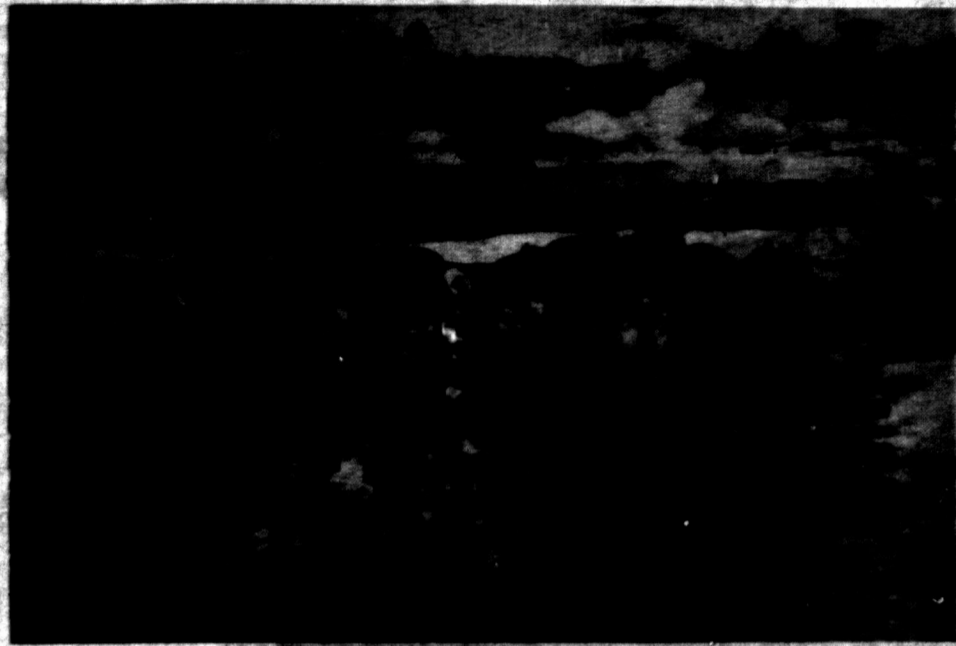


Summer 1992

# amy winton, psa



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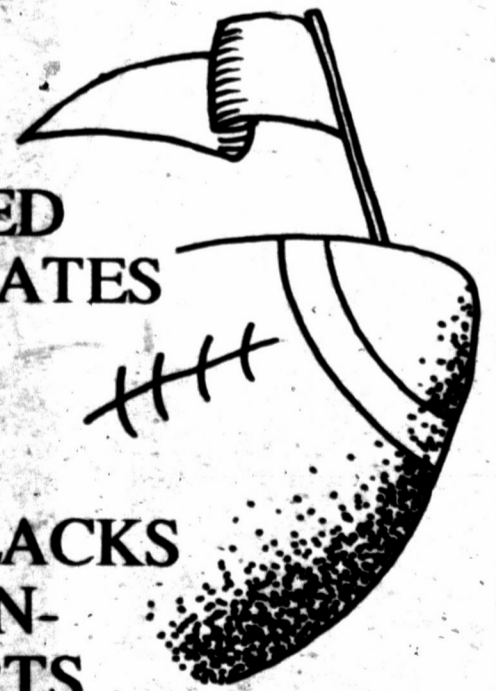
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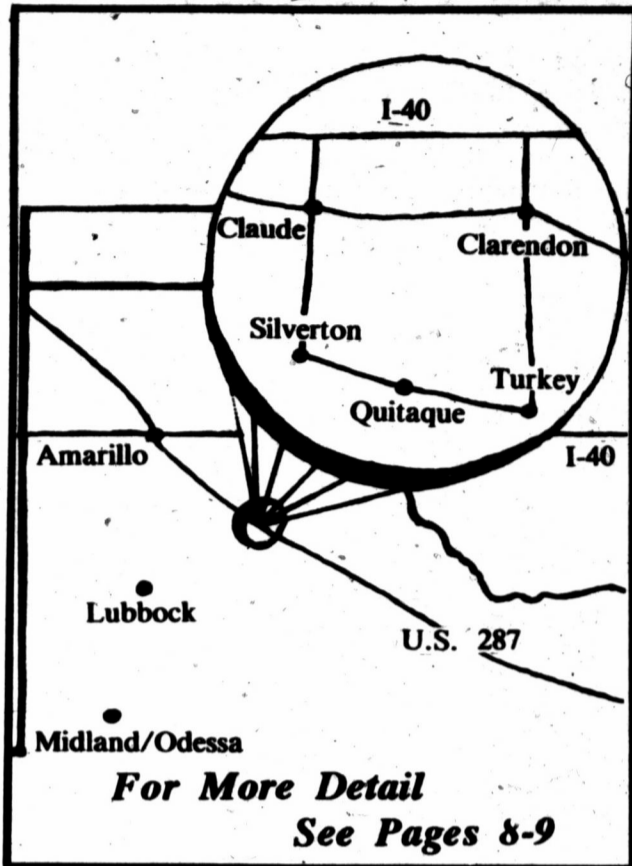
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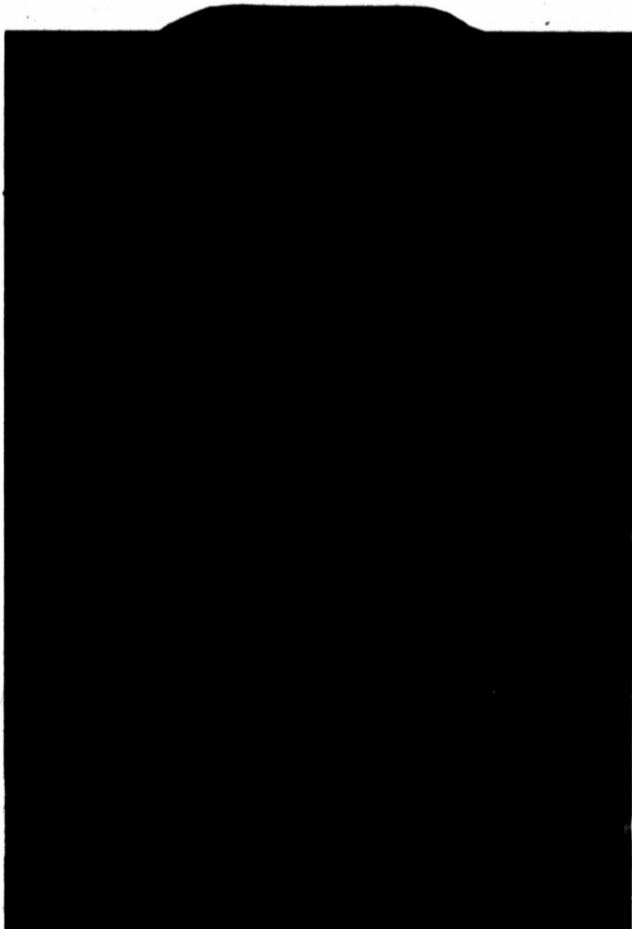
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**Prairie Dog Gazette Staff:**  
 Kevin Welch, Judy Welch,  
 and Pat Sikes

# Dream of Caprock Trailway Becomes Reality

In Quitaque, July 9, 1992 marks the end of an arduous period of hard work and planning. Furthermore, this date signals the beginning of an adventurous era that will entail even more work and perseverance.

It was on this date that the Texas Parks & Wildlife Commission unanimously voted to accept the donation of 64 miles of Burlington railroad right-of-way. This corridor, from 18 miles east of Plainview to

Estelline, will become the Caprock Canyons State Park Trailways.

The trails for hiking, biking, and horseback riding pass through some of the most historic and scenic country in the area. From the High Plains through the canyons of the Red River, the route includes the heart of Comanchero country, the Valley of Tears, dugouts, Jonathan Ferris Switch (a major cattle shipping point), the pioneer Lazy

F, Shoe Bar, and Ox Bow ranches and the last operable train tunnel in Texas.

Interest in the project began four years ago when Burlington Northern began considering the abandonment of the rail line. Former Briscoe County Judge Jimmy Ross and others initiated a

search for a way to utilize the land. For over a year this specific project was planned and negotiated with broad community involvement. Some of the leaders of the project include Rusty Sargent, Elgin Conner, Truman Merrel, and Steve Ulrey who says, "our biggest job now is to let people know why this

line is important, more than just a hiking path." The national group "Rails to Trails" has been helpful during the planning and negotiating stages of development.

Ulrey also notes that the project has benefited from the advice of

*Continued on page 5.*

**BIG C TRADING POST**

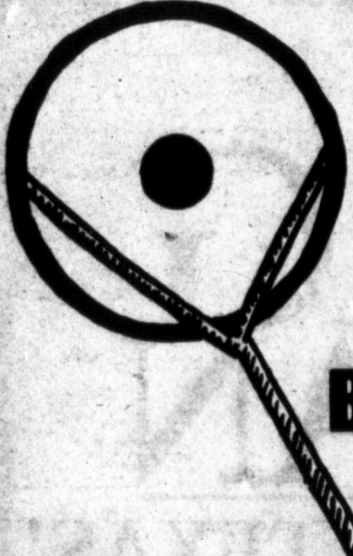
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*Community leaders and Texas Parks officials consider project plans from Caprock Canyons RR bridge.*



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## Quitaque's Trailway

Continued from page 4.

Peter Herschend who developed Silver Dollar City in Branson, Missouri. When the Quitaque group went to Branson with another interested party from Clarendon, Herschend cautioned them to start slowly and build a firm foundation for any project. "We've taken the time to do things carefully and to involve all the community," Ulrey explains.

Together, the public and private entities involved plan to begin full operation in the Spring of 1993. Burlington Northern hopes to have the rails and ballast removed in a few months. At that time interpretive exhibits and the actual trails will be developed.

The Trailways will be managed by the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department as a unit of Caprock Canyons State Park.



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## Ranch Tells Tales of Past

A ranch is more than just grass and cows. The land itself holds the heritage made by the people and events that have touched it.

The Triangle Tail Ranch lies southwest of Claude and speaks as eloquently of its history as any ranch in the area.

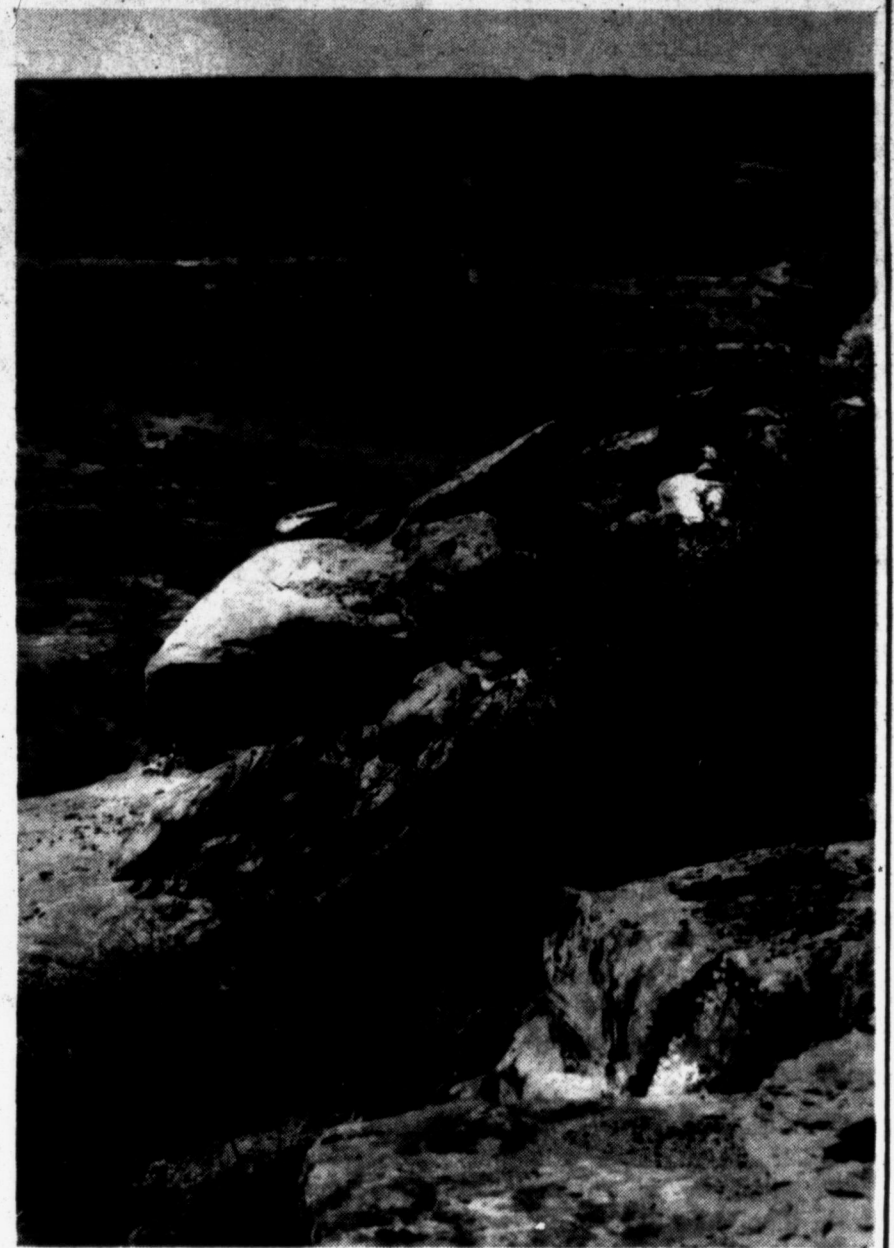
Although the Triangle Tail was created in 1917 when Edward Harrell bought its 35,000 acres from the original JA Ranch, the land's history is as deep as the Palo Duro Canyon which crosses it.

Thousands of years ago the Prairie Dog Town Fork of the Red River began to carve the steep walls of the canyon, providing shelter adopted by Indians of the region. Artifacts and historical accounts indicate that the decisive Cavalry/Indian battle of the Red River War occurred in this segment of the canyon.

After hostilities ceased, pioneer rancher Charles Goodnight and partner John Adair formed the JA Ranch and a line camp near the Harrell family's present ranch headquarters. The stone bunkhouse and smokehouse of the JA's Rush Creek division still stand where the high plains descend into Palo Duro.

Standing in the river bottom, surrounded by the songs of red-winged blackbirds and the whispered flow of water, one can almost hear the creaking leather saddles of cowboys past and the breathing and muffled hoofbeats of their horses.

Continued on page 13.



Triangle Tail Ranch overlook of Palo Duro Canyon.

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# History Natural For Artist

Art and history are inseparable for Otho Stubbs of Turkey. His closely researched drawings, paintings, and sculptures based on local history are well known. However, the collection of artifacts amassed during his research are equally intriguing.

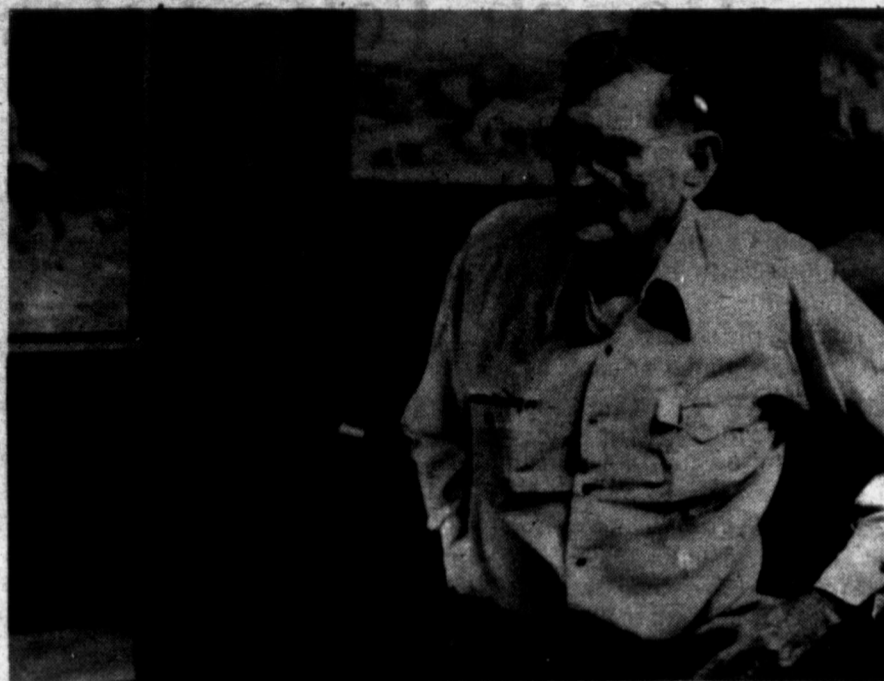
Stubbs is a self-trained archaeologist and natural historian who started down this trail as a young cowboy. He became familiar with the Caprock area and some of its past while working on the famous Matador, Mill Iron, Shoe Bar, LX, and Bell ranches.

His interest in the land and the events that shaped it led him to a career as an artist. Researching for historical accuracy in his work provided a starting point for the collection that makes his home look like a museum.

Many of Stubbs' finds are of Native American origin. There are over 600 catalogued and indexed pieces in his collection, some over 20,000 years old.

Other finds include spurs and ring bits left behind by Spanish explorers north of Silverton. Another highly prized item is a prehistoric horse skull which he estimates to be over 1,500,000 years old.

According to his wife, Dr. Dora Crandall, "Every time someone finds a rock or an artifact, they bring it to Otho to learn what it is."



Otho Stubbs incorporates natural history with his western art.

Sometimes the artifacts actually become part of his art. A buffalo's shoulder blade became the "canvas" for his 1972 painting entitled "Buffalo Wallow."

Numerous specimens of local wildlife are preserved by Stubbs and displayed around his home. Among them are a ring-tailed cat and a huge six-foot-long rattlesnake.

Otho is a talking encyclopedia with a historian's remarkable ability to remember dates and places. In recalling the origin of the town of Turkey, Stubbs said that Turkey Roost (the town's first name) was a line camp for the Lazy F Ranch. The early structure, a favorite roosting place for wild turkeys,

became a store with unofficial mailboxes for nearby residents. In 1892, Stubbs explained, the official post office was established there.

The "museum" in Stubbs' home is open to the public. "I never turn anyone away," he says, "but call first."

He has recently written a book entitled *Otho Stubbs: A Lasting Legacy*. "It's a lot of history that goes way back in the Caprock--the Valley of Tears, Blanco Canyon, Mackenzie's Raiders--all authentic," Stubbs said. The book contains 51 color photographs of his paintings, sketches, and some of the artifacts in his collection. It is available through Stubbs: Box 115, Turkey TX 79261, 806-423-1294.

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POWER  
IS ON

# "Downtown Daredevils"

The ninth annual Burleson Memorial Roping will be held July 24, 25, and 26 at the Burleson Arena in Flomot, south of Turkey. Cutting horse competition and team penning are scheduled for Friday. Youth horse riding events and the team roping begin on Saturday. Sunday morning the team roping concludes, and the entertaining pasture roping events begin at 1:00 p.m.

Proceeds from the three days of events benefit the Ranch and Feedlot Operations Scholarship Fund at Clarendon Junior College.

In the nine years since it was founded, the Scholarship Fund has allowed 25 young men and women to participate in the Ranch and Feedlot program.

Rodeoing at Flomot, Texas is a long-standing tradition in the Burleson family. As early as 1939, W. E. Burleson and Norman Martin sponsored and promoted the Flomot Rodeo near the town.

Wanting more than the customary makeshift arena, made by parking cars in a circle, Burleson and Martin set to work building the arena, later named in their honor.

At the same time, the "Downtown Flomot Daredevils," a group of working cowboys (and one cowgirl) were making a name for themselves at all the local rodeos. Known for their toughness, skill and competitiveness were Dude Barton (later named to the Cowgirl Hall of Fame), John Bourland, Rooster Gilbert, France, and Clayton Barton, Bob Echols, Jr., Buster Durham, Pete Keeling, and, naturally, Martin and Burleson.

They spent many Sunday afternoons practicing, often in sandstorms. The cowboys claimed this improved their times, since they were acclimated to these conditions, while their opponents were not. This gave them an edge in actual competition should the south wind kick up the dust (as it was prone to do).

S. C. and Lou Burleson are continuing the family tradition of rodeoing at Flomot. They host many youth-oriented team roping events. The events are held in an arena they built on land which has been in the family for generations. S.C.'s grandfather, I. E. Martin, established his homestead there in a dugout around 1891.

For more information on this year's Memorial Roping, phone Lou Burleson at (806) 983-2977. Better yet, come out to Flomot for a weekend of high quality horsemanship and roping skill. From Turkey, take Highway 70 south to FM 2009. Turn right and follow the signs about four miles to the arena.

# Memorable Night



*Editor's Note: We are grateful to Glenna Haley Garrison of Amarillo for sharing this photograph and personal recollection of an interesting encounter her family had in the early 1900's.*

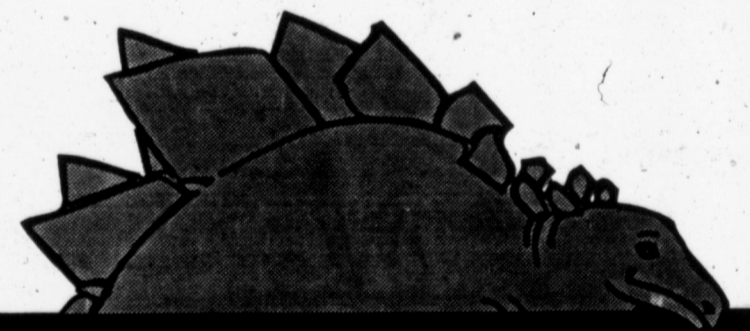
When I was 3 1/2, my mother's sister and family came to visit us in Clarendon. My dad, Will Haley, rigged up a covered wagon and we traveled to Col. Goodnight's ranch to see his buffalo. That evening we were to spend the night in the wagon yard at Claude. After a meal off the chuck wagon, we were ready to sleep in the wagon when the building next to us caught fire and burned to the ground. My dad and my uncle were able to get us out safely including his beloved mules. Col. Goodnight was at the scene and was kind enough to offer us a night's lodging in his bunkhouse. He also took care of the mules.

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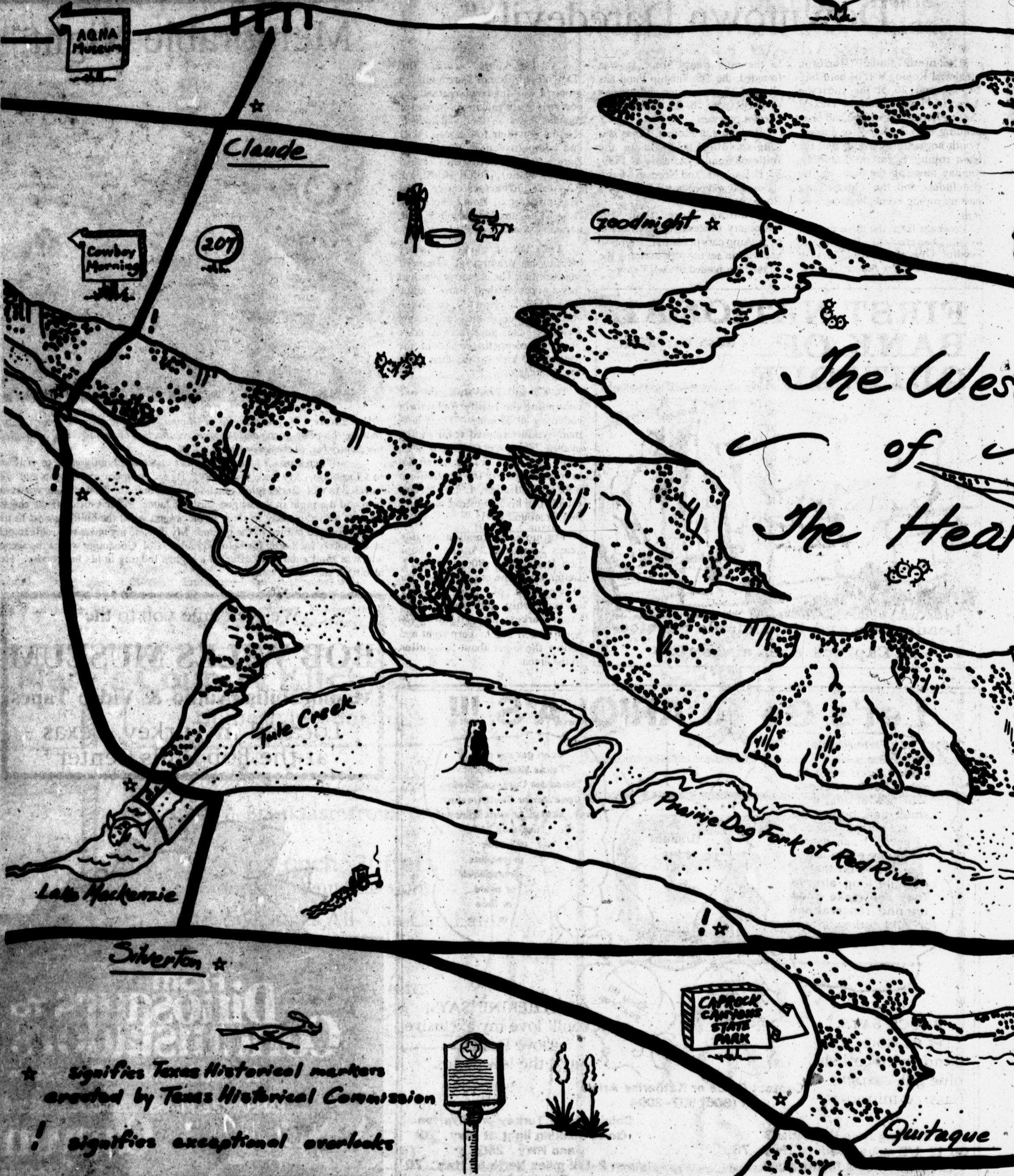
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# Along The Trail

*"The West of the Heart"* is this region of the Texas Panhandle where the Llano Estacado tumbles down the rugged Caprock Escarpment, finding comfort at last in the gentle, rolling plains. A drive through the land stirs up ancient dust. Every particle, as it settles, has a tale to tell. Here, still, the values of the West's most potent symbol, the quintessential cowboy, remain in the hearts of the people.

**Clarendon** - One of the three earliest centers of Panhandle government. Donley County seat, 1890. Settled 1878 as a "Christian colony." Strict moral codes of colonists conflicted with free-spirited life of cowboys, prompting nickname "Saints' Roost." On the Salt Fork of the Red River, cattle range of JA, RO, and many other pioneer ranches.

**Claude** - Armstrong County seat, 1890. Established as a stop on the Fort Worth & Denver City Railroad line and named for a train engineer. Nearby landmark is JA Ranch Headquarters, still home of original owner John Adair's descendants. To the east is the site of the house and grave of legendary plainsman Col. Charles Goodnight in the town named for him.

**Quitaque** - In Briscoe County. Probably named for the early Quitaca Indian tribe which scouted for Spanish explorers. Gateway to Caprock Canyons State Park. Sidewalk Museum recreates ranching/farming life and times. Heart of infamous Comanchero-Indian trade territory. Nearby campsite of tragic 1841 Texas-Santa Fe Expedition.

**Silverton** - Briscoe County seat, 1892. Named by Mrs. Z. T. Braidfoot, wife of ranch settler, for aesthetic appeal. East of historic Tule (Indian name for "marsh grass") Canyon and region of U. S. Cavalry-Southern Plains Indian wars. Landmark 1894 jailhouse represents Old West struggle for law and order.

**Turkey** - In Hall County. Originally named "Turkey Roost" for wild turkeys on nearby creek. The town grew around a line camp cabin which became a general store and settlers' mail exchange. Official post office established in 1892. Museum, memorial and annual celebration honor Western Swing King Bob Wills.

## Area Lakes

**Greenbelt Reservoir** - near Clarendon, 3 1/2 miles north from US 287 on TX 70. Spring-fed 1,990 surface acres. Northern Pike Capital of Texas. Permit required. Public marina, ramps, several bait shops nearby. Concessions. RV parks. Contact Manager, Greenbelt Water Authority, P.O. Box 665, Clarendon, TX 79226, phone 806-874-3650.

**Lake Mackenzie** - 12 miles northwest of Silverton via TX 86 West or 45 miles south of Claude via TX 207 South. An 896 surface-acre reservoir in historic Tule Canyon. RV hookups. Ramps, floating docks. Contact Mackenzie Water Authority, Rt. 1, Box 14, Silverton, TX 79257, phone 806-633-4326.

**Lake Theo** - in Caprock Canyons State Park, 4 miles northwest of Quitaque on FR 1065. One of two Texas habitats for salt water herring on 120 acres. Annual rainbow trout stocking in December. Concessions. Various shelters and comfort facilities. Vehicle access fee, overnight is extra. Contact Superintendent, Caprock Canyons State Park, P.O. Box 204, Quitaque, TX 79255, phone 806-455-1492.

## Points of Interest

All the highways of the area provide beautiful views; however, TX 207 south of Claude and TX 256 east of Silverton have especially dramatic views of canyonland.

**Caprock Canyons State Park** - 13,960 acres, recreation and archeological sites, north from Quitaque. Contact 806-455-1492.

**Goodnight Cemetery** - north of US 287 at Goodnight. Col. Charles Goodnight's grave and a feeling of lonesome prairies.

## Historical Markers:

- Armstrong County Courthouse Square US 287, in Claude.
- Dugout (pioneer family home), TX 207 between Claude and Silverton.
- Overlook TX 207, near Briscoe County line.
- Lake Mackenzie overlook TX 207.
- Briscoe County Courthouse Square TX 86, in Silverton.
- Comanchero Trail picnic area, TX 86, between Silverton and Quitaque.
- Hotel Turkey, One block north of TX 86, in Turkey.
- JA Ranch, between Clarendon and Claude.
- Sites within towns of Clarendon and Claude.
- Col. Charles Goodnight's House US 287, near the community of Goodnight.



# SHADOWS SEEM TO FOLLOW CORINNE

**Editor's Note:** This is the third and final installment in a three-part series about Corinne Goodnight, the second wife of pioneer rancher Colonel Charles Goodnight. The first part appeared in our Autumn, 1991 issue and the second part in our Spring, 1992 issue.

What little is currently known of Corinne's life with Charles Goodnight and her place in history is contained in the catalogued papers which are deposited in the archives of the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum in Canyon, Texas. About ten years ago, her brother, Thomas, arranged for the museum to receive them.

**SYNOPSIS:** Charles Goodnight married Corinne Goodnight (also her maiden name) in March 1927 in Clarendon, Texas. Press coverage of the event focused on his advanced age and legendary career as a trail blazer and rancher. His union with an unknown, 26 year-old, independent Montana woman raised curious eyebrows about propriety and motivation. This was particularly true since his wife of 56 years, Mary Ann Dyer Goodnight, had been dead less than a year. Newspaper and magazine stories after their marriage portray Corinne as his companion, chauffeur, hostess, nurse, secretary and amateur biographer.

In her collaboration with J.

*Evelyn Haley on Haley's biography, Charles Goodnight, Cowman and Plainsman, she expressed high hopes that the book would make them both renown, if not wealthy. However, Corinne eventually had to face the fact that not only would the royalties be small, but the part she had played in the Colonel's life had been cut from the manuscript (with apologies from Haley).*

*Without the larger-than-life Colonel or any other lies to the Texas Panhandle, Corinne returned to Arizona, where she would be closer to her brother.*

Within five months of Charles Goodnight's death, Corinne, his wife of less than three years, took an apartment in Phoenix. By 1933, she was living in Los Angeles. She had at least two jobs, one as a survey taker for the Federal Emergency Relief Administration to help assess employment and other needs for the Depression's unemployed. In 1937, she was a payroll clerk for Monogram Productions in Hollywood.

Whether Corinne was left financially secure by the Colonel's estate, we can't be sure. Mystery and controversy overshadowed the question of rightful heirs. Corinne may have been "property poor" and the heiress of uncollectible debts, a casualty of the depressed economy in the 1930's.

When Charles Goodnight died in

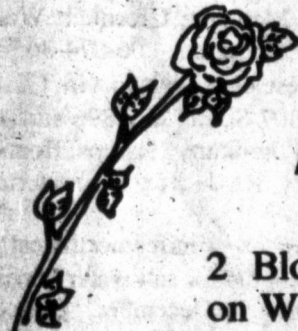


Corinne and Col. Charles Goodnight. Photo courtesy Saints Roost Museum, Clarendon, Texas.

December 1929 in Tucson at age 93, Corinne appeared to be his sole heir. According to his obituary, no children were born during either of his marriages, although a strange clipping in Corinne's files teases the mind. It was a photo reprint attributed to the University of Texas and clipped from what appears to be a Sunday magazine supplement. The date is uncertain but an advertisement on the reverse side would place the time about 1950-60. The caption reads: "Charlie Goodnight, at 91, with a woman thought to be his second wife. A child born to the union failed to survive."

The woman in the photo does indeed appear to be Corinne Goodnight. Perhaps Corinne's own words, in a congratulatory note to another couple upon the birth of their child, reveal more truth about the question. Corinne wrote of her private pain for never having had children.

In his will dated September 29, 1927, signed and witnessed in Clarendon, the Colonel bequeathed all of his estate, with one exception, to "my beloved wife Corinne" and named her executrix. He set the wheels in motion within two weeks of their marriage by arranging for approximately four sections of land in Armstrong County to be deeded to Corinne and W. C. (Cleo) Hubbard. Each was entitled to an "undivided half interest." The Colonel identified Cleo as "the young man I raised, consideration in this deed were his services from childhood to manhood, he never was paid a dollar of salary...I reserved all the income from said land during my lifetime."



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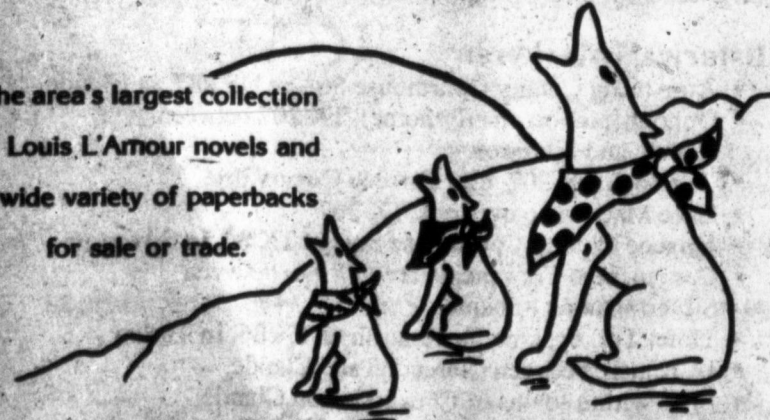
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# Calendar of Events

## Claude

**September 18:** Friday Night Football - All Classes School Reunion.

**September 19:** Alumnae Events at Claude School. Contact Leta Rutherford, Box 282, Claude, TX 79019, (806) 226-5311.

## Briscoe County

**August 1:** Caprock Jamboree - Family entertainment. Western, Bluegrass and Gospel Music. Supper at 6:00 p.m., \$4 per person. Show at 7:00 p.m., Free Admission.

**August 8 & 9:** 10:00 a.m. begins the Antique Tractor & Machinery Show, an officially sanctioned show of the Texas Plains Two-Cylinder Club. Sponsored by the Silverton Volunteer Fire Department. Anyone who has antique implements, vehicles, or draft horses is welcome to show. Public invited to attend. Contact Silverton City Hall, (806) 823-2125.

**August 13:** 4-H Play Day. Barrel and Flag Racing and other events at the Rodeo Arena, 7:00 p.m.

**August 14 & 15:** Rodeo, with dance after each evening's performance. Live Band. Admission for both events.

**August 15:** 10:00 a.m., Silverton Homecoming at Silverton High School. 3:00 p.m., Parade Downtown. 5:00 p.m., Barbecue on the Courthouse Square. 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Company E, Texas 4th Cavalry, whose purpose is to promote Texas history of 1871-1874 period, will be presenting re-enactment demonstrations on the northeast corner of the Courthouse Square.

## Flomot

**July 24, 25, 26:** Cutting Horse Competition, Youth Events, Team Roping, Pasture Roping at the Bureson Memorial Roping at arena on FM 2009 between Matador and Turkey east off Hwy. 70 S. Call (806) 983-2977.

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**1st Weekend of Each Month:** Trade Days, at the Intersection of Hwy. 287 and Hwy. 70 South - Antiques, food, arts & crafts. For information or reservations for booths, Call (806) 874-3935 or 874-2861.

# Corinne Lost In Life's Loose Ends

According to one member of the Hubbard family, Cleo's mother, Ella, was a friend of the first Mrs. Goodnight. Mary Ann offered her the position of ranch cook and housekeeper, knowing that Ella had a young son to raise alone. Mrs. Hubbard worked and lived at the Goodnight Ranch the rest of her life.

By May 1929, the Colonel must have begun to worry that perhaps his will and the Armstrong County property title arrangement might not protect Corinne's interest after his death. He asked R. E. Underwood, an attorney in Amarillo, about this very concern. The response was "...You may rest assured, from what you tell me, that your wife will be subjected to a suit upon your death by the (Dyer) heirs of the first wife and it should be your purpose to get it in the best shape that you can..." The attorney meant for Goodnight to prepare a detailed statement of the history of property division and gifts prior to her death between his former wife, Mary Ann, and her eventual heirs. Underwood continued: "No doubt (Corinne's) title (to the Armstrong County land) as well as Mr. Hubbard will be attacked."

In October 1929, still uncertain about the Dyer-Goodnight estate settlement, the Colonel consulted a Clarendon attorney, A. T. Cole. His absolute opinion was "...that

matter is already settled..." in accord with Texas community property law. Since Mary Ann and Charles had had no children, Charles was the sole and rightful heir to her share of the jointly-held estate. Cole concluded.

Historians may never learn the significance of a mysterious portion of that same letter to Goodnight. Cole continued, "I cannot think of but one person who would, if she could, attack your will. I do not think her husband will permit it."

According to records in the Armstrong County Abstract Co. office, some of Charles Goodnight's land holdings were mortgaged with Great Southern Life Insurance Company. Title reverted to the company in 1929 when the stock market crashed and, coincidentally, the year Goodnight died. Not until 1935 was Cleo Hubbard able to buy Corinne's 1,440 acres. By that time, Corinne had given power of attorney to her brother Thomas who completed the transaction.

We are left with questions about certain aspects of Corinne and Charles Goodnight's lives. So little is known about Corinne's life between 1937 and 1960. In 1960, we are given more insights through her correspondence with the publisher of *True West* magazine, as reported in the Autumn, 1991 *Prairie Dog Gazette*.

However, she remained largely anonymous until her death in 1974 in Arizona at age 73. Thomas, whom she had cared for and educated after the death of their parents, was her only known survivor.

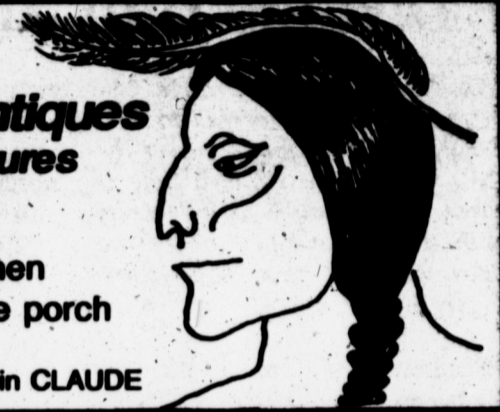
Despite the painful gossip during those early years, Corinne seemed content to graciously entertain and

please the Colonel's admirers, relinquishing the spotlight to perpetuate his memory. From her place in the shadow of a giant, Corinne's own words may cast a glimmer of light: "It was a great honor and privilege to have been in his life in those closing years and he greatly appreciated every moment."

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## Hobart Rides Herd On JA

Our next issue will begin a series on T.D. Hobart, a remarkable man. Hobart earned his reputation as "the land man" and played an important role in developing the Panhandle. One period in Hobart's career was serving as manager of Cornelia Adair's JA Ranch and later as execu-

tor of her estate, a gigantic task. When Hobart became JA manager in 1915, the ranch held 550,000 acres of land, 25,000 cattle and 400 horses. With a strong sense of duty, even through trying times, Hobart witnessed sweeping changes from the days of the "open range."

## Digging Into Ancient Past

*Editor's Note: The Prairie Dog Gazette is very grateful to Dr. Gerald E. Schultz for supplying the abstract on which this article is based. Dr. Schultz is on the faculty of the Department of Biology and Geosciences at West Texas State University in Canyon.*

Students and fans of the Old West, and its cowboys, cattle drives, railroad settlements and ranching empires, are only scratching the surface of history. The land itself still holds some of the secrets of creation and evolution that are between nine and eleven million years old.

The first local examples of that era's fossils were found in the early 1890's. The most extensive search for fossils was from 1929-1960 and spurred the prominence of Clarendon resident/rancher Will Chamberlain, a collector for the Frick Laboratory in New York and site guide for university archaeologists. They inspired the organization two years ago of the Clarendon Archaeology Society and its members' interest in protecting the fossil sites and remains.

According to David Lowrie, head of the Science Department at the college, a class with "an archaeology/anthropology emphasis" may be added to the Fall 1992 course offerings. "The hold up is an instructor," Lowrie said. "You don't find an archaeologist under just any old rock."

At more than 30 sites north and east of the town of Clarendon along the Salt Fork of the Red River, the silt, sand, gravel and caliche of the Ogallala Formation have yielded the flora and fauna of the Clarendonian Age. They correlate generally with finds in the Nebraska plains and Gulf Coast of Texas. The climate at that time was mild and subhumid in a stream border environment—a woodland savannah similar to central Africa today. Characteristic animals were the three-toed horse, rhinoceros, small-to-medium camel including the giraffe camel, garfish, giant tortoise, alligator, mastadon, slingshot deer, saber-toothed cat and small-to-large dogs including the bear dog.

The Clarendonian, Hemphillian and Blancan Ages have been designated "Provincial Ages" and also "North American Land Mammal Ages," represented in part by first and last appearances of mammalian genera in North America. Complete skeletons are rarely found except in sinkhole deposits where animals were trapped. The Frick Laboratory

excavated about two dozen horse skeletons and several other mammals from a sink on a ranch northeast of Clarendon. The largest collections were obtained about 1929-60 under the supervision of Will Chamberlain.

Clarendonian Age fossils can be seen in important museums all over the U.S.; but to walk in the footsteps of an ancient age, take a stroll through Donley County, right here in our own backyard.



T. D. Hobart and JA Ranch cowboys. Photo courtesy White Deer Lands Museum, Pampa, Texas.

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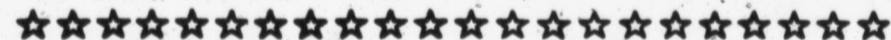
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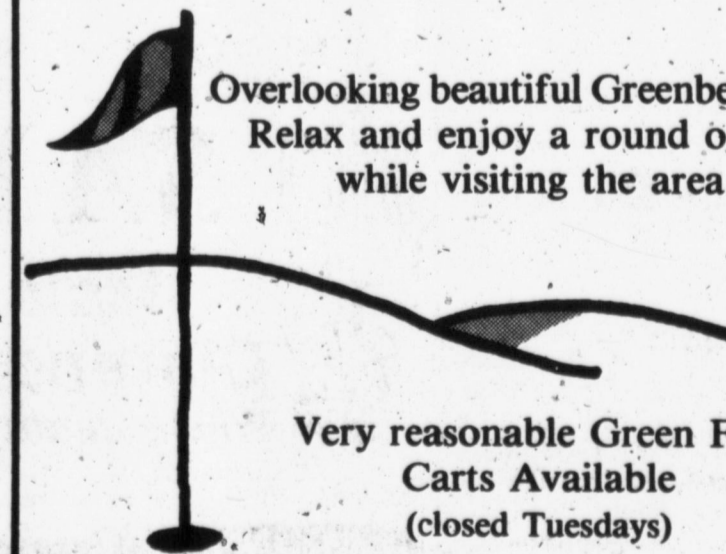
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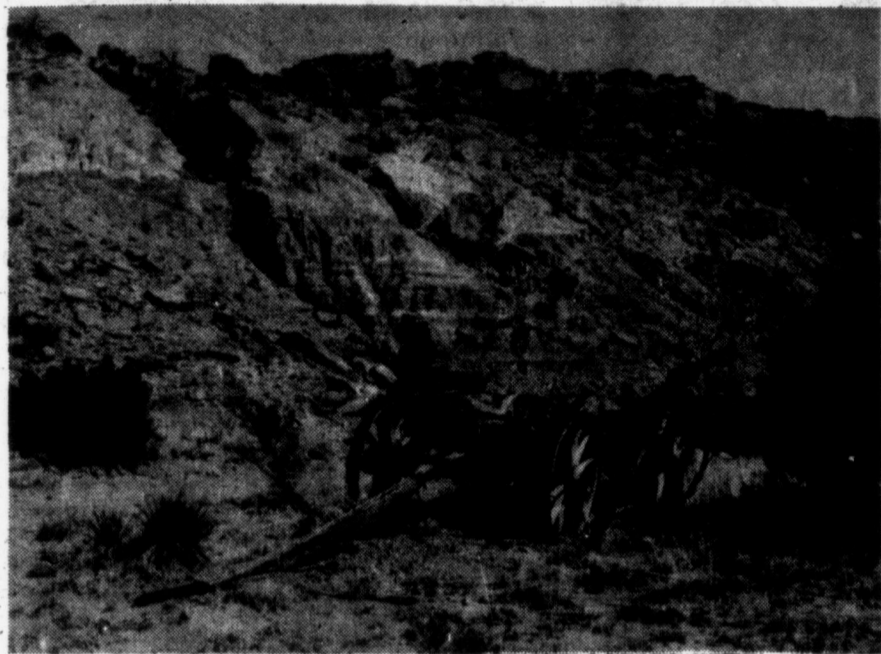


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# Triangle Tail Ranch



Cable from top of cliff to creekbed transported supplies to wagons



Smokehouse/Bunkhouse on Triangle Tail Ranch's Rush Creek Division.

Continued from page 5.

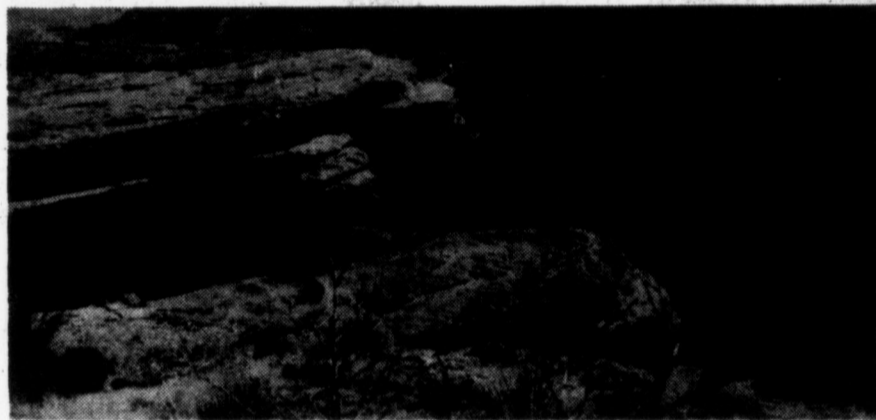
Due to the rugged nature of the canyon, the Harrell family has made few changes to the land. Only one steep road, requiring a four-wheel drive truck, provides access to the canyon floor from the north. In the early days of the Triangle Tail, a cable trolley delivered cattle feed from the high ground and brought firewood back up from the banks of the river. Even wagons were moved in pieces via the trolley, since travel was limited to horseback or a steep hike on foot. Although now inoperable, the cable rigging and an old wagon remain as mute reminders of ranch life in the past.

Jim Denton, who helps the Harrells run the Triangle Tail, notes that nature still challenges the operation of the ranch. "We can't keep cows in the river bottom during the summer because of excessive heat and the deer flies" that attack the cattle. Also, much of his time is spent bulldozing invading mesquite trees which have crept northward into this area.

From the canyon rim the ranch does not reveal some of the more subtle changes made in modern times. Originally one, large 35,000 acre pasture, the Triangle Tail has now been fenced into a few smaller areas, and cows with Black Angus breeding are replacing the traditional Herefords.

Cattle were formerly roped, branded, and doctored in open pastures, but now a few corrals dot the ranch to contain them, providing easier access. Central heat has put an end to collecting firewood from the banks of the river, but the canyon still provides shelter from winter's north wind.

While the business of running the Triangle Tail is a day-to-day business for owner Ed Harrell and his family, a ride through the ranch reveals not only natural beauty, but a rich past. Its story is of thousands of years, hundreds of people, their struggles, and their dreams.



High above Prairie Dog Town Fork of Red River on Harrell Ranch.

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# Briscoe Celebrates 100 Years

**Editor's Note:** The citizens of Briscoe County are celebrating their centennial this year. To all those who ever left an imprint on the development and progress of this historic county, we extend heartiest congratulations! As we go to press, special events through August are listed on page 11. After September 1, area visitors are encouraged to call Silverton City Hall (806) 823-2125 for more information on activities.

Briscoe County was organized in 1892 and named for Andrew Briscoe. During the war with Mexico, Briscoe had valiantly fought for Texas independence, participating in the famous battle of San Jacinto in 1836, among others.

The first census on the high plains was taken in 1880. It recorded six Anglo adults and six children in what is now Briscoe County. Cattle was valued at \$10 per head and horses between \$25 and \$50 each. There were two stage stops and settlers were coming in from every direction, according to early historical accounts.

One of those settlers, Tom Braidfoot, filed on a section of land in 1890. It was his intention to build a town which would become the county seat. After surveying was done, Braidfoot called a meeting for the purpose of organizing a townsite company. The company approved Braidfoot's

suggestion that Silverton be the new town's name. When the legal requirement of 20 completed houses was met, a petition for an election to organize, elect county officers and select a county seat was filed. The election was held on March 15, 1892. County officers, including County Judge J. N. Stalbird and Sheriff Minor Crawford, and the county seat of Silverton were chosen by a large majority.

Topographically, the county's 874 square miles encompass two distinct areas, one on the flat staked plains (Llano Estacado), the other with rugged canyons (primarily Tule Canyon) precipitously dropping 800 feet off the Caprock Escarpment in some places. This irregular line creates breathtaking beauty and contributes to many winding creeks, most of them tributaries of the Prairie Dog Town Fork of Red River.

The environment presented the first settlers a variety of possibilities for development: Native grass on the High Plains, but scarcity of water; rangeland with very little mesquite and other brush invasion until 1900, more rugged, but sheltered from winter's worst cold.

The first irrigation well in Briscoe County is believed to have been drilled in 1935, indeed a blessing during the Dust Bowl days.

Wildlife, both desirable and predatory, roam the county. Deer, antelope, rabbits and imported Aoudad sheep, as well as foxes, bobcats, coyotes and a few mountain lions inhabit the land. Many game birds, song birds, and birds of prey nest there.


More than a dozen large irrigation and recreation lakes have been built, six of them open to the public.

Four scenic drives crisscross the county, and one of them includes the beautiful Caprock Canyons State Park, 3 miles north of Quitaque.

People, bringing with them many cultures, have traversed the land over the past 30,000 years - Indians representing 50 tribes, 16th Century Europeans, mostly Spaniards, and immigrants. All brought special characteristics to Briscoe County.

Early explorers, hunters, traders, soldiers and ranchers collectively breathed a spirit of adventure and conquest (for good or evil) across the area.

Fortunately, the majority of settlers put their efforts and vision into building a place worthy of pride. They accomplished much in spite of hardships. Men built roads and established law and order. Women created homes and organized churches, schools and social activities, bringing culture to the frontier. Together, they brought civilization to the frontier, passing down values and traditions to their descendants which endure today.



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**Ol' Pete**

**Our Prairie Dog Town correspondent**

As we go to press, summertime is only half spent, but this old dog is already panting! Rodeos and reunions, barbecues and bulldoggin' - whew, it's enough to make a body start looking for those autumn leaves. But it sure has been fun.

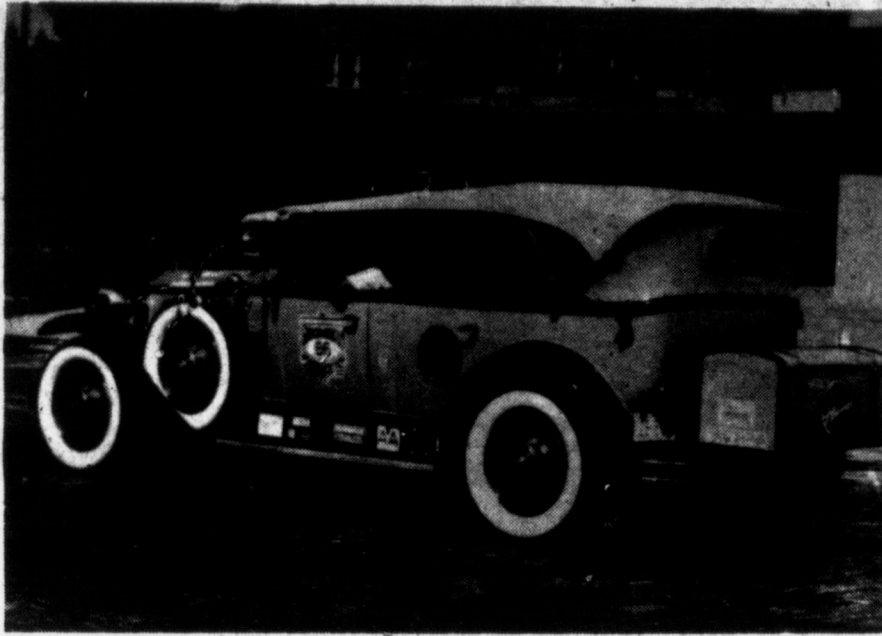
We had some classy, vintage cars roll through these parts for an official pit stop in the Great American Race. The Clarendon Merchants Association folks made some plenty-fine homemade ice-cream and cookies for the racers, and community service groups offered lemonade, hot dogs, and snowcones on the courthouse lawn. Fortunately, I had film in my camera, so you can see this 1931 Buick Phaeton (and ain't she a beauty!). The driver Jay Arendt and navigator Gary Wallace of St. Louis, Missouri are headed for the finish line out in California. Good luck, guys.

We have enjoyed some nice visits lately. Freda Osteen from Fort Morgan, Colorado contacted us in June, in her search for some missing "limbs" on her family tree. Freda is an amateur genealogist and has located of Jasper side of her family. They came up the Schott Cap (Caprock) Road to Silverton many years ago. She remembers her mother saying that Mr. Schott (who built the road) was the best dancer in the community. Finding out about her father, who worked on the JA Ranch in the 1890's has proven more difficult, however. John Walter Burrows was his name, but "Knotty" was his nickname because he rode a horse that had a knot on its side.

We introduced her to Mary Linn Bills, the very capable librarian at Burton Memorial Library in Clarendon. The last time we saw Freda, she and Mary Linn had their noses stuck in several books and didn't even notice us slip out the door. Hope they found old "Knotty's" trail.

We were tickled to send Howard Stromme, an admirer of Col. Charles Goodnight's, the latest *Gazette*. Howard had heard about us all the way down in Florida! Howard, hope you like the third installment on our Corinne Goodnight story in this issue, too.

Lloyd "Little Tex" Worrell wrote to us from Auburn, California. Worrell is a retired musician, songwriter and country-western disc jockey, most active from 1945 to 1965. He worked with Spade Cooley, Tennessee Ernie Ford, Jimmy Wakely and many other great performers, including former "Texas Playboys" from Bob Wills's band. Lloyd's fondest hope is to come to Turkey,



Pit stop in Clarendon for cross-country racer, 1931 Buick Phaeton.

Texas and see the Bob Wills Museum. In the meantime, we put him in touch with two other western music buffs, Windy Woods from Claude and Jimmy Burson from Silverton (who is busy being Briscoe County Judge when he's not fiddlin'). All three should have a fine time swapping stories.

Still in the musical mode, we're grateful to Paulita Young for sending us a wonderful audio tape of her son Benny and his trio called "The Desert Sons." Their music reminds me of the great "Sons of the Pioneers." And what should we read on the tape's dedication, but a tribute to Paulita's father, Lonnie McCracken (1873-1940), one of the founders of Gasoline, Texas! Seems that Benny wrote a song in his memory entitled "Down Off The Caprock." Small world.

The Saints Roost Museum in Clarendon was recently presented a gracious gift from Virginia Haigh and Dorothy Rowden of Wichita, Kansas. The ladies are daughters of the late Charles Harrison who was the depot agent in Clarendon for the Fort Worth & Denver Railroad for almost 30 years. A photograph album containing some 90 pictures, scenes of people and places in Clarendon from 1905-1925, was donated by Harrison's daughters.

Haigh and Rowden had previously

given a pewter tea service to the museum.

The daughters recalled hobos, who followed the railways during the Depression of the 1930's, looking for work...and a meal. The men would "mark" the back fences of homes that were considered "good prospects." Mrs. Harrison was known as a good prospect

because not only was she generous, but made wonderful fruit pies from the family's orchard -- cherry, apricot, pear, persimmon. I'll bet they were heavenly when fresh cream from their cow, "Jersey," was ladled on. Thanks for the memories, ladies, from all the volunteers who make the Saints Roost Museum such a great place.

A recent get-together in Clarendon by four other ladies is worth mentioning, since it's rather unusual to have the wives of three former sheriffs plus one current sheriff of Donley County gathered at one time.

Mary Pierce's husband, Guy, served as sheriff from 1930-1940, Moselle Wright's husband, also named Guy, from 1940-1952, and Thelma Behren's husband, Truett, was sheriff in the 1950's and 60's. Aleta Thompson's husband, Jimmy, has been sheriff since 1980. The "Fearless Four" wives



Daughters of railroad agent present gift to Saints Roost Museum.

shared some hair-raising tales of outlaws (and in-laws).

All this visitin and goin's-on sure beat standing in the hot sun on my hind legs and twitchin' my nose for the tourist cameras at Prairie Dog Town. I may apply for a bit part in

the Steve Martin movie "Leap of Faith" when they're shooting over in the Claude area. Maybe Debra Winger will adopt me and take me back to Hollywood.

Otherwise, I'll see you before the first "Norther" blows in.

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