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ENCHANTED ROCK

M A G A Z I N E

VOL. 5, No. 1
MAY/JUNE 1998

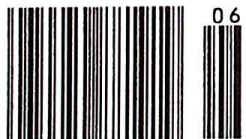
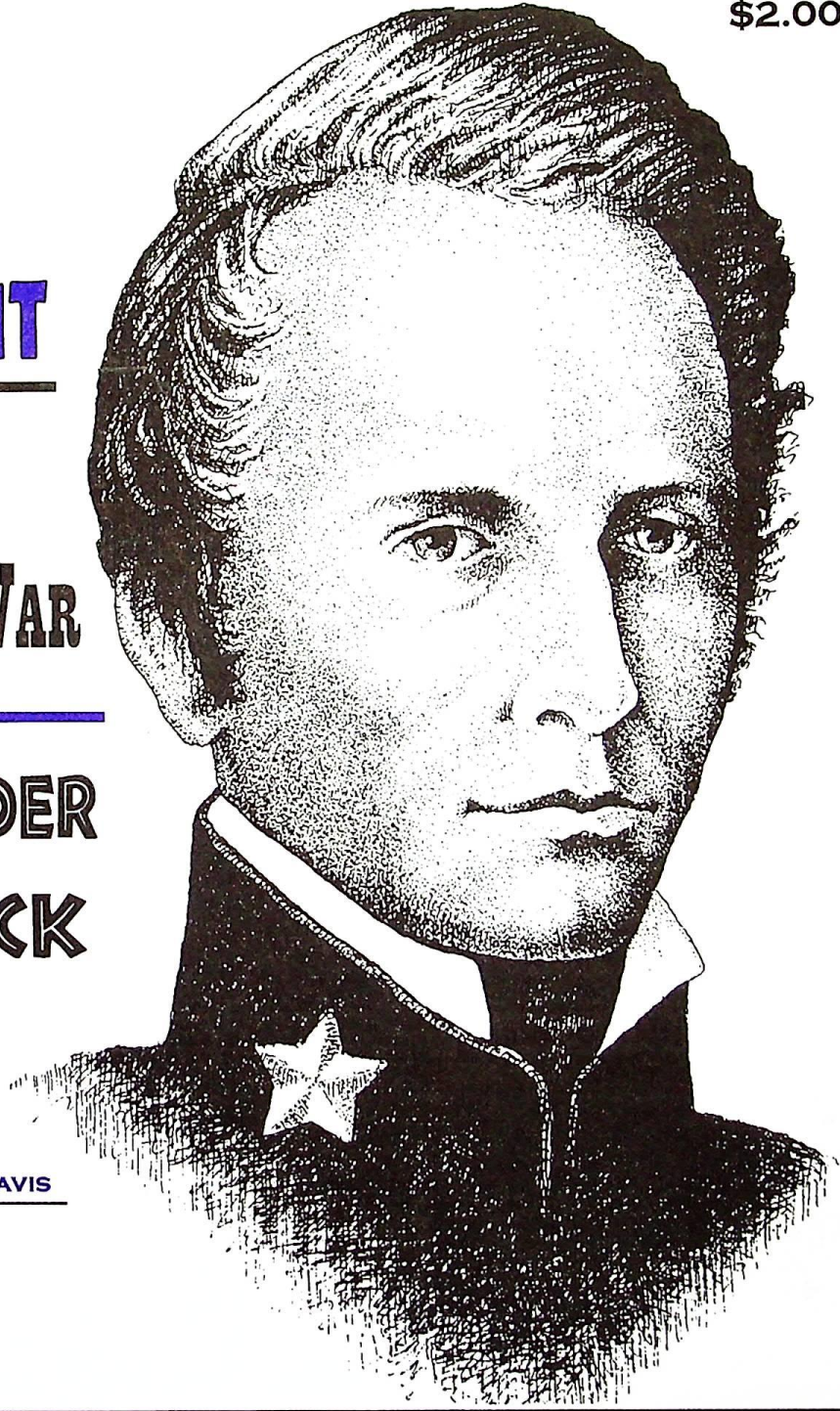
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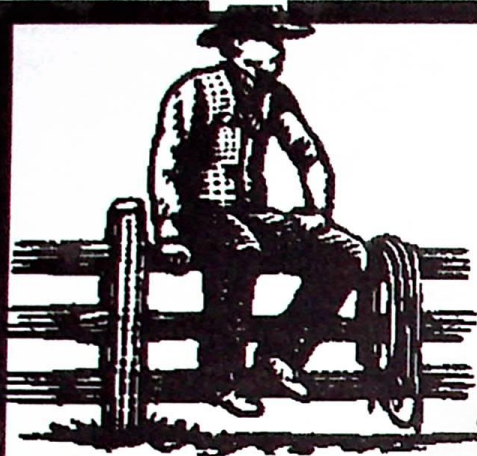
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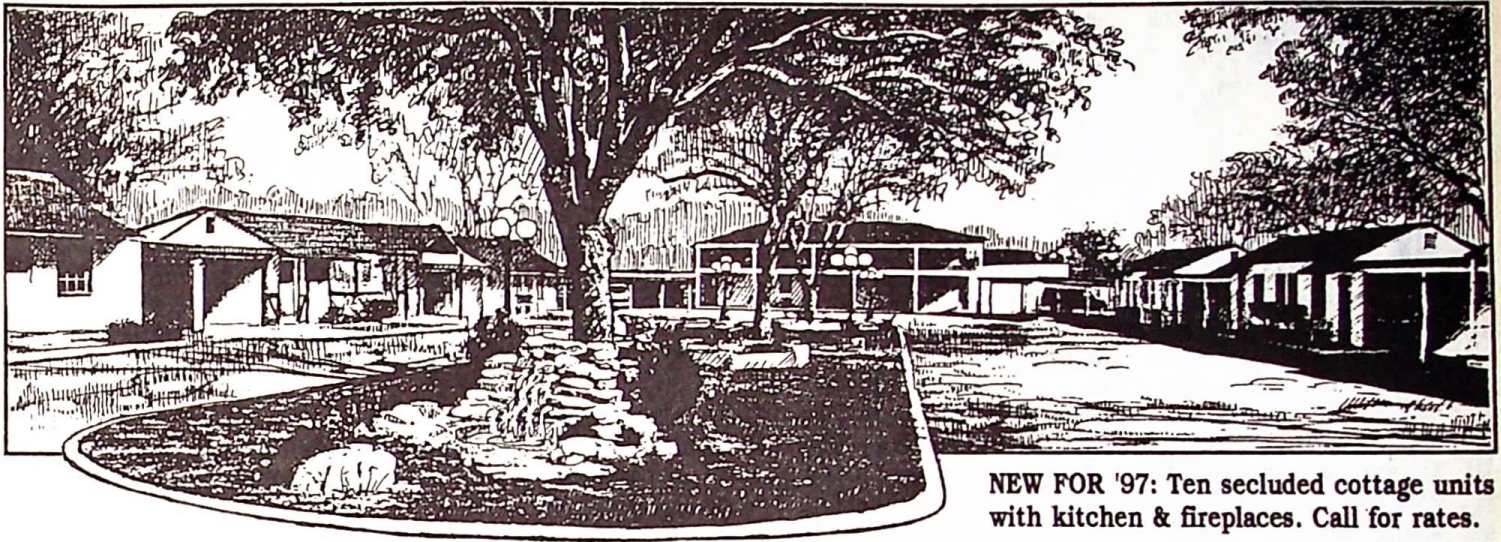
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FROM THE EDITOR

CHICKEN RANCHING

How hard can it be to raise chickens and gather eggs? A little feed and water with an equal portion of patience and you're there. At least that's what I thought *before* we went into the chicken raising business. Now, I'm not certain we'll ever see a single egg.

First we fixed up the chicken coop. It's so tight the wind has to turn sideways to ventelate the place. There's even chicken wire, three feet wide, stretched out horizontally all around the base of the structure to keep raccoons from digging their way inside. Then came the chickens—chicks actually—seven hens and a rooster (well, they will be—or mighta been—which is the point of this story). We turned out our iddy-biddy totally defenseless chicks loose in their new home so's they could grow up fat and sassy and provide us with all the eggs we'd ever need. Well, that was the plan anyway.

Things were going along just fine for a couple of weeks. Our new garden was springing forth, the chicks were shedding their down for real feathers, and all was right on the Triple Creek Ranch. Every evening we'd water the garden, and every morning we'd go out to feed the chicks. Taking pride in our flock always meant counting them first thing. It doesn't take long to count to eight, and then came the water, food, and then their favorite treat, bread crumbs.

Counting to three hardly counts as counting, which is what happened two weeks ago. Some critter managed to eat four and one-half chicks the night before. And there was no sign of a break-in. We didn't figure it was an inside job cause chicks aren't cannibals.

Some time back Ms. Intrepid's roller canary went to the great beyond, so we commenced to corralling the flock of three into the birdcage and bringing them in the house every night. There, safe and sound right above the kitchen sink, they'd be till morning.

I can't describe how upset I was when we discovered one dead and four presumed dead chickens. It was coons or possums responsible for the demise of our critters, I was certain. That night Ms. Intrepid and I baited the chicken coop and waited for the culprits in the pick up.

In came the coons. One of them met his maker after I levelled the business end of a 30-gauge shotgun on his sorry hide. Then, the following night, came the coon's revenge. First, they chewed a hole in the door of the chicken coop big enough to drive a pig through; then they ate their fill of chicken feed which was spread all over the place. Then they went for the side yard, rooting through the garden. In the meantime, they tore open a bag of fire-ant poison and licked it clean before doing the same thing to a bag of charcoal.

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I don't know how many of these critters I'm dealing with, but I can tell you a live trap won't hold them, and I can't stay up every night till midnight or later waiting to pop another one. Fact is, I generally fall asleep around 10 p.m. no matter what. That's when the idea to hunt them down presented itself.

Harold, a friend and neighbor from Willow City came over and we drove all over this place with a spotlight so strong a rooster a mile off started crowing. But we didn't see a single coon in any tree—anywhere. Fact is, we didn't see a single critter at all. And, no, I'm not getting a coon dog. I'm going back to sitting in the pickup with a shotgun, tossing out bait a few feet away, and waiting for them to come to me, like every other respectable redneck.

Now, the chickens—Thelma, Louise and Conan the Rooster—are feathered out and meandering around the fenced yard every day. Near evening we take the birdcage outside, drop a few bread crumbs inside, and the chickens squeeze through the cage door for their nightly perch above the kitchen sink. Cork, another Willow City friend and neighbor put a serious door on the chicken coop—says there's cement in the panel tough enough to wear out a good drill bit. But I'm reluctant to use the coop until I manage to feed the neighborhood buzzards a few more coons. In the meantime I'm reading up on chicken snakes.

Ira Kennedy
IRA KENNEDY

ENCHANTED ROCK MAGAZINE

P.O. BOX 355, LLANO, TEXAS 78643 • PHONE & FAX 915/247-3708

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WEB: WWW.TEXFILES.COM
E-MAIL: EROCKMAG@TEXFILES.COM
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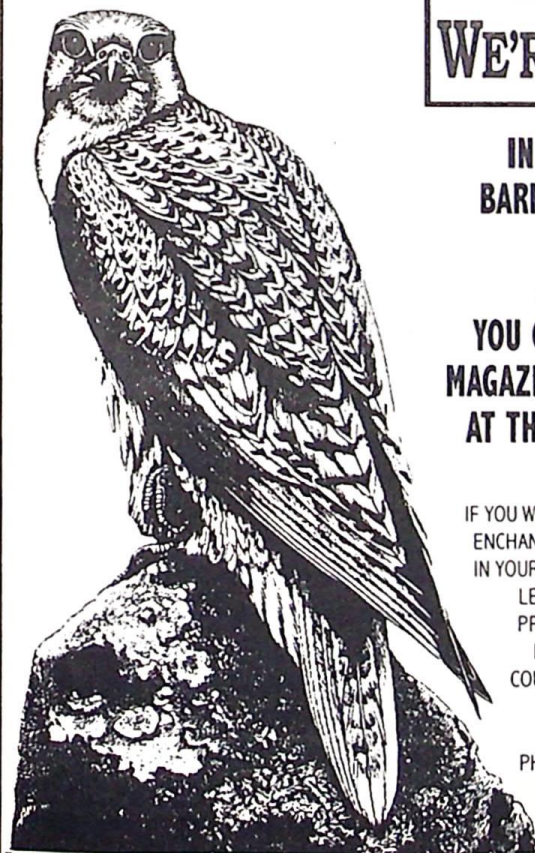
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ALOT OF BAD THINGS

I've done a lot of bad things in my life, but spending another night in Texas is not one I want to repeat.

Just kidding.

I received your invitation to the Writer's Rendezvous, and wanting to attend, immediately checked every schedule that I try to maintain. Again, it looks like it will be impossible for me to attend in 1998. I have a deadline, and am closing on a house deal (too many kids, not enough rooms) that very week. I'll pencil-in next year's Rendezvous right now, I promise.

Ira, I admire your work on the pages of ER, and think I might have a few assignments for you if you have the time in the future. Give me a call and we'll discuss the details.

Don't grow yer watermelons on a hill,

Marcus Huff
Editor, Western Publications
Stillwater, Oklahoma

FOUND IN COOPER'S

I look forward to receiving your mag. The first time I bought a copy was at Coopers BBQ in Llano. I am a native Texan with roots in south Texas around the Pearsall and Dilley area. I would like to see an article on the years prior to the Texican settlers if possible. The land around Webb and LaSalle counties holds a beauty all its own.

T. R. Skinner
Houston, Texas

ON THE PLANE

On the plane I read a couple of Enchanted Rock magazines I found on the coffee table. One article was about Ira's Uncle Carl—he reminds me of my husband, Rex! I'm going to miss L. Kelly Down also his recipes were great, are you going to pass them on? Is Susie Kelly Flatau related to him? I really enjoy her counter stories. And, I loved Later Billy, ain't that a kick?

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IMPRESSED

So am I (impressed, that is). [your web site is] Real easy to negotiate..I might be headed up your way next month doing something on the upcoming deer season, seeing as Llano is the whitetail capital of Texas.

Joe Nick Patoski
Austin, Texas

WEBSITE FOUND

I just found your web site and think its great ! My wife and I moved to Llano from Dallas in 1996 after taking a disability. I was in the pro photo lab business for 28 years , and have a pretty large stock of photos, and still shoot for a hobby . My wife helps out at the LAN-Tex and really enjoys doing so . If we could be of help just let us know.

Don & Kay Clark
Llano, Texas

FOUND IN HOUSTON

I would like two subscriptions to your magazine, one a gift for my brother who loves the Hill Country as much as I do, and, of course, one for me. I first saw a copy at the new Newstand on Shepherd Drive in Houston.

I have relatives in Mason and visit there often. My family had a place near Ingram where I spent many summers growing up. I enjoyed your article on the man who "belled" the deer. There are sure a lot of great characters in the Hill Country...always have been anyway.

Andy Greenwood
Houston, Texas

AT THE CRAWFISH OPEN

Ira, I enjoyed meeting you at the Crawfish Open. W.W.Kothmann would be a very good source of stories for your excellent magazine. He lives in Brady. Another article may be on my Dad's house in Mason. It is at the intersection of the Brady and Menard roads. Was built in 1854 by the Crosby Family. I have access to the Abstract to this place and a lot of history is in that document. Keep up the good work. I love your magazine.

Carl Keith
Brady, Texas

WELCOME

We extend a welcome to recent subscribers from: Little Rock, AR, Clovis and Chino Hills, CA, Franktown, CO, New Orleans, LA and Sapulpa, OK.; plus Smithville, Highlands, Clifton, Dallas (6) Eagle Lake, Fredericksburg (2), Austin (12), Plano, Llano (3), Rockport (3) San Antonio, Tow, Weatherford, Decatur, San Saba, Red Oak, Ft. Worth, Midland, Grandbury, Jonestown, Kerrville, San Marcos, Sour Lake, Pflugerville, Houston (3) Cedar Park, No. Richland Hills, Wichita Falls, Temple and Kingsland, in Texas.

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GET ALONG RANCH, TEXAS

BY DIANA FINLAY

INTRODUCTION: THE GOOD LIFE

I guess you'd have to say that life as we know it is pretty good. We live on a small ranch on the banks of the pristine, spring-fed San Marcos River, at the foot of the Texas hill country. I work as a feature writer at a daily newspaper not far from home.

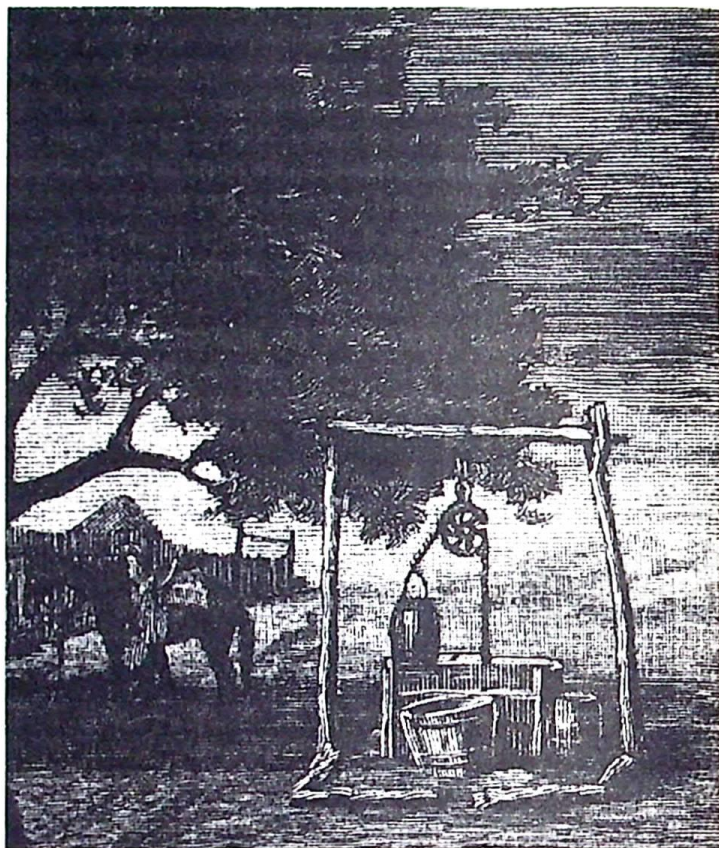
I am a native Texan with German-Cherokee roots, seasoned with a storytelling legacy. I come from a very large family that has a tendency to spill over into my writing a lot of the time.

My husband, Kent, is a songwriter by profession (yes, that is his real job), and cowboy philosopher at heart. A McCulloch County native, Kent knows all the backroads between here and every border of Texas. The quest for a perfect cast iron skillet or a source for bushel baskets is all the encouragement he needs. I get to call "shotgun" for such adventures.

We've been rocking along for well over 20 years, and we always thought raising kids was a piece of cake... until this year, when our firstborn daughter, Jenni followed a lifelong dream and left for college four states away in Nashville, Tennessee... How'd she get to be nineteen so fast?

Sterling is our nature child. This seventeen year old, born with the soul of an old poet, has taught me how to be a first-class daydreamer.

And HalleyAnna is already eleven and a half, you know. She is our resident expert at catching lightning bugs, taming ranch kittens, and chasing



sunsets into tomorrows that come way too soon for mothers.

My Uncle Faybert and our old ranch hand, Joe, will show up in a few of these daydreams, and in a lot of my memories.

And you'll probably meet a steady stream of musicians who have wandered through our world on their way to the top. We were lucky enough to own Cheatham Street Warehouse, a unique music hall, for about 16 magical years back in the '70s and early '80s, where a whole lot of songwriters and musicians cut their teeth before hitting the highways to crisscross the country in search of fame and fortune. The Get Along Ranch continues to be a stopping place for songwriters along the way. Kent, a master-teacher, helps them to hone their skills before they jump on the fast track of the music industry.

Hill country hikes and country drives, going to town and leaving the farm, bouts with spring fever and the simple realities of life and death offer snapshots of life on the Get Along Ranch and the road beyond.

Welcome home. Grab a plate.

You're just in time for supper.

ENCHANTED MEMORIES OF SUMMERTIME



Outnumbered by the girls for about 360 days of the year, the boys in our house take a summer sabbatical with "no-girls allowed" to an enchanted natural area in the Texas hill country. It never fails. They come back a little tanner from the Texas sun, a little heartier from the campfire food, and a little stronger from the company they shared.

GET ALONG RANCH, TEXAS—It's a man thing.

Each year, the men in our house take a quick, summer sabbatical to Enchanted Rock State Natural Area in the middle of the Texas hill country. It's a "no girls allowed" kind of trip. It's a long standing tradition. They schedule it for early in the week to avoid the crowds and a few times they have managed to coordinate the trip to coincide with a meteor shower.

There can't be anything more "enchancing" than watching a million shooting stars while reclining on that warm mass of red granite, listening to the spooky groans and creaks of the rock as it cools and contracts from the heat of the day. Under the full moon, the surface sparkles and glistens—from the minute reflections in the granite and the small huecos or rock hollows where water collects.

There are caves to explore and rocks to climb and from what I gather, they eat a lot. Our son comes home raving about the food, and I am amazed that they can consume so many incredible meals during the short period they are gone and still be starving when they get home. They fill themselves with beef jerky and grilled steaks and huevos rancheros and venison sausage...

"What a trip! The best ever!" sun-bronzed Sterling shouts as he throws his bedroll and backpack on the living room floor.

Kent follows, with a little less energy. "Enchanted Rock sure makes a firm bed," he allows, as he heads for a hot shower to relieve the aches and pains that only a few nights on the rock can produce. "But it sure is a good ache," he insists.

If the legends of the rock itself aren't enough to keep the campfire conversation going, they take a guitar or two and swap songs well into the night.

The first year of the trip, twelve years ago, they set up the tent and then opted to sleep on a "sort of level place" on the rock. After all, real men don't need tents, right?... or innerspring mattresses... or level sleeping quarters...

The rock is more than enough.

Their schedule is as much a tradition as the trip itself. Camp is set and a fire is started for supper. Sterling heads out for a quick inspection of his favorite cave and Kent starts the late

afternoon meal on the open fire. Soon, Sterling is back in camp, rejuvenated by the magic of the Rock, talking Kent into a quick trip to the top to check on their tree.

There is a little oak tree at the summit of Enchanted Rock. Somehow, against the odds, it has managed to dig roots into a spoonful of dirt in a "King of the Mountain" game with Mother Nature. Each year, the tree has grown, and the boy who brings it a jug of water each summer has grown along with it.

There would have been easier places to take root. There are lots of trees growing taller and faster at the base of the rock. But the easy way isn't always the best way.

A few years ago, our youngest daughter began to think she might be missing out on something. "What do they do there?" HalleyAnna asked, impatiently swinging her legs from the tailgate of the pickup, as our ranch hand, Joe helped Sterling and Kent load up for their annual trip.

"Man things—you wouldn't understand," replied her brother, a little too quickly, lest she decided she wanted to go, too.

"Like what?" she persisted, jumping down and twisting a bare foot into the dusty, dry caliche in the driveway.

"Oh, you know... Scratching and squatting and spitting on the ground," he answered.

"Yuck," she concluded, as she wandered off to find something more civilized to do, perfectly resigned to waiting until the family camping trip to Enchanted Rock later in the summer.

Oh, the luxury of man things in this fast-paced world. Will busy streets, neon lights and a faster pace ever take the place of a rock to climb, a baby bullfrog to catch or a pristine hole to fish in? Do boys have to grow through that phase—when Dads are not nearly as wise as they once seemed to be and youth is immortal and invincible?

Who knows? But we can only hope that these summertime memories will live forever.

These memories of a time when the rock was more than enough.

THURSDAY, MARCH 3, 1836
WILLIAM B. TRAVIS TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE
CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION:

"...The citizens of this municipality are all our enemies except those who have joined us heretofore; we have but three Mexicans now in the fort; those who have not joined us in this extremity, should be declared public enemies, and their property should aid in paying the expenses of the war...."



Travis' Complaint

by CHARLES M. YATES

DRAWING BY IRA KENNEDY

This passage from one of Travis' last letters to leave the besieged Alamo has always troubled me, as I am sure it has others. He had been surrounded by the Mexican Army for about ten days and yet the townspeople of Béxar had not rallied to his aid. While I am sure that some of the residents of Béxar were supporters of the Santanista cause; I am equally sure that many had a much more compelling reason, dating back some two decades, to be reticent about supporting revolutionary causes.

In August of 1812 a large group of adventurers, predominately from the United States, led by Augustus Magee and José Bernardo Gutiérrez de Lara congregated in the no mans land between Louisiana and Spanish Texas. Surreptitiously backed by the United States and with the full knowledge of President James Monroe, they crossed the Sabine River with the intent of freeing Texas from Spanish rule. Through propaganda and force of arms, they quickly overwhelmed the Spanish garrison at Nacogdoches. They then proceeded to capture La Bahía and were soon threatening the largest settlement in Texas: Béxar. Magee had died, apparently from natural causes, shortly before the taking of La Bahía and this left Gutiérrez in preeminent command of the insurrectionist forces. Along the way to Béxar their ranks were swollen by liberal Mexicans, ex-Spanish soldiers, native born Tejanos and Indian allies to create a formidable army.

On March 29, 1813, a brief and bloody battle, known as the Battle of Rosillo, took place between the Republican insurgents and the Royalist garrison of Béxar just south of

town. The Spanish force was routed and forced to retreat back into Béxar. In order to spare needless bloodshed, the Spanish military commander and Governor of Texas, Manuel Salcedo, agreed to capitulate and turn the town over to the insurgents. The rebels were welcomed by the residents of Béxar, many of whom had liberal leanings. Many of the Spanish soldiers who were garrisoned in Béxar even joined the rebel cause, along with many of the residents.

The Spanish government was in no mood to tolerate this threat of independence on the part of one of its internal departments. It had only been two years since Spain had put down the first attempt at Mexican independence led by a priest from Dolores named Father Hidalgo. The Spanish government had dealt harshly with Father Hidalgo and his followers and they would do the same with the insurgents in Béxar. Spain sent their most able and ruthless military leader, Colonel Joaquín de Arredondo, north to deal with the crisis.

Between March and August of 1813 the condition of the government of the newly independent Texas was anything but stable. In April, Gutiérrez formally declared an independent state and set up an interim junta to assist him in governing the new state. Gutiérrez ordered Salcedo and his officers to be taken to the Texas coast and placed on a ship bound for Tampico. Without orders and unbeknownst to the rebel leaders, the officer in charge of taking the captured Spanish officers to the coast brutally murdered them a few miles outside Béxar and left their mutilated bodies to the wild animals. Many in the rebel leadership were horrified when they found out what happened to Salcedo. Some of the prominent Anglos wanted no further part of the expedition and went back to the States. Many of the Indians became bored and went back to their villages.

By July, Gutiérrez had fallen out of favor with the Anglo portion of his army and the agents of the United States. Through a series of shenanigans that would have made Machiavelli proud, the junta governing Texas was persuaded by these agents to replace Gutiérrez with José Alvarez de Toledo. The composition and leadership of the insurgent force was changing, however the rebel force in Béxar could still field 1200 to 1400 effectives.

In early August, Béxar got word of Arredondo's march from the south. Toledo decided to spare the village the trauma of a siege or battle and elected to ambush Arredondo outside of town. On August 18, 1813 the stage was set for the largest and bloodiest land battle ever fought on Texas soil. The insurgent force of approximately 1400 men waited in ambush for the force of approximately 1800 Spaniards. In a complex series of miscalculations and misfortunes the rebels lost the element of surprise but the battle was joined nonetheless. The battle raged for several hours in the hot August sun through the dry, sandy country south of Béxar. Soon both forces were near exhaustion. At one point both forces broke off the engagement and were in the midst of retreating when Arredondo suddenly realized he had routed the rebel forces. He rallied his men and drove the rebels all the way back to Béxar.

During the rout back to Béxar, Arredondo's men slaughtered every rebel they could lay their hands on. The wounded rebels were summarily dispatched, their bodies quar-

During the rout back to Béxar, Arredondo's men slaughtered every rebel they could lay their hands on. The wounded rebels were summarily dispatched, their bodies quartered and the various body parts hung from tree limbs along the way. The brutality of the rout would be exceeded in the days to come.

tered and the various body parts hung from tree limbs along the way. The brutality of the rout would be exceeded in the days to come.

Panic gripped Béxar. Combatants and non-combatants alike fled for their lives toward Nacogdoches and the safety of the United States beyond. Arredondo sent soldiers after the refugees. It was understood by these soldiers that the taking of prisoners was not a priority and that Spanish justice should be administered quickly and efficiently to any rebel or their family that was caught. It was.

John Villars, an American from Kentucky, describes what happened next:

"Aradondo on ariving at Béxar made prisoners of every woman whose husbands were suspected of being friendly to the cause of the Revolution, and placed them in a place called Cuinta (La Quinta), where they were made to grind corn for the use of the army. The captives taken at Trinity were placed with them. They were treated with great brutality, whipped, ravished, and maltreated in every possible form; and they constituted the best portion of the population-- The brute who were placed as overseer over them was a sargent called Acosta, black ferocious villian who violated some of the prisoners daily and whipped others for their resistance.

"Aradondo had in Béxar, among the males about three hundred prisoners, which he put in irons; and daily executed some of them in a manner most shocking; first shooting them, then dragging them around the public square, and then cutting off their arms and legs and placing them on public places—these scenes continued until he disposed of the most unfortu-

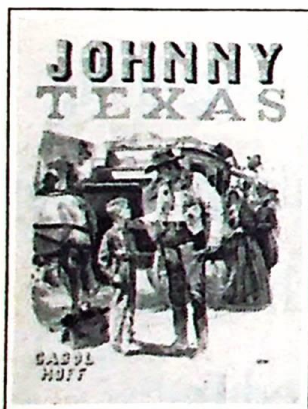
nate of these fellows—the few who were not executed were liberated on the birth day of Ferdinand (October 14 Ed.)."

The Battle of Madina was fought on the 18th of August 1813. Aradondo left Béxar April 1814, leaving a strong garrison behind, and taking with him 13 or 15 american prisoner to monterey, where he set them at liberty; the narrator of these évents being one of them."

Many of those who watched Arredondo's repriasals were the wives, daughters, mothers, sons and brothers of the men executed. The small children of the imprisoned women were turned out into the street and forced to beg for survival. If not for a few kind souls, many of these children would have perished. Upon release, the women found their men gone, either fled or executed; their children terrified and their property confiscated. Arredondo wanted to make certain the people of Béxar would never forget the price of insurrection.

The village of Béxar, at the time containing only about 1700 inhabitants, did not soon forget. The ferocity of Arredondo haunted them for years afterward. As late as September of 1817, the last Spanish Governor of Texas, Antonio Martinez, complained to his superiors that "...the houses confiscated from the rebels were useless because they cannot be rented due to the prevailing state of poverty and because of their dilapidated condition..."

Fast forward 22 years. By 1835 Béxar had grown to about 2200 residents, but many of the same families living in Béxar in 1813. Names like Navarro, Menchaca, Tarin, Esparza and several others appear in the archives throughout the pe-



JOHNNY TEXAS

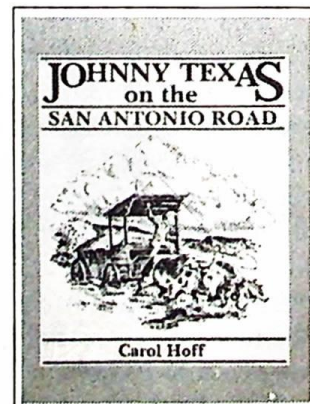
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riod. Near the end of that same year of 1835 a band of about 300 predominately Anglo settlers showed up outside Béxar. After vacillating for several weeks they attacked and defeated the Mexican Army garrison under General Cos and set up a provisional government. They then turned to the local populace and, in essence, said, "We are free men now. We have thrown off the yoke of oppression and ousted the despots. Come join us!"

But the residents of Béxar still remembered the first Texas Revolution. They also remembered the price paid for the failure of that first attempt. They remembered one other thing: a young lieutenant serving with Arredondo's army of retribution, Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna. As events progressed, the 150-odd initial Alamo defenders were surrounded by a Mexican army force numbering approximately twice the number of Béxar inhabitants and headed by a man whose methods the residents knew all too well.

If I had been a resident of Béxar in early 1836 and my family had lived through the aftermath of the Battle of Medina, I'm afraid my response to the new defenders of the Alamo would have been "Hmmm. Been there; done that." And yet a handful of the locals still joined the Texian ranks and died behind the Alamo walls. Those few residents of Béxar who joined Travis in the Alamo may have been the only ones in the Alamo to fully comprehend the danger they faced, and yet they stayed. In a group of some of the most courageous men the world has ever known, this small group stands out.


It has been 23 years since the United States extricated itself from the Viet Nam War and still it is a touch stone of sorts. It was such a disastrous experience that even today when the United States debates sending troops to Bosnia, the Middle East or some other hotspot, someone always warns about the dangers of becoming involved in "another Viet Nam". We are not removed from those people of Béxar in 1836. We remember the past just as they did and try, albeit vainly at times, not to repeat it.

Charles M. Yates is Director of the Texian Heritage Society, Inc., 15742 Fitzhugh Rd., Austin, TX 78736 • (512) 264-2355
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Boys, there were lots of ways the hands on trail rides to the Abilene, and other towns up north on the way to the railroad, could find to die. Most were real young. Most under twenty-one. Now, you can bet none of them went looking for a place to die—they were looking to really live. Just as you girls ain't making no plans on you burying place, they weren't either.

They're like lots today, had a hard, tough job and did it best they could. Most got throwed, stomped, runned over, kicked, bitten, cut and hit upon by man, plant and every critter that came by. Then a few got hurt bad. Their innards get to knotting—cookie don't have no cure—they died from simple stuff, that had they been in town or where any grandma was there would have had a way to save them, instead, they died on the trail.

From about 1867 when trailing of cattle started slow like to Missouri, then tailed off in 1888, when Kansas laws shut it tight, one cow hand on the average was buried on the way. Best they could do was wrap them in their bedding, plant them deep so critters wouldn't dig them up—lots drove the herd over the new grave so no mark of it showed; as some low life's would dig them up for the boots they wore or the bedding they were wrapped in.

No matter how close a person tries to remember, one hill and tree look different four months later on the way home. There was no grave marker on most. No iron fence to keep animals out and spooks in—so them hands is free like they was when they walked this earth. But most dead things are the same.

Don't feel bad that we and all the other critters cross their grave—they are proud to give all of us the best of their earthly remains and adventures to build on. If you think on it all of us and people who lived, lied, loved, and ate good food, like dutchoven biscuits, should be so lucky—us older ones giving a leg up to others like them unmarked trail ride graves had done for us and ours.

On a bright moon lit night, when the wind gets low and the critters are quiet you can hear them young fellows laughing down at a creek in amongst the pecan and live oak trees, maybe we can join them 'round their campfires and live their times and ours again. Recon that be heaven?

TRAIL RIDE GRAVES



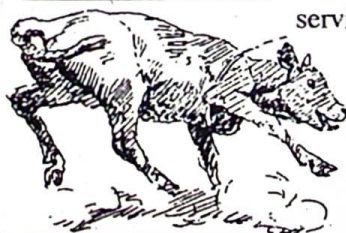
by **L. KELLY DOWN**

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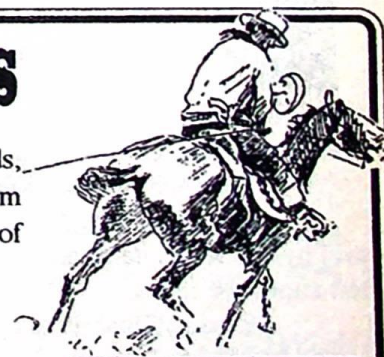
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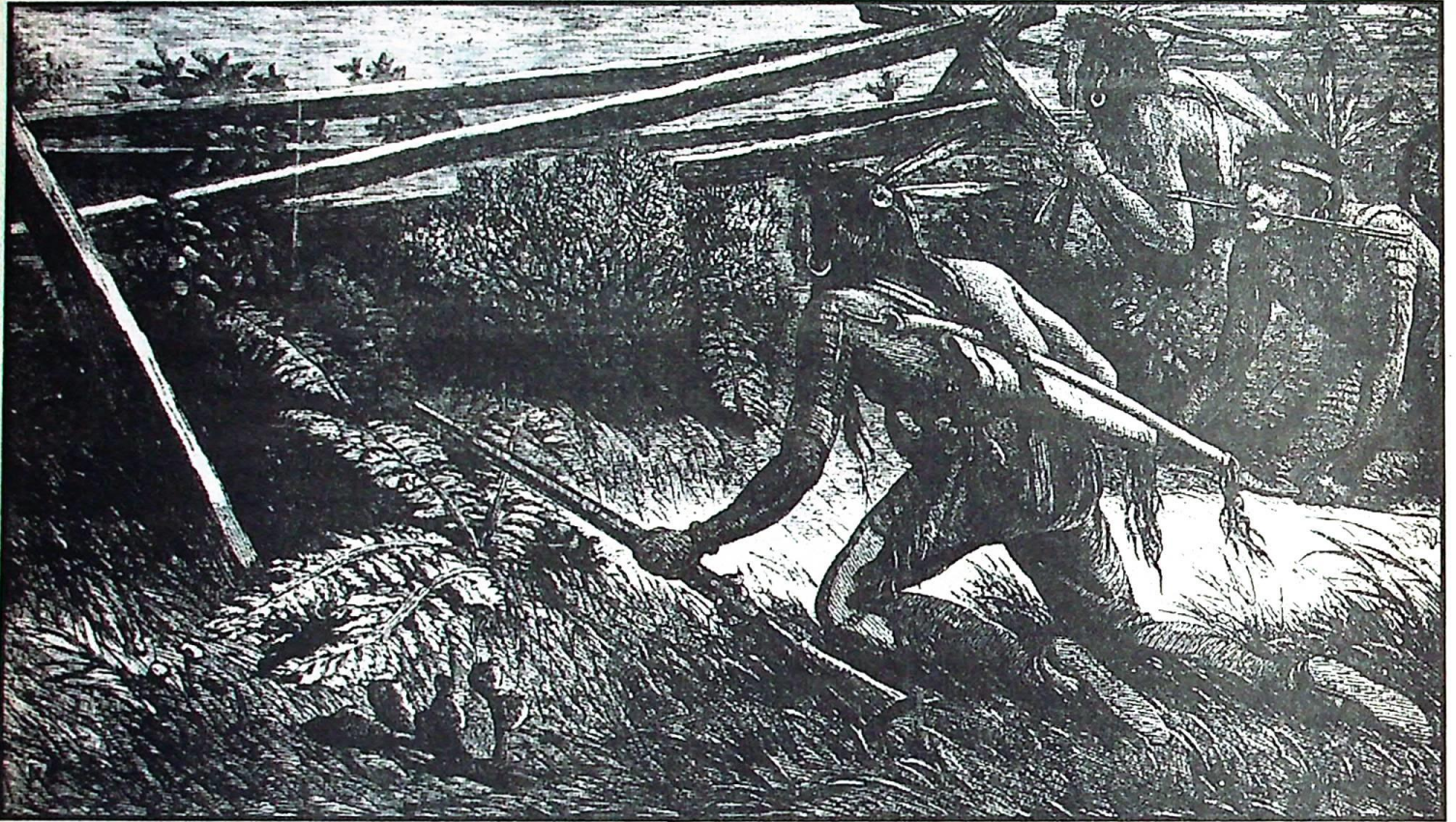
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A SCALPING AND A VISION

BY STEVEN L. YUHAS



I found this story while doing research on the life of "Bigfoot Wallace". Wallace had stopped to spend the night at a cabin about twelve miles above La Grange. A man wearing a fur hat came in and stood before the fire. After a few minutes he removed his hat and bent over to warm his head. It was raw, red and had some bone showing. In those days it was frontier custom not to ask questions of a stranger, but Wallace's curiosity got the best of him. "Excuse me for asking, but what happened to your head?"

The man matter-of-factly replied, "I been scalped."

His name was Josiah Wilbarger and his story is still told by his descendants and can be found in several books written about the times.

Josiah Wilbarger came from Missouri and settled about ten miles above Bastrop. Several years later, Reuben Hornsby built a dog-trot cabin about nine miles east of Austin just across the river from present day Del Valle. Wilbarger Creek and Hornsby Bend mark the locations of their homesteads. In Au-

gust 1833, Wilbarger went to Hornsby's to join four men, Christian, Haynie, Standifer and Strother. They went to explore the country to the northwest. Near Walnut Creek, an Indian appeared for a brief moment then disappeared in the cedar bushes.

When they stopped for lunch near Pecan Spring, Strother, Christian and Wilbarger unsaddled their horses. The others left their horses to graze with their saddles on. As they were preparing their food, a large band of Indians crept up on them and opened fire with rifles and bows. The men took cover behind some small trees and anxiously returned fire. Strother was killed outright. Christian took a ball in the hip and then a second arrow. Wilbarger took an arrow in the calf of his leg. Far outnumbered, the survivors hurriedly mounted up to effect an escape. Hornsby bravely turned his horse to pick up Wilbarger but saw him go down and immediately pounced upon by Indians. The remaining men spurred their horses on to Hornsby's place. There they told of seeing Wilbarger being scalped. A rider was quickly sent to gather reinforcements. As they planned on retrieving the bodies in the morning.

Around midnight, Joe Hornsby's mother woke and told him of a dream. She had dreamed that Wilbarger wasn't dead, but gravely injured. She wanted her son and the others to leave immediately to rescue him. Joe said, "Ma, you're excited and your imagination made you dream these things. Wilbarger is dead. The last I saw of him, he was down on his back with the Indians running lances through him. They never quit a man as long as there's any life in him."

But later that night the dream was repeated, and this time Mrs. Hornsby said there was a tree and described the area. She said Wilbarger was no longer under the tree but had clawed his way to a water hole. The men still doubted her visions but said nothing. As promised, reinforcements came at daylight. When the rest of the men were mounted and ready to go, Mrs. Hornsby came out of the cabin with a blanket saying, "Here, take this to make a stretcher, he's not dead but he can't ride."

Joe Hornsby, the last to see Wilbarger, went straight to the tree. He wasn't there, but a trail of blood led them to a pool of water. They found him there alive, horribly wounded, scalped and covered with blood. They put his naked body in the blanket and carried him between two horses. When they arrived at the cabin, Mrs. Hornsby was waiting outside with bandages and poultices of wheat bread and bear grease.

After he regained some of his strength, Joshia told his story. He remembered being speared soon after Hornsby fled. His previous wounds and a bullet that had gone through his neck, had rendered him helpless. He felt a knife working around his head and realized he was being scalped. Once the knife had gone around, the Indian twisted the hair in his fist and gave a jerk. At the sound, he said it felt like a gun going off in his ear and immediately passed out.

When he awoke, the moon was shining and he could hear the usual night sounds. Unexpectedly, he saw an almost transparent figure of his sister Margaret, sitting next to him. She had been dead many years and had never been to Texas. She advised him to stay where he was, because his friends would rescue him in the morning. The vision then vanished in the direction of the Hornsby home.

He began to remember what happened next. His scalp was burning fiercely, but he remembered the water hole nearby. Unable to rise, he painfully crawled to the water and immersed his body in it. He found that submerging his head greatly relieved the pain in his scalp. Each time his head would begin to burn, he would dip it in the water. He continued the procedure until his rescuers arrived.

Joshia Wilbarger recovered to live another eleven years. All the events were verified and sworn to by all who were present. They were adamant about it for as long as they lived. Wallace was amazed at the story but as he had heard it from the lips of the scalped man, he was not inclined to doubt.



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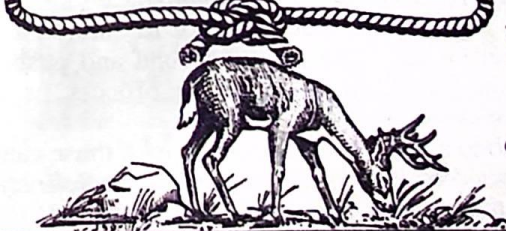
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LACEY'S TAKE

by HOLLY SCOTT

Lacey sat in the middle of the living room, looking into the dining room that had now been converted into a "writer's room", by Later Billy. Open, on the table was a dictionary, several paperback books and enough paper strewn around the once cozy round oak table to completely obscure its original use.

"Dang it," she thought. "I wonder when he's gonna get this writin' thing out of his head. I got company comin' for supper and no place for them to eat."

Later Billy had just left to go to town and pick up some last minute groceries for the get-together—his final word, going out the door, was "Don't touch a thing on that table."

"Now how am I gonna do that?" Lacey muttered, as she was dusting the ever dusty house. "There's stuff scattered to the ceiling," she wasn't far from wrong. Along with the paper and books Later Billy had taped 3 x 5 cards to the wall to aid him in his 'yarnin'; push pins held snippets of news articles, notes with red hi-lites scribbled on them. They created a wallpaper, which Lacey considered not to be the "Laura Ashley" type she had seen in Martha Stewart's magazine.

While Lacey was pondering her fate to live in an ever cluttered house, the cat came in the room.

Now, Scooter was a good mouser, and had just recently saved Lacey from a diamond back near the wash room, outside, so her presence in the house was tolerated and extra rations of 'wet food' were placed out for her. Scooter was just in the process of jumping up on the table, which usually Lacey wouldn't permit, but this time Lacey just watched as the cat planted herself right in the middle of the mess Later Billy had left.

That cat just loved paper—you could find her usually on the stack of old Bluckaroo Times that Later Billy would forget to add to trash every week, snoozing.

Quick as the weather changes in Texas, Lacey got a plan. She waited and watched the cat as she tenuously placed first one paw and then the other on the stacks of paper, until finding a comfortable place for her afternoon nap.

Dogs may love trucks, but cats like to snooze and Scooter was definitely a cat. She pawed around and pushed papers about until she found her 'bed'. In the process, paper was floating down onto the floor.

Lacey grabbed a large envelope that one of those catalogues had come in, and took all of the papers off the floor and off the table. Took the borrowed computer and printer and put them in a plastic bag and dusted the table, waxed it, then set the table with some placemats she had made and the good flatware.

When she had finished, there was the "Martha Stewart" dream setting for the table, and a cat sound asleep next to the Coal Oil lamp she used for the center piece.

The paper and the computer went into the garage and the 'wallpaper' was removed and numbered on the back, so that it could go back up on the wall after the company had departed. Lacey went outside, into the pasture and picked some wildflowers; Bluebonnets, Indian Paintbrushes and Queen Anne's Lace for a bouquet to be put on the table. There, now it was perfect.

She started supper and just as she got the beans up to a boil, Billy walked in the front door with a bang of the screen.

"Lacey, what the Sam Hill?" Billy was chagrined. "What did you do with my writin' stuff?"

"Oh, well, you see, the cat came in while I was cleanin' the house and took up residence on the table. She scattered all of them papers all over the floor. I knew how important it was, so I gathered and put 'em up all safe in the garage."

"What about Joe Bob's computer that he loaned me? Huh? How about that?" Later Billy was red in the face and powerful angry.

"Well, you always say that dust is that machine's worst enemy. And when Scooter came in she'd been rollin' in the dirt so's to catch varmints better, an' I knew all that dust would hurt that thing, so I put it in a plastic bag and put it out in the garage with the rest of the stuff." Lacey was gaining some confidence now.

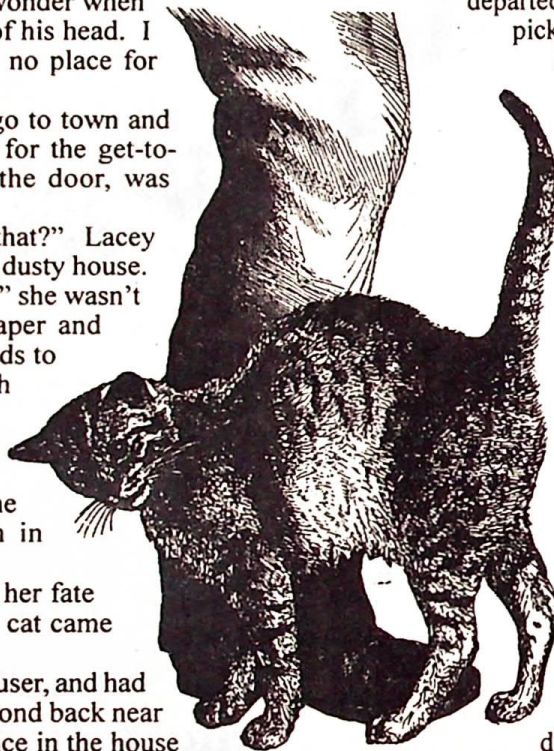
"Now, I suppose you're gonna say that the cat was rollin' around the wall where all my 'portant notes were." Later Billy said sarcastically.

"No, I 'member z'actly what you said, William. You said: 'Don't touch a thing on that TABLE.' You didn't say nothin' about no wall." Lacey had played her trump card. She watched Billy sputter and try to come up with another argument, but he just shrugged and put the plastic bags from the store on the kitchen counter.

Lacey added, "Besides, Billy, I numbered all them notes all on the back, so's I could put them up again for you, after the company leaves." She knew that Later Billy was going to calm down sooner or later, and hoped with the last comment that that would hasten the process.

Later Billy only snorted, and reached in the refrigerator for a Lone Star. "When's that company comin' anyway?"

Lacey sighed, knowing the storm had just passed. "Bout seven. So get, I got work to do."



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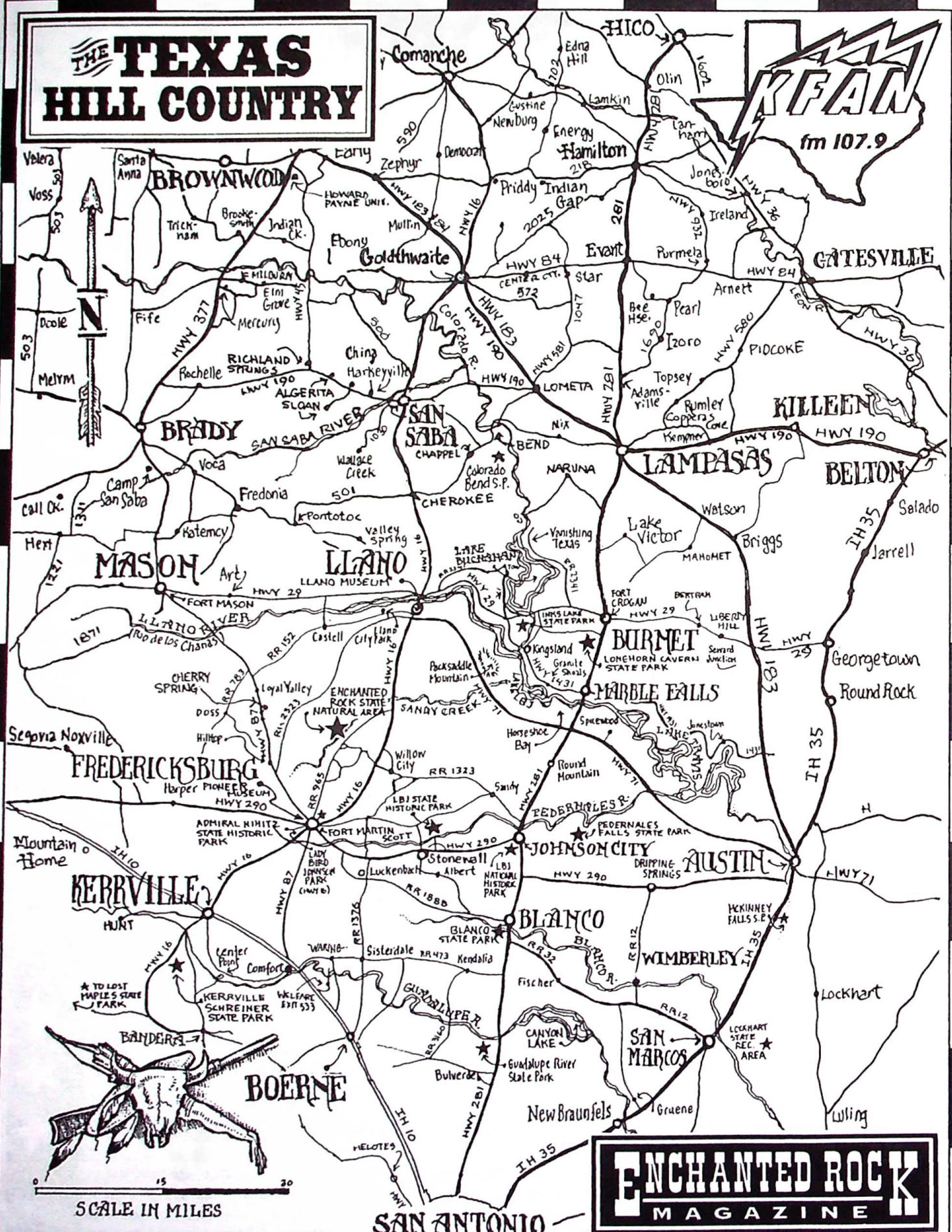
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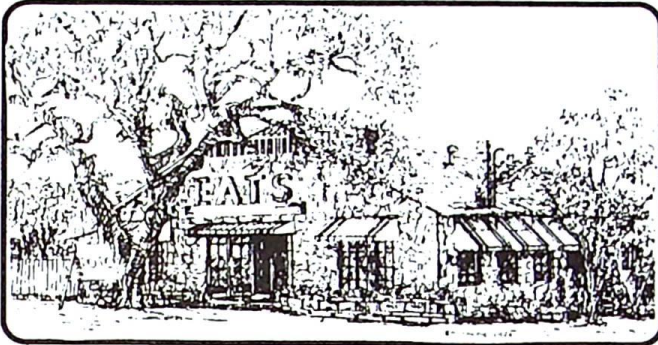
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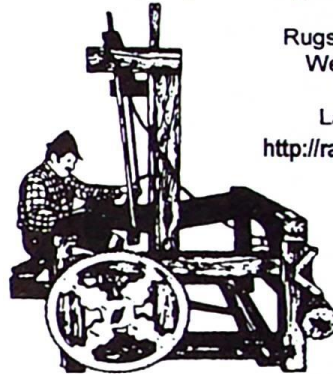
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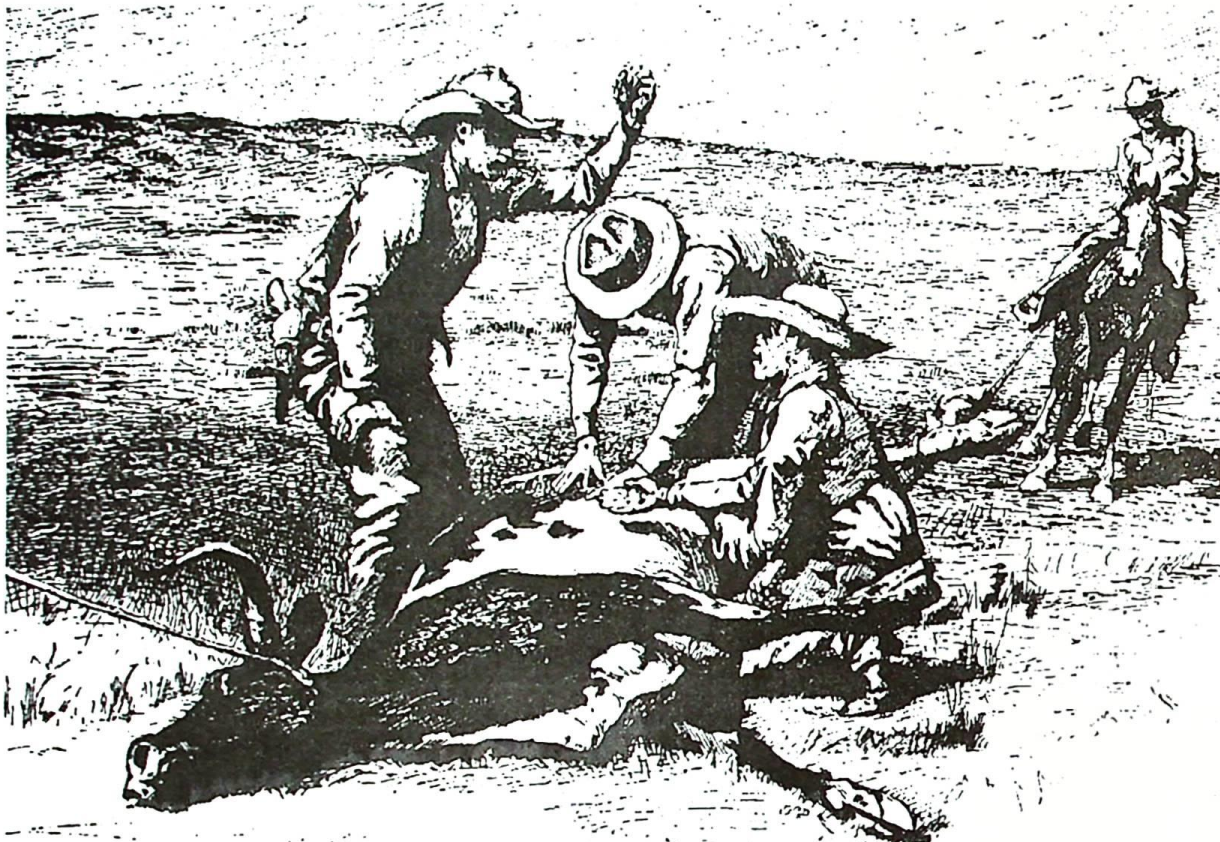
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THE MURDER MAVERICK: ANATOMY OF A LEGEND

BY C. F. ECKHARDT



Frederic Remondet

I'll first tell the tale as it was first told to me, though a printed page can never bring it to life as I heard it, with the odor of mesquite and liveoak a-burning, the biting, acrid taste of Granger Rough Cut in a cob pipe, the chill of a brightstarred Williamson County night, and the raspy drawl of the old cowboy who told it.

"'Twas back in '91," he allowed, "somewheres around the first part of the year. There was a gather—that's what we called it when we brung the cows up to be counted and branded, 'fore the movin' pitchers learnt us to say 'roundup'. 'Twasn't far out of Murphysville—what they call Alpine these days—in the high country out past the Pecos.

"There was this big maverick, you see—red he was, and with horns longer'n a man's arm and a mean look in his eye. He musta been six, seven years old—regular old *ladino*. Never had a rope on him. He got caught in the gather, and two cowmen, they commenced to argue with one 'nother over which one had claim to the critter. The argument got hotter'n it needed an them two fellers reached for their sixshooters while the rest of us, we hunted cover 'til the shootin' stopped. When the shooters quit poppin' one was dead an' the other done grabbed

a horse an' hung his hooks to it to draw blood. He was a-leavin' the country. Never heard tell what happened to him.

"Wellsir, there was these two cowboys, they roped that maverick an' threw him an' cut him, an' then they took a runnin' iron an' all along his side they burnt MURDER in letters a foot high. Then they turned the steer loose. They were friends of the dead man or maybe they worked for him—I never did get the straight of that.

"They didn't brand him right, you see—just sort of traced over the hide with the iron, an' it burnt the hair off an' sort of scorched the hide under it, so the hair grew back, which it won't do under a proper brand. When it come back in it come plumb white, like it'll sometimes do when you take a lick on the head. That big ol' steer was like a signboard—a big red signboard with MURDER painted on it in white letters.

"It turned plumb wild an' mean, it did, an' even the other critters wouldn't have nothin' to do with it. It become a regular Ishmael, like in the Bible—I think he was the one, anyway. It run off into the high country and only once in a while would a man see the thing. If he got close enough to read MURDER on it, somebody he know would be murdered inside a week. It was powerful bad luck to see the Murder Maverick."

Years later, in another place, I heard the tale again. This time the steer was black, and MURDER showed up like chalk on a blackboard. More detail came this time—the date the killing was, though the teller couldn't recall it precisely, branded below MURDER in smaller letters, and the killer had to leave the country because the Murder Maverick followed him wherever he went. A few years after that, out Fort Stockton way, I collected yet another version. The steer was neither red nor black, but 'a kind of muckledy-dun lookin' sort of critter.' MURDER was branded on one flank, the date on the other. The dead cowman was "a feller called Post or something like that, anyway," and the killer was none other than the notorious Emanuel 'Manny' Clements, cousin to and saddle-partner of John Wesley Hardin.

Not long afterwards, in Austin, I ran on yet another version. The cow-critter's color and gender were ignored, but the dead cowman was named Poe—"like the poet that wrote that Raven thing"—and the killer was not Manny Clements, though Manny was present at the killing. The actual killer was a one-armed man and a pal of Manny's, a man named "Gillis or Gilman or somethin' like that".

If you've ridden the backroads of Texas on the sunset side of the Colorado, and if you've listened to tales in small town cafes and bars and over campfires, you've heard a number I can call to mind. You've heard of Bowie's lost silver, of the headless horseman along the Nueces, of Stampede Mesa, and of the Murder Maverick. Running tales like that into the dirt—if in fact they *can* be run into the dirt—is my business.

There is lot of fact in the Murder Maverick tale, and there was a lot of deliberate mythmaking afterwards. The two combined to make The Legend of the Murder Maverick.

On January 28, 1891, at Leoncitas, near Murphysville—present Alpine—there was a cow gather. A good many cowmen—and some others—were present, among them a one-armed Confederate veteran named Henry Powe (pronounced Poe) and his teenage son Robert; Manny Clements, and a man named Finus Gilliland, who was called 'Fine'. Powe was a local rancher, and his brand was HHP. He was cutting his own stock out of the gather, and his son was holding the cut. Gilliland was repping for a big outfit, checking to make sure none of the smaller cowmen led off calves that had been following his employer's brand. Gilliland, incidentally, was a man of some reputation—certainly not in a league with Clements and his kin, but considered short tempered and a bad man to mess with. Exactly what Clements was doing at the gather has not come down to posterity, though he had been, from time to time, a cowman.

There was a brindle-colored yearling bull in the gather, and several cattlemen told Powe they'd seen it following an HHP cow during the year. Powe cut it out and drove it into the

At this point Bob Powe realized things had gone very far indeed, and that there could be what is called, in the understated vernacular of men who live on the edge of violence, 'a difficulty'. Henry Powe did not, as a rule, pack a sixshooter, and as a one-armed man he had trouble shooting a rifle. He rode to Manny Clements, talked to the sometime-gunman a few minutes, and then reached into Clements' saddlebag. Manny, Bob Powe knew, habitually carried pistols in his saddlebags.

HHP gather, where young Bob was holding the stock. Fine Gilliland rode up to young Powe and demanded to know if the bullcalf had a mother cow in the HHP cut. The boy replied that it did not, but that the other cowmen had seen it following an HHP cow during the year. Gilliland then said that the bullcalf was not HHP stock unless someone produced an HHP cow to go with it, and ordered young Powe to cut it back into the main gather. Bob Powe cut it out of his gather and Gilliland hazed it back to the main bunch.

As Fine drove the bullcalf back into the main gather Henry Powe rode up to him and words passed between the two, but nobody was close enough to hear what was said. Powe rode up to the man in charge of the gather, a cowman named Kelley, talked to him a moment, and then rode back to the main gather and started to cut the brindle yearling out. Gilliland rode up to Powe and more words passed, but again no one was close enough to hear what was said.

At this point Bob Powe realized things had gone very far indeed, and that there could be what is called, in the understated vernacular of men who live on the edge of violence, 'a difficulty'. Henry Powe did not, as a rule, pack a sixshooter, and as a one-armed man he had trouble shooting a rifle. He rode to Manny Clements, talked to the sometime-gunman a few minutes, and then reached into Clements' saddlebag. Manny, Bob Powe knew, habitually carried pistols in his saddlebags.

Henry Powe rode back into the herd and began to cut the brindle bull out. Gilliland rode up and threw a rope at it, whether to head it off or to catch it we don't know. He succeeded in neither. Powe then pulled Clements' revolver and fired—not at Gilliland, but at the yearling. He missed. Gilliland dismounted about thirty yards behind Powe, drew his own sixshooter, dropped to one knee, steadied the revolver in both hands, fired—and missed Henry Powe clean. While Powe dismounted and wrapped his horse's reins around his only arm, Gilliland fired again—and missed again.

Movie horses are trained not to shy at the sound of gunfire. So were cavalry horses of the day. Cowhorses usually

Putman squatted on the icy ground, rested his Winchester across a rock, and waited. In a moment Fine's hat appeared over the back of the horse. When enough hat was showing for him to be sure Gilliland's head was inside, Jim let fly. The big .44-40 slug took Fine Gilliland squarely between the eyes.

weren't. Powe's horse shied wildly, jerking the man off his feet. Gilliland used the time to run within twenty feet of Powe and fire twice more, again missing. Powe either ran out of ammunition or his pistol misfired. Gilliland ran up to him, placed his pistol against Powe's chest while holding Powe's pistol away with his other hand, and pulled the trigger. Powe staggered a moment, then fell dead. Gilliland mounted and rode away at a gallop.

This is the whole story of what happened. Note that there is no mention of anyone tying the brindle bullcalf down and branding it with anything. Robert Powe's account of the incident concludes with a statement that he later heard that some of the cowboys did rope and brand the yearling —MURDER on one side, Jan 28 91 on the other. He didn't see the branding, he only heard about it, and no matter how much they branded the beast, the brand would never have showed distinctly on the pe-

culiar 'muckledy-dun' brindle hide.

There was, of course, aftermath. What most of those present remembered for years was not the branding of the yearling—if, indeed, it ever happened—but the raising of a cairn of rocks on Leoncitas Flat to commemorate the spot where the well-respected Henry Powe was shot down. That cairn stands to this day, and a few oldtimers around Alpine can guide you to it. Henry Powe's body was taken to Alpine and he was buried near the Methodist Church he helped to establish.

On January 31, 1891, Texas Ranger Jim Putman and Brewster County Deputy Sheriff Thalix Cook rode up on a stranger in a nameless canyon in the Glass Mountains. Cook demanded to know if the stranger was Fine Gilliland. He was—he replied with gunfire, his first shot breaking Cook's knee, his second killing the deputy's horse.

That was not smart of Fine Gilliland. No one, to my knowledge, has ever made a big thing of Thalix Cook's shooting, but just about any oldtimer in the Big Bend country will tell you that Jim Putman was hell-on-red-striped-wheels with a Winchester. Jim dismounted, drew his rifle from the saddleboot, and dropped Gilliland's horse with a single shot. He then demanded that the murderer surrender. Fine replied with two more shots, then dropped down behind the dead horse.

Putman squatted on the icy ground, rested his Winchester across a rock, and waited. In a moment Fine's hat appeared over the back of the horse. When enough hat was showing for him to be sure Gilliland's head was inside, Jim let fly. The big .44-40 slug took Fine Gilliland squarely between the eyes.

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Fine Gilliland's body was collected by relatives, who took it to Snyder for burial. Gilliland Canyon in the Glass Mountains is named for him, for it was there that Jim Putman killed him.

Nowhere do we find anyone saying "I saw the brindle bullcalf with MURDER on its side." Bob Powe mentioned it, but he said he heard about it long after the incident.

Brewster County Judge Wigfall Van Sickle, named for Texas' fire-eating secessionist Senator Louis T. Wigfall, seems to have been the first great moving force behind the Murder Maverick tale. He first wrote up "The Story of The Murder Maverick" for the *Galveston News* in 1896. He told essentially the same tale thirty-five years later, and it involved himself, then District Attorney, and then- County Judge of Brewster County. According to Judge Van Sickle, the two minions of the law were riding from Alpine to Fort Stockton when they rode up on a big red maverick. Supposedly they headed and heeled the beast, which fell on its left side. Van Sickle built a fire and was heating a spur to serve as a running iron when the Judge mentioned that animals were generally branded on the left flank. The two men rolled the beast over and: "Behold! A brand was disclosed. It was MURDER in letters that extended from jaw to tail."

There are a couple of points here you might miss unless you've done some cow-chasing yourself. First, Bob Powe—who was there when it happened—said the animal was brindle-colored. Muckeldy-dun. Judge Van Sickle's critter was red, and muckeldy-dun critters don't turn red no matter what you brand them with. Second, any man who's a cowboy enough to head or heel a big animal and doesn't notice a brand "in letters that extended from jaw to tail" either needs glasses awful bad or he didn't rope the animal he claimed he roped.

Judge Van Sickle, according to no less an authority than his wife, did his best to promote The Legend of The Murder Maverick by enhancing it with new tales at every opportunity. It was he, or so the story goes, who started the yarn that during a discussion of the murder of Henry Powe in the old saloon in Alpine, the Murder Maverick itself joined in, sticking its head through the window and letting loose with a 'blood-clabbering bawl'.

Judge Van Sickle also seems to have been the author of the yarn that the Murder Maverick began to put in mysterious appearances just before and just after any murder in the Alpine area. Others, not he, seem to have added the story that the killer survived the pursuit of the Rangers and finally killed himself because the Murder Maverick dogged his heels wherever he went. The tradition of bad luck following a Murder Maverick sighting or the sighting of the Murder Maverick meaning one's self or one of one's friends would be killed shortly afterwards also seem to be post-Van Sickle additions to the story.

Barry Scobee, the almost-but-not-quite-yet legend among Big Bend and Texas writers, who wrote many of the better books about the Big Bend, first wrote up the Murder Maverick tale—with Judge Van Sickle's trimmings—for *Adventure Magazine* in 1919. He re-wrote it in 1936 for *The Cattleman*. At least two and perhaps three western short stories in the pulp magazine era were based on the Murder Maverick tale, and one of

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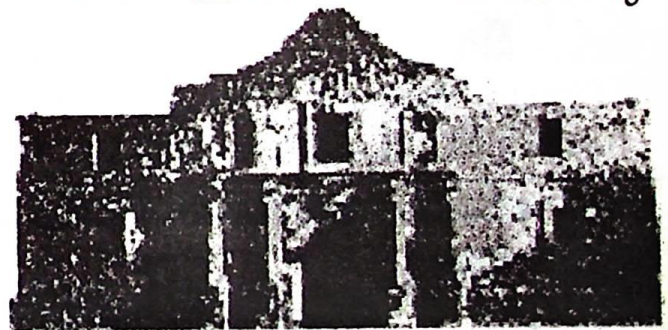
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Once the tale appeared in *The Longhorns* it began to spread. It was used in at least three western comic books—in one form or another—during the great comic book heyday of the 1940s/1950s, and as late as the mid 1970s it appeared as a tale in one of the black and white 'horror comics' so popular in that period.

them may—though this is not certain, since he used so many pen names—have been written by the legendary Robert E. Howard of Cross Plains, better known as the creator of Conan the Barbarian.

J. Frank Dobie, whose own preface to his first book, *Coronado's Children*, says, "I never let the facts get in the way of a good story," put the tale of the Murder Maverick in his book *The Longhorns*. From there, more than from Judge Van Sickle's efforts or even Scobee's, it grew, for Dobie had a national reputation neither Scobee nor Van Sickle attained. Once the tale appeared in *The Longhorns* it began to spread. It was used in at least three western comic books—in one form or another—during the great comic book heyday of the 1940s/1950s, and as late as the mid 1970s it appeared as a tale in one of the black and white 'horror comics' so popular in that period. It has also appeared as a pseudo-scholarly article in one of the New York published "Western Fact" magazines. So far—at least to my knowledge—it has not formed the basis for the plot of a movie or a TV western, and I did see most of those—but all the facts aren't in there.

Was there really a Murder Maverick? There was, apparently, a brindle-colored yearling bull over which one man was murdered and the murderer later killed by law officers. According to Robert Powe the steer remained in the area, on HHP range, until 1896. Robert, then a young man in charge of the HHP brand and stock, asked a drover named Allen, who was making up a herd to go to Montana for Indian beef, to take it with him. Whether or not it was actually branded MURDER, or whether or not the brand was visible if it ever was so branded, we don't know, because Powe—who apparently saw the thing fairly regularly and wanted to get rid of it because it was a constant reminder of his father's murder—never said "I saw the brand MURDER on the animal's side." He only tells us that he was told, some time after the fact, that the animal was so branded.

We do know that Bob Powe followed Allen's herd all the way to the Pecos and saw the animal cross with that herd at Horsehead Crossing. He then returned to Alpine, having rid himself of the reminder of his father's death. The original murder maverick—the animal over which Henry Powe died—at least left for Montana in the spring of 1896. Whether or not it ever arrived there we have no way of knowing.

The Murder Maverick—the creature manufactured by story tellers—entered the Land of Legend in 1891. It may never die. Like Pecos Bill, Strap Buckner, and all the rest, it has become part of that great heritage of Texas legend.

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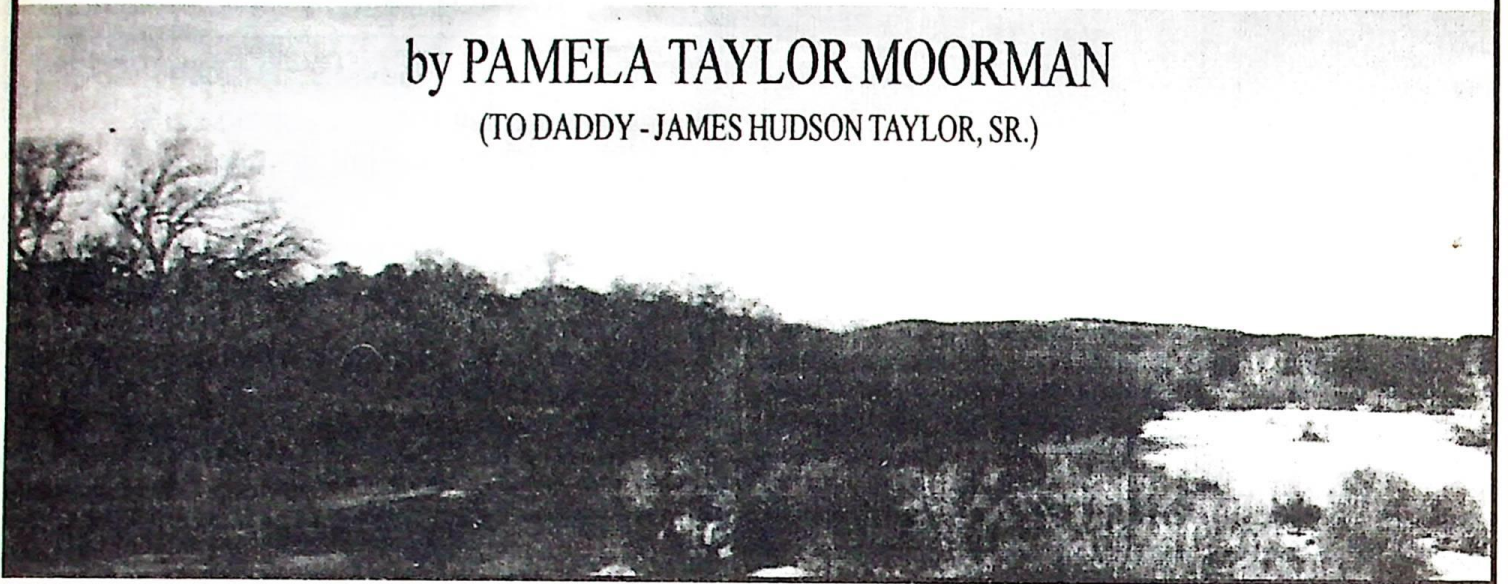
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THE LEGACY

by PAMELA TAYLOR MOORMAN

(TO DADDY - JAMES HUDSON TAYLOR, SR.)



ALONG SANDY CREEK. PHOTO BY HAROLD STRICKLAND.

Recently, by a true trick of fate, I was asked to write my thoughts, experiences and feelings about “*La Lomeria*” [ed. note: Spanish term for Hill Country] for *Enchanted Rock Magazine*. Of course, I was flattered, but a writer I am certainly not. I write just like I talk—too much. In a phone conversation with Holly Scott, she listened to some of my stories and a brief historical overview of my times on a large Llano County ranch. She said people are hungry for what I know about the area and sharing experiences.

Slightly overwhelmed after our conversation, I thought “Okay, just what do I have to say that might be of interest to people?” I kept coming back to my strong love of the land itself—the sounds, the sights and the smells—things I can always recreate in my mind—that are so solidly imbedded in my memory that nothing could ever make me forget. Okay, so how did I develop this strong love and appreciation? Of course, I thought, it all started with daddy—so that’s where I need to begin.

It was dad who taught us and led us to the love of the land and nature. He taught us the ability to really *see* what is right in front of us—a most important gift. As small children, our yearly vacations were not to Disneyland—but to remote areas of America to see and appreciate the majesty of mountains, to look for all kinds of wildlife or wade in a mountain stream. He taught us not only *what* to look for in nature but *how* to look. Little did I realize at the time that those lessons could help us in life also.

Isn’t it a strange phenomenon how, as we get older, our roots and heritage become so much more important—and many of us seem even more drawn back to the land and its people?

An example of the search was very well written in William Least Heat-Moon’s 1991 novel entitled *PrairyErth*. The phrase *PrairyErth* means a deep map—could it be a map to explore the land itself or maybe a map to help us seek and perhaps find what life is all about?

The author had always heard people say that there is nothing in Kansas—nothing of interest and nothing pretty in its landscape. He set out to prove that thinking wrong and mapped out a grid of Chase County, Kansas. The grid system was similar to what archaeologists lay over the ground to excavate. He mapped out coordinates to explore and hoped that those coordinates would lead to connections.

Mr. Least-Heat Moon took years to rediscover Chase County, its people, its past and its hopes—and see the beauty and specialness of that supposedly mundane and boring landscape. In that type of discovery, we can get a true glimpse of ourselves, our roots, our relationship with the land, and our dreams. And that can be the best gift that one could ever find. Forgive me if I get philosophical on you, but I really think that this is all connected somehow.

When I was six years old, dad took us to Llano for the first time and that trip developed into a lifetime of memories and experiences for generations to come. For forty-two years this particular stretch of prime Hill Country land also helped shape and guide my life. In reflection, I can clearly see just how daddy and the land itself, influenced who and what I am. My first introduction to Llano County, Texas was when I was six years old. Daddy had just signed us up for a year-round family lease on Mark Moss’s famous Bar-O Ranch. It was love at first sight for this piece of historical, beautiful and rugged land.

Old Mr. Moss also helped inspire my sense of adventure by

When I was six years old, dad took us to Llano for the first time and that trip developed into a lifetime of memories and experiences for generations to come. For forty-two years this particular stretch of prime Hill Country land also helped shape and guide my life. In reflection, I can clearly see just how daddy and the land itself, influenced who and what I am.


telling me grand stories about the hardships of ranch life, rattlers, old Cotton Top Joe (his prized quarter horse), and Indians. He was one of the first to import exotic game to Texas. He used to take me in his old Model T truck to Turkey Knob pasture to see his new animals, before releasing them onto the rest of the ranch. Of course, he teased me about the new animals being a cross between a rhinoceros and a giraffe and I believed him wholeheartedly.

Mr. Moss took daddy and me to his secret place—an old Indian encampment on Big Sandy Creek. That one visit initiated a lifetime passion to study ancient Indian cultures and the spear points and tools they left behind.

Every trip was different from the other. Every experience was different, also. One trip, the creeks and tanks are overflowing and wildflowers everywhere, the next trip, everything is dry and barren, but you may find a nice deep pool to swim in, when 200 yards down stream there is nothing but sand. You never knew what animal you may see around each bend or upon each hill. You may be lucky and see a cougar run up an embankment, with his long tail flowing behind him or a fawn, camouflaged in the grass.

As I got older, daddy taught me to hunt. I loved to go out all alone and spend the entire day with nature. I really gained a better insight to nature and the land around me. Instead of feeling alone or wary, I would enjoy the sights and sounds of the day—especially near dawn or dusk; and enjoy the anticipation of what I would see next. I didn't care if I ever took a shot, I enjoyed being one with the land and found comfort in really knowing the lay of the land and familiar landmarks—more than likely, unnoticed by others. I would take joy in trying to figure out the habits of certain animals and their day to day rituals. It's funny, but you'd be surprised how much you learn about yourself during days like these.

Unfortunately, the days of family leases are pretty much over. That's a shame, for most people will never get the opportunities to bond with the land as my family did, over several generations. It was a special time for family togetherness, learning and exploring, not only the land but ourselves, as well. Ranchers really have no choice anymore, with low cattle prices, climbing taxes, and droughts and devastating floods. They have



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That old tree which we were sure could tell many stories of decades past, maybe even centuries, had finally died and fallen into the ravine. For some reason, instead of being sad or upset, it was almost fitting, signifying to us that as nature had its cycles of death and rebirth, that maybe that is what we should learn to do also, and finally let go.

to find ways to be able to keep their land. Now, the only ones that can afford a lease are corporations or huge hunting clubs. Too bad—it's our loss.

In 1992, after thirty-seven years leased to my family on the beloved place, we had to give it up. This was caused by an extreme increase in price and *new* restrictions. It was like losing a family member. The entire family gathered in the old veterinarian's shack we called home for so long, and began dismantling our memories. When the new owner of our 1955 jeep came to pick it up, there was not a dry eye for miles. Even the foreman's son, that we had known for so long, felt our pain and openly cried along with us.

About a year later, our dear friends, Berit and Finn Aagaard, who used to live on the Bar-O and shared our love for the place, eventually helped me heal. After moving into their new home, they called me to come for a visit. I hadn't thought I could return—for I felt it might be too painful. But Berit persisted, and Dad and I drove down for a weekend. I hadn't been there for an hour, when Finn and Berit got me into their new 4-wheel drive pickup truck and took off to the Bar-O. They put me in the back so I could hear the sounds and smell the air. They drove around to the favorite spots that we all had in common. I cried almost throughout the entire drive. Upon cresting Graze Mountain, Finn told me to "get out, walk around, and be welcomed back—for the land had missed me, also." Well, that did it. I knew then that I could still find my pleasures and passions in the land, even if it was under different circumstances.

Now, between the Aagaard's and my new friend, Gene Hall Reagor, who owns two guest lodges and a bed and breakfast (and who just happens to be Mr. Moss' grandniece) and the many exciting places that Enchanted Rock Magazine writes about, we have more new, but delightful, places to rejuvenate ourselves.

We have magical memories of the old Bar-O Ranch and La Lomeria, in general. Over the years, we learned to appreciate nature—the sights, smells, sounds, animals, minerals, trees and vegetation—and taught that we were privileged to be temporary guardians and caretakers of that property. In essence, the land, as well as my father and mother, helped shape our interests and most importantly our values and integrity—helped us become who we are and what we are. Whether we are in the Hill Country or in another part of the state, we find the beauty of nature everywhere, daddy and the land itself, taught us how to look for and find it.

The Bar-O had been an active participant to many important times and phases of my life. I was lucky to practically grow up there and very privileged to help my own children do the same and learn the *appreciation* that I did. The Bar-O was an integral part of my life as an exploring child, as a teenager on my first deer hunt; as a new bride sharing my 'beloved part of the world' with a new husband, as a young mother trying to be brave enough to turn my own children loose, so they can explore the country as I did, and taking the time to teach them the values that my parents and the land helped instill in me. The land shared my most precious memories and also helped me find myself again as rough times came around.

The land even helped us heal after my husband of twenty years died suddenly of a heart attack at forty-one years old. After we buried him, the kids and I made a special trip to the Bar-O to bury his "Llano clothes" and hat that he always wore during happy times at the ranch. He always loved a huge, old cottonwood tree that leaned precariously over a ravine that fed into Big Sandy. He named it "The Leanin' Tree" and it became a popular landmark for us for many years. The children and I buried his Llano regalia under the branches of that beloved, old tree. Somehow, it was comforting to us to know that part of him will always be there.

On a recent trip, some eight years later, we went to visit "The Leanin' Tree". As we drove the truck nearer to the ravine, we somehow sensed that the area had changed. Sure enough, the tree was gone. That old tree which we were sure could tell many stories of decades past, maybe even centuries, had finally died and fallen into the ravine. For some reason, instead of being sad or upset, it was almost fitting, signifying to us that as nature had its cycles of death and rebirth, that maybe that is what we should learn to do also, and finally let go.

I feel so thankful to have been a recipient of such special gifts. Words cannot express my gratitude for the legacy that was given to me. Dad helped us learn and encouraged us to explore what was around us. He knew the land was a good teacher also. What a good partnership they had in raising us. I feel so blessed that dad is still around and still teaching us lessons in life, as well as encouraging us when we are down and out. He turned eighty years old on January 31st. How can I ever repay the love and the lessons he has given to me?

Maybe I just answered my own question. I can help continue the legacy that daddy and the land have entrusted to me and my family. As an adult, I feel it is my place to help spark that special interest in the land, and all that is in it, to those around me, especially young people.

Of course, my dream is to have a little place of my own near Llano someday, but that dream may never pan out. I can, however, volunteer or become a docent at a nature center or part, closer to my Arlington home. It is not quite the same as "La Lomeria" but again, the land taught me what to look for and appreciate, no matter where I am. I also have a super grandson and a brand new granddaughter to start working on now, so I can leave them the gift, this same legacy to appreciate and to cherish. Just maybe, it is a legacy for true contentment and happiness.

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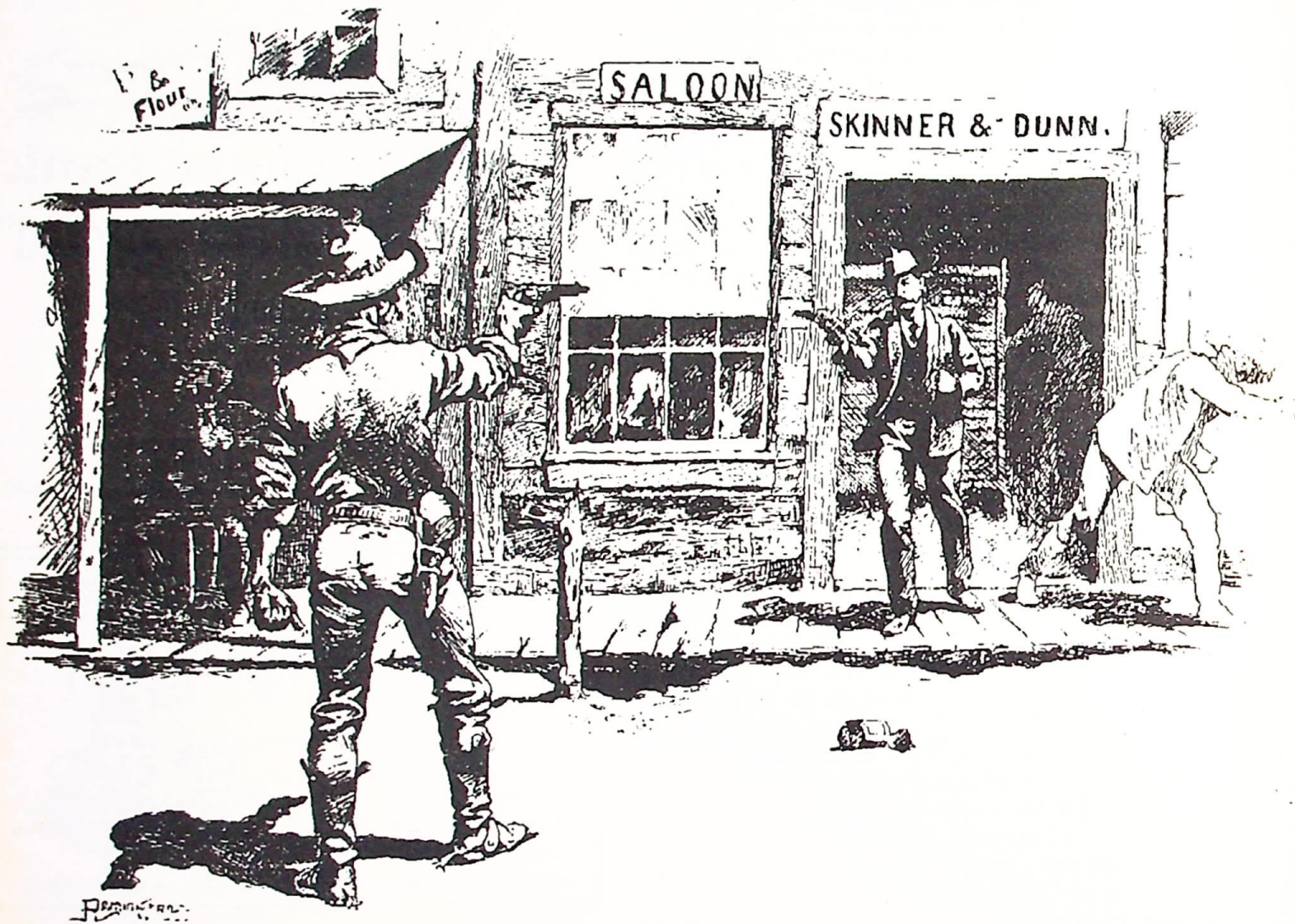
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THE JAYBIRD-WOODPECKER WAR OF FORT BEND COUNTY



BY GARY BROWN

In a small town filled with history and historical markers, the gray stone obelisk with the bird on top of the pyramidal point is not easy to find. Positioned on the historical courthouse square, it is, in fact located at the corner of Fourth and Morton Streets a block from the current two courthouse buildings in downtown Richmond.

Next to the monument is a yellowish brick building serving as the city hall—the ugliest building in this area of town that consists mostly of historical structures converted into antique stores and gift shops.

Driving slowly down Morton Street, I finally see the marker ahead of me and from a distance it looks like dozens of other

Texas markers I've visited around the state. Immediately I recognized the stone bird carved on the top of it. It looked like a pigeon resting.

I pulled up and parked, the small granite bird continued to resemble a pigeon but this bird is not going to fly off when I walk up. The bird's not a pigeon; it's a jaybird and its silence in the late afternoon winter cold and wind belies the story it could tell if only it could become animated.

This jaybird is here as the result of a promise made long ago and the story it would tell would be that of the short, violent and infamous Jaybird-Woodpecker War of Fort Bend County in 1888-1889.

I got out of my truck and walked around the base of the obelisk. The side facing Morton Street has a short history of the marker and the other three sides are dedicated to individuals: J. M. Shamblin, H. H. Frost and L. E. Gibson. All, according to the inscriptions, met violent and early deaths in trying to restore legitimate and honest government in Fort Bend County.

But the story is much more complicated than that. No monument of this size could begin to relate the story of the Jaybird-Woodpecker War or its origins and causes. The war was a result of local antagonisms following Reconstruction. It crossed racial, political and social lines. And it was very violent.

Richmond and Fort Bend County following Reconstruction found local and county government controlled by a small group of White politicians elected into office through recently freed "colored" voters and a few Black political office holders. Most of these incumbents had been in office since the 1884 elections and were up for reelection in 1888.

With Reconstruction officially ended in Texas, the Fort Bend Democratic Party decided to reunite and regain control of local and county politics. But after over twenty years of being denied office, they were far from united despite the fact they represented nearly every adult White male in Fort Bend County.

During the summer of 1888, these men attempted to organize and throw the hated Reconstruction politicians out of office. Bob Chapel, an old Negro many said was half-crazy was known for his rambling and singing about the Jaybirds and Woodpeckers. Somehow the lyrics of his singing became associated with the two sides in the 1888 elections.

Initially applied to the Democrats in derision, the term "Jaybird" came to be adopted by the group and they began referring to the incumbent politicians as "Woodpeckers" hidden in their holes. By the fall of 1888 the Democrats were officially referring to themselves as the Jaybird Club.

But by then the sides were polarized and the killing had begun.

Not surprisingly, the Jaybirds were attempting to reestablish themselves as the political force in Fort Bend County by, among other tactics, restricting the "colored" vote.

One of the more prominent Jaybirds, a plantation owner named J. M. Shamblin gave a warning that he would not allow any Negro agitators on his plantation. Earlier that year he had charged two Blacks from the county with stealing cotton and had testified in their indictments.

One evening at the beginning of August in 1888, Shamblin was reading in his home at Walnut Grove Plantation when someone shot through a window and mortally wounded him.

As help arrived at the plantation, a note was discovered on the letterhead of H. H. Frost, another Jaybird activist. The unsigned handwritten note accused Shamblin of attempting to intimidate and manipulate the Negroes and stated the author was "a republican".

Shamblin, on his death bed, identified the handwriting as belonging to one of the Negroes he had charged with stealing cotton and subsequent investigation found more letterhead at the home of the accused and an arrest was made.

After threats of a lynching, the accused was moved to Houston and would eventually become the subject of a widely publicized trial, found guilty and hanged for Shamblin's death.

But, back in Richmond during the pre-election fall of 1888, the killing of Shamblin created an atmosphere of hatred and fear. One month later, on September 3, Henry H. Frost himself was the victim of an attempted assassination as he closed his

The Woodpeckers, for their part, were not conciliatory either. Woodpecker Sheriff Tom Garvey would get drunk and publicly abuse Jaybird supporters—even pulling a gun and forcing them to do humiliating public acts such as stooping to pick up his hat.

merchandise store that evening.

A deputy tax assessor named Jack Randal was arrested shortly after the shooting and bloodhounds from the local prison led a posse to a house in the Negro part of town and three local Black men were arrested.

The accused were kept in jail—probably for personal protection—then as tempers cooled all four were no-billed by a grand jury and released.

In response, the Jaybirds decided to "organize" again and held a series of meetings in Richmond during September. At one of these meetings, the Republicans were blamed for the killing of Shamblin and wounding of Frost and a list of Negroes was drawn up with instructions that they were to leave the county within ten hours.

About three hundred of the group then marched through Richmond to the homes of those on the list and "official notification" given to those who could be found.

Although one of the marchers, a hotheaded agitator named Kyle Terry, had to be restrained from violence several times the group did not turn into a lynch mob as Terry had advocated.

When some of the group went to an address outside of town, they met resistance and, in the resulting standoff, a large group of armed men assembled in Richmond amid rumors that hundreds of armed Blacks were moving towards Fort Bend County. Amidst the confusion, threats and rumors, the Fort Bend County sheriff requested the governor send in Texas Rangers and several were promptly dispatched.

Tensions remained at a high point until the standoff ended with the voluntary departure of the Negroes on the list. At this point, despite the tensions and threats of violence, only Shamblin and Frost had been physically attacked and now, just before the election, there was a general feeling that the worst was over.

In reality, it was just the calm before the storm and the killing was just beginning.

On September 21, the Jaybirds met again and nominated a slate of candidates to contest the upcoming election.

The Woodpeckers also coordinated their roster of incumbents with new candidates that included, surprisingly, the hothead Kyle Terry for tax assessor. Terry had sought, and been denied, the spot on the Jaybird ticket when the Democrats nominated Ned Gibson.

During October an agreement was reached between the two sides that a series of barbecues featuring debates would be held

throughout Fort Bend County—a surprising agreement given the general tendency toward violence and the previous summer. The agreement did include, however, the provision that the debate would be attended unarmed. Initially they progressed peacefully.

On October 19, however, Kyle Terry launched a personal attack on the absent Jaybird candidate, Ned Gibson. Gibson's brother was present and took exception—drawing a prohibited pistol. In the resulting melee, the Gibson brother was disarmed and violence was averted. Once more, an overall feeling that the preceding summer's incidents were finally finished for good.

The election was held under the supervision of the Texas Rangers on November 6, 1888 and for some unknown reason the majority of White voters never bothered to vote. Despite a reduced Black voter turnout, the Woodpeckers won every single position on the ballot again. The Jaybirds, expecting to sweep the ticket, did not gain one single office.

The result was a continuation of post-Reconstruction politics in Fort Bend County and the immediate reaction among the Jaybird majority was hostility, bitterness and the threats of revenge.

The Woodpeckers, for their part, were not conciliatory either. Woodpecker Sheriff Tom Garvey would get drunk and publicly abuse Jaybird supporters—even pulling a gun and forcing them to do humiliating public acts such as stooping to pick up his hat.

Other public incidents continued to occur and it was only a matter of time until the two sides resorted to violence once again.

In mid-November, Kyle Terry—always ready to fight—attacked his former opponent, Ned Gibson, and brutally beat him. Neither party responded to counter demands for a public duel and the incident died down until the spring of 1889 when Gibson was scheduled to testify in a cattle rebranding case in nearby Wharton.

The accused cattle rustler happened to be a friend of Terry's and, as Gibson left his hotel for the courthouse, Terry stepped from a saloon and shotgunned him to death. He was jailed, posted bond and left Richmond for Galveston where he remained throughout 1889 and into 1890.

Gibson had been a very popular man in Richmond and, despite being a Jaybirder, had been considered a voice of reason during this tense period. His murder had serious repercussions back in his hometown and eight Texas Rangers were reassigned to Richmond to keep the peace.

The Gibson murder occurred in June of 1889 and in August, four of the Rangers were withdrawn. Almost immediately, the tension level in the community rose again.

On the afternoon of August 16, J. W. Parker and Will Wade, both Woodpeckers, left the courthouse on Morton and Fourth Streets and ran into Guilf and Volney Gibson on Jackson Street, one block over.

The shoot-out that followed resulted in Guilf Gibson wounding Parker and chasing him back into the courthouse. Volney Gibson and Wade dismounted and fired at each other but the only casualty in that initial firefight was a young Black girl who had been standing on the sidewalk.

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Immediately, at least a dozen armed men poured out of the buildings and started toward the courthouse. Among those was Henry Frost, who had been wounded in the assassination attempt the year before.

The Woodpecker sheriff and his two deputies appeared on the courthouse square and the area became a heavy fire zone from all directions. Sheriff Garvey's body was riddled with bullets and one of the deputies, Harry Mason, was wounded and forced back into the courthouse.

Henry Frost was shot by the other deputy, Tom Smith, while crossing the street but managed to stagger two blocks down to Sixth Street where a Jaybirder named Yandel Feris was holding a Woodpecker supporter named Jake Blakely at gunpoint. Although mortally wounded, Frost approached Feris, grabbed his gun, and shot Blakely point blank, killing him immediately.

With darkness, the shooting stopped and the Woodpecker officials—several with serious wounds—holed up in the courthouse for several days.

On the other side, Volney Gibson and another supporter were wounded. One of the Texas Rangers was also wounded.

A request was wired to Governor Ross for help and he responded by dispatching companies of the Houston Light Guards and Brenham Guards to Richmond. More Rangers were sent in and the governor himself traveled to Richmond to serve as mediator between the two sides. Henry Frost died in his home as the governor was visiting.

The governor appointed one of the Rangers, Ira Arten, as county sheriff and installed a respected Brazoria County lawyer, M. J. Hickert, as county judge. Within a few weeks every Woodpecker officeholder had resigned office or had been removed. Most left Fort Bend County for good. Kyle Terry remained in Galveston under indictment for the Ned Gibson murder but the killing had stopped in Richmond. The Jaybird-Woodpecker War of Fort Bend County was over.

In the fall of 1889 the Jaybird Democratic Association was organized and took complete and total control of Fort Bend County politics that lasted for the next seventy years.

J. W. Parker was indicted for the killing of the young Black girl in the shoot-out with the Gibsons. His trial was moved to Galveston County and scheduled for hearing with the Terry trial on his charges of killing Ned Gibson.

On the morning of January 21, 1890 the courthouse in Galveston became a repeat scene as the two parties again had a shoot-out. This time Kyle Terry was killed in a hail of bullets. Volney Gibson and several of his supporters were charged with the murder of Terry but the charges would eventually be dismissed.

Henry Frost, who had died in the company of Governor Ross after the August 16th shoot-out, had had a premonition much earlier that he would be killed in the conflict. In foretelling his death, he asked two friends to have the Jaybird Association build a monument to him and those who died with him. He asked that a Jaybird be created upon the crest of the monument.

And so, on this wintery day, the street has grown deserted as the shops are all closed along Morton Street now. It's getting dark and the wind has died down. From its perch on the pyramidal point of the obelisk, the granite jaybird surveys a silent historical county courthouse square.

But it has not always been quiet here.



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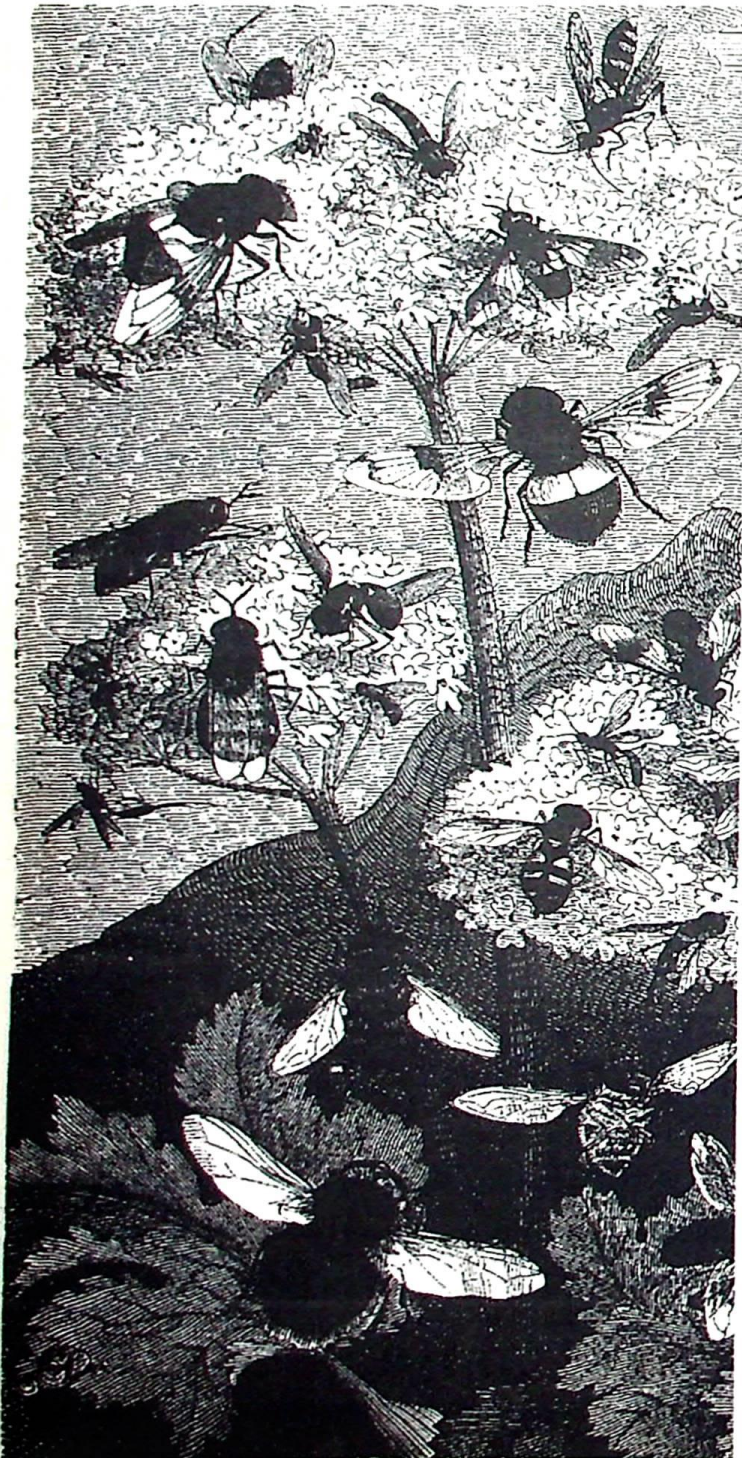
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THE PRICE OF THE SWEETEST HONEY

By MARION K. TAYLOR



When he heard the rustle in the brush next to the trail that paralleled the creek, Roan Livingston turned to face the sound and waited, shotgun ready. He heard no other sound but suddenly into the trail, twelve feet from him, stepped a crooked old man.

The old man was dressed in ragged overalls and a faded blue denim work shirt with holes at the elbows and no buttons at the cuffs. He wore patched rubber boots that came to a point just below his knees. On his head was a battered straw hat which failed to conceal his straggly gray hair. Tobacco juice stained his grizzled beard. He was so hunched over with age that he looked directly toward the ground as he walked, and he looked forward only by thrusting out his chin and raising his eyebrows to peer about. Over his bent left shoulder he carried a double-bit axe.

Oscar first peered up the path that he had stepped into, then, turning his whole body stiffly, he peered down the path in the direction of Roan.

"Mornin' Oscar," said Roan in a rather too loud voice.

"That you, Roan?" asked the old man as he hobbled down the path. He rested the axe on the ground and stuck out his hand. They shook hands warmly as Oscar peered upward at Roan as best he could.

"What you doin' with the axe?" asked Roan.

"Axe, what axe?" croaked Oscar as he peered about him. "Oh, *this* axe," he said as he spied it in his left hand. "I carry this axe with me to mark my wild bee trees. After I mark 'em I come back in the fall and cut some of 'em to git the honey I need for winter. I eat a lot of honey in the wintertime 'cause it's good for my rheumatiz. What I don't eat myself I trade for groceries in town, and once in a while I trade a jar of it to Slick Jensen for a jar of his moonshine whiskey."

"How do you go about findin' a bee tree? I spend a lot of time in these woods and I don't ever stumble on one."

"You don't stumble on bee trees. You gotta know how to look for 'em. Since you're a friend of mine and not in the honey stealing business, I'll tell you if you promise not to give away my secret."

"I promise," said Roan.

"Well," continued Oscar, after hawking and spitting a brown stream into a nearby bush, "I go find me a water hole that is bein' used by wild bees. I set and watch which way these bees go when they leave the water hole. You know a wild bee flies as straight a line as he can from the water to his bee tree. After I see about a dozen bees flyin' in the same direction, I foller 'em."

"But how do you see 'em after you leave the water hole?"

"You don't stumble on bee trees. You gotta know how to look for 'em. Since you're a friend of mine and not in the honey stealing business, I'll tell you if you promise not to give away my secret."

"I walk about forty yards or so in the direction they have gone and then I lay down on the ground. I'm so bent over with the rheumatiz now, I have to lay down on the ground in order to look at the sky. I watch the sky for some of 'em to fly over goin' from the water hole to their tree. After I have agin found the line the bees are flyin' I move on another forty yards and do the same thing over agin."

"Don't it take a long time to find some of the trees?"

"It shore does, 'cause sometimes the tree may be a long way from the water hole the bees are usin'. About six years ago I spent seventeen days jist findin' one bee tree. It was a goodun though. Course sometimes I git lucky and find the tree in only an hour or so."

"How do you mark the tree once you've found it? Like I said before, I spend a lot of time in these woods and I ain't never found a tree with your mark on it."

"The secret is to mark the tree so that nobody will see my mark by jist lookin' at the tree. If they find the tree by trailin' the bees like I do and then look at the tree trunk to see if the tree is marked, they will look a lot closer and see my mark."

"What kinda mark do you put on your trees?"

"I mark it by carvin' the letter **H** into the bark, but I always do it on the side of the tree that ain't likely to be seen by somebody jist walkin' past. If I made a mark so that it could be seen easy, then honey thieves would start lookin' for my marks instead of lookin' for the bees."

"Have you ever had a problem lookin' for a particular tree?"

"Oh, yeah. I did have a problem last summer with one," cackled Oscar, with a gleam in his faded eyes. "Spent the better part of four days trackin' these bees from a water hole through thick brush and across a couple of swamps, but I finally found 'em." He peered up at Roan expectantly as if waiting for him to say something.

"Where did you find 'em?" asked Roan after a time.

"I found 'em in a bee hive box in Widow Elsie Brown's back yard," croaked Oscar. He laughed as he slapped Roan on the shoulder and then slapped his own thigh repeatedly. He laughed so hard that tears streamed down his withered cheeks. The laughing finally ended in a spasm of coughing.

"I understand that forbidden honey is the sweetest honey of all," said Roan after a moment of silence.

"It is. You have to pay a terrible price for it. Me and Widow Brown are gonna git married next week."

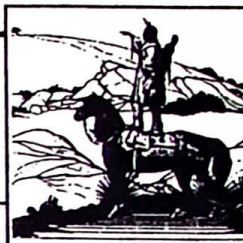
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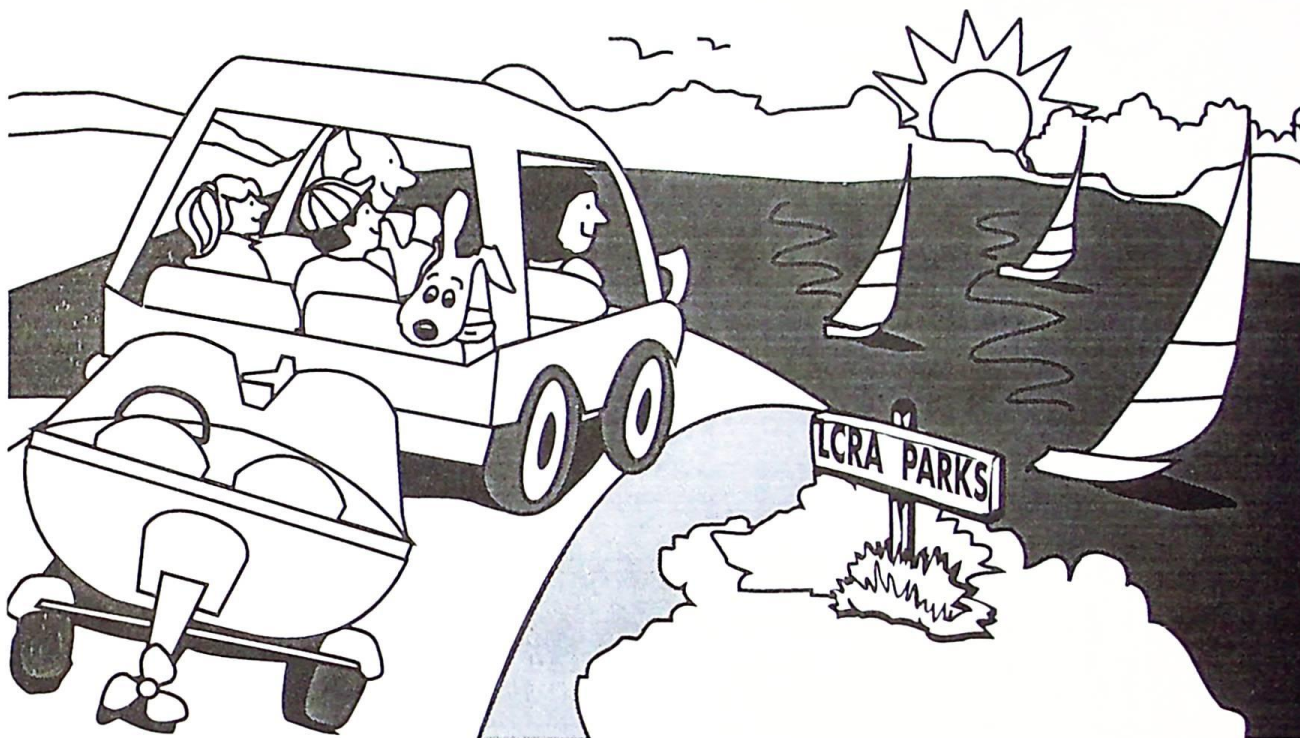
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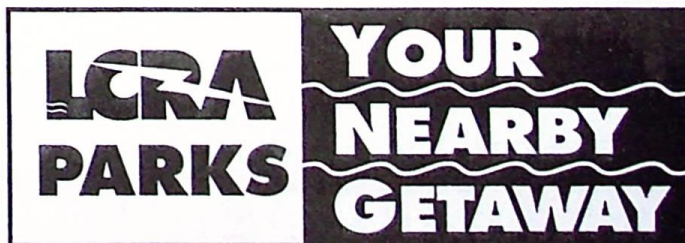
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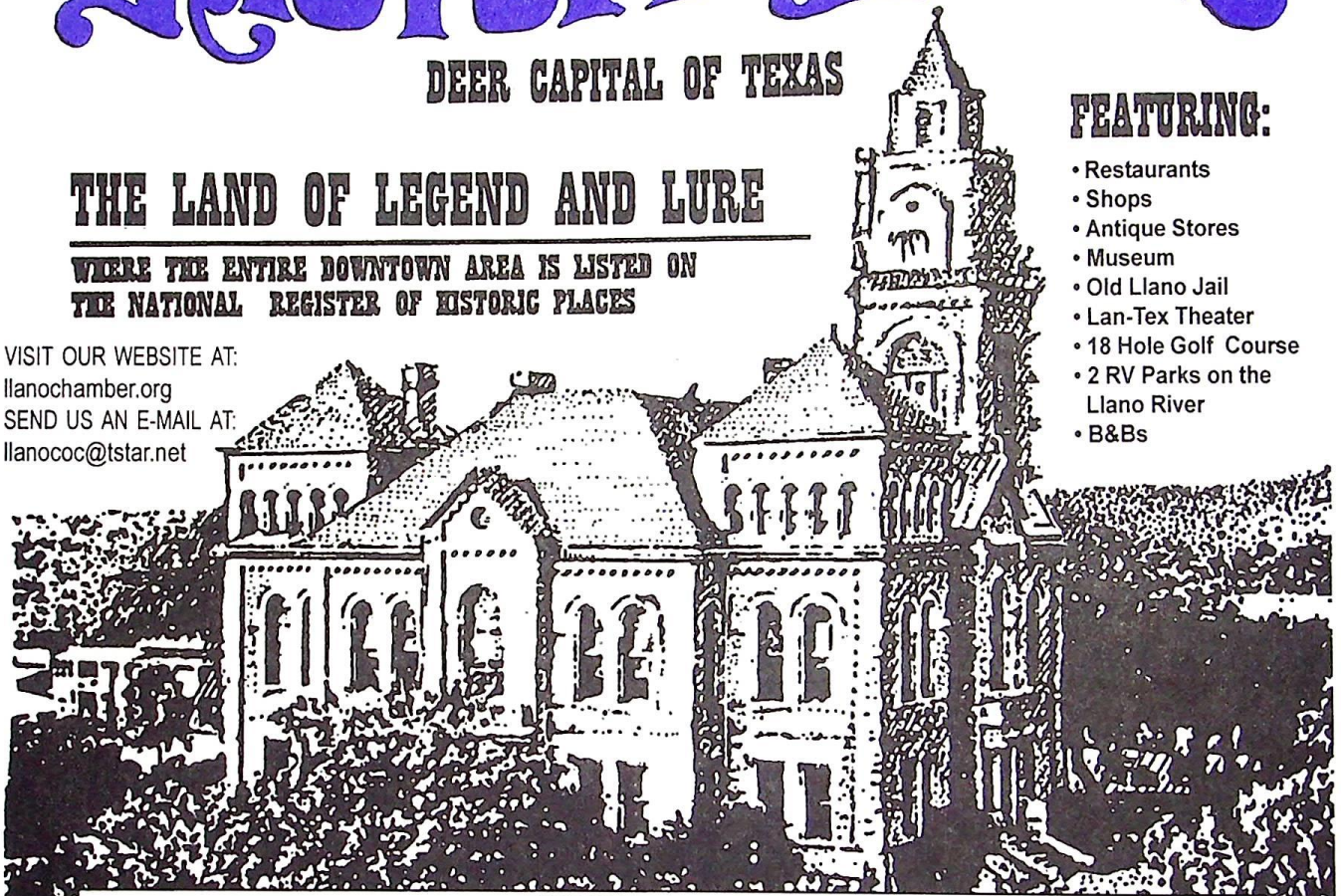
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16/17	Bud Light Team Roping	25	Castell Volunteer Fire Department Bar-B-Q
23	9th Annual Chamber of Commerce Bar-B-Q Cook Off		SEPTEMBER
JUNE		19	Texas Indian Hobbyist Fall Meet
5	63rd Annual Llano Rodeo Parade	25-27	Mack Yates Memorial Roping
5/6	63rd Annual Llano County Rodeo		OCTOBER
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