

TEXAS ★ HISTORY & ADVENTURE

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INSIDE

ENCHANTED ROCK

MAGAZINE

VOL. 4, No. 11
JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1998

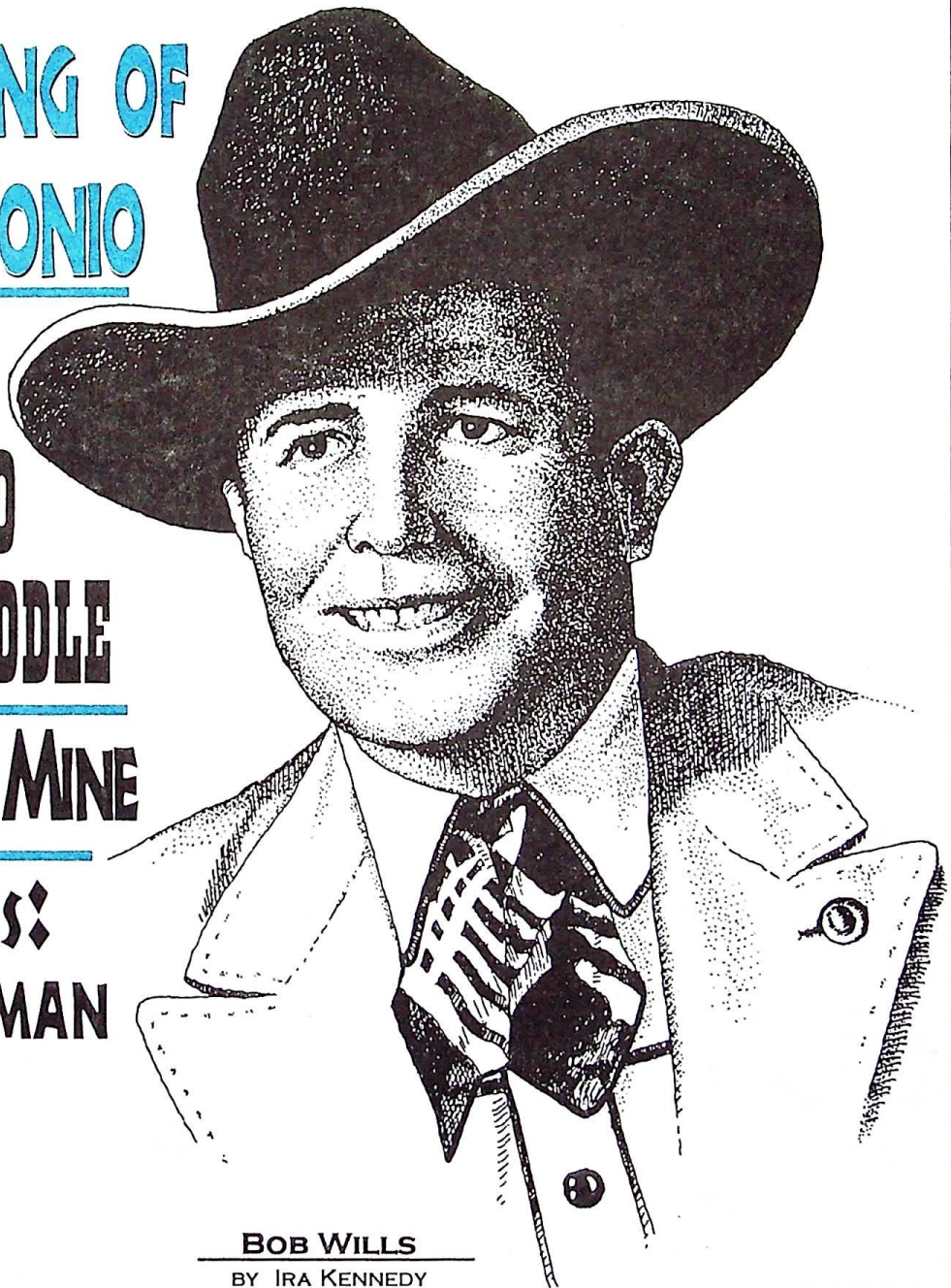
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THE TAKING OF SAN ANTONIO

**Bob Wills:
The LEGEND
WITH A FIDDLE**

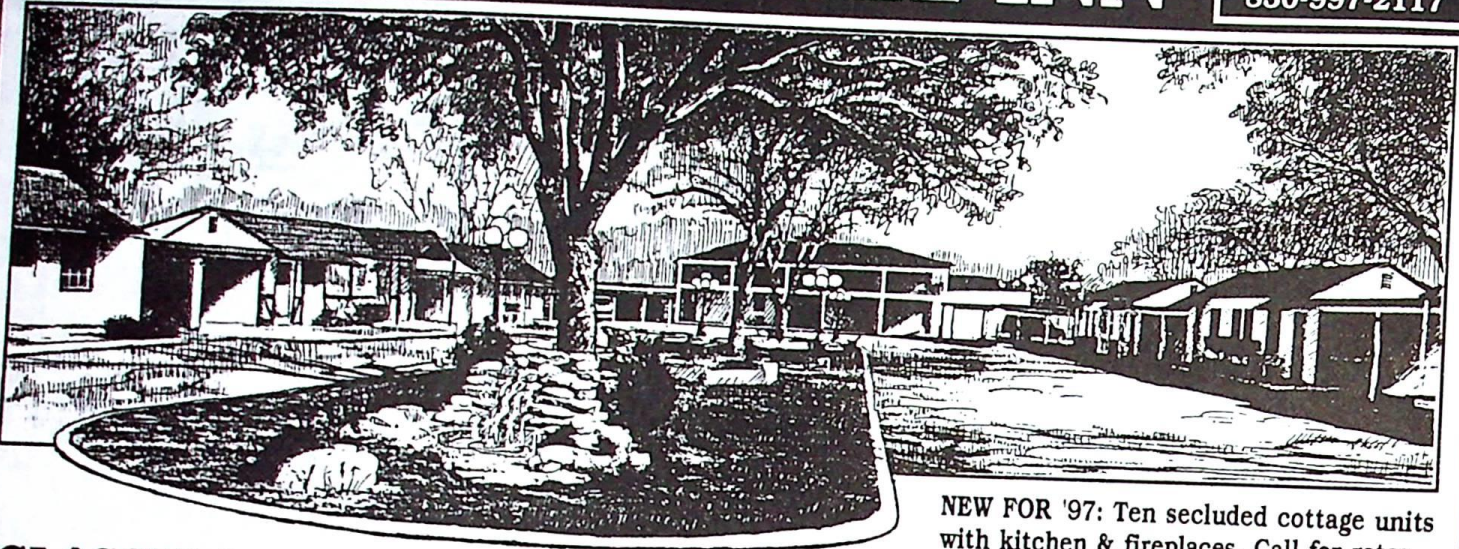
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BY IRA KENNEDY





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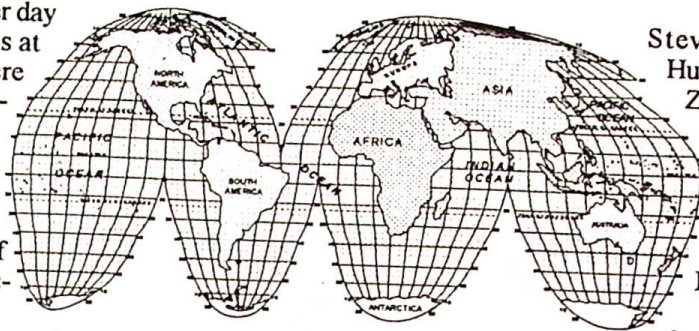
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Beam Me Up, Bill Gates

I landed on Mars the other day and within minutes I was at Macchu Pichu. From there I went to the Getty Museum in Los Angeles, and then to rock art sites in Texas. Long lost friends have been located and e-mail has been exchanged with everyone we could think of especially my sister Deb in Australia.

Although I've only been on the web for a few weeks, there are several sites which should be of special interest to readers and subscribers of our magazine.

I have listed several web sites below which include friends, neighbors, and favorites. I found both sites listed in our history section exceptionally informative. **The Texian Heritage Society** is carrying *Enchanted Rock*



Magazine's article about Clara Driscoll by C.F. "Charlie" Eckhardt.

Of special interest, to those of you with sound capability, is **Texanna Records**. There you'll find several songs from **K.R. Wood's Fathers of Texas CD**. If you're love Texas history and country music, you're in for a treat. This album is the story of the Texas Revolution in song and narration featuring Gary P. Nunn, Red Stegall, Delbert McClinton, Rusty Wier,

Steve Fromholts, Ray Wilie Hubbard, Tom. T. Hall, Townes Van Zandt, Shake Russell, Guy Clark and others. The narration is by Guich Kooch, Gib Lewis. and K. R. Wood

If you need a good giggle check out **The Roundtop Register's** virtual newspaper.

By February 1, we plan to have our web site **textfiles.com** online. Apart from selected articles from the magazine, we are including other materials, such as black & white and color photo essays which are more suitable to the web format. Also, we will be running several articles from back issues which have enjoyed great reader response. We'll be starting our fifth year next month, so we have plenty of choices. E-mail comments to textfiles@cxofalls.com

The listings below include friends, neighbors, and favorite sites. Contact *Enchanted Rock Magazine* by e-mail at textfiles@cxofalls.com if you have any suggestions for this section.

HISTORY

THE TEXIAN HERITAGE SOCIETY

pw2.netcom.com/~cm Yates/index.html

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texhillcntry.com/stagestop/

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GALLERY OF THE HILLS:

Web: www./inetport.com/~lakes/index.htm

MUSIC & MUSICIANS

GARY P. NUNN

Web: www.hepcat.com/campfire/gpnunn.

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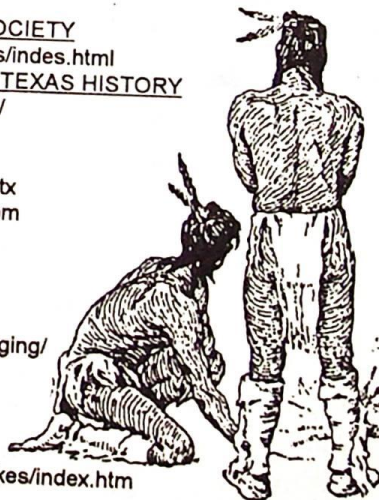
Web: www.mammothartist.com/krwood.htm

PUBLICATIONS

BIG BEND QUARTERLY

E-mail: bigbend@onramp.net

Web: www.webcasting.com/bigbend



ENCHANTED ROCK MAGAZINE

Web: textfiles.com (active on Feb.1, 1998)

HILL COUNTRY SUN

Web: www.ccsi.com/yeeha/hcs/hcs2.html

ROUNDTOP REGISTER

Web: www.rtis.com/reg/roundtop/

TEXAS CACHE

e-mail: txcache@aol.com

Web: www.arrowheads.com/taaa/default.htm

VIRTUAL TEXAN/Ft. Worth Star Telegram

virtualltexan.com

REAL ESTATE

JIM BERRY REAL ESTATE

Web: www.jimberryranchsales.com

TERRY WOOTAN REAL ESTATE

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e-mail: twootan@tstar.net

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ON THE INTERNET



FROM THE EDITOR

LOST IN HYPERSPACE

Go Web Old Man, Go Web. That's all I heard from couple of well-meaning friends for over two years. But I wasn't listening. Until a year ago, I had a barely functional computer in the last stages of Alzheimers. The poor thing would have frozen in its tracks when introduced to the World Wide Web. In the process of finding a replacement I realized the value of the Internet.

But, by then I had already bought a Gateway 2000 with a Pentium II processor and lots of fancy features. If I was going on-line I needed more hardware: a modem, sound card, speakers, and a scanner—not to mention the software and the installation all of that stuff.

And that's just for openers. The real wake-up call came when I learned our telephone's microwave transmitter we have out here on the Enchanted Rock Batholith couldn't handle the web—too much background noise. GTE rose to the occasion and said, "Well, when we removed the telephone wires a few years ago we didn't anticipate the web, so we'll run a cable out to your place."

After contacting the phone company with our request we had to wait three months for a subcontractor to dig more than two miles of ditch and drop in an equal amount of cable. The actual work only took two days, and two days later our long-awaited phone line was up and running.

In the meantime we connected with a local service provider, and for our web site we contracted with a web host provider, and filed a domain name.

Then the fun began—or at least it should have.

The phone number we were assigned months ago was changed at the last minute. After being on-line for two hours we were disconnected because that second phone number belonged to someone else who was summarily disconnected after several years of service. He was kinda upset. So we were disconnected, assigned a third number and waited another day before going back on-line. Oops! We were assigned the wrong phone number again. So we were disconnected and had to wait another day. At that time we were given (I think) the number originally assigned to us.

We're on-line for a couple of weeks, then my teenage son reprograms our on-line search engines so we lose programs, get confused and make "help me" phone calls and wait. Now, we can still get on-line but without abundance of search engines we had before.

In the middle of all this we had to produce a magazine and construct our web site "textfiles.com" which we plan to have on-line by February 1. (What are the odds?)

And then.... We're disconnected again.

More "help" phone calls, this time to GTE. Instead of "going postal," Ms. Intrepid handled their service depart-

ment with remarkable calm. I figure, just any day now, we'll all hear about her nomination as a recipient for the Nobel Peace Prize; or maybe that she's in the running at the Academy Awards for her portrayal as a mild-mannered victim of corporate chaos.

Now get this—GTE says to Ms. Intrepid that they have no record of anything that has happened. So she passes along our work order number from their letter of October 2, 1997. Still no record. Could they misplace the two-plus miles of ditch and cable? Or the three phone numbers?

We've been on the web over their phone lines off and on for almost a month. But we don't exist. After an hour or so on the phone with Ms. Intrepid, GTE discovers or remembers we exist, and we're promised to have a dial tone for the net by morning. And so we're back on-line.

All the trouble may have begun (as if it's really over) with the first phone number we were assigned: 247-1313. Who knows? My mind keeps going back to the pile of computer magazines we've collected. Buried somewhere in one of them is an ad for an Ouiji Board mouse pad. Now, with that piece of equipment I just might figure out which phone number we really have, and how to restore those lost search engines. Who knows, maybe it could even connect me with a really good ghost writer?

IRA KENNEDY

ENCHANTED ROCK MAGAZINE

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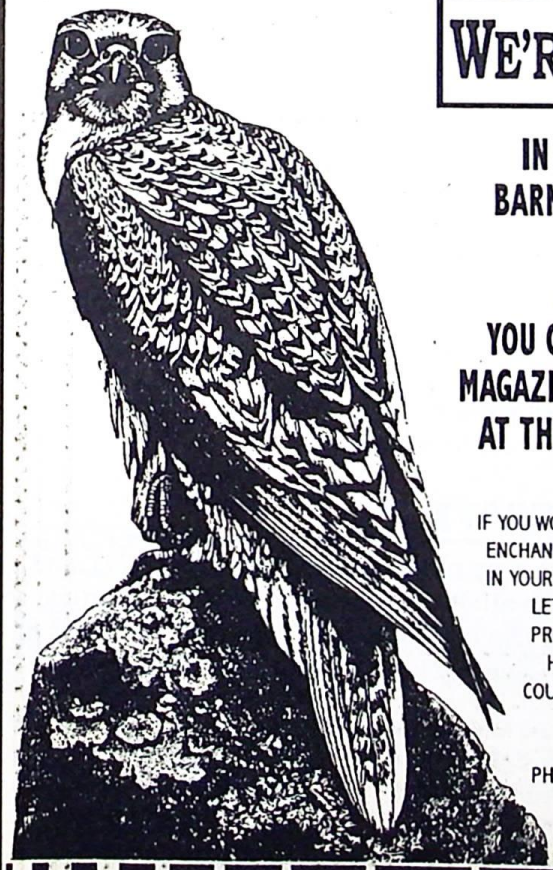
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- 16 The Bowie Mine
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ON THE COVER: Bob Wills—by Ira Kennedy

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PRICKLY PEAR ANTIQUES

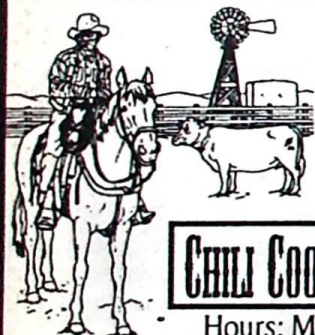


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ON THE WEB

I am the Director of the Texian Heritage society, Inc. a pre-1840 Texas living history group headquartered in Austin, Texas. I recently read with fascination Mr. Eckhardt's article on "The Second Battle of the Alamo" in the November/December issue of *Enchanted Rock Magazine*. I cannot remember an article holding my attention as well as this one did. Not only was it well written, but the story is so important and yet so seldom told. As part of our effort to educate the public about early Texas history, THS operates a Texas history Internet site and I would like your permission to reproduce Mr. Eckhardt's article on our web site. This story is important enough that the would should know the role Clara Driscoll and the Daughters of the Republic of Texas have played in saving our most cherished historical site. By granting permission to reprint this article, people around the world will have the opportunity to read about and more fully appreciate all of the struggles surrounding the Alamo and its history. I look forward to hearing from you and would encourage you to visit our web site at the address listed above.

Sic Semper Texanus
Charles M. Yates
Texian Heritage Society
Austin, Texas

[The web address for the Texian Heritage Society is on the previous page. ERM and Mr. Eckhardt granted permission to THS and the article can currently be found on their web site. -IK]

TREASURE TROVE

I happened upon a copy of your magazine (Feb. 1997), and was impressed with all of its contents, especially the article by Bill Townsley and David Aukbridge, "Spanish Treasures of Dry Pond". Bill Townsley has property near my home at Lake Palestine.

Regards,
Ms. F.M. Brown
Flint, Texas

[Townsley has an article on page 16 of this issue regarding the Lost Bowie Mine. -IK]

ERM IN ER

Please send E.R. to my son, who is an Emergency Room Physician now living in Austin & frequently going to Cherry Springs Ranch where he ded the best growing up years of his life. Sometimes he works at Burnet, so, if you get in trouble with Later Billy & need Emergency Room attention, ask to be taken to Burned on the 1st 7 3rd week-ends of every month,

Best wishes,
Pauline
Houston, Texas

NEW LEAF

I guess I'll have to stop "borrowing" your magazine from Anna Galloway, who is my long time friend in my neighborhood, and get my own subscription! I never did get to the issue which concerns the article on "Babyhead." It would help if I knew which issue it was.

Sincerely,
Pauline Brown Schwartz
Austin, Texas

[The Mystery of Babyhead Mountain by Dale Fry appeared in Vol. 2, No. 6, August 1995. -IK]

YORE AMIGO

Thank The Good Lord & Texas History for *Enchanted Rock Magazine*. It is the best reading I've ever come across, full of great Texas history & folk lore. I love it. The magazine has helped me in my research of Texas History—with every issue I find something new or a story that I've never heard. Keep up the Great Work.

Our main goal with Texanna Records is to educate the children of Texas & the world about Texas History. Thanks again for your wonderful magazine. Looking forward to meeting you both and working with you in the future.

God Bless & Keep It Texas!
Yore Amigo
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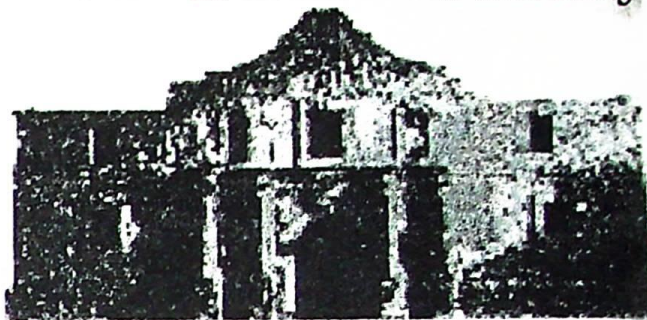
WELCOME

We extend our welcome this month to subscribers in Lawton and Ponca City, OK, Hagerstown, MD, Emporia, VA, Evinston, IL, New York, NY, Plantation, FL and Novato, CA. In Texas: San Antonio (3), Taylor, Austin (8), Waco, Rowena, Kerrville (2), Burleson, Flint, Leander, Liberty Hill, Dallas (2), Buda (2), Corpus Christi, Fort Worth, Conroe, Wimberly (2), Art, Horseshoe Bay, Arlington (2), Round Mountain, Galveston, Llano (2), Irving, Euless and Highland Haven.

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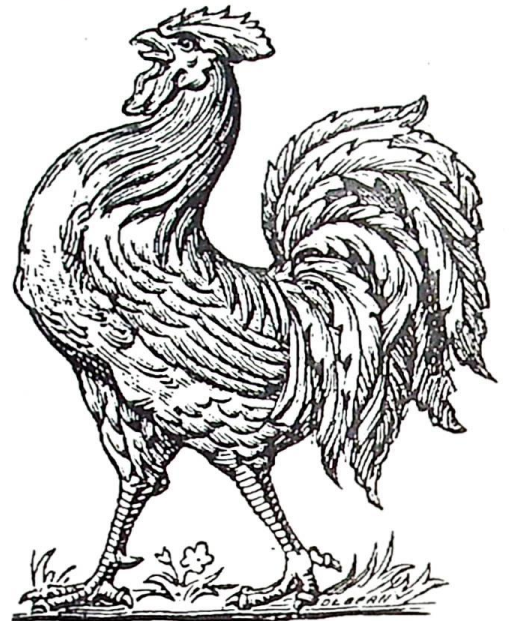
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THE CHICKEN WAR OF 1719



BY GARY BROWN

Historic battlefields have always had a special appeal for me and I've been fortunate to visit some of the more historic sites. One such trip took me down a country road somewhere outside Robeline, Louisiana on the trail of some Texas history.

One of the very first wars involving Texas started near here 278 years ago. It wasn't a monumental or decisive war, and you will have trouble finding mention of it in Texas history books. Mostly it is cited in Catholic mission history texts. Not only is the war relatively unknown, it is also ignominiously named: The Chicken War of 1719.

But the Chicken War produced serious repercussions. Two years later, in 1721, the Spanish claim to Texas was so solidified that it was never again challenged by France.

This region has a long history of geographical identity disorder and, in 1719 the Spanish also laid claim to it. This area has been known variously as New France, New Spain, Mexico, United States, Coahuila and Texas, Louisiana, and "No Man's Land".

During the early 1800s an estimated three-fourths of Anglo immigrants passed through here to cross the Sabine at Gaine's Ferry. In 1835, Captain Thomas C. Breece's company of the New Orleans Greys camped somewhere in this area to avoid contact with Fort Jessup and U. S. "neutrality" during their journey from New Orleans to Bexar.

Less than a year later, the commandant at Fort Jessup had to dispatch soldiers to Harrisburg after the Battle of San Jacinto

to try and round up the U. S. Army "deserters" who had participated with Sam Houston at that battle.

One fact is clear, modern day Texas is influenced by Spanish history and present day Louisiana is influenced by French history. But while that fact may be clear, it has never, ever been simple.

On August 2, 1718 the Treaty of Utrecht ended the War of the Spanish Succession and the resulting Quadruple Alliance of that year required Louis XIV of France to recognize the protestant Succession in Britain and the Holy Roman Emperor Charles VI to recognize Louis' grandson as Philip V of Spain.

So what does this family squabble have to do with Texas history? Well, the treaty may have ended fighting in Europe but it didn't settle the European claims in the New World.

Early in 1719, France was threatening to expand its influence into the Spanish territories of Coahuila and Texas from the east across the Sabine. An ambitious young lieutenant at the French post in Natchitoches decided to strike the first blow; a decision made probably on false reports from his own people.

Anyway, Lt. Phillippe Blondel decided to attack the nearest Spanish presence. In 1719 it was called *San Miguel de Linares de los Adaes* mission, and young Lt. Blondel gathered together a formidable force of seven French soldiers and performed a preemptive strike on the mission grounds—much to

the consternation of the lone Franciscan lay brother and the one Spanish soldier posted there as his protection.

Blondel informed the Franciscan that he had it on good authority that the French had captured Pensacola and that at least one hundred French soldiers were marching to East Texas from Mobile.

Enjoying an eight-to-two manpower advantage in this confrontation, the French quickly succeeded in capturing the Franciscan vestments and provisions which couldn't have amounted to much since the mission was less than three years old and only boasted a staff of two.

Blondel's planning and execution of this assault had been textbook perfect up to this point, but here he made a critical mistake; he decided to raid the Franciscan henhouse.

Upon capturing the enemy chickens, he tied them to the pommel of his saddle and, as he mounted his horse, the chickens flapped their wings, spooked the horse and threw Blondel to the ground. While the French soldiers rushed to help him, the Spanish lay brother escaped in the confusion—The Chicken War had begun.

The lay brother made his way across the Sabine to another newly established Spanish mission near present-day San Augustine in current East Texas territory—*Nuestra Senora de los Dolores* mission. There, he told Father Antonio Margil de Jesus of Blondel's attack and the French claims of a massive military force marching on Spanish interests in East Texas.

Fray Margil was an excellent missionary—he was later credited with establishing the most successful Spanish mission in Texas, The *San Jose & San Miguel de Aguayo* in Bexar—but he was no warrior. As a man of peace and gentleness, he had assumed the religious name "Nothingness Itself" and, to his credit, he recognized that "Fray Nothingness Itself" would hardly strike fear into the French military even if they were, at this point, simply a bunch of chicken thieves.

So Fray Margil did the only sensible thing in this situation; he retreated to yet another nearby Spanish mission. Arriving at *Nuestra Senora de la Purisima Concepcion* near present-day Nacogdoches, Texas he approached the presidio commandant there, Captain Domingo Ramon, and informed him of the French invasion which by now was becoming more and more threatening with each telling.

In fact, the French weren't even on the move towards East Texas. Lt. Blondel, nursing a sullied reputation and sore buttocks, triumphantly returned to Natchitoches with his noisy spoils of victory only to learn that his reports had been wrong. There were no invading French forces headed his way.

Instead, France had dispatched a team of businessmen from the French Company of the West with orders to promote and increase trade with the Spanish in East Texas.

Sheepishly—or chickenly—Lt. Blondel had to inform the traders that, thanks to his military folly, not only would the Spanish not be trading with the French, but at that very moment they were probably preparing to launch a counterattack in reprisal.

The businessmen hurried back to France and the stockholder's expansion charts of the French Company of the West were put on hold for nearly two years.

The Spanish counterattack never took place because, as the French businessmen scurried east from the area, Captain Ramon had packed the Spanish possessions, civilians and soldiers at Mission *Purisima Concepcion* and was headed west to the safety of San Antonio.

In reality, the Chicken War had resulted in the Spanish and French running away from each other in East Texas. After Ramon's departure from *Purisima Concepcion*, Fray Margil remained behind briefly with Fray Isidro Felix de Espinosa and two soldiers but they eventually followed Ramon to San Antonio, effectively erasing all Spanish presence in East Texas.

At San Antonio, Fray Margil was content to take up residence at the mission there—*San Antonio de Valero*, which would later become known as the Alamo.

Fray Espinosa, however, was determined to reclaim East Texas for the honor of Spain and the salvation of the Indians. He had, after all, been instrumental in the establishment of three of the missions in that area, so he approached the governor of Coahuila and Texas, Marques de San Miguel de Aguayo, and began campaigning for a military expedition back to East Texas to drive the French out.

Aguayo was the ideal choice for Fray Espinosa. Since the governor owned a hacienda that comprised nearly half of Coahuila, he would have a vested interest in placing a military barrier across East Texas to thwart the perceived French invasion.

Aguayo requested, and received, the title and responsibilities of captain general of the provinces of Coahuila and Texas in October of 1719 and the following year received a military commission to reenter East Texas and drive the hated French from Spanish territory.

The French, during the brief hiatus in this war, had in fact established a "presence" in the area in the form of Jean Baptiste Bernard de La Harpe who had moved into the area of Texas today known as Bowie County and established a trading post on the Red River.

La Harpe's objective was not to wage war with the Spanish, but to reestablish trade for the French Company of the West. The problem was, with Ramon's withdrawal to San Antonio, there weren't any Spanish to trade with. In fact, there wasn't even anybody to talk to.

Late in 1720, Aguayo finally launched his expedition to wrestle the area of East Texas back from the French only he, too, couldn't find anybody with whom to fight—or trade—or even talk to. His expedition became merely one of re-occupation but, once accomplished, it did succeed in establishing a Spanish presence in East Texas that the French never again challenged.

And what about this part of Louisiana where I'm at this morning? Well, the French did maintain a presence here long enough to assure that modern-day Louisiana is saturated in French culture. But it's still also an important part of Texas history—thanks to Lieutenant Blondel, the chicken thief.

As far as wars go, I guess the Chicken War of 1719 was a pretty good one. Nobody got killed and there was only one wounded, if you consider Blondel's bruised rear-end a casualty. It did result in a two year suspension of Spanish missionary activity and French commercial activity in the region.

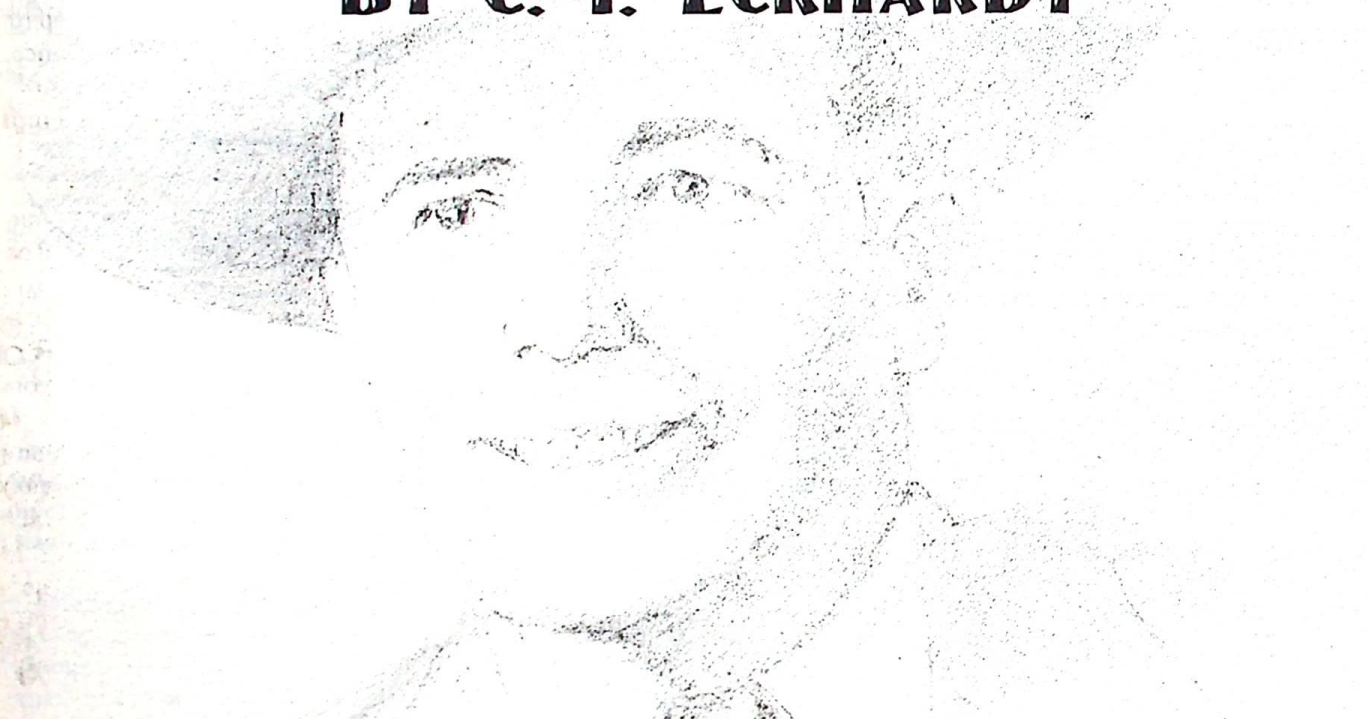
In the 1960s there was a bumper sticker that read: "Suppose They Gave A War And Nobody Came?" I guess, in a sense, that's what happened here almost three hundred years ago.

[THIS IS ONE OF A SERIES OF LITTLE-KNOWN AND HIGHLY UNUSUAL CONFLICTS IN TEXAS BY GARY BROWN WHICH WILL APPEAR ON A REGULAR BASIS IN ERM.]

BOB WILLS

THE LEGEND WITH A FIDDLE

BY C. F. ECKHARDT



Up where the Red River meets the north-south line that forms the eastern edge of the panhandle, there's a little place called Turkey, Texas. In Turkey is the largest public school on earth. It covers some forty acres—maybe more—with a single building, and it's at least thirty stories high.

Now, please understand that I've never seen this school. Neither, to my knowledge, has anyone else. Yet it has to be there. It absolutely has to. I've met so many people who "went to school with Bob Wills in Turkey, Texas", it would take a school that big to hold 'em all.

His name was Jim Rob Wills, and whether that was 'James Robert' or just 'Jim Rob' makes no difference to anyone. He was a shirttail kid from Turkey, where they put both city limits signs on the same post. He had a fiddle and a Model T Ford, and he drove that Ford to anywhere anybody would pay two or

three dollars to hear him fiddle all night and sometimes well into the daylight of the next morning while they danced to old songs.

Sixty years after that beginning, he was a legend—Bob Wills, the fiddle king, the man who started the sound called Western Swing. He was the leader of the most famous band in the southwest—Bob Wills and his Texas Playboys. He wrote God only knows how many songs and saw more of them than perhaps any other song writers' production become standards. He wrote and played "San Antonio Rose" (originally called "Spanish Dance" until Tommy Duncan wrote lyrics for it), "Across The

Alley From The Alamo”, “Faded Love”, “Yearning”, “Big Ball’s In Cowtown”, “Stay All Night, Stay A Little Longer”, “Ida Red Loves The Boogie” and dozens, if not hundreds more. During WW II, wherever American servicemen went, Bob Wills’ music went with them.

Bob took the most scoffed at and maligned musical form in the United States—‘hillbilly’, they called it then, not recognizing it as the natural outgrowth of ‘folk’ music—and it had not yet become, through its own somewhat askance-viewed offspring, ‘rockabilly’, the direct ancestor of Rock and Roll—and married it to the Glen Miller type big-band sound of the 1930s. By doing so he created an entirely new form of music—Western Swing—that has influenced nearly every type of American dance music since. Yet, in Bob’s own words, “Nobody loved us but the people.”

Bob began his career as a solo fiddler, and shortly organized his first band—The Bob Wills Fiddle And Jug Band. It consisted of Bob on fiddle, Herman Arnspiger on guitar, and an as-yet-unidentified jug-blower. A talent scout who saw the band at an amateur tryout of WBAP Radio in Fort Worth in the very early 30s described it as ‘about the worst sort of thing hillbilly music comes to.’

Bob’s second band still exists, though he didn’t form it himself. Burrus Mills of Texarkana, Texas, home of Lightcrust Flour, hired in the 1930s a go-getting publicity man named W. Lee O’Daniel. W. Lee ‘Pappy’ O’Daniel later made himself governor of Texas, US Senator from Texas, and a complete ass, not necessarily in that order. This, however, isn’t Pappy’s story but Bob’s, so we’ll let Pappy’s political career die an unmourned death here, mentioning only that his election as governor caused one Washington wag to comment that the United States Flag should be changed from 48 stars to 47 stars and a circle—to represent a biscuit, in recognition of Governor O’Daniel’s success in using the same techniques he used to sell Lightcrust biscuits to sell Texas a governor.

The Lightcrust Doughboys, the Burrus Mills promotional hillbilly band, was the brainchild of O’Daniel. A hillbilly music fan himself, Pappy reasoned that a band organized to play hillbilly music and promote Lightcrust Flour would be a great success. He was absolutely right.

The Lightcrust Doughboys consisted primarily of a fiddler named Jim Rob Wills and a guitar-picker named Herman Arnspiger. The Doughboys’ theme, still being played today, was written by Wills. The catchy refrain—

Listen everybody from near and far

While we tell you who we are.

We’re the Lightcrust Doughboys

From Burrus Mills.”—

accompanied by Bob’s breakdown fiddling and Herman’s thumping guitar rhythm, made Lightcrust Flour the most widely sold and used in the four states of Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Arkansas, outselling any national brand by two to one, including Pillsbury and General Mills. O’Daniel was on his way—and so was Bob Wills.

Those ways were soon to part. Bob used his time off to play country dances, picking up the extra money that sometimes meant the difference between staying solvent and going delin-

Bob used his time off to play country dances, picking up the extra money that sometimes meant the difference between staying solvent and going delinquent on debts in the meager 1930s. Pappy, a hardshell Southern Baptist, frowned on dancing, drinking and anything else that looked or sounded like it might actually be enjoyable.

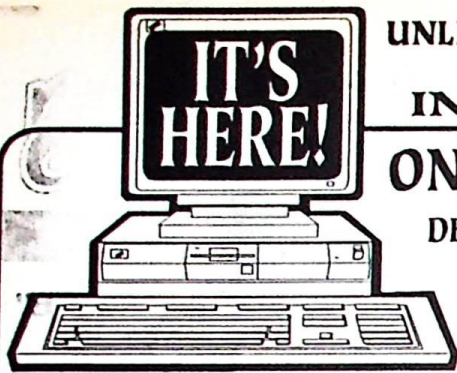
quent on debts in the meager 1930s. Pappy, a hardshell Southern Baptist, frowned on dancing, drinking and anything else that looked or sounded like it might actually be enjoyable.

The Lightcrust Doughboys played five shows a week, three on WBAP in Fort Worth (Monday, Wednesday and Friday), and two on WHOO in Oklahoma City (Tuesday and Thursday), at prime rural radio time—noon. All five shows were done live from the studio, which meant that the Doughboys did a lot of traveling. Bob would leave Fort Worth right after the show on Monday, play a dance in Lawton Monday night, do the Okie City show on Tuesday, pick up a dance in Cherokee on Tuesday night, make the show in Fort Worth Wednesday, and so on. Sometimes the dances degenerated into marathon drinking bouts on homebrewed beer and moonshine whiskey, and Bob didn’t make the show the next day.

This, of course, infuriated Pappy, who read to Bob and Herman from the Good Book about missing shows. This in turn infuriated Bob, who responded by going out and tying one on. In 1932 O’Daniel and Wills came to a completely non-amicable parting of the ways, and Pappy did his best to prevent Bob from ever getting another job as a musician.

Bob formed the nucleus of the band that became The Texas Playboys and went to WHOO in Oklahoma City. He was joined by Smokey Dacus on drums and a boyish-looking hellraiser who could sing but couldn’t play the piano, in spite of his claim that he could—a kid named Tommy Duncan. The new Bob Wills Band—the Playboys—got the Monday/Wednesday/Friday noon slot on WHOO.

Immediately, O’Daniel stormed in. His new Lightcrust Doughboys, less Bob and Herman, were the station’s Tuesday/Thursday mainstays. Burrus Mills was also the biggest local advertiser on WHOO. If Wills and his band were not dismissed instantly, O’Daniel said, he’d not only pull the Lightcrust Doughboys from WHOO, he’d pull all Burrus Mills advertis-



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All during 1940 and 1941 Bob and the Playboys were in Hollywood, doing musical background and riding horses for the cameras in Tex Ritter westerns, playing club dates in and around Los Angeles, and building a national following. Then, at just about 7 AM Honolulu time on Sunday, December 7, 1941, the world fell apart. The Playboys fell apart with it.

ing from the station except that with network shows. WHOO showed Bob and the Playboys the door.

The next stop was KTOK in Tulsa, which didn't get the Lightcrust Doughboys and needed a noon attraction. Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys became the Monday/Wednesday/Friday noon Big Band, with plenty of freedom to play dancehall and nightclub dates the rest of the week. The schedule, as it turned out, was a rough one. The Playboys would board a rickety bus on Monday after the show, play a dance at Little Rock or Shreveport, Waco or Big Spring, or maybe Mission, Kansas—anywhere in reach of KTOK's signal—and then roar back to Tulsa in time for the noon show on Wednesday.

By 1936 Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys could draw more people to a crossroads barn dance on three hours notice than Glen Miller could draw in Dallas with three days notice. Outside the KTOK listening area—Oklahoma, Northern Louisiana, Northeast Texas, Western Arkansas, and Southern Kansas—nobody ever heard of 'em. "Bob Who and the Whatboys?" was the A&R man's reaction when they turned up in Chicago to record. That soon changed. Ted Weems or Glen Miller might sell well in Chicago, New York, or LA, but across the south and southwest Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys outsold 'em two to one.

Part of the secret of the success of the Texas Playboys was Bob's philosophy of popularity. People, he figured, wouldn't like anybody they couldn't get to know. At Bob's insistence the Playboys mingled with the crowd between sets, made friends, shook hands, danced with a few ladies to the backup band's music, and got acquainted. It worked.

Bing Crosby, Ted Weems' star vocalist, was somebody you saw on stage. Between sets he disappeared backstage. Tommy Duncan sat down at your table with you, drank a beer with you, and got to know you and your date. Bob talked to the crowd between numbers, called out old friends' names over the mike and brought 'em up to the stage to shake hands. The band cut up, hollered, and occasionally raised a little hell on stage. There was never any way to tell what might happen when the Texas Playboys started playing.

One notorious night Bob opened the show with a fiddle breakdown that ran a full three minutes. Just after he started play-

ing, his second fiddler and brother Johnnie Lee Wills, stepped up and whispered something in Bob's ear. Immediately the fiddler began to act very strange. He continued to fiddle away, put his knees came together, he got pigeon-toed, and he stooped over. Immediately after he finished he turned his back on the audience, then began to chase Johnnie Lee around the stage, whacking him with his fiddlebow. Tommy Duncan, who—as usual—had instigated the gag, took the mike and explained. Johnnie Lee had told Bob his fly was open and his drawers were hanging out. It wasn't. The audience roared—and loved the Playboys even more.

By 1940, the Texas Playboys were a southwestern legend. Another young Texan who'd made his way to Hollywood via radio, records and the musical stage—Woodward Maurice Ritter from Muvaul Creek in Panola County, known more widely as Tex Ritter, was doing quite well from himself making singing-cowboy movies. His two major rivals, Roy Rogers and Gene Autry, had backup bands and singing groups—the Sons of the Pioneers and The Riders of the Purple Sage.

Tex figured he needed a backup band, too—and he knew a good one. Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys. He contacted Bob, and the Playboys went to Hollywood to back up Tex in a series of pictures—for which Bob wrote many of the songs. It was in Hollywood that Bob wrote "Bluebonnet Lane" and he and Tommy got together and took the "Spanish Dance" tune the band played as an instrumental, changed the phrasing slightly, added lyrics, and came up with "San Antonio Rose". Tex recorded it and it remained, until 1952 when he recorded Dimitri Tiompin's song for the Gary Cooper western *High Noon*, his biggest hit.

All during 1940 and 1941 Bob and the Playboys were in Hollywood, doing musical background and riding horses for the cameras in Tex Ritter westerns, playing club dates in and around Los Angeles, and building a national following. Then, at just about 7 AM Honolulu time on Sunday, December 7, 1941, the world fell apart. The Playboys fell apart with it.

Tommy Duncan started it. "I don't know what the rest of you are gonna do," he announced, "but I'm joinin' the Army." On Monday morning, December 8, that's exactly what he did. By noon on Tuesday, December 9, 1941, the Texas Playboys, for all practical purposes, had ceased to exist.

Bob and a couple of others held off joining up until they got back to Texas. They went by the recruiting station to see Tommy and the rest before they were shipped off to basic training. In the middle of the floor in the back room was a huge circle of kneeling men. It could have been a prayer meeting, but just as Bob was about to assume it was and leave quietly, he heard the unmistakable click-click of dice on a wooden floor and Tommy sang out "Eighter from Decatur, county seat of Wise." Bob wrote the phrase down, and after the war he turned out a song called "Eighter From Decatur", which proved to be a minor hit. Tommy, of course, sang it—after Bob explained to the crowd where the song came from.

"Eighter From Decatur", for the record, is one of two songs based on crapshooters' calls. The other, "Tenaha, Timson, Bobo And Blair", was written and recorded by Tex Ritter. Both are Texas in origin. Tenaha, Timson, Bobo and Blair were whistle-

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stop towns on the H&TC railroad in deep east Texas, and—or so the story goes—they were so small and so close together that if the conductor called them one at a time the train would be past Blair before he got through calling Timson. Tenaha is pronounced 'Tinny-haw' and Tenaha, Timson, Bobo and Blair is the call for the ten in a crap game. Both expressions are now worldwide.

After the war, Bob gathered up the survivors including Tommy, and re-formed the Texas Playboys. During the 'forties and early 'fifties, the Texas Playboys were the hottest dance band west of the Mississippi and east of California. Nationally known bands like Ted Weems and Benny Goodman deliberately avoided playing any town within three weeks of a Texas Playboys' date. They had too many walkouts. The folks in the west wanted Western Swing. It was during this period that some of the finest of Bob's music was written, including "Take Me Back To Tulsa", "Big Ball's In Cowtown" and the immortal "Faded Love", considered the best country and western fiddle tune ever written.

The Playboys, of course, inspired imitators—some successful, some less so. Perhaps the most successful was Peewee King and the Golden West Cowboys, whose style, for years, was a direct imitation of the Playboys. It was Peewee King who had a stroke of luck like Bob's with "San Antonio Rose", and gave

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the world a classic. At a recording session the Cowboys cut a side called "Rootie Tootie", which they expected would be a big hit. They didn't have a "B" side for the record, so Pee-wee and his vocalist dug out a waltz tune that had no lyrics, sat down and wrote lyrics for it in about twenty minutes, and put it on the back of Rootie Tootie. They called it "The Tennessee Waltz". Yet another Playboys imitator, Jimmy Heap and the Melody Masters, never achieved national recognition but worked most of Texas for over thirty years as a western swing band before changing styles.

The Playboys star rose—to featured appearances on The Grand Old Opry, the Carnegie Hall and Madison Square Garden of country music—and then it fell with dramatic suddenness. With the rise of rock and roll, progressive jazz, and the pseudo-sophistication of the late 'fifties, followed by the English Invasion of the 'sixties, western music—and western swing—went into a decline. Tommy left the Playboys, to pursue a solo singing career. Other vocalists followed him, but only one—Leon Rausch—ever really came close. In 1965 Bob and Tommy reunited for an album called *Together Again*, but the great Duncan voice was gone. Two years later Tommy was dead of throat cancer.

When country music began its great rise in the late 'sixties, the Texas Playboys rose with it—but only for a time. Long hours, late nights, and too much whiskey had taken its toll. In 1971, Bob suffered the first of a series of massive strokes that silenced that wonderful fiddle forever. Early in 1974, after attending a recording session for an album released as *Bob Wills And The Texas Playboys—For The Last Time*, Bob died in Fort Worth.

The Texas Playboys—without Bob—are still going, though not as strong as they once did. They are, after all, getting old. But they say that in ten thousand old drafty dance halls across Texas, Oklahoma, and the rest of the west, when the moon and stars are right and the night is still and quiet, you'll see an apparition in a white Stetson, a cigar tucked in the side of his mouth, step out on a deserted stage. He'll tuck a well-worn fiddle under his chin, and if you listen hard you'll hear the sweet notes of "Faded Love", followed by a well-remembered holler—"Aah-ha—San Antone!" Maybe Waylon Jennings said it best: "Once you're down in Texas, Bob Wills is still the King." Amen, brother.



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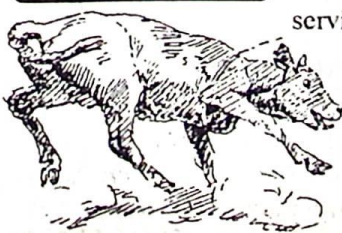
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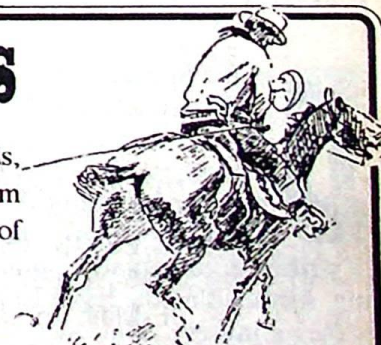
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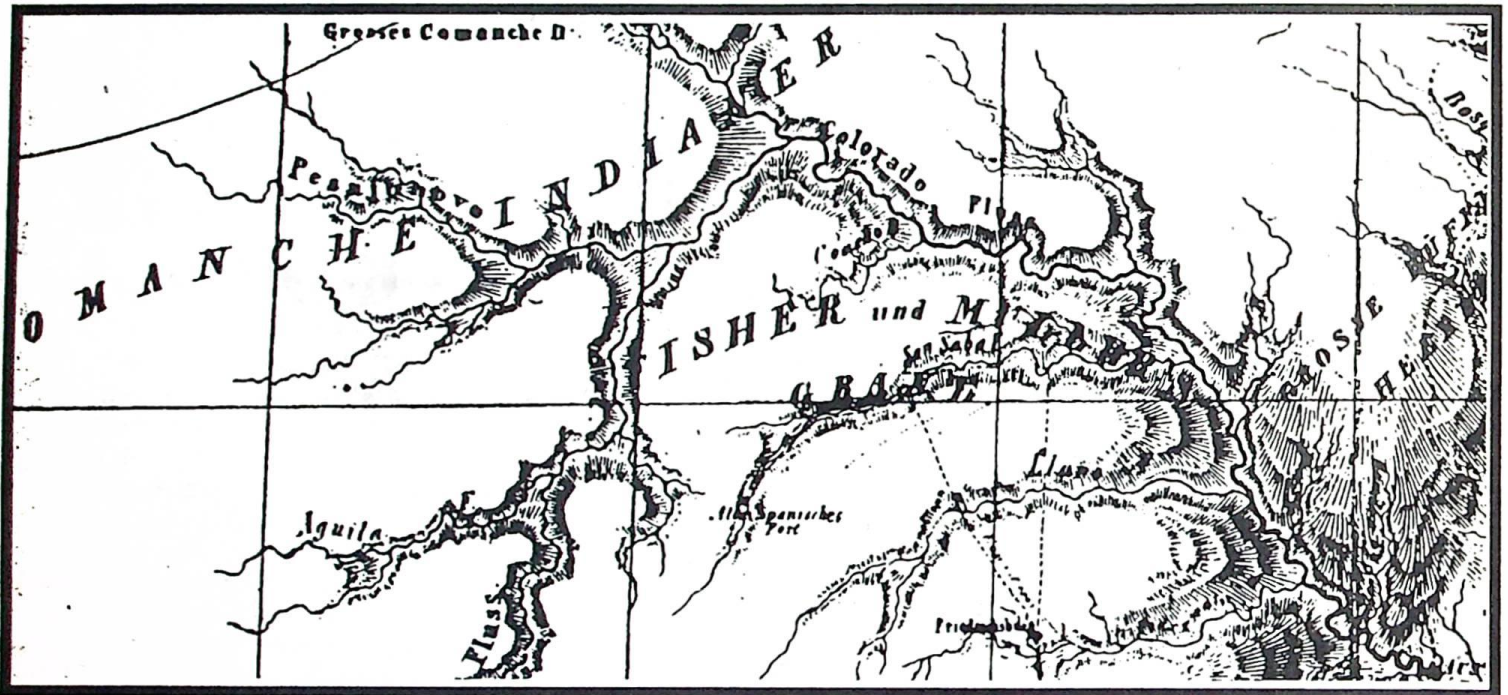
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The Bowie Mine

A LITERATURE REVIEW BY BILL TOWNSLEY



DETAIL OF FERDINAND ROEMER'S MAP SHOWING THE ROUTE OF JOHN MEUSEBACH'S EXPEDITION FROM FREDERICKSBURG TO THE SAN SABA IN 1847-48.

THE SEARCH FOR THE LEGENDARY LOST BOWIE MINE HAS BEEN THE TOPIC OF CONVERSATION AND CONTROVERSY FOR OVER A CENTURY AND A HALF. TODAY, TREASURE HUNTERS MINE THE SOURCES IN HISTORY TO NARROW THE SEARCH.

Did the Spanish really mine silver and gold during the 1700's in the red hill country of Central Texas? Or, did they use exploratory shafts to store silver bars mined somewhere else? Did Jim and Rezin Bowie truly search for legendary mines? I don't know for sure, some say they did, some say—not. There's a considerable amount of written documentation, oral accounts, and some outright lying, surrounding the legendary Los Almagres or Lost San Saba Mine (or mines). Some historians contend there was more than one mine, while others argue there was but one. Because of Jim Bowie and Rezin Bowie's alleged search, in later years, the mine has also come to be known as the Bowie Mine.

Charlie F. Eckhardt, of Seguin, Texas, spent some years researching his book *The Lost San Saba Mines*. Published by Texas Monthly Press, Inc. in 1982, it's one of the best I've read on the subject. Then in 1991, *Treasure Magazine* published a six-part article that was equally informative. Dr. Duane K. Hale and Robert Kyker, co-authored those articles. Ed Syers' book, *Off The Beaten Trail*, published by Texian Press enlightened me too. Harry Sinclair Drago's, *Lost Bonanzas*, devotes an entire chapter to the San Saba Mines and another to the Lost Bowie Mine. Of course, you can't do any research without a copy of *Coronado's Children*, written by J. Frank Dobie, back in 1930. Also, Lesley Byrd Simpson's book, *The San Saba Pa-*

pers, translated by Paul Nathan contains many documents pertaining to the mission and the presidio near Menard, Texas.

On February 28, 1758, Colonel Diego Ortiz Parrilla (commander of the presidio), wrote the following account:

"A quantity of ore was brought to me by Don Jose de Guzman, who stated that it had been taken from an outcropping discovered near the Chanas (Llano) River. I examined and tested this greenish silver ore mingled with lead. (The 25 pounds of ore yielded one and one half ounces of silver).

Ila Mae Davis, of Menard, Texas, will mail you a book written by her cousin, *My Search for Los Almagres Mine*—later called Bowie's Mine. Ms. Davis' cousin wrote under the pseudonym H.A. Desmond. Ms. Davis owns property in the area which is one of many search sites. Possibly the Bradford family, from Menard, could contribute additional information. And if you can find it, C.L. Yarbrough, published a little magazine in the 1980's from Bee House, Texas, entitled, *Vanishing Texas*. The single issue price then, was \$1.25. I paid \$2.25 in 1994, and was happy to do it. (By the way, I suspect these magazines will be worth a small fortune someday...You may still be able to purchase back issues from Larry Walker of El Paso, Texas. Walker told me, Yarbrough only printed 2000 copies.) The first time I phoned Yarbrough, we talked for well over an hour. He provided some valuable leads and sent me in directions, I might otherwise, not have taken.

Many other reference materials are available concerning the mission and the mine or mines associated with it. Additional references that should be reviewed by anyone attempting to undertake an extensive study, are listed as follows: *San Saba Gold and Silver Mines*, J.A. Quintero, *Texas Almanac, 1868*; *Mineral Resources of Texas*, A.R. Roessler, *Texas Almanac, 1872*; *Miranda's Inspection of Los Almagres: His Journal, Report, and Petition*, Roderick Patten, *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, LXXIV, October, 1970; *Texas: Original Narratives of Texas History and Adventure*, Mary Austin Holley, Steck and Company, 1935; *The San Saba Mission, Spanish Pivot in Texas*, Robert S. Weddle, University of Texas Press, 1964; *History of Texas 1685 to 1892*, John Henry Brown; *Texas in the Middle Eighteenth Century*, Herbert Eugene Bolton, University of Texas Press, 1970, originally published in 1915 as Volume 3 of *The University of California Publications in History*; and many documents on microfilm in the Bexar Archives. The list of references cited above, are certainly not all that is available. But they will get you well on your way and enable you to draw your own conclusions.

There's been equally as much written about Jim and Rezin P. Bowie's search for the Los Almagres or San Saba Mines, as the mines themselves. Did the Bowie's, really search? That's a tough one to reply yes or no to as well. Almost always, you'll find reference to the Bowie Party's encounter and ensuing battle in 1831, with some one hundred and sixty Indians (the number differs depending on who's account you're reading, but for the sake of this article it is really of little importance). There's a lot of physical evidence to consider—like the inscription carved on the gatepost of the Persidio San Saba. The inscription reads "BOWIE MINE 1832". Eckhardt and others claim the inscription originally read "BOWIE CON SU TROPA 1829". Sometime between 1895 and 1910 it was altered by an unidentified vandal. (ref. *The Saga of San Saba*, by Jalon Escuriex, *Long John Latham's Treasure World Magazine*, September, 1974.) Mrs. H.H. Wheless furnished a photograph that proved the in-

Professor Ferdinand Roemer, visited the ruins of the persidio, west of present Menard, Texas, in 1847/8. At the time of Dr. Roemer's visit, the fort had been vacant for approximately 76 years. He took measurements of the existing structures and recorded the following inscriptions carved on the gatepost: "PADILLO 1810, COS 1829, BOWIE 1829, MOORE 1840".

scription had been altered. The word "mine" does not appear in her photograph, but has been superimposed over a date 1829.) "CON SU TROPA" translates to, "AND HIS MEN". And what about the trail that led from some burnt rocks, adjacent to the north side of the Persidio San Luis de las Amarillas? Menardites say it led to an area northwest of the persidio, where oak trees had been used to make charcoal. Were the rocks, remains of an old silver smelter, or something else? Professor Ferdinand Roemer, visited the ruins of the persidio, west of present Menard, Texas, in 1847/8. Roemer neglected to mention slag or a smelter in a book he published some two years later. He, on the other hand, didn't mention the old irrigation ditch, either. The ditch could then, and can still, be seen. At the time of Dr. Roemer's visit, the fort had been vacant for approximately 76 years. He took measurements of the existing structures and recorded the following inscriptions carved on the gatepost: "PADILLO 1810, COS 1829, BOWIE 1829, MOORE 1840". And shouldn't you consider what Rezin Bowie said? "On the 2nd of November, 1831, we left the town of San Antonio de Bexar for the silver mines on the San Saba River."

Then there's Caiphaz K. Ham, occasional companion to the Bowie brothers. He lived with a band of Comanche Indians for a while and claimed he (not Jim Bowie) was told of a mine rich in silver. Ham claimed, Rezin Bowie, not Jim Bowie, saw Spanish bars of silver tucked away in a mine. Caiphaz Ham continued to search long after Colonel Bowie's death at the fall of the Alamo.

You have to ponder over that letter, penned in Galveston, Texas, by E. McLean, on December 8th 1880. Writing to C.K. Ham, McLean warns Ham, to keep the matter to himself, as though he had abandoned the hunt. In McLean's letter to Ham, he references another letter, from somebody named Hays (possibly the famous Texas Ranger). You can find a copy of it, in that little, hard to find magazine of Yarbrough's, that I was telling you about earlier. The letter was furnished to Yarbrough by Ms. Joan Speer of McAllen, Texas.

You'll need to take a look at Doctor Herbert E. Bolton's book, *Spanish Explorations of the Southwest*. Start somewhere around page two hundred and eighty-three, read until the subject changes. The archives in the University of Texas has a Spanish transcript entitled *Expedition to Los Almagres and Plans for Developing the Mines, 1755-1756*. It's better known as, *The Miranda Report*. Oh yea—remember it's written in Spanish. Mrs. Margaret Kenney Kress, instructor of Spanish at the University of Texas, translated it for Frank Dobie. Dr.

Bolton, literally using the Miranda Report as a map, placed the Los Almagres Mine, the mine that Don Bernardo de Miranda, lieutenant-general of the province of Texas, opened in 1756 near Honey Creek, in Llano County.

You'll need to read...John Warren Hunter's pamphlet, *Rise and Fall of the Mission San Saba*. They wouldn't let me leave with it, but I read a copy of it at the Moody Library Building on the campus of Baylor University, in Waco, Texas. Again, you almost always, find reference to that Monday, November 21, 1831, battle between Indians and Bowie's company of treasure hunters. The exact date may be questionable, but it's certainly close enough. Jim Bowie, Rezin Bowie, Ham (some writers spell the name with two m's), Robert Armstrong, David Buchanan, Mathew Doyle (sometimes spelled Doyal), Jesse Wallace, Thomas McCaslin, James Coryell, and two servants, a Mexican named Gonzales and a mulatto boy called Charles, are known to have been participants.

The site of the battle is as much a mystery as the mines and the Bowie's involvement. The speculation is endless. There's accepted history and, well, there's legend. Circumstantial evidence exists too, but when history, legend, physical, and circumstantial evidence is co-mingled, it's difficult to separate. Rezin Bowie said the battle occurred "six miles east of the old fort" which would place you near Jackson's Creek. Some Menard citizens will point you in the direction of Silver Creek, which is nine miles west and three miles north of the old presidio. In the 1860's Dixon, G.B. Ezell, Wiley Stroud and Sam Fleming came into possession of a map showing the location of a mine tunnel on Silver Creek. The area is commonly referred to as the Egg-Shaped Basin. In the early 1900's Judge J.R. Norton and a woman, billed as a Comanche Princess in wild west shows and circuses also dug at this site. There's a wash known as Turkey Creek, that some consider to be the proper location of the fight. The State prefers a location near Calf Creek, a tributary of the San Saba River, as the official site. The Calf Creek site is south and a little west of Brady, Texas, in McCulloch County. Texas erected a Historical Monument along the side of the highway, near the community of Calf Creek.

Some people will tell you that Bowie didn't search for the mines at all—instead he and the other Texicans were searching for a Mexican caravan to rob. It has been widely believed the Mexican Government transported silver from mines in Sonora to some point in the United States or possibly New Orleans, for payment of goods and supplies.

In 1948 Charlie Eckhardt was told by Ralph A. Doyal, grandson to Matthew A. Doyal, who was with Jim and Rezin P. Bowie at the Calf Creek Fight (or wherever, it really took place), that his grandfather said the Bowie party stole three silver-laden mules from the Mexican Government. Historians have concluded that Thomas McCaslin was the only causality (not including the Indians). Most have reasoned McCaslin was buried near a breastwork of rock, hastily placed by Bowie and his men to defend their position against the Indians. Matthew A. Doyal was shot in the chest but survived his injury. Years later, Matt Doyal told his grandson the three mule-loads of silver was buried about waist deep and the cache marked by triangular shaped rocks, placed in the formation of a triangle.

I asked 87 year old, Ms. C. Harlow, who lives near Brady, Texas, about the Calf Creek Fight. She told me some things I had not read or heard:

"Yes, the Indian Fight, the Bowie Fight, the Calf Creek

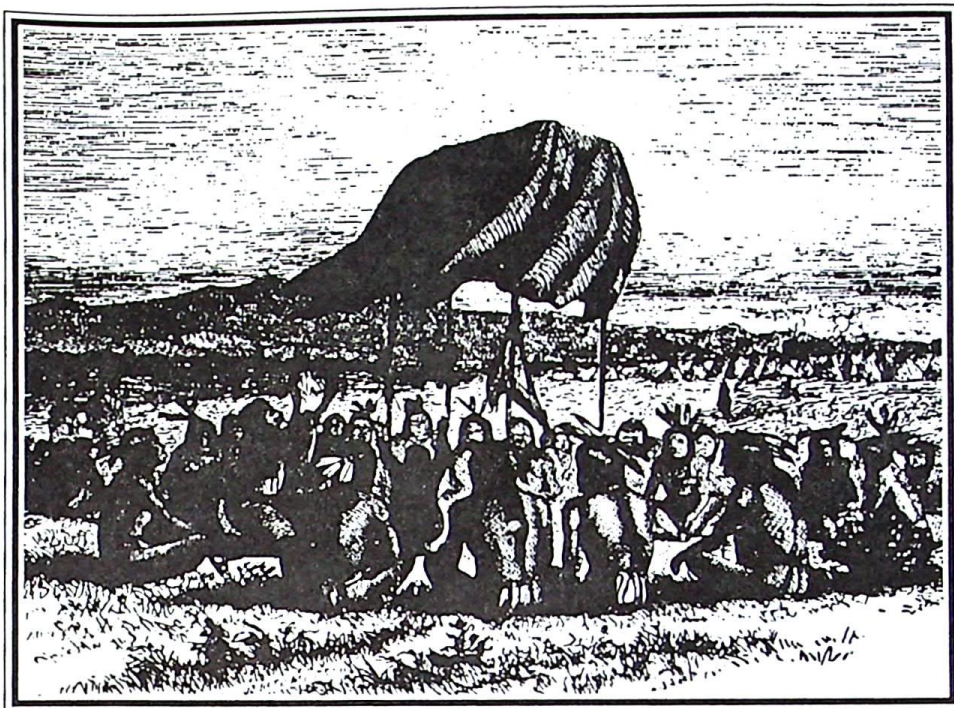
Fight, took place in a live-oak thicket, in a big pile of rock, near a spring of water, in the corner of the Harlow and adjoining farm. My husband, Mr. Harlow, found one of the boy's grave. We believe, he was sent for water at the spring and was killed by a Caddo or Lipan Indian arrow." During one of several interviews, Ms. Harlow revealed that in 1925, two men came to the ranch house and asked if they could look around near an old structure that had once stood on the property. She granted them permission. After all, they just wanted to look around.

Several days later the Harlow's noticed a large stone had been moved. In the hole, left by the men's digging, was the imprint of a three-legged pot. "I don't know what was in the pot, but I know we never saw those men again," she added. "The structure, near where the men dug up the three legged pot, was built by old man Fiddler around 1900." Ms. Harlow said, there used to be an old rock fence, "that reached from the Habey fence, from the Habey ranch, from Calf Creek, all the way to the highway that goes to Junction, Texas." The Harlows tore the rock fence down in the 1930's. Another interesting fact revealed by Ms. Harlow, was the 1920s discovery of a flint rock, partially embedded in the forks of an ancient Live-oak tree. It is located near the farm, approximately 300 yards from the circle of rock (what some believe to be the breastwork used by Jim Bowie and his men to defend themselves against the Indians in 1831). You have to know exactly where the tree is located or you'll find it only after a great deal of difficulty because the tree has completely grown around the rock. Is this one of the rocks Matthew A. Doyal told Ralph Doyal would help lead the group back to the three mule loads of silver they cached? Hard to say, but then it seems to fit. I mean, you have a live oak thicket, a rock breastwork, a spring, a grave, and a flint rock embedded in the forks of a tree. You also have two men who dug-up a three-legged pot, left with it, and were never heard of or seen again. (Ms. Harlow told of another Live-oak tree, at Traveler's Well, in San Saba County, that has a flint rock embedded in the forks of it and still another rock embedded in the forks of a third oak tree near Rochell, Texas.) Ms. Harlow said she thought the rocks marked some type of trail. She told me about B. Wright, who lived near Menard, and had known several persons who hunted for Spanish silver near the presidio. I phoned Wright, who told me about an old man who searched for years near Hext, Texas. The last time I spoke with Ms. Harlow, she said, "I don't think they're going to find that pot of gold or silver, it's been gone, a long, long, time." Perhaps she's right...

As recently as 1995, much activity and attention was centered around the old well at the Alamo in San Antonio, Texas. The nationally syndicated television program, *Unsolved Mysteries*, filmed the excavations being performed by treasure hunters and archaeologists. And although nine pages were dedicated to the subject in the 1996-1997 *Texas Almanac*, few people know the site of the the "lost mission", Santa Cruz de San Saba (not to be confused with the stone presidio) was located in an alfalfa field 3.95 miles east of the presidio, in September of 1993.

My research is ongoing, if you have any additional information, I'd enjoy discussing this topic with you!

Bill Townsley
22557 Waterview Circle
Flint, Texas 75762



WHEN DO WE DIE?

by JAMES E. CORNETT
(AKA L. KELLY DOWN)

THIS ARTICLE WAS ONE OF THE LAST PIECES JAMES CORNETT, AS L. KELLY DOWN, WROTE BEFORE HE DIED A YEAR AGO THIS MONTH. MOSTLY HE TOLD STORIES ABOUT COWBOY LIFE DOWN ON THE MATAGORDA. HE'D LEAVE THE PONDEROUS DISCUSSIONS ABOUT THE MEANING OF LIFE AND DEATH UP TO LITERARY TYPES. BUT I DON'T BELIEVE DEATH CAUGHT JIMMY BY SUPRISE. HE TURNED OUT STORY AFTER STORY DURING HIS LAST FEW MONTHS—STACKS OF THEM. AND IN THE LAST BATCH WERE THESE THOUGHTS OF HIS ON LIVING AND DYING.

Is dying like snuffing a candle light—one second bright and dark the next? Is dying like the ripening of wheat—going from green to golden yellow, then bleached by the sun and rain, a dull brown then the stalk falls—is this death? Or are we on one level expanding outward like the millions of galaxies all flying apart—slowing, stopping for an instant then falling back to another beginning—is this dying?

Discounting accidents, a full life seems to be not only growing but always dying. The balance of the two is what tells our age. The very desire to learn, to have real adventures, dreams of the next week or the next fifty years—is growing. Hurts, not of the body, but of the mind and soul—are dying.

No matter how fast we run to reach the goal of maximum growing, we can not avoid the pitfalls and twists that are caused by nature and rubbing the exterior of other humans. No matter how soft a person is inside; there is a very hard shell that is like rain on the hardest rock, it wears on all others, even the people we most love.

People, I have noticed, that seem to be dying the fastest are the ones who live in the physical world. When their body will not perform as it did, they begin to die. Their growing may be as short as sixteen years and then they are dying for the next eighty years. They have a long life that is spent mainly in dying. They seem to be tied so fast to the past they have no future.

However, people who live on ideas, dreams, the constant quest for knowledge, may have the same number of years, but all that time is spent growing, and a very short, short time dying. These people always seem to face the sunrise and chase the twilight. They may break a toe on a rock in the path, they may have to carry heavy loads, but their eye never leaves the top of the hill—because that is where they wish to be—so they are.

Who has the most happy life? To each their own. The ones who take eighty years from start to finish in their dying can be very happy doing so. However, the people I have known, the ones who force their growth as a bean seed forces a shoot out of the field, are having more fun, doing new things, having different

People who live on ideas, dreams, the constant quest for knowledge, may have the same number of years, but all that time is spent growing, and a very short, short time dying. These people always seem to face the sunrise and chase the twilight.

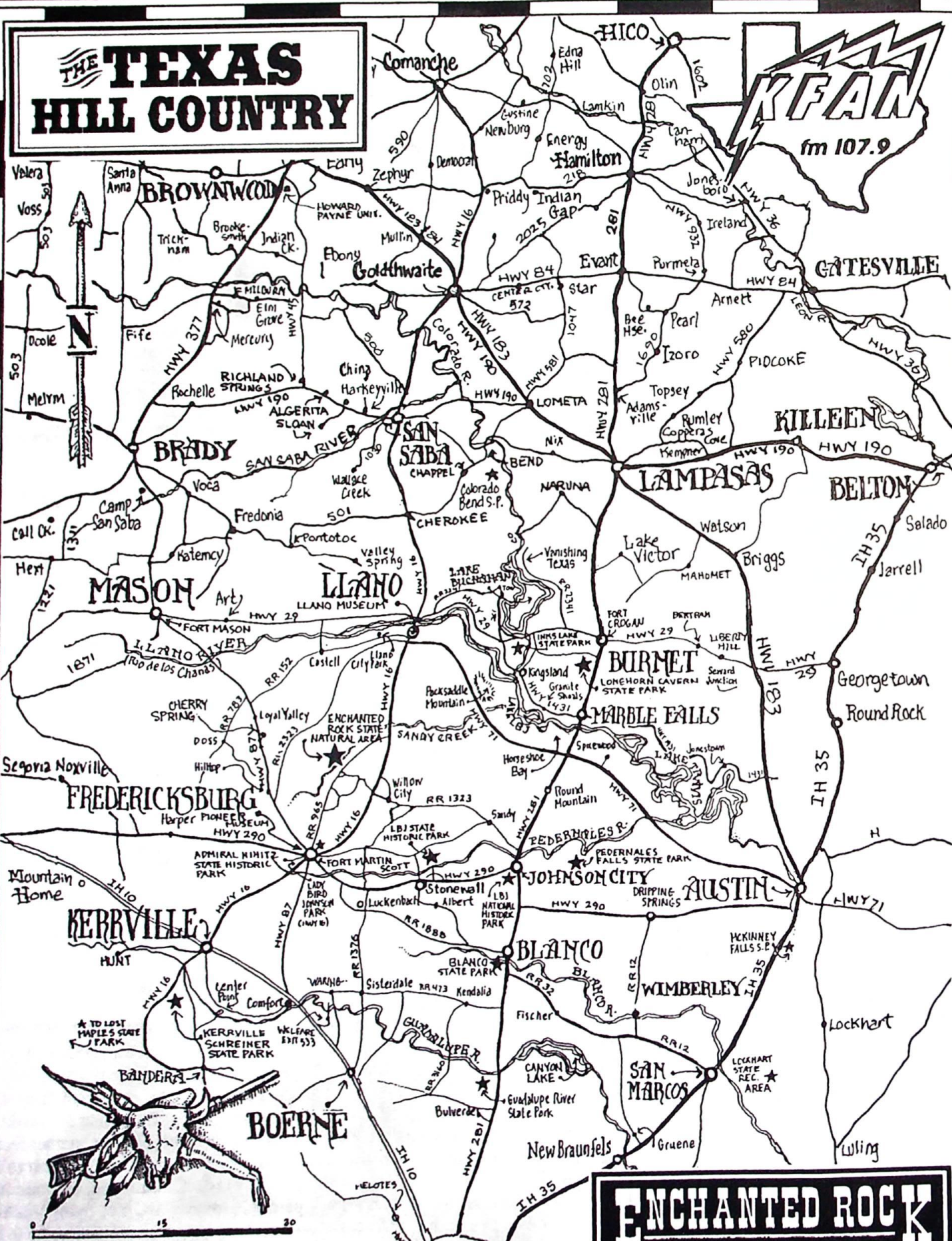
adventures—both good and bad—they are the ones who seem to be the happiest.

The final judge of which is best is not ours to decide. But which do you think would be most qualified for another level?

You can control when you start to die and how fast. Children are one hundred percent growing and not dying. Is this what the master meant—that to go to the next level we must be as children?

November, 1996

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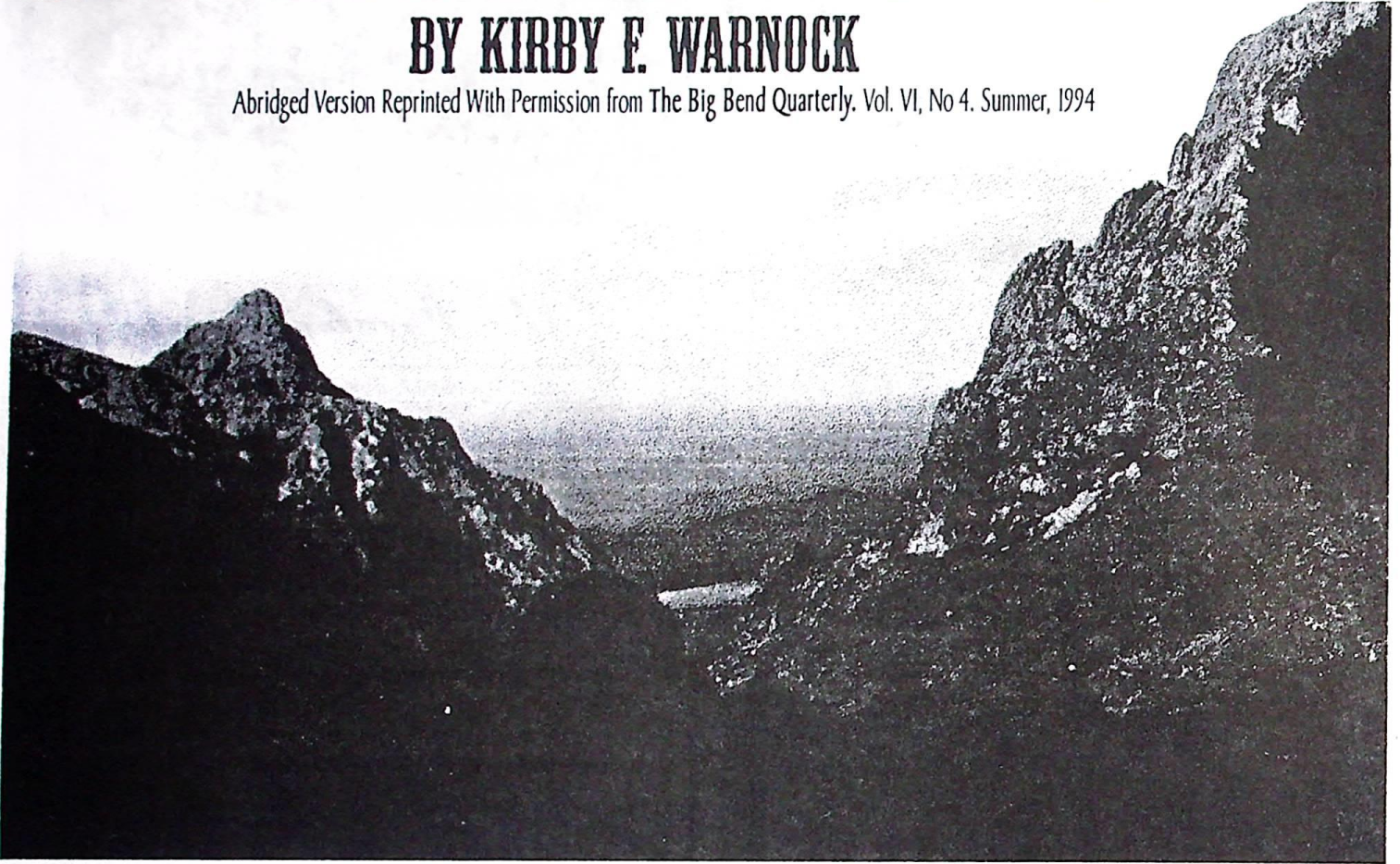
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MY LIFE IN THE BIG BEND

BY KIRBY F. WARNOCK

Abridged Version Reprinted With Permission from The Big Bend Quarterly. Vol. VI, No 4. Summer, 1994



THE WINDOW FROM CHISOS MOUNTAINS BASIN AT BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK. PHOTO BY IRA KENNEDY

Sometimes a place can get a hold on a person and never let go. That's what happened to Kirby F. Warnock, Editor & Publisher of *Big Bend Quarterly*, a magazine of history and news about one of Texas' most remote regions.

Here's Kirby's story in his own words.

The impetus for *Big Bend Quarterly* was born years ago, when I first started coming to this country as an infant. For 45 years I have had the privilege of spending several months out of the year west of the Pecos. It all began when daddy Frank Warnock put me in the family's DeSoto and drove back to the old home place on 7-D road, about four miles outside of Fort Stockton. It was a two day drive from Biloxi, Mississippi to Fort Stockton. We drove from Biloxi to Dallas the first day, the Dallas to Fort Stockton the second. Although I was overwhelmed and impressed with the sheer size of Dallas and it's moniker of Big D, I never felt that I was really in Texas until we got near San Angelo. From there the land took on the appearance of the

West. By the time we pulled into the family ranch at Fort Stockton, I knew I was in the West.

Those Christmases and summers were looked forward to with a tremendous amount of anticipation. I can remember sitting at my desk in elementary school, drawing pictures of what I was going to do when I finally got out west. For a young boy, it was pure heaven.

You have to place it in the context of the popular culture of the 50's and 60's. When I was five years old, it was 1957. Roy Rogers was the biggest thing on television. Every boy in kindergarten wanted to have a horse named Trigger and two six-guns on his hips. There were Roy Rogers toy guns, lunchboxes, shirts, hats, boots, even a Roy Rogers cereal bowl that I ate my

oatmeal out of. The closest that a kid in Mississippi would come to that fantasy would be a chance to ride a pony at the local carnival, but not me. I actually got to ride a real horse, on a real ranch, and shoot a real gun. It was a great childhood.

I remember that this country at that time was not called the Big Bend. Everyone just called it West Texas. Somehow the term "West Texas" has today come to mean Lubbock and Amarillo, which has always irritated me because that is the panhandle, but that's the current terminology. The area west of the Pecos was dominated by large ranches and people who made their living raising cattle. The only other source of employment was the oil business. Oh, there were a few merchants in town, like Edward Winkler or Jimmy Black who had a department store and a pharmacy, but by and large everyone worked outdoors, whether it was punching cows or wrangling drilling pipe. There wasn't any tourist industry to speak of. The closest thing to tourism was Indian Lodge in Fort Davis and the Chisos Lodge down in the Big Bend National Park. These facilities were primarily used by people from Pecos, Fort Stockton and Midland who headed down there for weekend retreats and special occasions.

My first trip to Big Bend National Park came in 1962. It was during Christmas vacation and my father was going to take the whole family camping up in the Basin. A canvas wall tent was loaded into the Chrysler and we headed south from Fort Stockton. We got up early in the morning and headed due south, toward Marathon. There were what seemed like hundreds of deer crossing the road and jumping fences during the drive. When we finally came to the entrance to Big Bend National Park at Persimmon Gap, a small group of Javelinas crossed the road in front of us. As we drove around the Park, my father pointed out Mule Ears Peak. Everything looked so large and colorful that it was almost like I was in a movie and not really there.

The drive up to the Basin seemed endless and steep. I was scared that our car would stop and we would careen backwards, downhill. When we dropped down into the Basin it was as if I was in Disneyland: So many rocks to climb, so little time.

The next morning we hiked the Windows Trail, which seemed to my 10 year-old legs to be twenty miles long. We saw javelina and deer, and several kit foxes. That night we attended a presentation in the amphitheater on finding water in the desert.

I didn't go back to Big Bend National Park until 16 years later, when I went on a field trip with the Sul Ross Biology Department, led by my uncle, Dr. Barton H. Warnock, or 'B. H.' as the family called him. On this trip we went along the dirt road that led to the Mariscal Mine. It was hot, dry and dusty, but striking in scenery and isolation. We saw one car the entire trip, and it was a Winnebago that must have gotten lost. I often wondered how that poor devil got his RV back to a paved road, or if he ever made it.

I was struck by the enormous size of the mine, stuck out in the middle of nowhere. All around it were several abandoned miner's shacks, inhabited by poor Mexicans from the other side of the Rio Grande who provided the cheap labor for this deadly job: The mercury ore mined here was processed in open retorts. Over time the fumes proved deadly for whoever worked

In what free time we had, my brother and I would saddle the horses and go off riding, going through any unlocked gate we could locate. We swam in windmill tanks, explored some run down shacks and looked for arrowheads. We saw all kinds of wildlife, from badgers and skunks to coyotes and deer. Driving through the country, it looked dead and dreary, but we quickly discovered that it was teeming with animals that were adapted to the land.

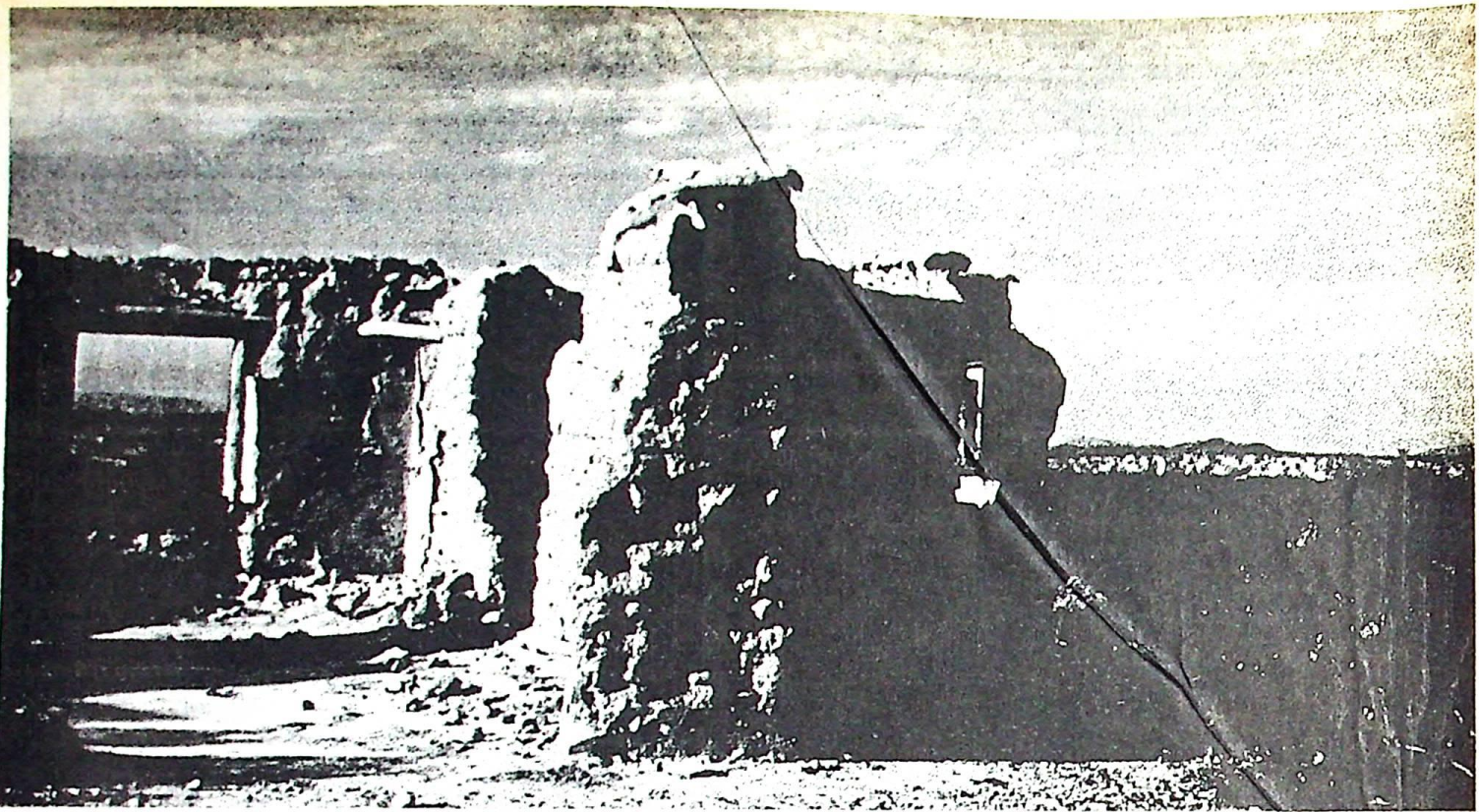
near the pots.

Much of my time was spent on the ranches that cover the Big Bend. Because my grandfather worked for the Texas Highway Department, he drove all over the country, talking with many of the ranchers about the roads. He also ran 500 head of cattle on a 50,000 acre lease north of Fort Stockton, and regularly talked with other cattlemen, feed suppliers and vets.

We spent Christmases pretty much doing as we pleased, but in the summers we were expected to help out on the ranch. It was nothing like Roy Rogers. To start with, we didn't get to ride horses very much. We doctored cows for pink eye, fixed fence, worked on windmills and re-hung gates. I remember asking my grandfather if we would ever get to ride horses. I got my chance when we were to move thirty calves from a nearby ranch to the loading pens on our place. We got to drive the calves a distance of about three miles, which qualified as a cattle drive in my book, and then we were to brand, vaccinate and castrate them.

My grandfather had hired three other cowboys to help out on this day. I discovered that if you were not an expert roper, you got the job of throwing and flanking the calf. The best roper stayed on horseback the whole time, tossing his loop over each calf while I struggled to throw the bellowing, kicking (and usually defecating) animal to the ground. Once he was down, one of us held down the head while the other pulled on one leg, and placed a boot heel behind the other leg, pushing it while you pulled on the other leg with both hands. My grandfather did the castrating (which utterly disgusted me) while another cowboy put the hot brand to the calf's hip. I can still recall that smell of burning hide and hair. It smelled a lot like burning bacon. I sweated profusely, and the perspiration would run down into my eyes and burn them. I didn't know that 30 animals could raise so much dust. I had fresh cow manure spread over a good portion of my body after I was drug through a fresh pile when an onery calf refused to go down for me. It was at both times repulsive and good. Good because it made a 12 year old boy feel bigger to be working with grown cowboys. Repulsive because fresh cow manure is just plain repulsive, no matter how it is applied to your body.

In what free time we had, my brother and I would saddle



ADOBES RUINS NEAR SANTA ELENA CANYON IN BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK. PHOTO BY IRA KENNEDY

the horses and go off riding, going through any unlocked gate we could locate. We swam in windmill tanks, explored some run down shacks and looked for arrowheads. We saw all kinds of wildlife, from badgers and skunks to coyotes and deer. Driving through the country, it looked dead and dreary, but we quickly discovered that it was teeming with animals that were adapted to the land. I was always fascinated by the Kangaroo Rats, which we could spot along the dirt roads at night, kicking and rolling in the dust. There were the millions of Chucwalla Lizards, who could run faster than lightning.

Try as we may, we never could catch one, so we opted to shoot them with our .22's instead, a practice that I am somewhat ashamed of today, but most 12 year old boys are bent on destruction. Then again, it was the ultimate for young boys: total freedom without any adults around.

It was during these long rides and exploring sojourns that we saw hundreds of amazing things that caused us to exclaim, "Did you see that!" on more than one occasion. It was an age of wonder.

I remember a time back in 1964 when an oil well near Fort Stockton had caught on fire. The fire raged for weeks, maybe even months, because it was still going when we left at the end of the summer. Although it was several miles away, whenever we stopped and were still we could hear the roar of the fire. At night the entire horizon was lit up at the spot of the fire. Once my father tried to drive us closer to it, but a couple of miles away the brightness was so intense that he turned around and went back to the ranch. During the day, there was always a single white cloud, directly over the fire. The intense hot air would rise, cool quickly, and form permanent clouds over the well.

For one whole week every summer we would drive down to Paisano Pass, between Alpine and Marfa, to attend the Paisano Baptist Encampment. Like most boys, I wasn't crazy about going to church, but Paisano wasn't like the church services back in Mississippi. It was, dare I say, fun! During the day we would link up with the dozens of other kids and climb all of the rocks and hills around the camp. We would walk the dry creek beds, sit under the bridges talking, and on more than one occasion climb Paisano Peak. My best friend for each camp was a boy from Fort Stockton named Randy Reeves. We dreamed of the day that we would be grown and able to buy our own 1962 Thunderbird and do our own driving. (I never got that Thunderbird, don't know if Randy did.) At night we gathered in the tabernacle for some singing and preaching. It always seemed to me that the preachers at Paisano were a lot more interesting than my preachers back home in Mississippi.

Each summer there would be several parties or cookouts that we would attend at the neighboring ranches. I recall that the ranchers my grandfather knew were very tough, hard men, but extremely kind. Their wives were always gracious, but didn't tolerate much misbehavior in their house. They all seemed different, so much larger than life.

Some of these men who come to mind were Wayne Hillin, who had a ranch near Bakersfield. He struck oil and gas, got rich overnight, but never quit dressing in old khaki pants and a Stetson hat. There was Wilson Smith, owner of the Barilla Ranch who had us out there to quail hunt and cook out. Alpheus Herral, whose Hat A Ranch was at one time one of the largest in the area, Pauline and Skinny Friend, with their gorgeous place in the Davis Mountains, and Clayton Williams Sr., who

On all of our trips into the countryside there were three hard and fast rules:

- 1) Always bring plenty of fresh water with you and take a good drink before leaving the house.
- 2) Don't put your feet or your hands where you can't see them.
- 3) Don't cross a fence if you are unsure of who the owner is.

allowed us on his property near Marfa. Then there was Herbert L. Kokernot. I never met the man, but he cast a giant shadow over the entire Big Bend. Whether it was attending a ball game at Kokernot Field, or dining at the Paisano Baptist Encampment, his presence was felt, much like the benevolent uncle who always brings a gift when he visits.

But the three men who passed on their love for the Big Bend were Roland Warnock, Frank Warnock and B. H. Warrick. Grandfather Roland taught me about the land, how to live on it and adapt to it, through his sayings.

"Always let a horse know that you have more time than it does."

"It should be one shot, one jackrabbit."

My Father, Frank Warnock, knew the history of this country, telling stories of the Goodnight-Loving Trail, Indian Emily, the troopers at Fort Stockton and the Comanches. Uncle B. H. Warnock not only knew all the plants, but passed on the history of sites in the region, such as Plata, the Mariscal Mine and Cienega Mountain. A boy could not have asked for three better teachers.

This isn't to give the impression that everyone out in the region was tough with a heart of gold. There were certain ranchers that my grandfather called "cranky", and we knew to give them a wide berth. They were downright ornery and had a certain mean streak to them, but by and large the people out here followed an unwritten code of the west; be a good neighbor.

Whenever my father wanted to take us to climb a certain mountain, or explore a site, he would place a telephone call to the owner. (It didn't hurt that my father had grown up out here and knew everyone.) Our request was nearly always granted, and we would head out in the pickup truck for a day of exploring Panther Cave, Monument Springs, Tunis Springs and other sites on private property in the Trans Pecos. It was about the early '70s that this practice began to dry up. Trash thrown on ranch roads, windmills with bullet holes and torn down fences eventually soured the ranchers on allowing people on their property. Today the gates are locked tighter than ever and the "No Trespassing" signs more numerous all over the Big Bend. A few trashy individuals basically ruined it for everyone, and I don't see any signs of it changing anytime soon.

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BY STEVEN L. YUHAS



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For a volunteer who managed to travel hundreds of miles to join the Texas cause and fight the Mexicans, the initial sight of the camp was a bit of a shock. The camp lay in a wide loop in the San Antonio River. Across a corn field, less than a mile away, the Alamo sat ominously on open ground, the Mexican Flag defiantly swirling in the breeze. On the far side of the loop, hidden by the trees that rose along the river bank, was the City of San Antonio or Bexar as it was often called. To the west and rear of the camp, the cattle and horses grazed in tall grass

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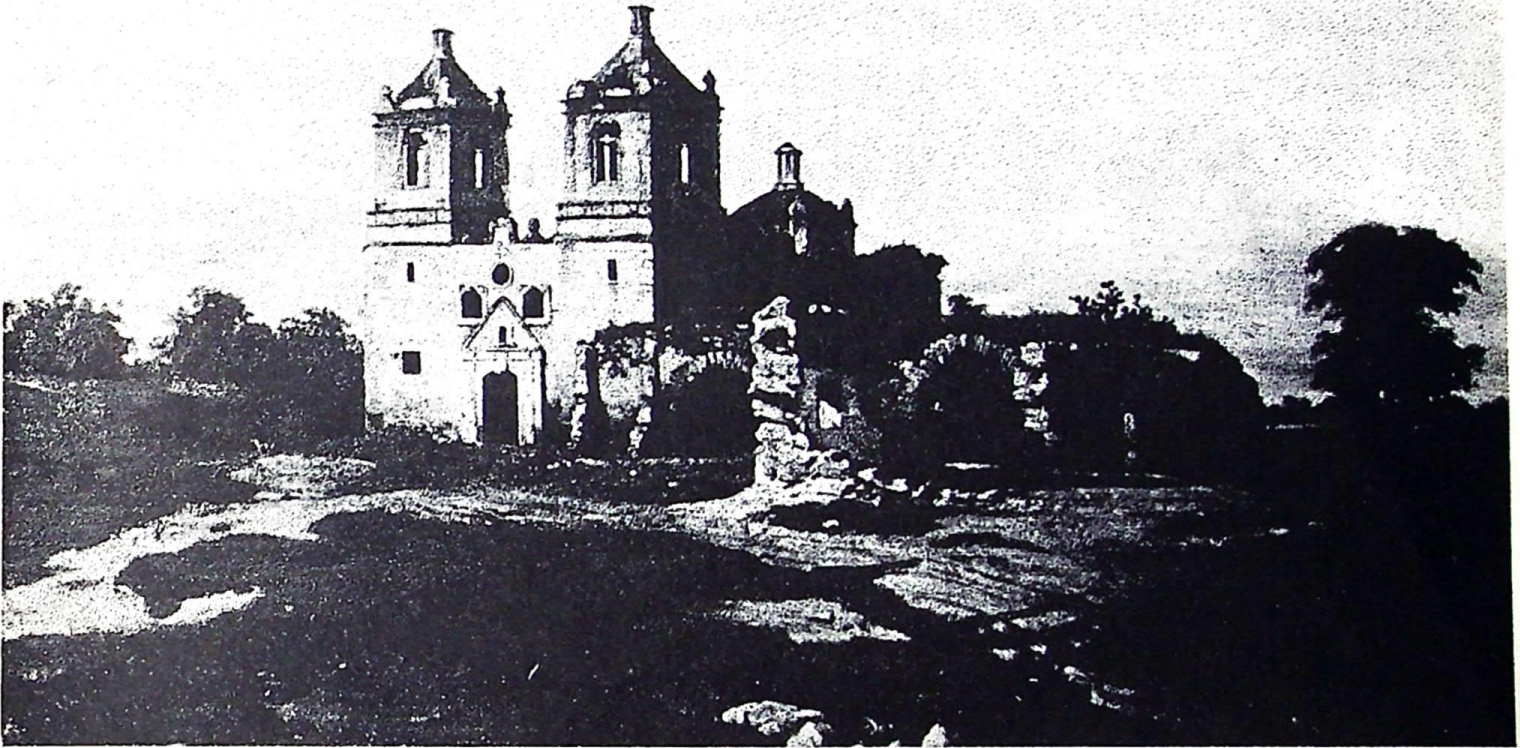


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At the guns, the men lined up to take their turns firing. It was very lively inside the parapet, as a good deal of betting was going on. Musket balls, money, knives—all were put up for the closest shot between the third and fourth windows. None of the shots were very good, but there was laughter all around.

surrounded by mesquite, pecan trees and a sprinkling of cactus. Close by the corn field, huge flocks of black birds strutted about, picking for food. When disturbed, they went swirling and circling in dark masses until they found a new place to land. There was another area set aside for the slaughtering of animals. That area could easily be detected by the lazy buzzards drifting overhead. When they weren't soaring in the breeze, they would patiently wait in the branches of the pecan trees. Even the coyotes would warily come in for their share

Except for the militia and the New Orleans Greys, the camp was in complete disarray. The volunteers just put up their tents and shelters in a haphazard way, whatever pleased their fancy. They were dressed in the same manner that they had left their places of origin. Buckskins, fur hats, crushed top hats, frieze coats, cotton shirts and checkered wool trousers abounded in the area. Most were armed with long rifles and Bowie knives. An undisciplined lot to be sure, but a bunch of men that had a hardened, knowing look about them. They carried an air of individual self-confidence. There were fighting men. Men used to the hard life on the frontier. Dependable men you could count on to stand unflinchingly beside you in a fight. That is, the men who came with, or joined organized units.

There were other free booters out on their own hook. Deserters and thieves who found the Texas army a good place to hide from the law. These men were fighters alright, but one had to keep a cautious eye on the scurvy looking bunch.

In the morning, some units held roll call, others didn't. The volunteers wouldn't fall into ranks but would answer from wherever they happened to be. Some roasting meat and brewing coffee, others from their tents and others from whatever chores they happened to be doing.

The days were used by the leaders to organize their units. Many used the time to ride out to the settlements to buy bread and other personables. The new volunteers bought wool blankets, or serapes as the Mexicans called them. They were warm and waterproof, good protection from the cool to outright cold of the prairie at night.

To help relieve the boredom of the camp, Captain Cook of the Greys built an artillery redoubt [ed. note: ...a temporary outlying fortification...used to secure hilltops, passes or the flanks

of entrenchments] on a slight rise near the edge of the cornfield. They moved two small cannons into the position and took turns taking pot shots at the Alamo. Every once in a while, a shot would actually hit the building. These weren't men trained in artillery, just fighters having a good time.

Part of the fun was getting back and forth to the redoubt. One had to cross over a hundred yards of open ground to get to the safety of the parapet. The problem was, there were several guns trained on the field. Every time someone headed across the open ground, one, sometimes three Mexican cannons would saturate the field with grapeshot. The excitement of running the gauntlet and a chance to fire a cannon at the Alamo was enough incentive for many men to make the trip several times.

Most just sat and watched the fun, but eventually another volunteer would just have to give it a try. One example was the drummer from the Greys. Without warning, he leaped up, let out a yell and streaked for the guns. Several others decided to follow. The rest of the men in camp started whooping and smacking their thighs in encouragement and enjoyment.

The Mexicans were alert and the grapeshot grew so intense that the runners had to take refuge behind the only tree in the field. They lined up behind that tree like baby ducks following their mother. The Mexican's aim was accurate, as round after round hit the tree or its branches, raining leaves and nuts around their ears. The men in the redoubt and the camp were holding their sides, doubled over with laughter. The next round hit the tree dead on, sending splinters all around the... That was enough. While the guns reloaded, the disassembled mob took off for the redoubt. They all made it unharmed.

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The last shooter of the day came forward and bet a brace of pistols. He took longer than the others at estimating the range and elevating the gun, asking the loader to put in a little extra powder. Satisfied, he lit the fuse. Everyone watched the round hit the wall, when the flying stone and dust cleared, it was right on the mark. Everyone cheered for old Deaf Smith.

The story of Deaf Smith's cannon shot spread through the camp. A new volunteer asked one of the militia about Deaf Smith. The soldier replied, "The way it was told to me was, not only is he as good as any artillery man with a cannon, but he is the best shot and hunter on the prairie. He always shoots his game in the head so as not to spoil the rest of the meat. When things first started getting hot in Texas, he scouted between the Nueces and Rio Grande Rivers. The Mexicans know him by name and fear him. He holds the Mexicans in contempt because of their poor marksmanship."

The volunteer interrupted, "If what you say is true, I'm glad he's on our side."

"It's true. He came in yesterday with Captain Fannin and Jim Bowie leading the Brazos Guards. They whupped the Mexicans at Concepcion and brought in a twelve pounder. Besides that, he's General Houston's chief scout."

The next day, another batch of men made their dash to the redoubt without incident. After Deaf Smith's demonstration, the men began to take their shooting more seriously and

were taking their time aiming the cannon. Consequently, there were more than the usual number of men around the guns. General Cos must have become annoyed by the constant firing, because unexpected rifle fire started coming from a spot directly across from the redoubt. The snipers were hidden in the tall grass along the river bank and made it impossible to fire the cannon. The continuous rifle fire kept them pinned down and the tempers of the high spirited men began to flare. "By God, I've had just about enough of this. I don't mind a good fight. But when it comes to spoiling a man's fun, that's down right unmannerly." Unwilling to pull back and unable to fire back, everyone started thinking about a solution.

A plan was hatched to have thirty to thirty-five men skirt around to flank the snipers. There was a stream bed close enough to return the fire and keep out of range of the Alamo's guns. Once in position, they drew aim on the smoke and flashes of the snipers rifles. Firing individually slowed the fire but didn't silence it. Someone came up with an idea and passed it down the line. "Starting from left to right, count off in groups of five. Now, the next time a sniper fires, all of the first group of five aim at that point. The next sniper, the next group of five and so on." The tactic had immediate effect, as the sniper fire was cut in half and then stopped.

The detachment was so elated, that as a man, they headed for the outposts of the city. The outposts put up no resistance and retreated into Bexar. This only inspired the men who began yelling and charging into San Antonio. It caught the Mexican soldiers and civilians by surprise and they fled to the center of the town. About ten of the Greys started breaking into houses and gathering up cooking utensils, which were sorely needed in camp. The rest took up positions to keep the Mexicans at a distance.

Suddenly, the sounds of bugles and drums filled the air, bringing with them Mexican reinforcements. But the accuracy of the shooters and the distance reached by the long rifles ate into the attackers. The volunteers weren't used to fighting in the confines of a city, but they managed to find cover in doorways and behind low walls. The decision to withdraw came none too soon. The cannon fire from the Alamo had shifted from the redoubt to the raiders. At the same time, two small four pounders opened up from a church roof located behind them. Shells and grapeshot began whizzing overhead from two different directions.

The gun crews on the church roof were soon dispatched with accurate rifle fire. It cleared the way, but there was no time to capture or spike the guns. More and more blue uniforms came streaming down the streets. These were reinforced by heavier artillery coming through the center of town. The Greys kept leapfrogging back down the streets, one man stopping to fire while the other moved. The withdraw was turning into a retreat. There was a distinct danger of being outflanked. They made it out of the city and began moving along the river bank. Now out of range of the long rifles, General Cos brought all of his cannon to bear on the little force.

About then, the music from a military march came floating over from the Texas camp. It boosted the morale of the troops and increased the stop. As cheering as the music was, the fact remained that the Mexicans were in hot pursuit and the little detachment was about to be surrounded against the river.

Matters became worse when a large force of Mexicans occupied the corn field on the right. Being pushed from be-

hind, shelled by artillery and flanked by a large force of infantry, every man among them began wondering about his fate. The move to the trees along the river bank had given some cover. When that cover ended, their next protection was a line of trees that ran inland from the river. But the only way to get there was to cross open terrain under the intense fire of the soldiers in the cornfield. Still being hard pressed from the city, they were forced to make a dash for the wood line.

By all rights, the force should have been chopped down in that open field. The only thing that saved them was the Mexican rifles. When fired, the flash pan blew the debris back into the shooters' faces. To keep from being injured, after pulling the trigger, the Mexican soldiers would jerk their heads back sending their rounds high and wide.

In the relative safety of the wood line, the men sent volley after smoke filled volley into the force coming out of the city. Each time, reinforcements would fill the gaps and they would charge again. The blue coated soldiers in the cornfield were slowly coming closer to cutting off any escape. Their last recourse would be a swift retreat over open ground to the safety of the camp. That is, if anyone made it that far.

Before anyone could move, the loud and lively notes of Yankee Doodle came to their ears. Looking over their shoulders, they saw a rescue force coming from the camp. At the head of the charging line of militia and volunteers was Deaf Smith, a gun in one hand, a flag in the other, shouting encouragement. When the Mexicans saw that their fire had no effect on the onslaught, they made a hasty retreat to the city. They left so quickly, the relief force didn't have time to fire a shot.

As the raiding party was being escorted back to camp, Deaf Smith said; "You Greys have a lot of sand. You know how to make a raid but you don't know how to get back. We can't send out a rescue party every time you venture out. I guess I'll have to look after my children."

A few restless days later, scouts came in with news that General Cos had sent a message to Matamoros requesting reinforcements and pay for his troops. Deaf Smith took a couple of men and went looking for anything coming from Matamoros. About five miles out of Bexar, they located a pack train.

Jim Bowie immediately put together a mounted force. He called among the volunteers, "Any of you men with mounts that want to go on a skunk hunt, follow me." About a hundred horsemen guided by Deaf Smith, thundered out of camp. The pack train was spotted about a mile out.

Bowie led the men into a low draw behind the train and formed the men into two columns. The train consisted of eight wagons, a few outriders and what appeared to be a company of infantry. Bowie stood in his stirrups and turned to check that all was ready. Pistol in hand, he raised his arm. Satisfied, he sharply swung his arm down and charged at full gallop. One column rode down the left side, the other on the right. They sped by the surprised Mexicans, yelling and firing their pistols all along the line. The attack was so sudden, some of the Mexicans fell while trying to shoulder their rifles. Once past the head of the train, the Mexicans veered right and rode to a cluster of mesquite. There, they immediately dismounted and brought their long rifles to bear.

General Cos, observing the fight from the Alamo, sent out a relief force with two cannon. Colonel Burleson had already formed up his militia and was marching to join the fray. The two forces met on the plain southeast of the Alamo. As the fighting intensified, the Mexicans started an orderly withdraw,

dogged by Burleson's men. Those Texicans remaining in camp cheered above the rattle of musket fire and tired to see through the smoke. The Mexicans fought halfheartedly until they again reached the safety of the Alamo.

After the fight, they found the pack train wasn't the one carrying money. It turned out to be a foraging party to get food and hay to replenish the stores in the Alamo. It was a costly expedition, as the Mexicans lost fifty, an unknown number of wounded and over a dozen captured. The captured men were a small problem as they had to be guarded and fed. So after a few days, they were turned loose and told to go home.

More days of inaction made the volunteers restless. The men had come to fight and the enemy was before them. Nobody had heard a word of a plan or a date for an attack. Finally, under the prodding of Captain Grant, "By God Colonel, you can't have these men just sitting around. You've got to do something, or we're going to have a mutiny on our hands." Burleson agreed to hold a general assembly to present his plan.

Among the assembled men were volunteers from other countries and other states. There were Englishmen, Irish, Canadian, Scots, Germans and Mexican land owners like Seguin. From the States, there were men from Louisiana, Mississippi, Georgia, Kentucky and Tennessee. They had several things in common. Love of adventure, a disregard for danger and to fight for the underdog.

Colonel Burleson stepped forward and praised the enthusiasm of the men. He then explained where he stood. "These plans were made by understanding that we are far outnumbered and even if we succeed, the Mexicans will surely send reinforcements to drive us out of the Alamo. With winter so close, it would be wiser for the militia to retire behind the Guadalupe, find a camp ground and wait til' next spring for reinforcements from the States. We could resume our campaign in February or March with a larger force and launch an attack or make camp in the vicinity of this city."

The statement brought on a roar of boos, loud shouts of "No!" and waving of fists. Again, Captain Grant, a Scot from the Greys, spoke up. "If we withdraw, we'll go back to the States. We couldn't stand five or six months doing nothing and living in this squalor until next spring. If we're going to act, let's do it now." The men let out a tremendous cheer. Burleson held up a hand for quiet.

"I figured you might not like my first proposal, so I offer you my second plan. If you approve, it will be put into effect at dawn tomorrow. This is what I have in mind.

"The army will be formed into three divisions. The

first, under Colonel Milam, will attack San Antonio on the northwest side, down the river. The second, commanded by Major Morris, will attack the center of the city on the western side. The third group will stand on the defensive with me in camp to cover the retreat of the others in case of mishap."

"How nice of the Colonel to wait in camp in case we git whupped."

The plan was met with contempt from the men. Colonel Burleson raised his arms. "Since you volunteers won't follow me—Militia, break camp and move to the Guadalupe."

Many of the militia immediately left to break camp. The volunteers were fit to be tied. "Damn! We ought to shoot the old buzzard and take the town ourselves." Seeing how demoralized the troops were, and disbelieving Burleson's attitude, Colonel Ben Milam stepped forward. He unsheathed his sword and shouted a challenge. "Who will follow old Ben Milam to San Antonio?" All of the volunteers and some of the militia stepped forward. The attitude of gloom instantly changed to jubilation.

Originally from Kentucky, Ben Milam had fought in the War of 1812, been sent to prison by Santa Anna, helped in the capture of Goliad and led the troops into San Antonio. The men under his command respected him and would follow him anywhere.

The next day, a Mexican Lieutenant with two other soldiers rode in under a white flag. Lieutenant Vidal claimed he could lead them undetected into the city. Deaf Smith warned, "Don't trust any of 'em." But after further questioning they decided to take a chance and made their plans.

Those militia who remained to fight would move north up the river with the artillery and at four in the morning, open fire on the Alamo. They would make it look like the attack would be there. At the same time, under cover of darkness, the rest of the men would move on the city in two columns. The New Orleans Greys and the Mississippi units would enter the city along the river. The Brazos Guards and the rest of the volunteers under Colonel Milam's command would move on the right side of town. Hopefully, both detachments would reach the center of the city before daylight, undetected. Then, using the thick adobe walls as protection, the real fighting would begin.

The plan complete, close to four hundred men took to their blankets. Using their saddles as pillows, they curled up by the fires. The new volunteers were glad they bought serapes, because the night grew bone chilling cold with a north wind blowing. Tomorrow would test the mettle of many a young Texicans.

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THE LEGEND OF THE BELL BUCKS

by PAM MOORMAN

This is a true story about Mark A. Moss, owner of the Bar-O-Ranch, Llano County, Texas. This took place around 1958 or 1959 and the wager described below was made to all the hunters, and their guests, that leased his three different leases, that covered approximately 7,000 acres.

Old Mr. Moss was definitely a fellow made up of "Grit" and liked nothing better than to prove it, whether with city slicker hunters on his many leases or prospective customers at some of his more famous quarter horse sales. One year, my Dad, Jim Taylor, came home from the ranch with a tale that Mr. Moss trapped 15 young bucks and put a bell collar on each of these bucks. He told all of his hunters, on all of his different leases that beginning with the next hunting season, he wagered that no one could take one of these bucks. He said that once he let the young bucks loose, back out in the wild, that they would quickly learn to walk and go about their business, without making the bells sound. He told the hunters that these bucks will be the smartest and most intelligent bucks anywhere. He offered \$500 dollars to the hunter that could bring one in—no matter how many years it may take.

Several years went by—and no bell buck was taken, however, every once in a while a hunter or a range hand would report having seen a bell buck and how big and how smart it was. The legend grew and grew until most hunters dismissed Mr. Moss' wager as a hoax. My Dad and two of his friends never forgot about the wager and always had the bell bucks in back of their minds.

Dad encountered one of these bucks about two years after their release. He saw this deer running with his tail waving goodbye over a distant ridge. Dad made a mental note of where he was and began that very day learning the lay of the land in that general vicinity and studying the deer's habits. Dad spent three years intricately studying this one buck and his habits. Deer vs Man—each trying to outwit the other and the deer usually the winner.

Dad tells of one time that he actually saw this ol' buck

crawl on his belly to get across a field. He was one wily old buck. As time went by, Dad began to deeply respect this buck.

Keep in mind, Dad was a good ol' country boy who hunted and fished his parents' East Texas land for food to put on the table. Sure, he admired trophy bucks—but the main hunting mission was for meat.

About six years after Mr. Moss released the bucks, Dad finally took in the bell buck he had been hunting and studying for so long. There was no elation in going to Mr. Moss for a wager won, for he never hunted deer again, after getting to know that one ol' buck so well. (Dad turned down the bet money—he said that acceptance would tarnish his memory of that smart old deer and this buck deserved to be honored). Mr. Moss was astounded for he really thought that no one would ever be able to get that close nor take the time and the energy to study the ani-

mal and its habits. Mr. Moss later told Dad that of anyone he knew—Dad would've been the one that he thought "just might do it" because of Dad's "woodsense", integrity and his deep respect of life and nature.

No one ever brought in a bell buck again, yet one bell collar was found alongside a creek, a few years later. Dad's bell buck has always been in a place of honor in our den, almost like an old friend. Before any of us ever even learned to shoot a gun, Dad filled us with stories of awe and respect for nature and of life—and to never take the life of any animal unless there was a good reason or for the meat.

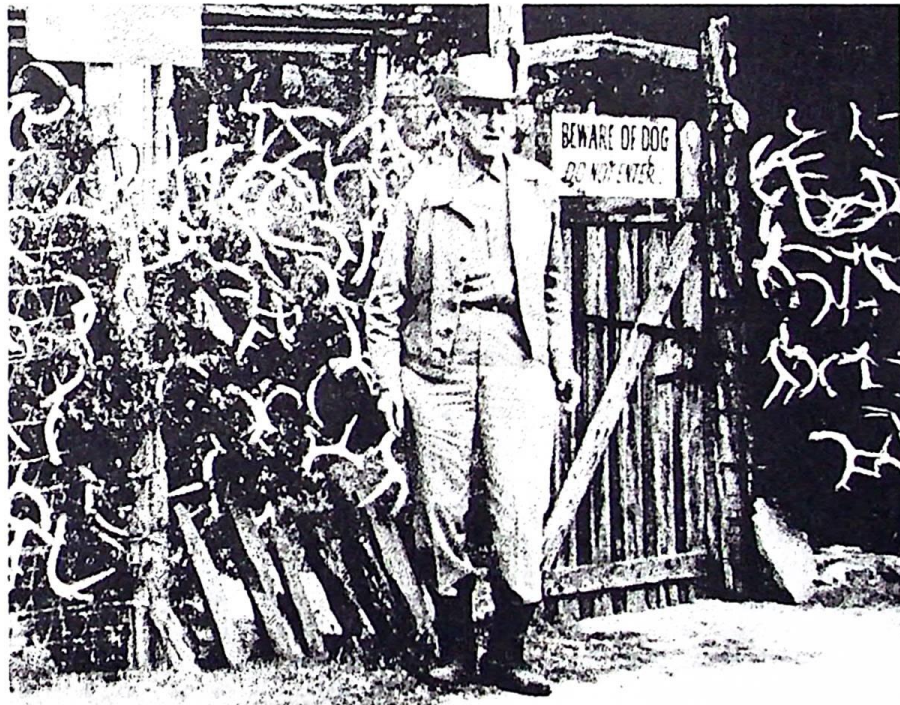
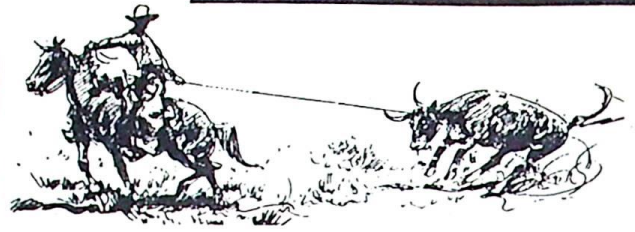


PHOTO: MARK MOSS STANDING AT THE GATE OF THE HOME OF HIS FATHER AARON F. MOSS. ANTLERS ON THE FENCE ARE FROM DEER HORNS COLLECTED ON THE RANCH. PHOTO COURTESY OF MILDRED INKS DALRYMPLE.

A. F. MOSS'S THE RANCHMAN



BY HAZEL OATMAN BOWMAN

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.

The Moss boys were in advance of everyone on almost every ranching improvement, or transition, and went in for safe and substantial things. The first dirt tank in Llano county was built on the Moss ranch in 1876 by John Moss. It was located on the C. T. Moss land and he had his brother, John, built it for him. It was used for watering saddle ponies after a rain to keep from drawing water from a well, and A. F. Moss describes it as "little better than none".

A. F. Moss differed from many of the Llano County ranchmen in that he was never a speculator, and neither was his brother, Charles. Mr. Moss explains it this way:

"Neither of us was any trader; we stayed on the job and attended to what we had. We paid no attention to the market because that was speculation, guess work, gambling. We set a date in the winter to sell so many cattle in the spring, depending on the rain. If it was dry, the sales were greater; if it had rained, we made the sales lighter. We at least sold as many as we could. We studied what our range could take care of, and there was no speculating. You won't go broke that way. A speculator may make more in five years than we did in 50, but they always go broke."

A. F. Moss followed the practice all through his active years as a ranchman of selling at certain times of the year and of not waiting until prices were just right.

In 1898, C. T. and A. F. Moss dissolved their partnership. Each were married and had a family, so they decided to divide their cattle and pursue separate business careers.

Unlike most of the pioneer cattlemen of Llano County,

A. F. Moss did not take to trail driving in the early days, for the reason that he had cattle on the ranch and always had more to do there than he could take care of. His only experience was in driving a herd of 500 stock horses to Kansas in 1884 in an effort to get something for the vast number that had accumulated on the range. "It was the most disagreeable trip of my life because I realized from the start that I was going to lose lots of money," he said. "I sold them in Kansas for \$19 a head, which was \$1.00 a head less than I could have got for them five years earlier. But even though I lost money, we got them off the range, and were fortunate to get rid of them."

Five hundred horses comprised a good sized herd of horses for those days, since they were generally driven in smaller bunches. In comparison, a good sized herd of cattle consisted of 3,000 or 3,500 head.

"With that many cattle there were usually eight men with the boss, and a cook and hostler. We had four men with our herd of horses, a cook and no hostler, and I was supposed to be the boss—and a mighty poor one."

As far as the usual hardships, the trip was all right, and rather uneventful. It had been a rainy year and there was plenty of water and grass.

"We left May 4, which was late to start, and it took 60 days to drive the 600 miles. We went from Llano County to Brady, then in a direct line north to Kansas. We had to spend 10 days at Doan's store waiting for the Red River to go down. Our food on the trip consisted of bacon and beans—the food of all ranches in those days—and occasionally rice and dried fruit."

They experienced no trouble with the Indians, for by that time those encountered in the Indian territory wanted food



mostly, and were easily satisfied. In contrasting a drive with horses up the trail to cattle-driving, Mr. Moss said, "Driving horses was slower than driving cattle, because horses graze round and round. You can drive them for two hours and you haven't gone one-quarter of a mile. You can hold a herd of cattle in shape; they chew as they walk but horses don't travel as they eat. You can graze cattle two hours and they will go at least a mile or more in that length of time.

A F. Moss' knowledge of cattle driving up the trail come largely from experiences of his brother-in-law, Damon Slator, who is believed to have been among the first to go up the trail from Llano country with cattle. He made his first trip in 1867 to Roswell, New Mexico, where he sold his cattle to the Government for the Indians on the reservation. In 1868 he went again, this time to California, where he had been before settling in Llano, and where he was familiar with conditions. Both of these trips having been successful, Mr. Slator drove another herd of 1,500 cattle to California again in 1869, and was accompanied by C. T. and Jim Moss, who threw in a few of their own cattle and went along. Cattle were not worth much, and it was just a chance to get something out of them. Most of the cattle, however, were Mr. Slator's. He had paid about \$8 a head for the Longhorn steers he had bought, and perhaps \$5 for the cows.

But this proved a disastrous trip. They struck a drouth, the cattle got poor and died, the market dipped, and they lost everything they had. Mr. Slator had bought the stock on credit, as was customary, and he was forced to come home and face his friends who had trusted him and tell them that he could not pay

them. The disappointment of the drive, together with the exposure and other hardships, led to his illness and death shortly after his return home.

C. T. and Jim Moss, upon their return from this unsuccessful trip up the trail, were forced to make a new start in the cattle business. Their father came to their assistance by allowing them to attend to his cattle for one-third of the calf crop for a period of three years. Later Matthew Moss did the same for his sons, Bill and Steve; and at the end of their three years, he in turn gave his sons, Matt and John the same opportunity.

A clear insight into an interesting period of the Texas ranching industry, which came about during, and as a result of, the Civil War, when herds of cattle multiplied by the thousands on the unfenced range, is given by A. F. Moss:

"All of the men of serviceable age were either in the army or the home guard, and there was no one to care for the stock. The herds increased and drifted hundreds of miles. The calves were not branded, and there were many grown animals that had grown up without brands. They were public property, or *mavericks*, as they were called. When the men returned from the war, these mavericks were anybody's. They might have come hundreds of miles. The cowmen gathered these unclaimed cattle and branded them. It was no reflection to brand mavericks in those days. It just depended on who was the best rustler as to who got the most. They were just like the buffaloes before them. First, you had the wild Indians and then wild buffaloes; then half-wild cattle and half-civilized attendants.

"After the war the country was overstocked, and the cattle drives started. Grass and water had become scarce, the cattle were worth nothing so the cowmen began hunting for a market, driving their cattle north to the various territories by the tens of thousands. The first drives must have started in 1866, most likely on a small scale at first, then they increased. Cattle branding was done right before and right after the war, but not during it because there was no one here to brand them.

"At first the cattle were bought on credit mostly. They were inspected, the brands recorded, and the buyers were supposed to pay for them when they returned. It was a chance all the way around. Sometimes they were stolen by the Indians en route, or would die or get lost from the herd. In that case the buyer couldn't be held accountable. That was the chance everyone was willing to take. There were two brands. One, behind the left shoulder a little piece, was for the road brand, or the buyer's brand, for convenience when the herds got mixed up on the trail. The first herds were small, about 1,000 or 1,500 head; then they increased to 3,000 and 3,500. Elwood and Abilene, Kansas, were the principal marketing places in the early days. Speculators brought them there and took them farther north."

After selling the AN brand to Colonel Pryor with his cattle in 1881, A. F. Moss started his own brand, using his initial, AM. This he found impractical since it was too large and burned the cattle too badly. In 1886 he started the *Bar O*, or frying pan brand. He had seen the Circle brand on the hips of lost of cattle while in New Mexico and liked it because it showed plainly. He came back home and added the handle to it and made the brand on the hip. The A. F. Moss ranch is referred to by many as the Bar O ranch. In the division of the property several years ago, Mark A. Moss took the Bar O brand, and Luke Moss started using the old Matthew Moss brand AN, which had not been in use since its sale to Colonel Pryor in 1881.

There was something to do all the time, but I liked it. I liked all the ranch work; I didn't particularly like the grubbing hoe and the ax, but I liked the pony part. I guess every man at one time in his life has thought he has ridden and owned the best horse in the world. That's the way I feel. I've ridden as good a horse as anyone. A horse you ride all the time gets so used to your way of handling, he will do just what you want him to, and you love him.

"Everything is different in the ranching business now," A. F. says. "In the early days we drove the stock to market. The cattle then could travel long distances; they were the lanky, long-legged steers. Now the trucks come to the pens and cattle are loaded there.

"We didn't feel the drouths so much either when the country was open. There were lots of springs and running creeks, and we made no preparation for water. But with fencing of pastures these places became somewhat inaccessible and ranchmen turned to dirt tanks when there was not sufficient running water on their land.

"Before the days of tanks, during dry times, when the springs got so low the water was muddy and unfit to drink, or had seeped into the ground, cattle would go all the way from the Moss ranch to the Llano River for water. They were the native cattle. They would water about every other day. The cattle nowadays couldn't do that; they would starve to death first."

In 1897 C. T. and A. F. Moss purchased some pure-bred Hereford stock, about 50 head, from their nephew, Jim Slator, and this became the foundation for the Moss herd. From then on there has been a steady breeding of Hereford cattle on the ranch, with the addition of registered Polled Hereford bulls from time to time. The herd was culled and only the best high grade stock kept until now the A. F. Moss cattle are high grade Polled Herefords. Most of them are descendants of the old original herd of registered Herefords. The ranch frequently gets a 95% calf crop, it being stocked lighter than the average ranch in Llano County.

In connection with the development and improvement of cattle since they have been bred up with registered Herefords, Mr. Moss estimates that the weight of all stock has increased about one-third during the past 40 years. In the early [18] '90's, 725 pounds was considered a big average weight for good plain cows. Then it took a good four-year-old steer, whereas now a three-year-old steer will average 1,200 pounds.

A noticeable change in the cattle industry as pointed out by Mr. Moss has been in the method of roping and handling. Once the best top hands were those who could rope the

forefeet while now a more careful way of handling is in vogue. C. T. Moss is credited with being the first man in Llano county to quit the rough method of roping. As the cattle became more gentle, ranchmen found that it was not necessary to handle them so roughly. Too, the brands used now are much smaller than they used to be.

In the early days of the industry all cattle were handled on horseback. It would take almost all day to make the long drive from the Moss ranch to the Llano shipping pens, a distance of 16 miles. They would go as fast as the cattle could stand. They were so heavily built that it was not uncommon for many to be lost on the road from heat and exhaustion. Now the cattle move by truck going from the ranches to the stock pens in Llano for railroad shipment, or else going directly from the ranches to the marketing centers by truck. A. F. Moss estimates that he has driven 40,000 head of cattle from his ranch to Llano during his ranching career, an average of 1,000 head each year for 40 years.

In this connection it is interesting that a 150 acre trap on the Moss ranch, known as the Buena Vista pasture, was fenced primarily for the purpose of penning cattle over night and breaking up the long drive from the ranch to Llano. While quite a large expense was entailed in fencing it and providing water, it was used only a few times for that purpose, for shortly, truck transportation came into use.

The last drive of cattle took place on the Moss ranch two years ago, in September, 1939, when 260 head were driven from the ranch to the shipping pens in Llano. The cattle were penned in the Buena Vista pasture overnight, and driven to town the following morning. "There will be no such bunch again," A. F. Moss said at the time of the drive. "Cattle driving is a thing of the past."

In reviewing his earlier years on the ranch, Mr. Moss said: "Work went on the year round. We worked our cattle all the time, doctored them for worms in the summer. There was no vacation. We had hogs and after the mast we sold them, and in the fall and winter put up meat and lard. We had horses to see to. There was something to do all the time, but I liked it. I liked all the ranch work; I didn't particularly like the grubbing hoe and the ax, but I liked the pony part. I guess every man at one time in his life has thought he has ridden and owned the best horse in the world. That's the way I feel. I've ridden as good a horse as anyone. A horse you ride all the time gets so used to your way of handling, he will do just what you want him to, and you love him."

The Moss ranch horses, like the cattle, have a lineage which dates back many years. Most of them are descendants of horses that were on the ranch 50 or 60 years ago, and some can trace their ancestry to the few old mares which A. F. Moss was given at his father's death 66 years ago.

Last year [1940] a picture appeared in *The Cattleman* of A. F. Moss and a span of 30 year old mules, which had been on the ranch 27 years. Mr. Moss was very proud of the picture, referring to it as "three of a kind," and was most anxious to have it taken. He said he was afraid something would happen to the mules, that he knew nothing could happen to him. Sure enough, some months later one of the mules died.

Though Mr. Moss has been zealous in his efforts to take advantage of every opportunity for making money and deriving profit from his ranching enterprise, he has taken some losses during the years.

interest and \$5 a head on them. I kept the cows until they were old, the mothers of the steers and heifers, and sold them, and later drove a few at a time to Austin, selling them for around \$8. I had paid \$20 for them.

"In those days you could buy far more for a dollar than you can now. Bacon was worth 5¢ a pound. We raised hogs in large numbers and drove the gentle ones to Austin and Round Rock and sold them. The others we butchered and sold the meat and lard for 5 to 6¢ a pound for it. We took the money and bought other groceries that we needed—coffee, sugar and flour, which consisted of the groceries for the average ranch of that day and time."

A. F. Moss did not see the town of Llano until he was a good sized boy, probably 15 or 16 years of age. "I had no curiosity to go to town, no money and nothing to buy. Lads had no money then. We traded in Burnet, Lampasas, and Austin. People could freight their own supplies and groceries cheaper than they could buy them in the stores at Llano, because the merchants had to pay the freight on their goods. So they freighted their own supplies; everyone had a wagon in those days anyway.

It is interesting to note the name of some of the mountains and creeks on the Moss ranch. Located to the north of the ranch land is Bull Head Mountain, so named because of being shaped like a bull's head. This resulted in the naming of the Bull Head ranch, Bull Head tank, and Bull Creek, which heads on the A. F. Moss land.

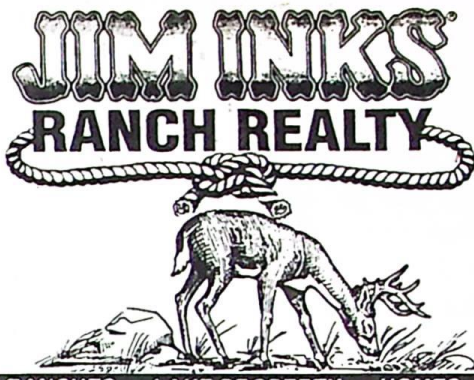
Grays Mountain and Grays Mountain pasture were named for the gray coloring of the mountain formation. The mountain is composed of one peak after another, thus the use of the plural.

In the southern part of the ranch is Watch Mountain, and between it and Bull Head Mountain are many large boulders, or mounds of rocks, which are called Rock Pile Number One, Number Two, and the like.

Watch Mountain has many crevices, some 50 to 100 feet deep. A. F. Moss tells the story that the mountain was named for Jim Riley's bear dog, called Watch, which became lost many years ago, and which was found dead in one of the deep crevices into which it had fallen.

Silver Mine Creek, which runs through a gap in Bull Head Mountain, is said to have been named for the old lost Bowie mine, where silver was believed to be, and which was thought by some to be located in the near environs of the creek. One of the large "rock piles" located in front of the A. F. Moss Lodge, is called Silver Mine Roughs.

While A. F. Moss has conducted his ranching affairs along strict lines of economy, he has been ready at all times to spend money on worthwhile improvements and on anything that would benefit his livestock business. As a result his ranch is one of the best planned and best equipped to be found anywhere. Due to Mr. Moss' careful and thorough management and his keen business sense, he has built up a ranching institution that is a monument to his success and ability. He maintains that he has built his business on the practice of spending less than he made. His ranch represents an infinite amount of thought and work, as well as heavy expenditure, as evidenced by the well built and carefully planned barns, pens and vats, the well fenced and conveniently arranged pastures and traps, the more than adequate provision for water. He has only the best of everything. A modern convenience, which recently came about as a result of the REA, is electricity, the entire ranch being



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Although A. F. Moss likes to fish for a pastime, he says that he has never shot at a deer with a gun in his life, and neither has his son, Mark. "For a long time Luke hadn't but he finally took to deer hunting and is a good shot and an good hunter. We always had hands on the ranch to kill a deer for meat if we wanted it. When it was my turn to get some meat to eat, I always got a calf or a hog—something easier gotten."

electrically equipped throughout.

The A. F. Moss Ranch, composed of a total of 21,000 acres, is one of the best natural ranching areas that can be found anywhere, being blessed with an excellent type of soil that produced good, strong grass of many varieties. It is a natural terrain in every respect—water, grass, winter protection and excellent drainage.

In addition to the creeks and natural springs on the vast acreage, much work has been done under the Government range conservation program during the past few years. There are now 35 surface tanks on the ranch. They average between 6,000 and 7,000 yards, and run from 2,000 to 35,000 cubic yards. The largest is located adjacent to the Moss lodge site, and covers 42 acres. It is 35 feet deep in the deepest place. All the tanks are well stocked with fish.

A modern ranching practice which has added to the revenues considerably is leasing for commercial hunting. Mr. Moss was among the last of the ranchmen in the Llano section to post against hunting, but finally he was forced to from pure necessity.

"One fall we were gathering steers in the Watch Mountain pasture before it was posted, and there were at least 50 men in there that one day hunting with long range guns and stirring up the steers; so we decided then that we would have to post our land. These free hunters had come hundreds of miles for free hunting, naturally, instead of paying to hunt somewhere else. We saw if we did not lease out we would have free hunting. It is quite a revenue, but with all the work that has to be done to provide accommodations and conveniences for the hunters, there is very little clear profit in it. But you have to have hunters; they will slip in if you don't let them come in."

It was commercial hunting which led Mark A. Moss to erect the wonderful system of signs on the ranch a number of years ago. As a result, it is almost impossible for anyone to become lost on the A. F. Moss ranch, because every road, pasture, tank, mountain, creek and whatnot is marked. That was one of the major expenses entailed when the ranch began leasing to hunters, to say nothing of other expenditures, such as building of good roads all over the ranch, erection of camp houses and the like.

However, laying aside the money spent on conveniences for the paid hunters, an idea of the profit to be made from commercial hunting can be gained by the fact that Luke Moss has

12 paid hunters in what is known as the Bull Head pasture at \$100 a man. They have season rights on the 5,500 acre Bull Head pasture.

The A. F. Moss ranch is one of the most desirable hunting sections in Llano county, and it is said by the owners that there are fully twice as many deer on the ranch land as cattle. It is not uncommon to see a hundred deer in a short drive over sections of the ranch.

Although A. F. Moss likes to fish for a pastime, he says that he has never shot at a deer with a gun in his life, and neither has his son, Mark. "For a long time Luke hadn't but he finally took to deer hunting and is a good shot and a good hunter. We always had hands on the ranch to kill a deer for meat if we wanted it. When it was my turn to get some meat to eat, I always got a calf or a hog—something easier gotten."

During the past few years, Mark and Luke have swung away from cattle to some extent, and have stocked their pastures rather heavily with sheep and goats, for which their type of country is well adapted. When asked for his opinion on this modern phase of the Moss ranching industry, A. F. replied: "We used to hate sheep worse than rattlesnakes; but this is a changeable world—anything to make the money. People used to bring sheep right up to your door. They ate the grass so close they starved the cattle to death. They nearly ran the cowmen out of the country and caused lots of trouble. But we always managed to get along with our neighbors pretty good."

Mr. Moss' good humor and happy disposition are a result of his philosophy of life. He is at all times fair and square in his dealing with people, expects them to be the same way with him, and is seldom disappointed. A feeling of complete understanding has always existed between him and his ranch hands, or anyone else with whom he deals. These principles are reflected in his business transactions and in his everyday life, and have played their part in making him an admirable character. Ever since he has retired, he has kept vitally interested in life, and in events and people, and he manages to keep busy with something all the time. Consequently, at his advanced age, he is well preserved, and is still a vital part of all that goes on around him. He said only recently, while visiting in town one day, "I'm supposed to be out there living in luxury and idleness, but there's no one any busier than I am."

Mr. Moss' first marriage took place in 1892, when he was 28 years old. He was married first to Miss Etta Passmore, an orphan, their marriage taking place at the home of her uncle, Bill Garrett, near Willow City. To this union his three children were born, in the order named: Mark A., Luke and Myrtle. Mrs Etta Moss died on December 16, 1906 and on September 22, 1909, Mr. Moss was married to Miss Kizzie Ratliff, a member of a pioneer Llano county family.

Mr. Moss and his sister, Mrs. Betty Moore, of San Antonio, are the only surviving children of Matthew and Mary Ann Moss.

The progressive spirit which A. F. Moss has always shown, his 50-odd years of experience in a large at home ranching enterprise, and his pronounced business success have distinguished him as truly a prominent figure in the livestock industry, not only of his native county, but also the entire Southwest.



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