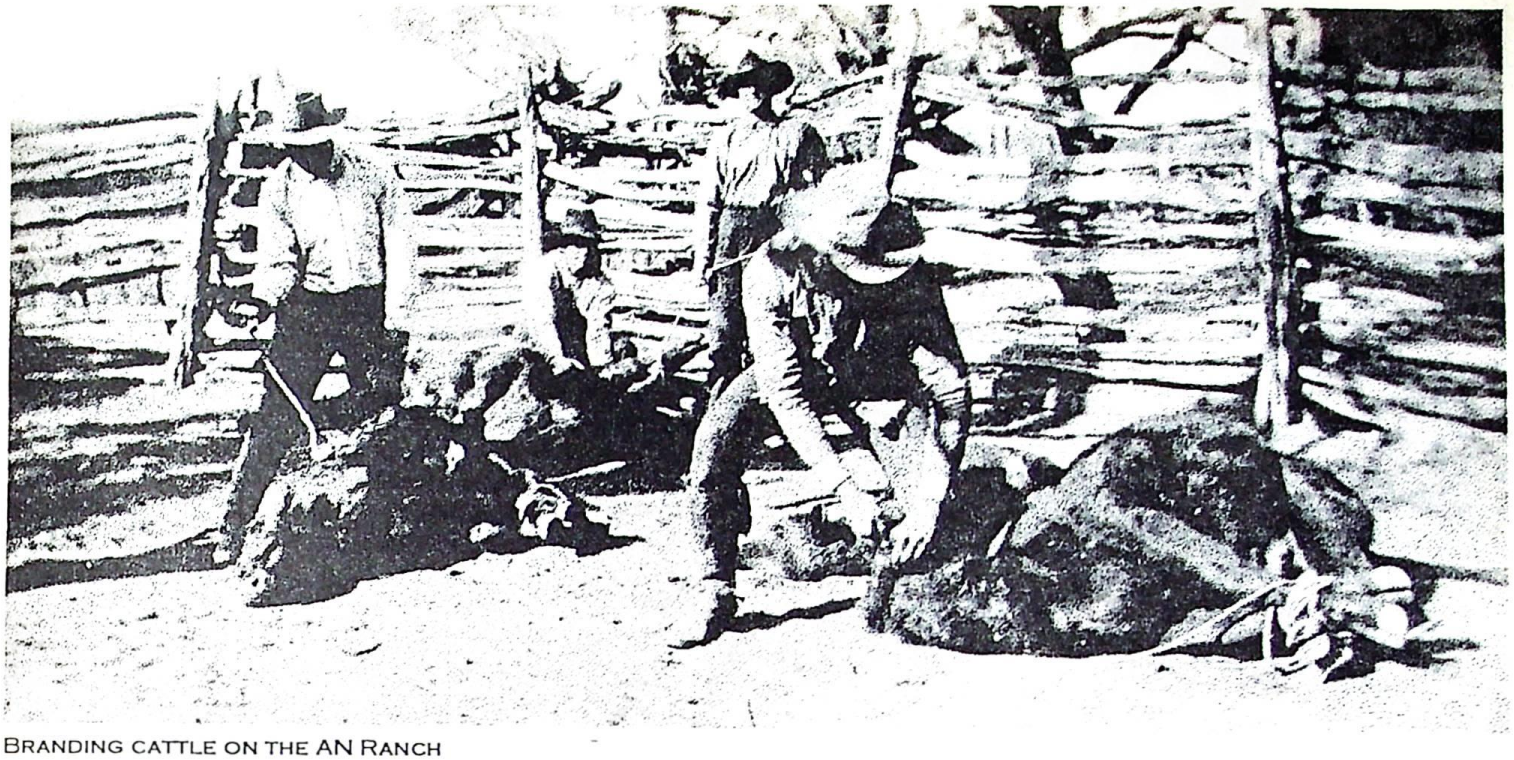
Matthew Moss, who founded the Moss ranching enterprise in Llano county, was of Scotch decent, being a great grandson of Matthew Moss, who, with his brother, James, enlisted in the English army, and later, after their discharge, immigrated to America, settling in Virginia. The younger Matthew Moss, who was called Matthew, Jr., or Mark, to distinguish him from his grandfather, and his father, who was also named Matthew, was born in Tennessee on February 15, 1802. He came to Texas at an early age in company with a trapper. He was a great lover of horses and when he was not working for himself he was employed either as a rider or a trainer of horses for men engaged in racing. He was also an Indian scout during the early days and carried through life a number of scars which were inflicted as a result of some of his encounters with the redskins. It is said that the love which this early Texan had for fast horses was so strong that the would have followed racing the rest of his life had it not been for his wife, who influenced him to turn to livestock raising as a means of livelihood instead.

Like his early Scotch forbearers, who served in the English army, and also his father, who was a member of the Tennessee Riflemen and participated in the battle of New Orleans under General Jackson in 1815, Matthew Moss, Jr. also saw military service. He enlisted in the army of the Texas Revolution and fought under General Sam Houston in the battle of San Jacinto on April 21, 1836. He was in Waves' Company and Sherman's Regiment, and following Santa Anna's defeat at San Jacinto, he was given an honorable discharge from the Texas arms. This document is in the archives of the Republic of Texas, in the basement of the State Capitol in Austin, a copy of which is as follows:

"Camp Warloupe, (Guadalupe), June 6, 1836.

"This is to certify that Matthew Moss has served in the Volunteer Army of Texas form the 6th day of March, 1836, to the date above written. That he was in the memorable Battle of San Jacinto April 21st, 1836, and there, as well as at other times, discharged his duties with faith to Texas, and honor to himself; and is this day honorably discharged.

"S. Sherman
Col., 2d regiment
"Jacob S. Collard, 1st Lieut.,
Co. D, 2d Regiment."



BRANDING CATTLE ON THE AN RANCH

For his services in the volunteer army of Texas, Matthew Moss, Jr., was granted two-thirds of a league and one labor of land. The land grant, dated March 1, 1838, is filed in the General Land Office at Austin. A certified copy of the patent to Matthew Moss of this headright, as recorded in Llano County, shows the grant to have consisted of seventeen million, six hundred and 66 thousand and 666 2/3 square varas [ed note: "Latin American unit of linear measure, varying in different countries from 32 to 43 inches" *Webster's New World Dictionary*, 1951] of land, situated in Bexar County on waters of the Llano 75 miles N. 15 degrees W. of the city of San Antonio, the patent being issued in Austin and dated August 27, 1846.

In 1838 Matthew Moss was married to Mary Ann Boyce. She was born in Missouri on August 16, 1823. The Boyce family came to Texas and located in Travis county, settling on headrights granted by the Government to heads for families to encourage settlement. Following their marriage, Matthew and Mary Ann lived in Fayette County for a while, later moving to a place which for any years was known as Moss Camp Ground, because camp meetings were held at a spring located there. Shortly they moved and settled on Mrs. Moss' subdivision of her father's headright. Later Mr. Moss traded their home for a bunch of cattle and they moved near Lake Brushy in Williamson County. His first cattle brand was **AN,** connected, taken from the A and N in his wife's name. The family lived in Williamson County until 1857, when they came to Llano, where his land grant was located, Llano County having been a part of Bexar County before its organization in 1856. However, that was not the primary reason for his locating there. He is said to have made trips through the Llano section many times, and to have been impressed by the fine open ranges. The country also appealed to him because he liked to hunt, and wanted to be on the frontier. While he knew that the land granted him for his military service was situated in Llano County, he did not know exactly where. All he knew was that Bull Head Mountain was on it.

Matthew was also given a section of land near Georgetown for being one of Stephen F. Austin's colonists, although he himself came to Texas long before Stephen F. Austin did. This land he traded for a pony—he could use the pony and he had no use for the land, which was not worth anything at that time.

In addition to this land grant, Matthew was also given a section of land near Georgetown for being one of Stephen F. Austin's colonists, although he himself came to Texas long before Stephen F. Austin did. This land he traded for a pony—he could use the pony and he had no use for the land, which was not worth anything at that time.

"I've heard my father say he could have got a league of land for a pair of boots, but he didn't have the boots, and if he had had them, he wouldn't have traded because he could use the boots and the land was worth nothing."—A. F. Moss.

Matthew brought his cattle to Llano in 1856, the year before he moved his family. Why he did this is not known, but at any rate, he drove his stock, consisting of something like a hundred head, to Llano first, stopping on Moss Branch, a tributary of the Llano River, which still bears that name. It is near Pack-

A.F. MOSS (RIGHT) RIDING HERD WITH A RANCH HAND.

saddle Mountain and runs into the Llano River from the south side. He left his cattle there on the open range with some one to salt them and look after them, while he went back for his family.

The following year, in 1857, he came to Llano County with two of his sons, Steve and Bill, in a horse drawn wagon and stopped at what he believed to be an everlasting spring. He stretched a rope between two post oak trees, hung a wagon sheet over it for a shelter, and left the two boys there alone while he went back for the rest of his family. One of the old trees is still standing. The spring has never been entirely dry, though, it got very low during the drouth of 1861, and again at a later time, when C. T. Moss dug it deeper and walled it up to form a well. But even now in wet times it still flows a bold stream.

Matthew returned to Llano in an ox wagon bringing his family and household supplies. Land, which was called "commons", was free, and anyone could live where he wanted to. Mr. Moss filed on the 160 acres of land around the spring site for preemption, and he and the boys set to work constructing their first home, a small house of post oak logs. It was in this structure, on the old Moss Ranch, that A. F. Moss was born.

The land which Matthew preempted was never patented during his lifetime. He attached no importance to this legal procedure because land was worth so little in those days. Later, however, C. T. and A. F. Moss had the land patented, the patent having been issued on April 1, 1898, to the heirs of Matthew Moss. The land is described as Survey No. 11, and located 11 miles south, 39 degrees west from Llano. The original survey of this 160 acre preemption is dated December 18, 1860.

Llano County at the time Matthew Moss settled there was all open, or prairie country, with an occasional oak tree and no underbrush. It is said that the Indians kept the land burned off to facilitate the killing of wild game. There were only a few mesquite trees in Llano County and undergrowth was scarce. All of the creeks were bold running streams at that time.

Mrs. Matthew moss died at the old homestead on October 29, 1866, and Mr. Moss' death occurred on August 1, 1875. Both are buried in the family cemetery near the site of the old Moss home.

Llano County at the time Matthew Moss settled there was all open, or prairie country, with an occasional oak tree and no underbrush. It is said that the Indians kept the land burned off to facilitate the killing of wild game. As the country began settling up, the prairie fires of the Indians ceased and the underbrush was allowed to grow. Too, the land was stocked lightly, consequently it grew up in grass very rapidly. A. F. Moss says that even in his early life there were only a few mesquite trees in Llano County and undergrowth was scarce. All of the creeks were bold running streams at that time. Sandy Creek, which winds through the A. F. Moss Ranch for a distance of seven miles was already named when his father came to that section, as also was Bull Head Mountain. Sandy Creek was then deeper and much narrower than it is now. It has filled with sand through the years, and at the Sandy Creek Ranch where Mark A. Moss lives, it is now three times as wide as it used to be. Time was when a herd of 400 cattle could be thrown in on Sandy in the spring of the year and watered for several months.

A. F. Moss was two years old when his mother passed away, and from then on he was almost the constant companion of his father, until his death in 1875. A. F. Moss, or Aaron, as he was named for his maternal grandfather, was 11 years of age at that time. He tells that he and his father drifted over the country, traveling to and from Austin in a wagon many times. They would stop at every house on the road, and people would have them bring from Austin on their return trip a package of soda or some little article they needed. Fully a month was spent on these trips, counting the stops and visits made along the way. Mr. Moss would never stay over night in the homes of his friends on these journeys, preferring rather to camp outdoors. A. F. Moss says that his father followed the practice of camping near someone's residence presumably because he was feeble and wanted to be near enough to send for help in case of sickness, or any need that might arise. His father had their wagon fixed to sleep in, and always preferred to be out in the open.

As for his education, A. F. Moss says that he went to several schools during his boyhood, but never went long enough to get interested. On one occasion, when he was seven years old, he went to school in Austin "one pretty good term". He attended the old Johnson Institute, along with his sister, Betty, now Mrs. Betty Moore of San Antonio, who is four years his senior. While he could have had any kind of education if he had taken it, he says that he always wanted to be outdoors, and oddly, he has no regrets. He declares that he has had as much

pleasure out of life as if he had gone to school; at least he has had a meal ticket.

At this point in the story, it might be well to name the nine children of Matthew and Mary Ann Moss, in the order of their ages: Julia Ann Moss, James Ragsdale Moss, Charles Tate Moss, Stephen Boyce Moss, William Burton Moss, Matthew Moss, John Moss, Elizabeth Moss, and Aaron Firman Moss.

The oldest, Julia Ann, was married to Damon Slator, a well known cattleman at Llano during the early days. After his death in 1870, she was living on Cedar Creek with her four children, and Aaron Moss was staying with them. One day while the children were playing on the creek, a band of about 15 Indians made their appearance over an elevated ridge that half circled the house. She called the children, put on a man's hat, and stood on a rock fence with a gun in her hand pointing toward the Indians as they circled the ridge. A. F. Moss tells that he and the Slator children stood beside her and watched the Indians until they went on off. That was in 1871, and the Slator children were Jeff, deceased; Jim, now of San Antonio; Damon, of Mason, and Mary, now Mrs. J. C. Cone, Sr., of Llano.

Mr. Moss relates another Indian story in which his brother, John, proved himself a hero. They were all living at the old Moss place, but everyone was away from home except John and his sister, Julia. About 20 Indians tried to steal the Moss horses that happened to be around the house. They became frightened at the appearance of the Indians and ran into the lot. John, then a boy of 14 years, shut the gate and killed one of the redskins as he started toward the pen. After retreating about one-fourth mile from the house the Indians started firing at John, shooting as many as 50 times. The bullets, whizzed in the trees and all around him, but he was never hit. John was using an old muzzle loading gun, and his sister, Julia, kept guns loaded as fast as they were needed. In this way the youth kept the Indians at bay for several hours. Sometime later a dead Indian was found in a rock pile about a quarter of a mile east of the house, which was believed to have been the one that John Moss killed. According to A. F. Moss, that was the Indians' way of burying their dead, by putting them in a rock pile and piling a few rocks on top of them.

Three of the Moss brothers were in the historic Packsaddle Indian fight, which took place on Packsaddle Mountain in Llano County on August 4, 1873. There were Jim, Steve and Bill, who, with five other white men, routed a band of Indians that outnumbered them three to one.

At the time of the battle Matthew Moss and his son, Aaron, were staying at a place which he had purchased in the southeastern part of Llano County on White's Creek. The property had a good cedar log house on it and good improvements for the times. Liking to ramble and move about, Mr. Moss would go there in his wagon, take his youngest son along, and stay a week or so at a time. After Bill Moss was wounded in the Packsaddle fight and it was thought that he could never ride again, his father gave him this piece of land. Mrs. Bill Moss now lives at this place. It is located seven or eight miles from the old John B. Duncan home, where those wounded in the Packsaddle fight were carried for treatment.

The battle took place about noon on August 4, and A. F.

Moss states that someone came to their place that night bringing the news. The next morning he and his father set out in a wagon for the Duncan ranch. Young Aaron was nine years old, and the scene which greeted them when they reached the Duncan home made a lasting impression. Dr. C. C. Smith, a pioneer Llano doctor, was extracting a bullet from Arch Martin's hip. He had no anaesthetic or anything. Finally, after enduring the pain as long as he could, Arch martin asked Dr. Smith: "Can't you whet that d— old knife a little bit?" Bill Moss had three holes, and several of the others were also wounded, but all recovered in spite of the fact that they were poorly cared for.

A. F. Moss tells that the Indians were civil through this section before 1857, and that the Germans and other early settlers traded things to them for hides. Then they were rounded up like cattle and taken to Oklahoma and put on the reservation, and that made them mad. They killed the white men mainly to keep them from "packing tales," this information having come to Mr. Moss from his father and others, who also contended that when the women stayed in the house and did not bother the Indians, they were not hurt, but it was when they became frightened and ran out of the house that they were usually killed.

At Matthew's death his land, consisting of his headright and his 160 acre preemption was divided equally among his nine children. He left his son, John 10 cows and calves; his daughter, Betty, 20 cows and calves; and the rest of his cattle went to his youngest son, Aaron. Mr. Moss says that he already claimed a few of his father's cows, and what he inherited consisted of about 100 head of cattle, 300 acres of land, and a few mares. The cattle were on the open range and worth in the neighborhood of $7.00 a head.

MARK AND ANN MOSS AT ENCHANTED ROCK ON THE MOSS RANCH.

Jim Moss sold his portion of land to his sister, Betty, for 50¢ an acre, and the other boys sold theirs to their sister, Julia, for 50¢ an acre. A. F. Moss bought this same land back from E. P. Marshall, second husband of Julia Moss, in 1899, paying $3.00 an acre for it.

Thus at the age of 11, A. F. Moss got his actual start in the ranching business. During his minority his brother, Charles, was his guardian, and it was from him and under his careful guidance that he learned many of the sound business principles upon which he founded his career and life work as the years went on. How faithfully C. T. Moss performed his duties as guardian, and the careful and thorough manner in which he looked after his minor's estate can be seen from the annual reports he made to District Court in compliance with the law.

These original reports, showing all expenditures, from major items such as ranch expense, expense on pasture fence, and the like to the smallest personal items such as tobacco and matches, gives an interesting sidelight on the successful career of A. F. Moss as a stockman. This thorough and meticulous way of attending to business was calculated to impress young Aaron with the value of his property and his accumulations, and his knowledge and practice of thrift and economy came no doubt from the example set by his older brother. That A. F. Moss was devoted to him and appreciated his true worth is shown by this statement: "I thought my brother, Charles, was law and gospel, and would do anything he wanted me to."

At the age of 14, A. F. Moss entered into a partnership with C. T. Moss, and began attending to business affairs and assuming responsibilities in earnest. That was in 1878. At the

age of 16, Aaron was foreman of a roundup for the first time. In the fall of 1881, the two brothers sold their cattle to Col. Ike T. Pryor. Some 3,000 head were sold to him, range delivery, for $10 a round. Pryor sold these cattle in the spring of 1882 for $20 a round. In selling this stock, A. F. Moss sold Pryor the old family cattle brand, *AN*, which his father had given him.

In 1882 C. T. and A. F. Moss bought all of the Maverick land in Llano County from Mrs. Mary A. Maverick, widow of Samuel Maverick. From time to time, as places came on the market for sale, they bought them, gradually increasing their land holdings. In 1899 A. F. Moss bought the Marshall land. The Maverick land was purchased for 75¢ an acre, and some of it was sold shortly by the Moss brothers for $1 an acre.

After they sold their cattle to Colonel Pryor and bought the Maverick land, C. T. and A. F. Moss started fencing, building the first fence that amounted to anything in Llano County. Before that time only a few hundred acres around the ranch house and stock pens were fenced, and with rails. Some of the rails which were split in the early days by the Moss boys are still in evidence about the ranch. In recalling the fencing of the ranch in 1882, A. F. Moss said:

"We made a good buy as far as land, but a poor sale of cattle. The land was no good to us unless we could protect it from transient stock, so we began fencing. We built 12 miles of rock fence first because we didn't know any better. We used Mexican labor and it cost us $400 a mile. Then we decided to use wire, which we could fence with for less than half the cost of rock fence. We built 15 or 18 miles of wire fence. I stretched practically all the wire, with some help. As spring came and we got in a hurry to finish it, we employed more labor.

"We put the posts a long way apart, and the holes were not very deep. We didn't have the tools to dig deep holes in the rocky places, and we were in a hurry to get it up, so it was a pretty sorry fence—inferior wire and fence, but it answered the purpose."

It is common knowledge that there was much objection at first to fencing, and the cutting off of the vast open ranges, making them inaccessible for public use. Then only incident of fence cutting known to have occurred in Llano County took place in the Marshall pasture, now a part of the Moss ranch. One thousand acres had been fenced, and one night someone cut the wire off each side of every post for a distance of two miles. It was presumed to have been cut by people who had been grazing stock on the land and objected to being cut off from its use. That was in 1890, or possibly a little later. An effort was made to discover who did it, and watch was kept for several nights, but the fence was never cut again. The evidence of this fence cutting incident is still to be seen in the Marshall pasture of the A. F. Moss Ranch.

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