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**Summer 1993**

# • Regional Events •

**Currently -**

A recently opened exhibit examines the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum's sixty year history. Beginning with only 10,000 square feet, the Museum now occupies 300,000 square feet of space, housing over 3 million artifacts.

**Now through Summer -**

TEXAS Musical Drama in Palo Duro Canyon State Park nightly, except Sundays. BBQ Dinner served at 6:30 p.m.; show at 8:30 p.m. Reservations call (806) 655-2181.

**Now through July 4 -**

"Crosses and Courtyards," paintings by Karen Wiseman, at the Purvins Gallery, Carson County Square House Museum in Panhandle.

June 12 - Donley County Senior Citizens Auction, 10:00 a.m. at the Clarendon Lions Hall. Proceeds go for equipment and services.

June 12 and July 10 - Cowboy Poet Breakfast at the Big Texan Steak Ranch, I-40 E. in Amarillo. Doors open 8:30 a.m.; buffet breakfast and program at 9:00 a.m. Western music and cowboy poets provide great entertainment.

June 18 - Howardwick Friendship Club, 6:30 p.m. at City Hall, covered dish supper. Mike Butts presents "Advances in Pharmaceutical Drugs." Everyone invited.

July 1, 2, 3 - Saints' Roost Celebration in Clarendon. Rodeos at 7:45 p.m. with Dance following each night.

July 2 - Clarendon Merchants Ass'n sponsors Trike & Bike Parade and Depression Days Lunch, beginning at 10:30 a.m.

July 2 - Annual Turtle Race at Henson's Hardware on main street of Clarendon. 3:00 p.m.

July 3 - Al Morrah Shriners sponsor Barbecue at Courthouse in Clarendon. \$5 plate; at 11:00 a.m.

July 3 - Parade down main streets, sponsored by Clarendon Chamber of Commerce, starting at 2:00 p.m.

**July 2 thru November 28 -**

American Quarter Horse Heritage Center and Museum tips its hat to the ranching industry with a special exhibit, "Hoofbeats on the Pitchfork Ranch: Photography by Bob Moorhouse," illustrating the beauty and function of the quarter horse and life on one of the nation's most historic ranches.

July 3, August 7 - Caprock Jamboree features live western bands. Hamburger meal available at 6:00 p.m.; show begins at 7:00 at the Briscoe County Activities Barn in Silverton.

July 4 - Old-fashioned Fourth of July in Memphis. Public cordially invited by the Memphis Chamber of Commerce. Bring your lunch to the city park and enjoy fun for all ages. Games, snowcones, watermelon, face painting from 1:30 to 4:00 p.m. Hamburger, ice-cream & fireworks display by Firemen's Flames and Volunteer Fire Dept. at football stadium, 7:00 p.m.

July 9, 10 - Caprock Roundup, Rodeo & Old Settlers Reunion in Claude. Details in story, page 19.

July 23, 24, 25 - Burleson Memorial Roping in Flomot. Team roping, youth events, cutting horse events. Call (806) 983-9777.

August 12, 13, 14 - Briscoe County's 101st birthday celebration in Silverton. Parade, rodeo, BBQ, dance. Call City Hall, 823-2125.

**AREA MUSEUMS**

**Amarillo - American Quarter Horse Heritage Center & Museum** showcases the history and modern activities of the world's most popular breed of horse. On I-40 East. Call (806) 376-5181 for admission prices, group rates and hours.

**Canyon - Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum** continues to fulfill its 60-year mission as cultural repository for the Texas Panhandle. Mon.-Sat. 9:00 to 5:00; Sundays 2:00 to 6:00.

**Childress - Childress Heritage Museum** says, "The Past Never Grows Old." At 210 3rd St. N.W., Mon.-Fri from 9:00 to 5:00. Tours available; call (817) 937-2261.

**Clarendon - Saints Roost Museum.** Donley County area ranching and turn-of-the-century heritage. Fri., Sat, Sun. 2:00 to 5:00 or by appt.; call (806) 874-3517.

**Memphis - Hall County Heritage Hall** at 6th & Main Sts.; Tues. & Thurs., 1:00 to 3:00.

**Panhandle - Carson County Square House Museum.** Exhibits detail human and natural history, and wildlife of the Plains. Railroad exhibit in real caboose, a dugout dwelling, art gallery. Mon.-Sat. 9:00 - 5:30; Sun. 1:00 - 5:30.

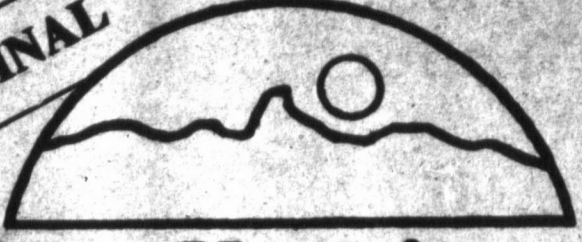
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THE ORIGINAL



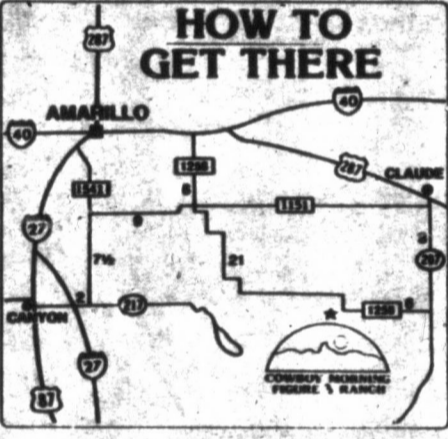
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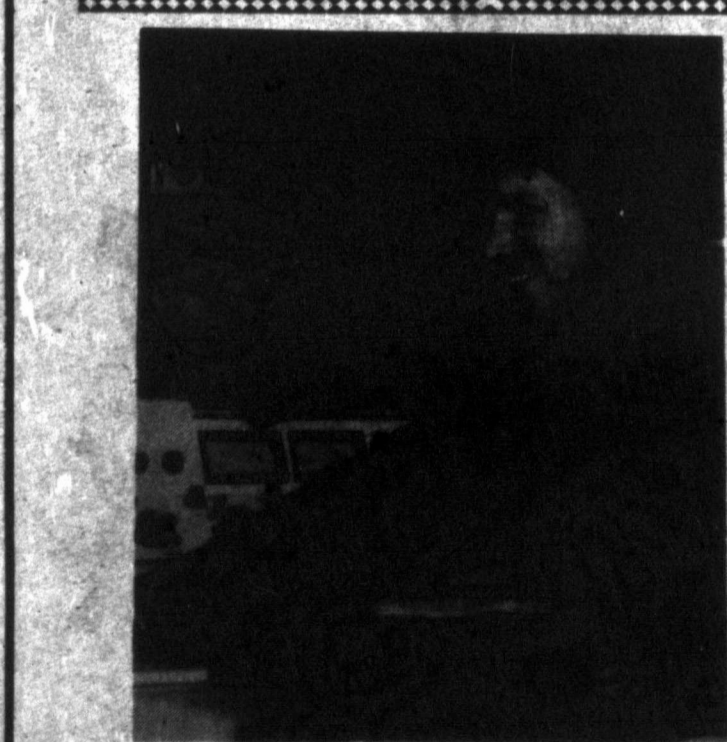


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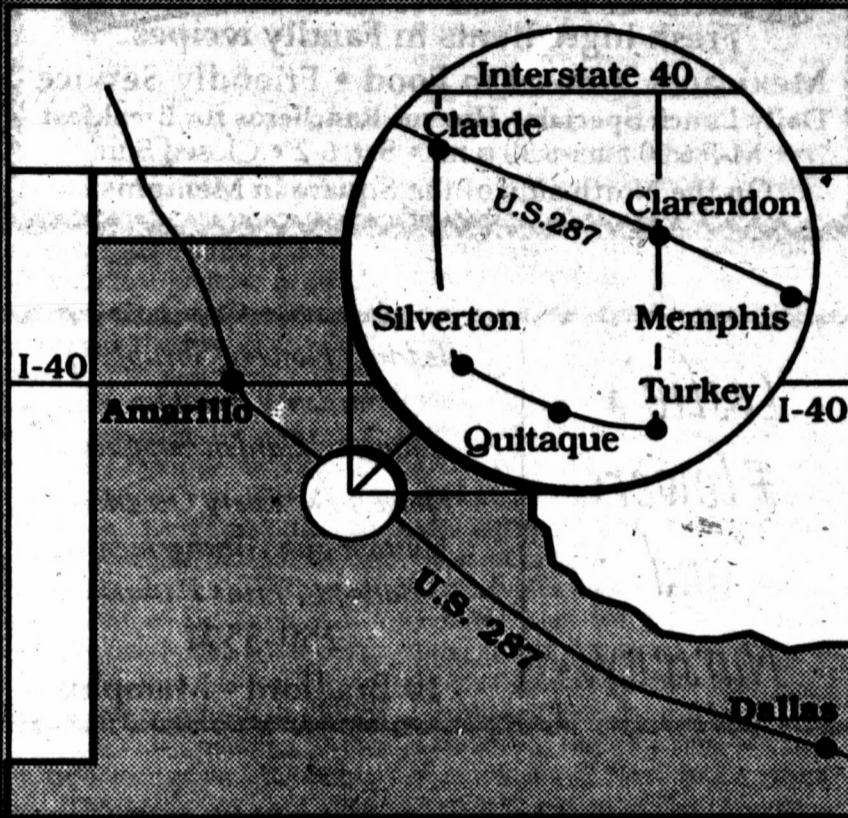
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# Setting The Scene



For more detail see pages 12-13.

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The tapestry of life in the Panhandle is indeed rich. Our culture is woven with blue skies and blue Northers, red bandanas and red dirt, and indescribable colors of sunsets on the prairie. Those quicksilver skies seem to be a subtle, yet important part of our subconsciousness; the horizon is wide, the sky is big, and goals are unlimited.

Neighbors are treasured, perhaps because they were truly few and far between in the early years. Like the terrain, ranging from rugged canyons to gentle plains, our people are both tough and tender.

Some of those people seemed larger than life, overcoming incredible odds while blazing trails,

taming the frontier, or digging deep for oil. Winners and losers, but all willing to take risks.

Others endured the day-to-day hardships with quiet courage and faith. Their tenacity is one of the strongest fibers in our tapestry.

But perhaps the most brilliant colors were passed along by a grand sense of humor and world famous friendliness. They are special blend of Scotch-Irish ancestry, Southerners' gift of gab, respite from loneliness, and a smidgen of pure devilment.

Here's hoping you discover all the elements that make our history intriguing, our land beautiful, and our people delightful.

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*Prairie Dog Gazette Staff:*

*Kevin Welch, Judy Welch, Pam Lewis, and Wil Burlin*

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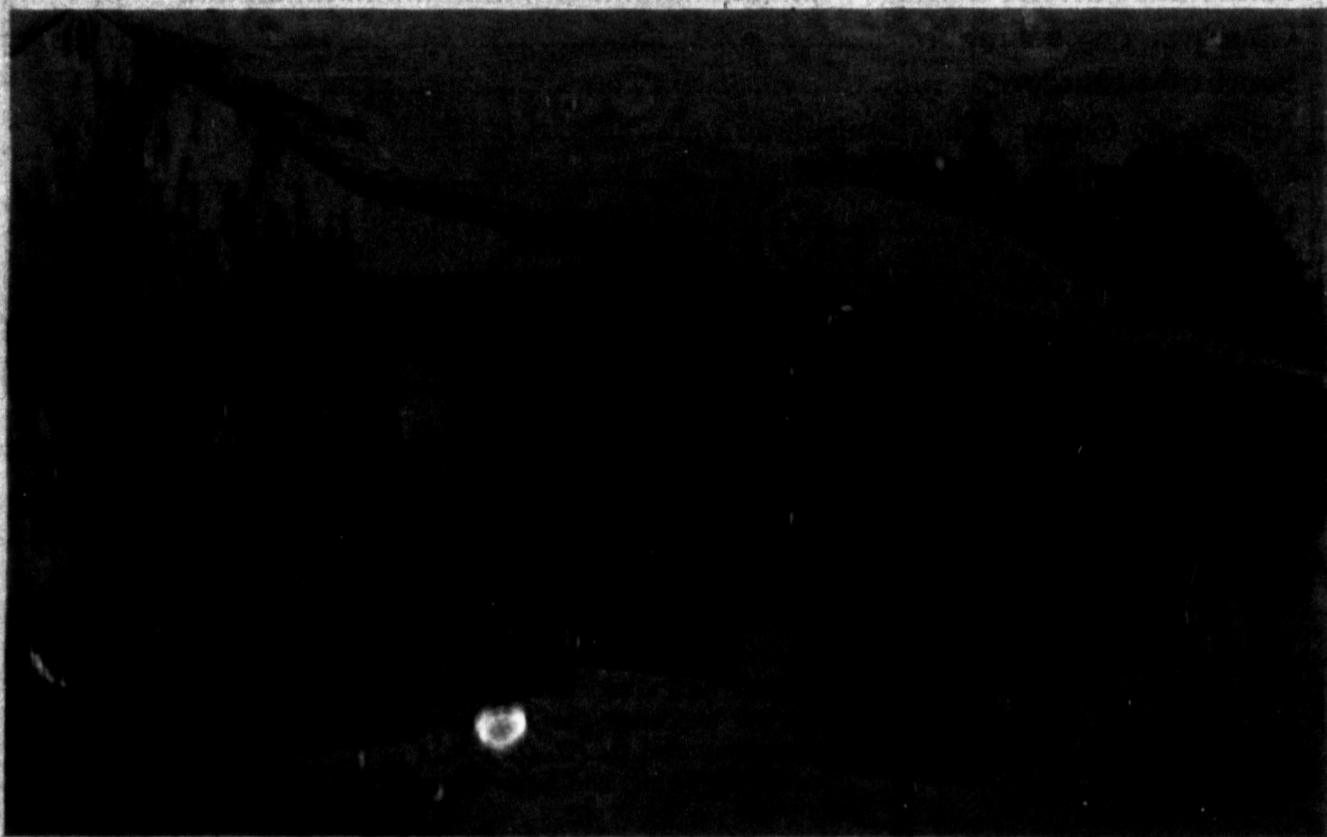
On May 4, 1890 community members from Salisbury, Memphis, and Lakeview met at the Shoe Bar Ranch headquarters on Oaks Creek to organize Hall County. Formed in 1876, the county had been attached to Donley County for judicial purposes until this time. James Clowney Montgomery took charge of the petition which contained 150 signatures, asking for the right to self-government.

The meeting in the adobe headquarters (now a ranch home) accelerated competition between the

three communities to become the county seat. Donley County commissioners scheduled the election for the Hall County seat and county officials for June 17, 1890. In the days before the election former citizens, laborers, and cowboys were courted for their votes. The final vote totals were Memphis, 84; Lakeview, 43; Salisbury, 19. Because Memphis was not centrally located, special legislative permission had to be granted to give the new county an official center of government.

Within ten years, due to events

begun by the gathering at the Shoe Bar's headquarters, both Salisbury and Old Lakeview were virtually abandoned by most residents and businesses. Many moved not only their belongings but their buildings as well. According to E.V. Hedgecock's recollections in *Yesterday In Hall County* compiled by Inez Baker, "There was a large hotel in Salisbury... when the break came it was sawed into three sections for removal to Memphis. One section was moved, another about halfway, and the other was never started."



Shoe Bar Ranch headquarters, setting for organization of Hall County in 1890.

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# Grand Old Hotel Gets A New Lease On Life

**Editor's Note:**

The following are personal reminiscences on a Memphis landmark. The author, Virginia Browder, has been a life-long resident of the area and has sought to record its history for many years.

It is most rewarding to reclaim, renovate, and thus restore, anything to its original state of usefulness.

So, with this premise in mind, let us consider seriously the long neglected old Memphis Hotel. Built in 1926, for the past twenty years, it has been an almost forgotten piece of property. However, for some forty years, it offered accommodations to numerous travelers on the Ft. Worth and Denver City Railroad and along Highway 287, as well as visitors to the town of Memphis, Texas.

Actually, the builders, Messers. George Thompson and son Edwin were hardware merchants operating from a gray stone building at the northeast corner of the courthouse square. The hotel was then built around and above the hardware store. Why do away with a sturdy building, they reasoned.

Originally, the plans called for 50 rooms, then, with the additions, by the time the hotel was finished, there was a lobby and hotel office on the main floor, four business office spaces, and a restaurant. On the second floor there were 31 rooms and a ballroom, and on the

third floor, there were 47 rooms. With the addition, the hotel was not completed until 1929. At different times, the office spaces housed a cotton office, beauty parlors, an optometrist's office, and a TV and radio shop.

When finished the large, square, three-storied yellow brick building cornering the Square was an impressive edifice in the small town of Memphis.

The Edwin Thompson family, the parents and four children, lived in the new hotel from 1933 to 1947 when they moved to a residence in town. Even after Edwin's death in 1959, Mrs. Thompson continued operation of the hotel until it was sold in 1968 to a Dr. Blackletter of Shamrock, Texas.

In the meantime, Billy Ed, son of Edwin, and wife Hattie Dem, bought the hardware store, and Hattie Dem added a gift shop.

When the young Thompsons moved their hardware store to a new location at 702 Noel Street, Helen Ballew's antique shop "Grandmas Attic" occupied that space for the next twenty years. Dr. Blackletter sold the building to the Ballews in 1970. Andy Gardenhire, an insurance broker and rancher, bought the old hotel in 1988.

During Gardenhire's tenure of ownership, he made several much needed repairs like reroofing, replacing windows, plumbing and electrical wiring, replastering walls,

and doing some painting.

Incidentally, the high school class of 1943 is to have a reunion June 11 and 12. Ex-students and teachers are coming from all directions, even from as far away as California.

Fortunately, the diligent Hall family, Leon, Wanda and son, Mark, have been so busy with more needed repairs, cleaning and refurbishing the hotel that they have rooms at the ready and reservations made for the reunion. In fact, at long last, there is to be a dance in the ballroom following the reunion banquet Saturday evening, June 12. Probably the "light fantastic" has not been "tripped" since the 50's in said ballroom.

It's likely just as well the walls of the old building don't talk or there would be some hair-raising tales told about happenings since 1926.

For several years, the John Browders lived in the third floor corner suite. Then, the Clyde Milams were there for a time.

The Hall family, since purchasing the old hotel in 1992, have been "good medicine" for the community, doing their "dead level best" to contribute to Memphis. Mark Hall heads the committee now revitalizing the City Park, Wanda serves as a Chamber of



Lobby of Memphis Hotel as it looked in 1927.

Commerce director. The Halls have made a Bed and Breakfast Inn facility of the long neglected Memphis Hotel. So keep in touch! Memphis is coming to life again!

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# Bob Wills Broke Into Business With A Bang

By Wil Burlin  
Staff writer

When he sings, "Once you're down in Texas, Bob Wills is still the king," Waylon Jennings shares the opinion of many, according to the thousands of fans that turn out for the Bob Wills Day Celebration each year.

The king of western swing may have become more of a success than could be expected from a poor farm boy, but it didn't come easy.

Starting his musical career by playing dances around his home in Turkey, Texas, with his father, Wills soon gained recognition as an aspiring fiddle player. After writing the classic, "Faded Love" with his father, the eager young musician took to the road and shared his love for good music with the rest of the world.

It has been said that Wills was at his best from the late 1930s to the early 1950s, but before he reached fame, the struggling entertainer still had to prove that he had what it took to be a star.

In 1931, the starving band, made up of Bob Wills, Herman Arnsperger and Milton Brown, wandered into Fort Worth's KFJZ radio station looking for an audition. Staff pianist, Al Stricklin, who later became the original pianist for the Texas Playboys, thought that they were tramps.



Legendary band leader Bob Wills hams it up with his horse Punkin.

"Those guys were rugged buddy, and they were hungry," Stricklin said in an interview in Dallas at a historic Asleep at the Wheel recording session. "So I looked down and there stood Bob Wills, who I didn't know at that time, and he had his fiddle in a flour sack.

"He borrowed it from the hock shop where he hocked it to get some money to eat on, and then he went and talked them into loaning him his old fiddle to go give an

audition at the radio station. You think somebody was having a hard time getting started!"

Wills and company went into the studio and began tuning their instruments when Stricklin asked what kind of music they played.

"Different," Milton replied. The Wills Fiddle Band put their heart and soul into that early performance and impressed Stricklin beyond belief.

"I had never heard anything like

this," Stricklin said. "They were selling me, boy, like I was a circus crowd or something."

After earning a spot on the 8-9 a.m. show the next morning, the band almost immediately gained a fan from everyone that was listening.

"That darn phone started ringing off the wall, you never heard anything like it," Stricklin explained. About 600 cards came in the mail that day and the Wills Fiddle Band got an offer they couldn't refuse. "Pappy" Lee O'Daniel, who later became

governor of Texas, talked to Wills and they worked out a deal that resulted in the formation of the Lightcrust Dough Boys, one of Wills' earliest bands.

Although Wills' career skyrocketed from this point on, he never forgot his neighbors in Turkey, Texas, and they never forgot him. He may have only been a farmer and a barber when he lived near Turkey, but new generations of music lovers still fall under the spell cast by Bob Wills and the music created by his Lightcrust Dough Boys and Texas Playboys.

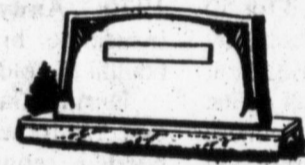
I am not responsible in any way for the comments attributed to me in the May 20, 1993 issue of the Clarendon News. An article in which I am "quoted" also appeared in the Amarillo Globe-News in their May 22 morning edition.

I deeply regret the erroneous association of my name with any derogatory remark about any individual or community.

I appreciate the understanding and support demonstrated to me by my friends, neighbors and business associates.

David R. Smith, Clarendon, Texas

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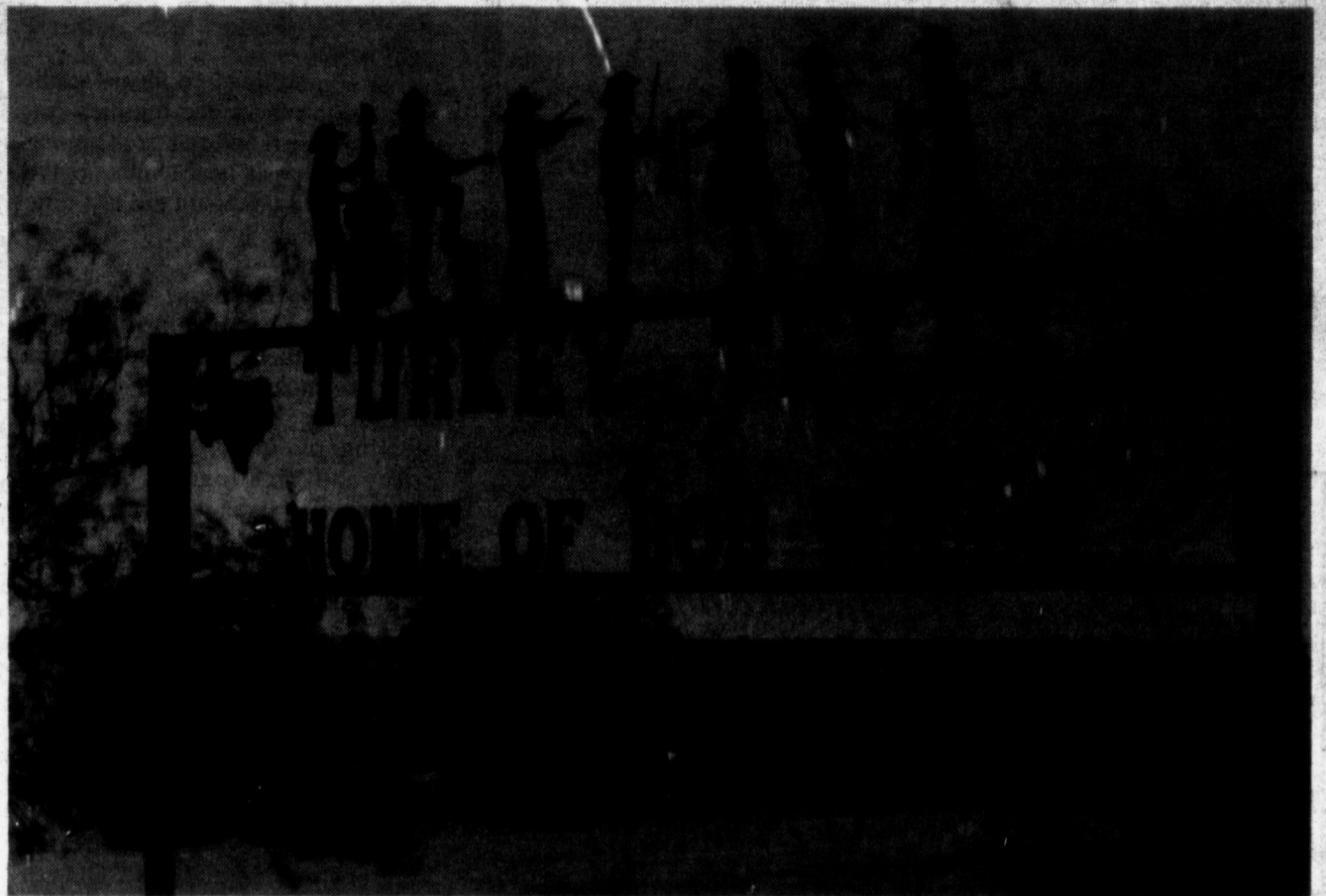
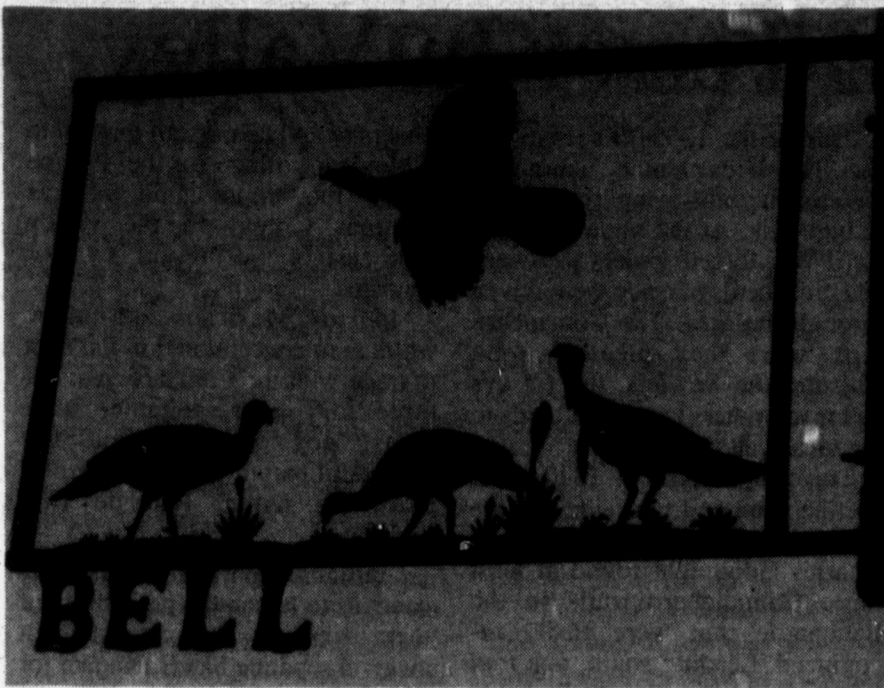
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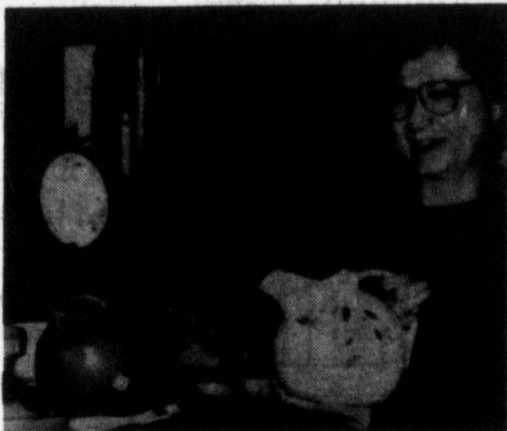
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# Echoes Of Terror In Valley

By Wil Burlin  
Staff writer

For some the name means nothing, but to others, the families that were torn apart and scattered among the trading posts near Quitaque, the Valley of Tears meant the last time a mother saw her children being carried away.

Among the horse and cattle thieves that ruled the open frontiers of Texas, the Comanche Indians were the most fierce and abundant marauders in the land. While stealing livestock, raiding campsites and fighting anyone who threatened to stand in the way, these warriors gained hundreds of thousands of animals.

Indian thieves learned that they could barter the stolen cattle with the Comancheros, New Mexican Indian traders. Dressed in worn leather breeches and armed with wide mouth muskets, these "pirates of the prairies" drifted across the plains with loads of whiskey, weapons, coffee, beads and other comforts that the Indians could not afford to buy.

Josiah Gregg, historian of the Santa Fe Trail, wrote that the trading tended to be modest. "Rarely the entire stock of the traders exceeded twenty dollars in value, but extravagant prices were placed on his articles and proportionally low valuations on the Indians' goods."

During the 1850-70's, many of the Texas cattlemen using the Goodnight and Loving Trail did so at high risk. At the same time, the Civil War forced settlers westward and great herds of cattle were driven through the area. The Comanches took what they pleased. John Chisum, the Snyders, the Caseys and many others lost entire herds to the savage attacks.

Travelers as early as 1820 could see the damage from raids and the worn trails used by the traders. Charles Goodnight found at least three Comanchero trails in the Panhandle that were easily recognized. Leading south, one trail left the Pecos near Bosque Redondo and headed east and south ending in Canon del Rescate, near Lubbock.

Soon the trade became a large business and defined trading places were arranged. Stealing in large quantities, the Indians would drive the horses and cattle north to meet traders in Las Lenguas. Some trading was also happening at the old Tascosa, on the JA range and along the Mulberry Creek.

Another trail branched southeast from the Canadian River and pointed toward Puerto de los Rivajenos, a large gap in the Caprock sometimes called the Door to the Plains.

Between the two trails was another that led to a camp at La Laguna, eight miles north of Fort Sumner, New Mexico. From there,

traders would take a trail that led to a Mexican village on the Tongue River (the anglo name for Las Lenguas Creek) in the valley southeast of the present town of Quitaque.

Indians, Mexicans and outlaw white men concentrated in the area to trade with the Comancheros. All three languages, together with signs, not only allowed for successful barter, but also gave the place its name, Rio de Los Lenguas.

Indians separated their white captives to lessen the probability of them escaping, and carried them away in separate bands. Known for the heartache and tragedy, it was in this Valley of Tears that captive mothers were torn from their children and scattered among the Indians, sometimes ransomed by the traders.

Thousands of cattle were traded in the valley, including those bearing the Sheek, Loving and Goodnight brands as well as the CV, Circle W, WES and the circle road brands.

In 1878, it is rumored that O. J. Wearin, foreman of the Lazy F Ranch, destroyed the 100-year-old village when he took control of the Quitique range. An upgraded military effort, vigilante cattlemen and the imprisonment of the Indian finally ended the trail of the Comancheros.

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# New Trailway Brings Adventure To Quitaque

Quitaque is becoming a center for tourist excitement. Since its establishment in 1981, the Caprock Canyons State Park has attracted many tourists each year, and with the addition of the new Rail-Trail, the number of visitors is expected to double.

"We've already seen Quitaque become a travel stop for almost 150,000 people per year going to Caprock Canyons State Park," Elgin Conner, mayor of Quitaque, said.

Inside the 14,000 acre park grounds, campers have a wide variety of entertainment for a car fee of \$3 Monday-Thursday and \$5 Friday-Sunday. Lake Theo (120 surface acres), located near the park entrance, attracts local and visiting fishermen with its assortment of catfish, bluegill, crappie, bass and rainbow trout. Around the lake, picnic tables, a group shelter, boat ramps, a fishing pier and Big C's Trading Post line the banks.

Up the road from Lake Theo, camping areas with water and

electricity and an amphitheater for educational use are available to visitors for \$10 Monday-Thursday, and \$12 Friday-Sunday.

One mile off the road lies an Equestrian Camping Area including 12 campsites with tables, fire rings and private 3-4 horse corrals. Water is provided for horses only; humans must haul their water from more civilized parts of the park.

Hundreds showed up for the June 5 transformation of the former railroad line into the second longest hiking trail in Texas.

"Converting unused rail lines into hiking, biking and equestrian trails makes sense," Kathryn Nichols, trails planner with the Texas Park and Wildlife Department, said. "It's fun, it's healthy and the tourism it generates is good for the economy."

The Caprock Canyons State Park Trailway dedication featured an inaugural bicycle ride along the new 22-mile stretch of the trail. An old-fashioned parade, antique car show, barbecue, arts and crafts booths,

rocking chair story tellers, museum tours and a country and western concert and barn dance by Hal Ketchum kept visitors entertained.

Once completed, the entire trail

will run about 64 miles through the Valley of the Tears, where Comanche Indians once traded white hostages, and it will continue across the Mighty F Ranch, one of

the first great ranches on the Texas plains. There is also a 1,000-foot abandoned railroad tunnel, which is on the National Register of Historic Places as one of the last in Texas.



U.S. Cavalry reenactment unit prepares to head down the trail during the dedication of the Caprock Canyons State Park's Trailway in Quitaque.

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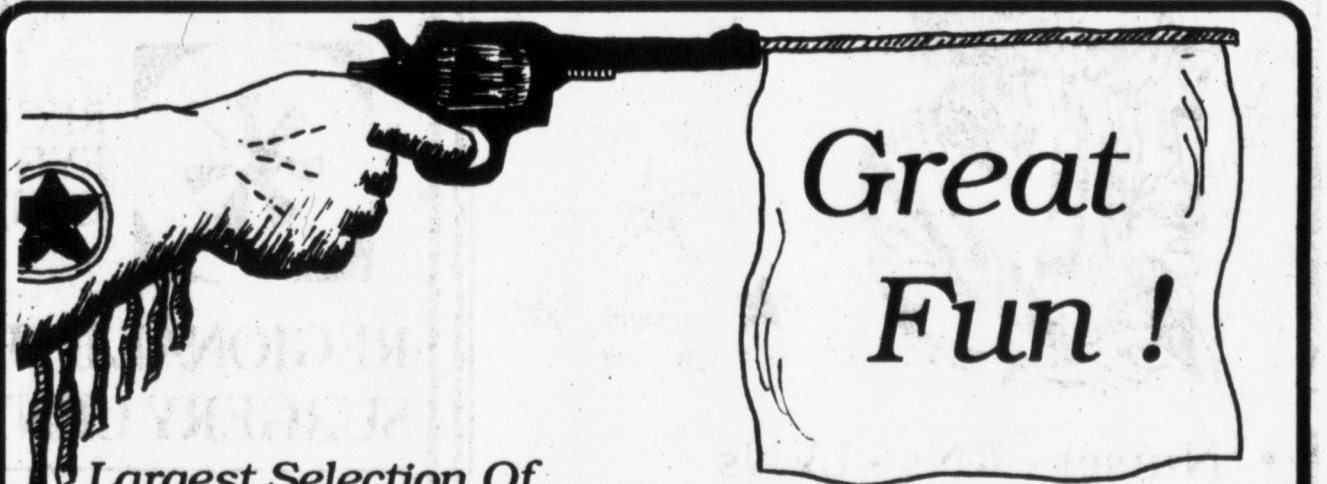


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# Leather Tames The West

By Pam Lewis  
Staff writer

The American West wouldn't have been the same without leather. One of the major characters in the West, the cowboy, depended on leather in his line of work.

Today's cowboy still depends on leather for the same reasons. Boots and saddles, just for starters, provide the durability and comfort necessary during long working days, sometimes in a harsh environment.

Most working cowboys don't

order their gear out of a Sears catalog. They depend on craftsmen with years of experience to turn pieces of leather into quality equipment.

Saddle makers have been around almost as long as men have worked on horseback. Instead of turning out as many saddles as possible, "a good saddle maker takes pride in the quality," said Jeff Anderberg of Faith Saddlery in Clarendon.

The way a saddle "sits" is very important to a working cowboy. If it isn't comfortable, it can sure make a man grumpy after a long,

hard day of working cattle.

Another good reason for a well made saddle is to prevent a sore-backed horse. If a saddle doesn't fit right, the horse under it won't be able to work for several days.

Even though his wages are far from high, a working cowboy would rather spend more money for a handmade saddle that will hold up under any circumstance. He doesn't want to risk anything breaking, which could spell disaster far from home.

Each man sits in a saddle differently, but after using it a while, the saddle conforms to the cowboy, becoming "custom fitted."

The classic western saddle, identified with the cowboy, has evolved over several centuries. Spanish vaqueros brought saddles influenced by the Moors and knights of old to the New World. However, these were made for riding rather than for working cattle. The old style was soon found to be uncomfortable for long days on the range and modifications developed.

Some of the early American saddles adopted the Mexican "tapaderos," which were leather covers on the front of stirrups. When riding through brushy terrain, a cowboy's feet were protected by more than just his boots. One of the ranchers from this area, Will Lewis, built a huge ranching business, but never wore boots. For protection, however, Lewis' saddles were always equipped with tapaderos.

Prices of handmade saddles vary, depending on what a person wants. "The basket-stamped pattern is the most popular for the money," stated Jeff Anderberg, pointing out that a fully stamped version costs \$1,300.



Skilled craftsman creates prized leather equipment.

The carved, full-flower pattern takes 60 to 70 hours to create and costs \$2,500. A plainer saddle, rough-out or smooth leather, is about \$1,115.

Comfort also plays an important role in a working cowboy's boots. An ill-fitting pair of boots can make a cowboy very "bearish." This is one reason most cowboys prefer to let an experienced boot maker put his feet in a pair of handmade boots.

Durability is another reason cowboys prefer handmade boots. For a little more "jingle" they can have a pair of boots that last three times longer than factory made. "The hardest handmade boots to pay for are the first ones," said Mike Walendorf, Hedley boot maker. "After people see how comfortable they are, they usually don't mind the price."

Every person's feet are shaped differently from any other person's, and both feet belonging to the same person will differ slightly. This fact of life is why a boot maker measures feet in numerous ways, assuring the best fitting, (best feeling) boots.

Clarendon boot maker Jim Owens said, "Boots haven't changed that much over the years, but the clientele has. There are more people

than just cowboys wearing handmade boots these days. And there are more exotic leathers being used, such as ostrich, elephant, snakeskin and anteater."


Cowgirls appreciate good boots, too. Memphis boot maker Elvis Bowens estimates 30 percent of handmade boots are now purchased by women.

There are still several boot makers in this region. However, at one time there were five footwear repair shops in Clarendon alone, three of which were boot making shops. In 1955, James Owens opened his boot making business in a Clarendon building that had been a boot shop since 1931. His son Jim has joined him in the business, carrying on the tradition.



Although cowboys will cite comfort and durability as good reasons to have good boots, there are two more reasons they just can't seem to say. Handmade boots are a beautiful work of art. They also symbolize the traditions and values passed down to them by earlier cowboys.

Among all the cowboy gear made from leather, from frontier times to the present, the basic necessities, boots and saddles, are still hand crafted when only the best will do.

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# Poet Translates Horsemen's Dreams

## Sort Of Not Defining

"Yeah, he'd be called a 'daisy hand' if these were bygone days  
Before the meanings changed their names and cowboys changed their ways.  
The punchers out of real old rock and of the long old shadow -  
Those graduates of the camp and trail who shunned the fenced-up meadow  
When all the range was grass-side up and all the cows wore horns -  
Would call your dad 'a ranahan well to the leather born' "

Old Dunder, augering the Kid, was brushing on the paint  
In strokes that made the Fiddle look a purely cowboy saint.  
He paused and then commenced to rake his hand across his whiskers,  
But realized that rasp he grew might raise some awful blisters.  
He soothed his palms upon his knees and gazed the air a hole  
And gave the Kid the look that showed the secrets of his soul.

"You set out definin', you're ridin' for boggin' -  
There's not a pure way to describe  
The reason and rhyme of the cowpuncher callin',  
The gist of the cowpuncher tribe.

But say we start up with an idy of Santee -  
Like Russell, a cowpuncher saint -  
The best you can say is he's good to his horses,  
The worst you can say is he ain't.

You can't call his rank by the crease of his hat,  
By his get-up, no matter how fine.  
You go by the moves that he makes on his horse -  
Is he on the right place the right time?

The kind out of old rock and of the long shadow -  
Your daddy is of the same leather -  
You'd say of his makin' his water runs deep  
And he'd do with to ride the wild river.

He knows what the mother cow says to her calf,  
He's a regular Webster on cattle,  
He hears what the wind says and listens to grass -  
He's plumb simply at home in the saddle."

-- Buck Ramsey

These poems, by Buck Ramsey of Amarillo, were written as a part of a larger work. The untitled piece is an excerpt from his book *And as I rode out on the morning*, published by Texas Tech University Press. The second poem includes many characters from the book but didn't make the cut ... this time.

Ramsey was a working cowboy for years until, as he explains, "a horse tougher than me ended all that." His experiences (literal and spiritual) come together in this book through a series of poems. They chronicle the life of a young man seeking to make a place for himself among the "princes of the earth" - cowboys.

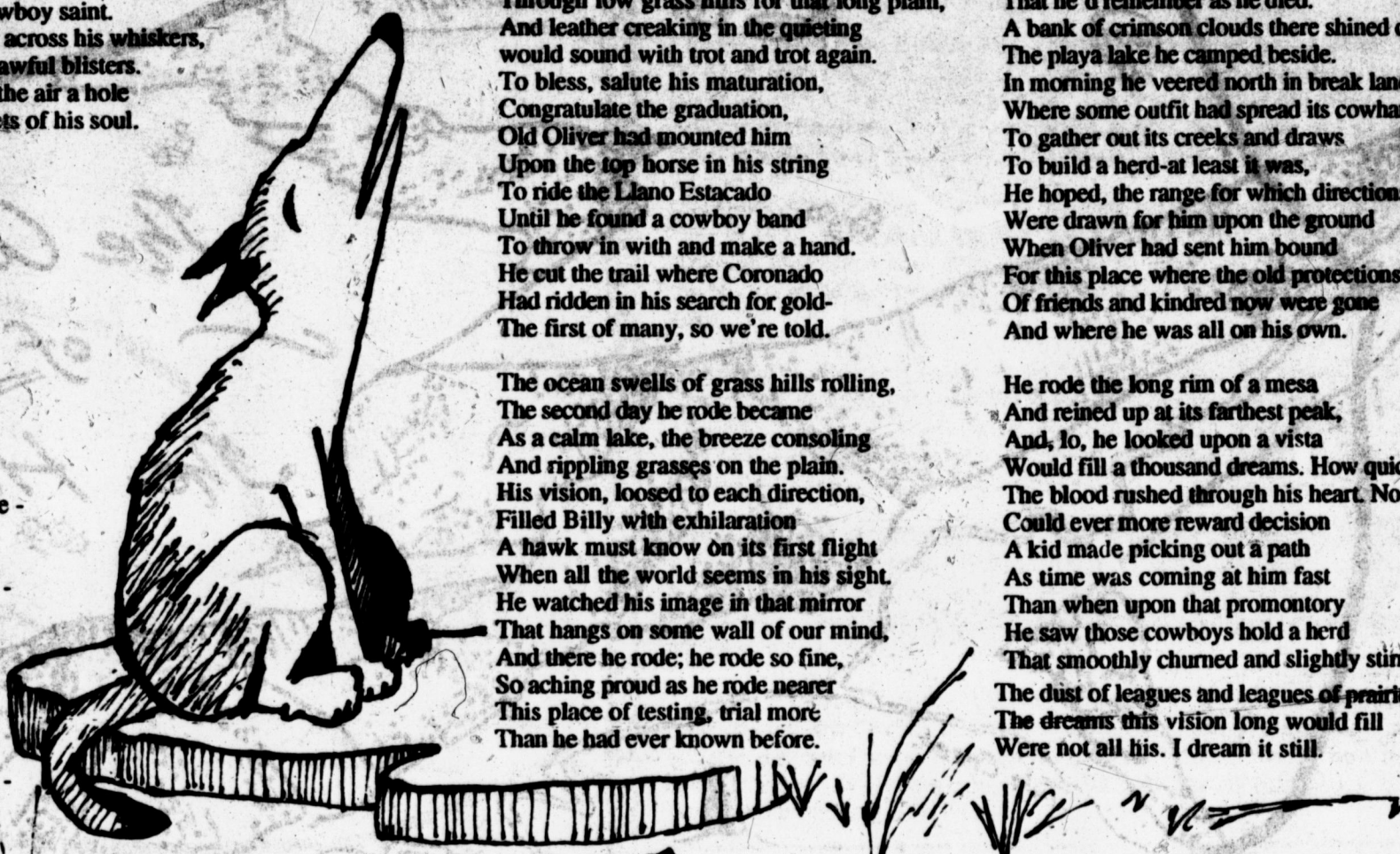
## Seven

And in the morning he was riding  
Through low grass hills for that long plain,  
And leather creaking in the quieting  
would sound with trot and trot again.  
To bless, salute his maturation,  
Congratulate the graduation,  
Old Oliver had mounted him  
Upon the top horse in his string  
To ride the Llano Estacado  
Until he found a cowboy band  
To throw in with and make a hand.  
He cut the trail where Coronado  
Had ridden in his search for gold -  
The first of many, so we're told.

The ocean swells of grass hills rolling,  
The second day he rode became  
As a calm lake, the breeze consoling  
And rippling grasses on the plain.  
His vision, loosed to each direction,  
Filled Billy with exhilaration  
A hawk must know on its first flight  
When all the world seems in his sight.  
He watched his image in that mirror  
That hangs on some wall of our mind,  
And there he rode; he rode so fine,  
So aching proud as he rode nearer  
This place of testing, trial more  
Than he had ever known before.

But first he suppered on a sundown  
That he'd remember as he died.  
A bank of crimson clouds there shined on  
The playa lake he camped beside.  
In morning he veered north in break lands  
Where some outfit had spread its cowhands  
To gather out its creeks and draws  
To build a herd-at least it was,  
He hoped, the range for which directions  
Were drawn for him upon the ground  
When Oliver had sent him bound  
For this place where the old protections  
Of friends and kindred now were gone  
And where he was all on his own.

He rode the long rim of a mesa  
And reined up at its farthest peak,  
And, lo, he looked upon a vista  
Would fill a thousand dreams. How quick  
The blood rushed through his heart. No vision  
Could ever more reward decision  
A kid made picking out a path  
As time was coming at him fast  
Than when upon that promontory  
He saw those cowboys hold a herd  
That smoothly churned and slightly stirred  
The dust of leagues and leagues of prairie.  
The dreams this vision long would fill  
Were not all his. I dream it still.



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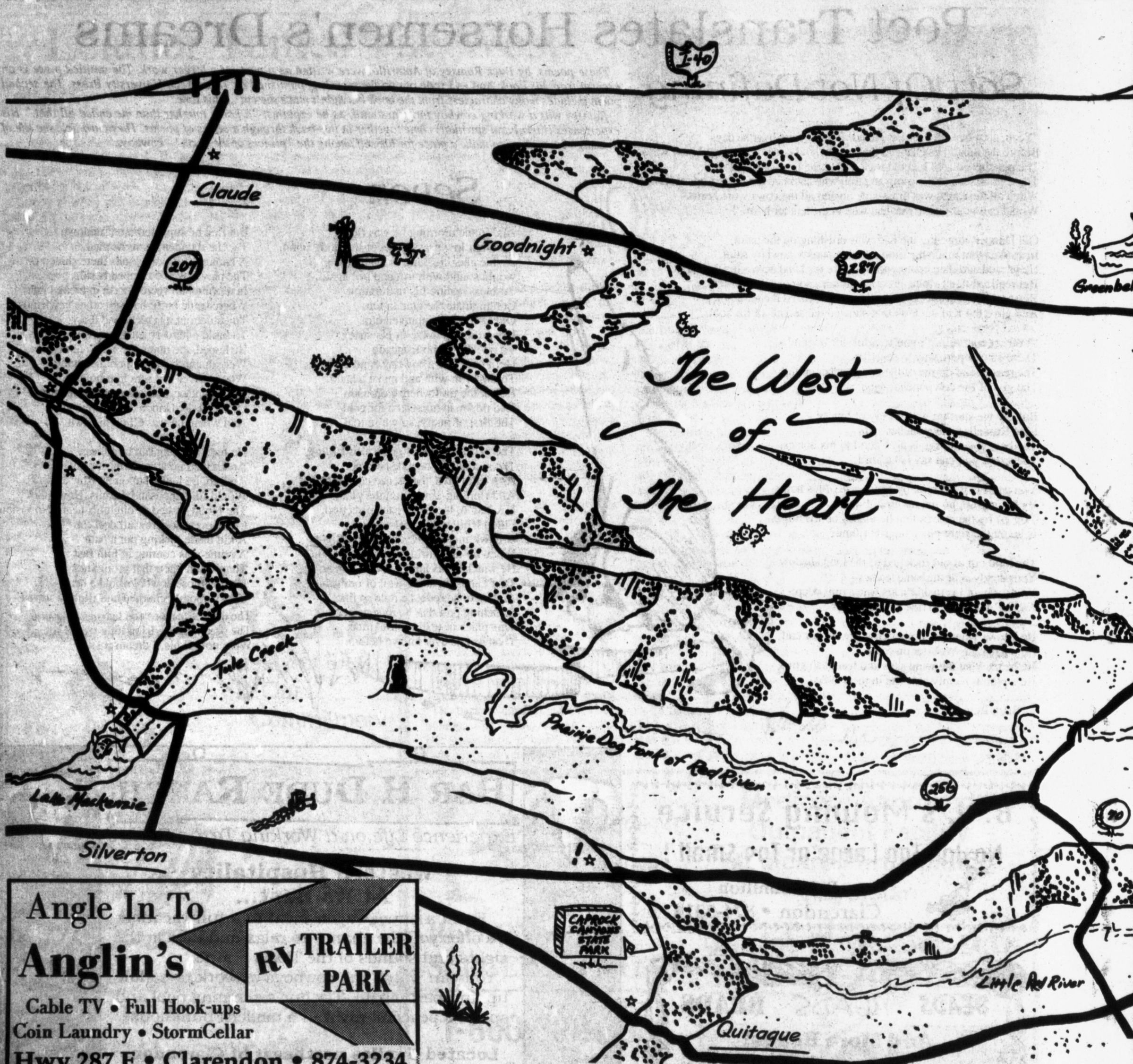
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# Along The Trail

"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.

**Memphis** - Hall county seat, 1890. Historic buildings surround courthouse built in 1922. Memphis claims the title "Cotton Capital of the Panhandle" although the county was originally home to large ranches. Among those established in the free range days were the Shoe Bar, Mill Iron, and Diamond Tail.

**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. Contact 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. Phone 806-455-1492.

**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. Vehicle access fee. Contact 806-455-1492.

## Points of Interest

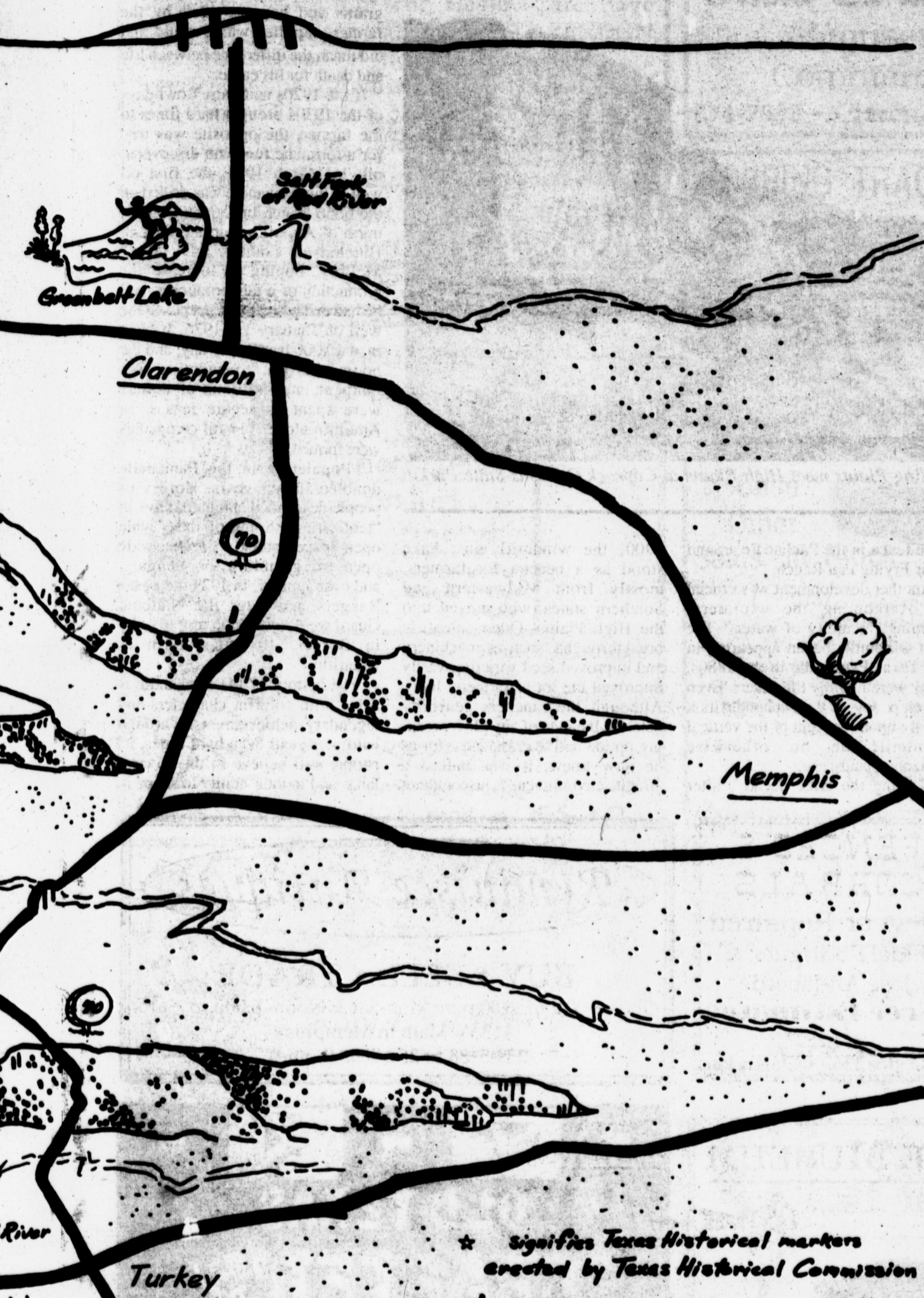
All the highways of the area provide beautiful views; however, TX 207 south of Claude and TX 256 east of Silverton have especially dramatic views of canyonland.

**Caprock Trailway** - 22 miles of the new trail are now open. It passes through the scenic, historic area near Quitaque. The route is open to hikers, horse riders, and bicyclists. Contact 806-455-1492.

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

## 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, Claude, and Memphis.
- Col. Charles Goodnight's House, US 287, near the community of Goodnight.



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# Diverse Heritage Etched From Sands Of Time

The phrase "shifting sands of time" seems appropriate in any attempt to describe the diverse history of the Texas Panhandle. Neat and tidy summaries can't do justice to the drama that has unfolded here.

Amazing stories lie beneath our feet in the river beds, floodplain deposits, and sinkholes. Prehistoric fossils 200 million years old have been discovered in this region. The walls of Palo Duro and other canyons, cut away by erosion, layer by layer, reveal centuries of evolution. Near Amarillo, the Caprock Escarpment marks the southern boundary of North America's "High Plains."

For 300 years, Spanish and other maps termed this region "The Great American Desert," and described it as unfit for agriculture, devoid of timber, and unbroken by any sort of landmark. But by the time Spain lost her empire in the American Southwest, missionaries, traders, and soldiers had visited and marked West Texas, naming almost every stream, canyon, and waterhole. One name that stuck was the "Llano Estacado," or "staked plains," with the Caprock's conspicuous escarpments on both sides.

A few years before the Spanish reign ended, Anglo explorers, including government sponsored expeditions, came to many of the same conclusions about this region - with a few important exceptions. Phrases like "valleys with streams" and "lush grasslands" were probably enough to encourage restless Americans in their push westward. Never mind the warnings of "fragile environment." Those lessons were to be learned the hard way.

The Panhandle had been the domain of Indians for centuries prior to the coming of American settlers. At first, these were Indians of the Pueblo tribes; then the Plains Indians, primarily Comanches and Kiowas, who had acquired horses in the early 1700's and therefore developed into good hunters. Even by 1830, there were 7 million buffalo to hunt, and the Indians' lives and culture revolved around the bison.

But in 40 short years, as more Euro-Americans moved west, the buffalo herds had been annihilated. Partly of necessity, perhaps as revenge, Indians made raids on frontier Texans' horses, cattle, and sometimes families. The remote, sparsely populated Panhandle provided safe haven to Indians returning from such forays into other parts of Texas.

Settlers loudly protested to federal military authorities whose thin line of forts offered little protection. The U.S. Cavalry rode out of those forts, launching an offensive campaign which lasted some ten years. In 1867 General Philip Sheridan's troops came into the Llano Estacado, looking for remnants of Indians who had rebelled against the Treaty of Medicine Lodge Creek and sought refuge in this area. Although many

Indians in the eastern Panhandle and Oklahoma had been forced onto reservations, those who still roamed the Panhandle had several more years of relative freedom because of President Grant's Administration policy, called the "Quaker Peace Policy."

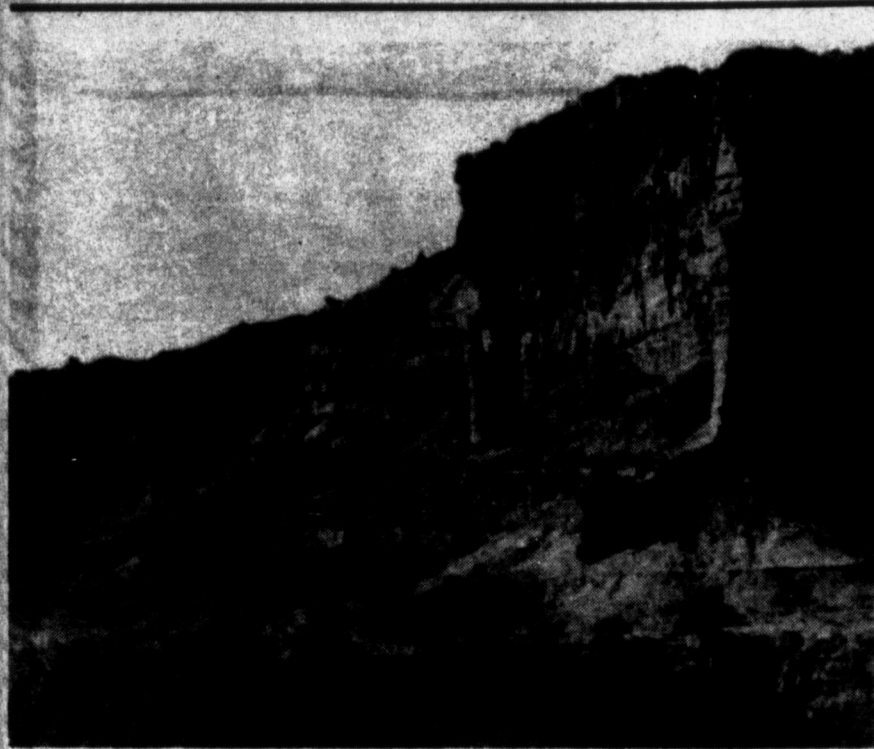
Brief campaigns, led by Colonel Ranald S. Mackenzie, were conducted in the Panhandle in 1871 and 1872. However, in 1874 the army mounted a major offensive against the Southern Plains tribes. Five columns of cavalry converged on the region. Hundreds of Indians encamped along three miles of the Prairie Dog Fork of the Red River were discovered on September 28, 1874. Mackenzie's cavalry dealt a devastating blow, burning winter food supplies and slaughtering more than 1,400 horses.

For all intents and purposes, the deterrent to American settlement was ended - at least the threat of Indian attack. Other dangers would surely come.

The grass which had fed many buffalo now stood tall for cattle. First Longhorns from Mexico, then Hereford and Angus cattle from Europe. A new breed of horsemen now made the Panhandle their home, in spite of fire and stampede, drought and gully-washer. And competition for that same grass was on the horizon, limiting the era of the open range to a mere 30 years.

Ranchers changed their minds about fences when herds drifting down from the north encroached on each year's limited supply of grass and water. The whole idea of fences ran contrary to their free-spirited nature, but it was also downright impractical. Words of the early explorers "devoid of timber" and "fragile environment" were now coming home to roost.

Between 1867 and 1887, the largest number of patent applications for barbed wire were registered. One of the promoters for Joseph Glidden's patented barbed wire was H.B. Sanborn. Glidden and Sanborn built the first barbed



Rolling Plains meet High Plains at Caprock Canyons State Park.

wire fence in the Panhandle around their Frying Pan Ranch.

Another development was crucial in overcoming the explorers' warning, "scarcity of water." The first windmills began appearing in the Texas Panhandle in the 1880s. They were literally life savers. Even today, people of the Panhandle look fondly upon the sight of the vertical windmill on an otherwise horizontal landscape.

During the three decades after

1900, the windmill must have stood as a beacon for farmers, mostly from Midwestern and Southern states, who moved into the High Plains. Other scientific breakthroughs, such as machinery and improved seed varieties, vastly improved the lot of farmers' lives. Although the ranchers generally detested the idea of any plow breaking up the native grasslands (for as he now knew, it was indeed a "fragile environment"), he could not

ignore the generous supply of grains and hay provided by the farmer, supplies which could and did mean the difference between life and death for his cattle.

If the 1920s and Dust Bowl days of the 1930s brought hard times to the farmer, the opposite was true for a fortunate few who discovered oil. In March 1921, the first oil well in the Panhandle was drilled on the 6666 Ranch in Carson County, north of Amarillo. Farther north in Hutchinson County, S.D. "Tex" McIlroy, hoping to increase the production of a fair-producing well he had drilled in 1925, deepened the well on January 11, 1926. It blew in at 10,000 barrels per day, and the boom was on. Speculation was rampant, and millions of dollars were spent to secure leases. In Amarillo alone, 114 oil companies were formed.

Population in the Panhandle doubled in ten years. Hordes of people descended and had to live in "tent cities." Some of these wide open spaces quickly became wide open for gambling, bootlegging, and even murder. In 1927 the Texas Rangers and later the National Guard were called in to restore order in Borger, 40 miles north of Amarillo.

The history of the Panhandle is filled with colorful characters and legendary achievements. Through hard work and even hard times, its people still believe in this diverse land - and in their ability to shape it.

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# "Come And Get It!" Rolls 'em Out For Chuck

Come hell or high water, cooking three meals a day for a crew of hard working men is a mighty task.

From a wagon measuring about 41 inches wide and 12 feet long, a chuck wagon cook produces hearty dishes to fill those bottomless-pits-on-horseback called cowboys. Sourdough biscuits, usually beef, always beans and, if they're lucky, fruit cobbler.

Cattle baron Charles Goodnight is credited with designing the original "meals on wheels," when he and his partner Oliver Loving prepared to take a herd of 2,000 Longhorn cattle from Fort Belknap, Texas to Denver, Colorado in 1866.

The term "chuck" originated in 17th Century England and referred to the lower priced part of a beef carcass. Later, the term was applied to any good, basic food for the working man. Finally, with Goodnight's innovation, a wagon with a chuck box became a chuck wagon.

The shelves and compartments of a chuck wagon contain the ingredients from which a good cook can create a range of variations on the basic menu. Beans+meat+potatoes=Stew, for example.

Dutch ovens are absolutely necessary for authentic chuck wagon

The following recipes were chosen because they are representative of the rich legacy left to us from outdoor cooks of the past. They were compiled and published by the Texas Beef Industry Council in *Yesterday and Today, the Best of Chuck-Wagon Cooking*, 1989. The ranch recipes also have been converted for use in home kitchens.

From the Long X Ranch,  
Kent, Texas

## Sourdough Biscuits

Starter:

1 cup milk / 2 pkgs. yeast  
4 cups flour / 1/2 cup sugar  
Mix ingredients together. Add water. Make it thick as possible. Let it sit for two days at room temperature. Add another cup of flour, 1/2 tsp. of sugar and water after first day. Keep it covered. By third day, it's ready to use.

Put 2 quarts of starter in bottom of mixing bowl and hollow it out. Add 2 tsp. sugar, 2 tsp. salt, 2 tsp. baking powder, 1/4 cup of Crisco or oil. Mix it and make dough out of it. Take 14-inch Dutch oven and in bottom add balls of dough about the size of a big hen egg. Cover and place over coals with some coals on top. Takes about 30 minutes to cook.

In oven place rolls on a greased cookie sheet and bake in 375 degree oven for 20 minutes or until brown

From the Guitar Ranches,  
Abilene, Texas

## Chicken Fried Steak

Round steak (1/4 pound per person)  
Salt and pepper to taste  
2 cups milk  
1 egg  
2 cups flour with 1 tsp. salt and

food. Anything that can be fried, boiled or baked can be cooked in these iron pots, usually 10" to 14" in diameter.

Lids on the ovens are flat, but rimmed, so that hot coals can be placed on top. A skillful cook can dig a shallow pit, select the wood which will produce good coals, and knows when to place each item on to cook so that everything will be ready at the same time.

When the pots are pulled off the fire, lids lifted with a hooked rod, and the biscuits are golden brown on top (but not black on the bottom), even the roughest cowboy has been known to get religion.

Although cowboys led a less-than-genteel life, a strict code of behavior grew up around campsites. Riders always stayed downwind as they approached to avoid scattering dust over the food; horses were not allowed too close to the chuck wagon. No one dared help himself to food without "Cookie's" permission, and the cowboys scraped their plates and put them in the wash tub after meals. It's been said that only a damned fool would argue with a skunk, a woman, or a roundup cook. And good behavior paid off if it kept the cook in the right mood to fix a dessert.

pepper added to it

Use Coke bottle bottom to tenderize meat with and to hack salt and pepper into meat. Take milk in a bowl and beat egg in it. Dip steak in milk and egg mixture then flour until well coated. Fry over medium high heat in about 1/2-inch grease until batter is golden brown.

From Jim Humphreys, Jr.,  
Dickens, Texas. Jim's interest in chuck wagon cooking began while his father was manager of the legendary Pitchfork Ranch near Guthrie, Texas.

## Texas Tornado Cake

1 1/2 cups white sugar  
2 eggs  
1 tsp. vanilla  
2 cups fruit cocktail with juice  
(Add 2 tsp. lemon juice or pineapple juice and blend in blender until smooth)

1 tsp. baking soda  
Pinch baking powder  
2 cups flour  
3/4 tsp. cinnamon  
1/2 tsp. nutmeg  
1/4 cup brown sugar  
1 cup chopped nuts

Mix and heat sugar, eggs, vanilla and fruit cocktail. Add soda, flour, cinnamon and nutmeg. Pour into Dutch oven. Mix brown sugar and nuts together and sprinkle over top of batter. Cook over hot coals (350 degrees) for 30 minutes.

Sauce: 1 stick oleo

1/2 cup canned milk  
1 cup brown sugar  
1 cup coconut

Mix ingredients in sauce pan. Bring to boil stirring constantly. When cake is ready let stand on wire rack for 3 to 4 minutes. Poke holes with fork in top of cake and pour sauce over top of hot cake.



Authentic Chuck Wagon, still dishing out good food and good times.

These cowboy cafeterias are a marvel in compact design and allow a smooth ranching operation.

From Wagon Creek-Spade Ranch,  
Throckmorton, Texas

## Spicy Hot Beans

1 (16 oz) pkg. dried pinto beans  
6 cups water  
1 lb. bacon, pieces cut in half  
1 lb. smoked link beef sausage  
2 medium onions, chopped  
1/2 cup chopped green pepper  
4 cloves minced garlic  
1/2 cup Worcestershire sauce  
1 tbsp. brown sugar  
2 tbsp. ground cumin  
1 tbsp. pepper  
1 tbsp. celery seeds  
2 - 3 tsp. hot pepper sauce  
1 tsp. salt  
1 bay leaf  
1 (16 oz) can tomatoes, undrained and chopped

Sort and wash beans. Place in large Dutch oven. Cover with water 2 inches above beans. Let soak 8 hours. Drain beans and return to Dutch oven. Add 6 cups water. Combine bacon and next four ingredients in a skillet. Cook over medium heat until bacon is done and vegetables are tender. Drain. Add remaining ingredients except

tomatoes and bring mixture to a boil. Cover, reduce heat and simmer (medium low) for 2 hours or until beans are tender. Stir occasionally. Add tomatoes. Cook 30 minutes longer.

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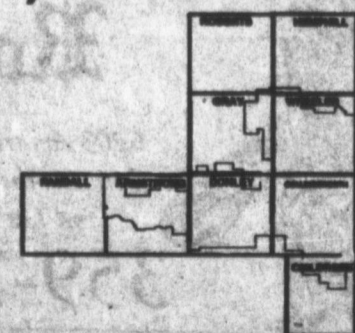
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# Fishing Brings Excitement On The Escarpment

By Mel Phillips

For those who like the great outdoors, nature has worked overtime to create some of her most beautiful panoramas right here in this part of Texas.

Best known is one of the largest state parks in Texas (15,103 acres), the magnificent PALO DURO CANYON. Called the Grand Canyon of Texas, Palo Duro canyon was carved by a fork of the Red River.

The canyon features an abrupt descent of 1,000 feet into a land of pinnacles, spires, and a colorful geological clock. Full service camping facilities, hiking, and horseback riding are available. Contact park headquarters at 806/488-2227.

The newest location for hiking, cycling, and horseback riding pleasures is CAPROCK CANYON'S RAIL-TO TRAILS STATE PARK. Located near Quitaque (KITTY KWAY), this abandoned Burlington railroad right-of-way will eventually run 64 miles from South Plains to Estelline.

Also located at Quitaque is CAPROCK CANYONS STATE PARK, offering 13,960 acres of colorful cliffs and canyons, abundant wildlife, and even a 100-acre lake for your fishing pleasure. For additional information concerning either the Caprock Canyons or the Rails-to-Trails Park, contact Rusty Sargent, park superintendent, at 806/455-1492.

While in the vicinity of Quanah, don't miss COPPER BREAKS STATE PARK, featuring 1,933 acres with first-class camping, playgrounds, hiking trails,

LAKE BAYLOR, not on most maps but located 6 miles north of Childress on US 287, is one of the jewels in the world of big bass lakes. Some Texans call this small 700 acre lake a "tank", but anglers regularly catch big bass. Lake record black bass is currently 14.40 lbs. During the spring of 1993, more than 40 bass over 8 pounds were verified and released alive.

The key to continued success of big bass fishing at Lake Baylor is this tradition of catch-and-release. Please, remember a trophy bass is too valuable to be caught only once. Best bass baits at Baylor are black jig-N-pig, chrome Rat-L-Trap, and waterdogs. Barn-door size crappie like minnows. Catfish prefer chicken liver, bloodbait, or shrimp.

For best, up-to-date fishing information, contact Roy Rapavi at 817/937-2102. Bring a camera, but don't bring that wimpy fishing rod because the bass are big in little Lake Baylor.

LAKE MACKENZIE is an 896 acre reservoir located 12 northeast of Silverton. This canyon-type lake features some outstanding fishing

for bass, stripers, catfish, walleye, and sandbass.

After getting the required lake permit and checking out the pictures of successful anglers on the wall at the Cactus Cove bait shop, try using minnows on the main lake points at the mouth of either Deadman Creek or Tule Creek.

Stripers at this lake will average over eight pounds. They stay in the main lake area, and will usually suspend at about fifteen feet except for brief periods of surface feeding. Try using an in-line spinnerbait or drift between the islands with minnows. **WARNING** Loosen the drag on the fishing reels because big strippers will take the bait and make a wild dash with it. For fishing and camping information, call 817/633-4325.

LAKE GREENBELT, the emerald lake of the Panhandle near Clarendon, features great fishing, camping, skiing, and sandy beaches that are perfect for an afternoon picnic. Anglers will enjoy trolling either a chrome Little George or Rat-L-Trap to catch sand bass.

To catch some tasty walleye, let the wind drift the boat while


bouncing an earthworm across the bottom. Bass fishermen work the main lake points with white spinnerbaits before heading to the cattails with the proven jig-n-pig.

Greenbelt, because of a good system of dirt road access, provides some excellent opportunities for shoreline fishing. Try Kelly Creek on the south side, and Carrol Creek on the north.

**Tips for Summer Shoreline Fishing:** Set out the bait (minnow or worm) then systematically cover several depths until the fish tell you the best depth. Try one rig on bottom. Set one rod

with the bait weighted at about 5 foot with a bobber. Finally set a rod with the bait suspended about one foot beneath the cork bobber. Change baits every 30 minutes, or until several bites indicate the best bait and best depth. During the summer, fishing early, late, and at night will increase the chances for success.


Mel Phillips, winner of numerous awards for journalism and broadcasting, is an active member of Texas Outdoor Writers Association, a tournament angler, an avid hunter, and host of a Wednesday evening outdoors show on KGNC



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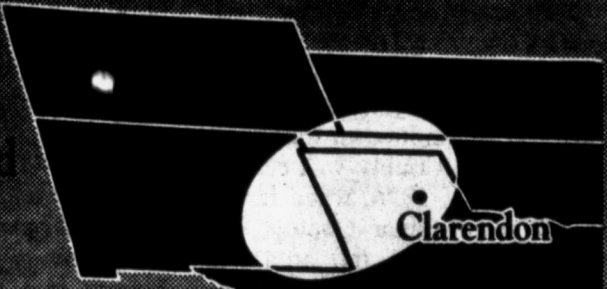
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# Days Of Our Lives Recorded At Courthouse

By June Adcock  
PDG Correspondent

Courthouses - those mysterious imposing buildings, ornately fashioned from brick or stone, that tower above every other structure in town, are prominent in almost every county seat in Texas. They are visible reminders of our heritage, tangible evidence of our beginnings.

As a child, I can remember gazing upward two or three stories at one of these masterpieces, struck with solemn awe at its architectural majesty and dwarfed by its stature.

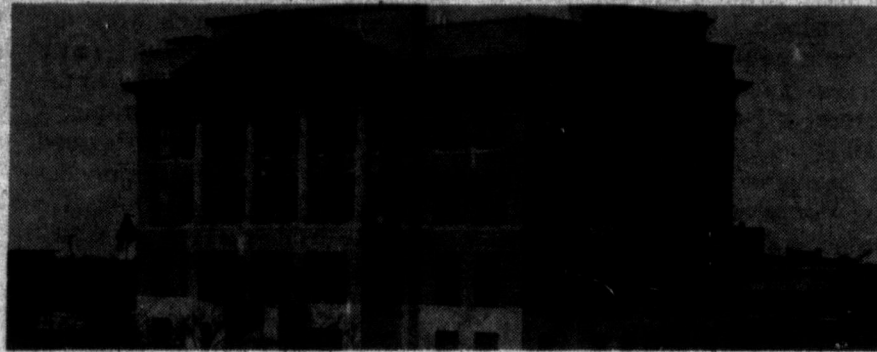
Standing in the newly restored courtroom of the Armstrong County Courthouse, I recently experienced that same feeling of awe and couldn't help wondering about the history that the walls must have witnessed.

It's all here. Our joys and our sorrows are all recorded in triplicate. The milestones of our lives: birth certificates, marriage licenses, property appraisals, tax increases, death certificates, autopsy reports and probates. History is duly noted, officially documented and systematically stored in the annals of the county courthouse.

The Armstrong County Courthouse's own rich history has been carefully documented and is a matter of public record, placed on permanent file within its own walls.

Armstrong County was created on August 21, 1876, when it was set off from Bexar County. For judicial purposes, the area had originally been a part of Donley County. On February 10, 1890, the commissioner's court of Donley County granted the petition of 174 qualified voters for the official organization of their county. They also ordered that an election be held on March 8, 1890 for the purpose of selecting a site for the county seat and electing county and precinct officials.

A hot race with Washburn for the county seat ensued but Claude won by one vote. The first county



Armstrong County Courthouse nears completion, January 14, 1913.

commissioners' court was held in the Palace Hotel on March 17, 1890, with Commissioners W.A. Campbell and J.E. Farrington present. The first deed recorded in the county involved 640 acres deeded to John Adair and Charles Goodnight by the governor of Texas.

The original courthouse in Claude was a poorly built 40'x40', square wooden building constructed in 1890. It was 2 1/2 stories high and had a porch on the east side. The \$8,000 structure proved its unsturdiness, as each consecutive commissioners court had to order repairs. On windy days, the judge was sometimes forced to adjourn because of increasing fear that the building would collapse. It remained in service for 23 years, however, and was a frequent meeting place for the Masonic Lodge and the Church of Christ.

During WWI, there was a great need for community cooperation. A Red Cross chapter was established and women from all over the county met regularly in the old courthouse where they knitted sweaters and socks for all branches of the U.S. armed forces.

Other buildings that surrounded the courthouse in downtown Claude during this time included a livery stable, lumber yard, blacksmith shop, railroad depot, one church, Cavins General Mercantile store and a saloon.

A jail was built in 1890 by the Pauley Jail Company, of St. Louis, Missouri at a cost of \$14,000. The

first jail was constructed of native stone and had a decorative dome. Prisoners from all parts of the Panhandle were sent to Armstrong County to be incarcerated because of the new jail's central location. It was also the largest jail in the Panhandle at that time. Early pioneers who helped build the jail were paid 50 cents a day to haul rocks up from Dripping Springs Canyon in their wagons. Though the foundation was poor, it was used until 1952 when a \$40,000 jail was reconstructed using the same stone.

Construction of the current courthouse began in 1912 at a cost of about \$65,000. There were economic advantages connected to being a county seat. Armstrong county grew rapidly because these were the times when men brought their families out west and built homes of their own. They sought the opportunities that the gospel of the Manifest Destiny promised. There was a whole country to build and Claude became a popular retail shipping point on the Fort Worth-Denver railroad line. Thus, Claude attracted businesses and shoppers.

A new well near the courthouse

provided the entire town with water. Barrels on carts were filled at this central location then stored in backyards. During the hot summer months, especially during harvest, farmers brought their working stock into town to water at the courthouse well. It was not unusual to see a whole herd of cattle completely surround the courthouse and mill around the square as they came off the dusty trail for a cool drink.

Besides serving the community in an official capacity, the Armstrong County courthouse is an attractive landmark that has become

an integral hub of Claude community life. For a while, there was even a whimsical bandstand on the spacious courthouse lawn during the 1930's.

The convenience of the automobile, telephone, electricity, and piped in gas and water have brought about many changes and many improvements. Old county courthouses seem to get even more distinguished with the passage of time. These historical institutions that grace our lives and record our life history, also contain their own intriguing story within the confines of their elaborate exteriors.


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# Roundup Spirit Still Alive

By June Adcock  
PDG Correspondent

The hospitality in Claude is never lacking and the 62nd annual Caprock Roundup, Rodeo and Old Settlers Reunion, scheduled for July 9-10, promises to be one of the best yet.

The first official Roundup occurred in July 1931, although annual picnics in Armstrong County have been recorded as far back as 1904. There's been a few changes since then but the old fashioned spirit of fun and friendly fellowship surrounding this festive celebration each year remains the same.

In 1931, 6,000 people came from all parts of the United States to attend Claude's big summer event. Tables were labeled with the name of each state and picnickers feasted heartily at the table marked with their own birthplace. Of course the Texas table was the busiest but every state in the union was represented. There were 45 decorated floats entered in the parade that year and music rang out from every corner of the courthouse square throughout the day. Quality entertainment included Geoff's Players, a popular traveling troupe of dramatic artists that put on comedies, skits and dramas under a tent for a 5¢ gate charge. Between acts, they performed vaudeville numbers. Later, everyone gathered under the big tent to listen to the old timers' stories at the Old Settlers Reunion. Mrs. R.M. Hathorn, one of the very first pioneer women in Claude,

was among the earliest settlers registered that year along with Mr. John P. Reck and Mrs. F. Chauveaux.

Also in 1931, J.M. Crist, manager, had to build an arena and makeshift corrals for the stock before the rodeo could begin. Trick roping by James Yeomans was a real crowd pleaser while Frank Campbell and Dirt Fleming thrilled everyone by steer ridin' double.

Yes, there have been some changes in the Caprock Roundup over the years. Faces have changed and improvements have been made. The weather hasn't always cooperated but the memories, unlike the weather, are always pleasant.

Rodeo cowboys and enthusiasts of the 1990's are drawn from all over the world to participate in the Caprock Roundup Rodeo because of its established tradition and reputation for quality stock. Top competitors in the field try to make it a regular part of their summer tour.

This year, rodeo preliminaries will begin on Friday, July 9. John R. Goodin, coordinator, has announced that the stock for this year's rodeo will be furnished by the Maverick Rodeo Company of Tulia. Some of the events to be featured include calf roping, bareback riding, bull riding, bulldogging, saddle bronc riding, barrel racing, team roping and more. A calf scramble with prizes for the kids will be a special event each night. American Legion Harold Gist Post #344 members

will be volunteer helpers at the Legion Hall for a country and western dance under the stars.

The Old Settlers registration and Reunion will open at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, July 10 on the west side of the courthouse. The theme for this year's parade will be determined by a contest that is currently underway. Prizes will be awarded for the best entry in four categories and the fun will begin at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday. Free barbecue on the courthouse square will be served at noon by volunteers from the Claude Chamber of Commerce and Lion's Club. Cold drinks, homemade ice cream, and lemonade will be available on the square along with several craft booths and exhibits in Claude businesses. The open talent contest is new this year along with the games for children including a townsack race, 3-legged event, and egg roll. There's even talk of a bed race.

The Claude Pharmacy, with its authentic old fashioned soda fountain, stands on the square and is a favorite meeting place during the Roundup. High school reunions and family get-togethers occur simultaneously on the square throughout the afternoon.

A few surprises have been planned to make this year's Roundup an extra special memory. The grand opening of the Armstrong County Museum has been strategically scheduled to coincide with the Caprock Roundup activities. This may prove to be the most unforgettable summer gathering in the history of the Caprock Roundup. So come on, make a memory.

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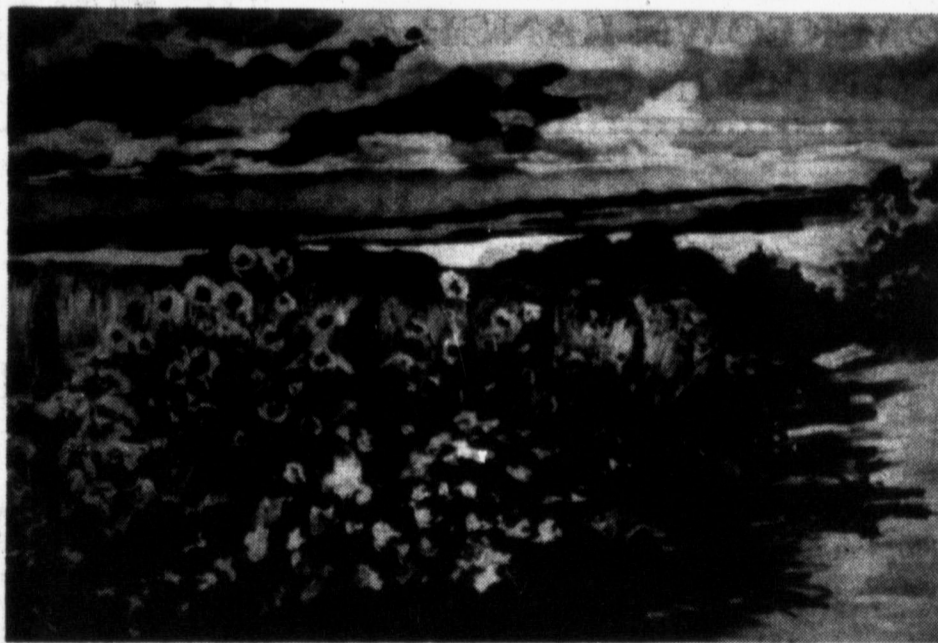
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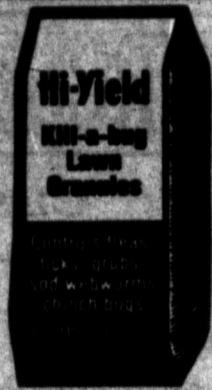
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**Symbol Of Settlers Survives**

On a hot, windy day the scent of cedar permeates the small draw. A cluster of Herford cows, their spring calves sporting a new brand of the old "JA," and a formidable bull seek the shade of a cottonwood tree.

Close by, three strands of old barbed wire barely cling to shrunken cedar posts, all propped up with the help of a short fence made of flat stones stacked around the 70-foot square.

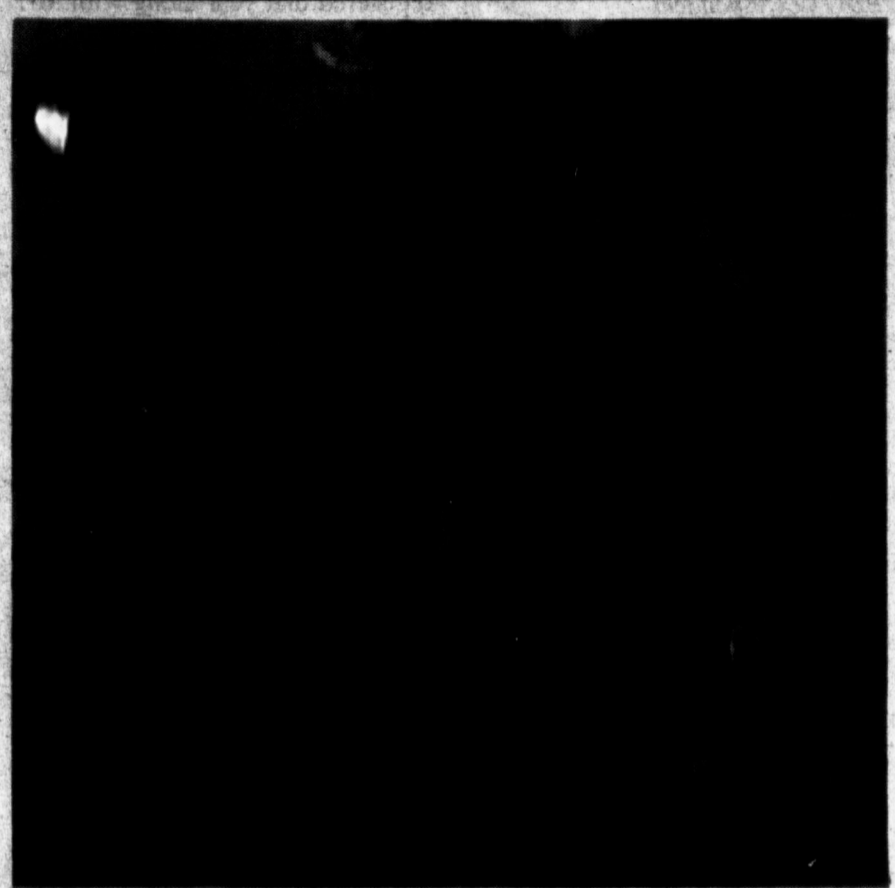
The spot chosen for the little cemetery would be merely a pinpoint if placed on a map of the huge ranch, but it looms large in the imagination.

Seven graves are marked, but slightly sunken spaces suggest other bodies have long been laid to rest here. What markers are in place reveal little: "Liza Hopkins, born about 1867, died 1890, burned in Tule Camp, married 1888 Armstrong County;" "Baby Cross, born and died 1897, Rosa Cross, mother, buried in 1906 in Silverton, E.T. Woodburn's daughter, who the Woodburn Camp was named for, Jim Cross, baby's daddy, buried 1945 in Silverton."

Other markers reveal even less: "Jeff Love; Mrs. Stevens; Baby Cuppell; J.W. Jack Cooper, born 1847, died 1899."

One grave on the northwest corner stands out. A solid piece of petrified wood bears a bronze plaque: "Thomas Everett Blasingame, 1898-1989, a true cowboy - loyal to the brand." Blasingame was indeed respected, perhaps because he represented the best characteristics of a dying breed.

The JA Ranch, established in



Final resting place for true cowboy Tom Blasingame on JA Ranch.

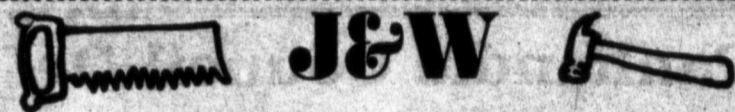
1874, has greatly contributed to this region's proud history. Countless men and women have helped create the legend.

However, two men deserve special mention with regard to the ranch cemetery. Lon Woodburn and "Goose" Ramey built the stone fence, researched and provided markers for several of the graves over a 30-year period.

Woodburn's father and two uncles once were JA cowboys, and one of

the camps was named for his family. The "Baby Cross, 1897" was a cousin of Woodburn, now 80 years old. He remembers collecting the stones "scattered along the creek." The late "Goose" Ramey also was a colorful JA cowboy at one time.

From season to season, as the wind passes over this lonely place, it whispers of souls gone before us, their hopes for the future - their contribution to the settlement of the Texas Panhandle.



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# Pete's Got The Top Down And The Radio On



**Ol' Pete**

**Our Prairie Dog Town correspondent**

bugs out of the air. Turkey was sleepy after all the Bob Wills Day festivities and Quitaque was sprucing up for the tourists to the State Park and Trailway.  
From the flat high ground around

Silverton I sped toward the best canyon views in the area. On the way to Claude you see "Steep Grade" signs that look like practical jokes until you reach the edge!



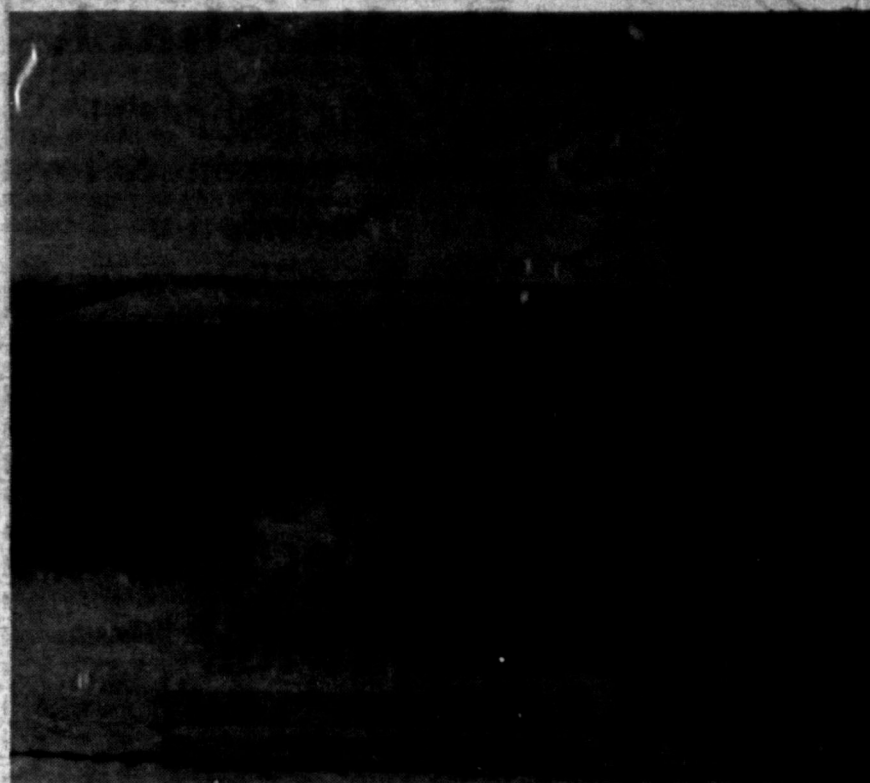
*The type of vehicle encountered on Pete's road trip. Has the Briscoe County Sheriff called the tow truck?*

Well, when the sun gets warm, I get an itch to travel. No, it's not fleas, just the urge to get out and about. So, not long ago, I asked around the office to see if anyone wanted to take a quick road trip. Everyone had an excuse, but I heard some whispering about my driving.

On the road - solo. No problem. The morning air was still cool and damp as I headed toward Turkey from Memphis. Through rolling farmland my old truck took me to Deep Lake. The first post office in Hall County was established here in 1884. There probably wasn't a lot of mail delivered there, but this pond with unusually blue water drew many visitors back then. Indians camped and cowboys brought cattle, because, until the droughts of the 1930s, the water never ran out.

I herded a few cows down the dirt road (rarely traveled) until they found their gap in a fence. After passing through Lakeview I stopped at the old school at Leslie. I got an eerie feeling there. I guess because abandoned schools conjure up the ghosts of rural communities. You can just feel the hopes and dreams of the early settlers who built them. A house was a home but the schools were the future.

By now the sun was getting pretty high and I pushed on across the canyons. Every bridge had an "air show" going on. The swallows were ducking and diving, picking



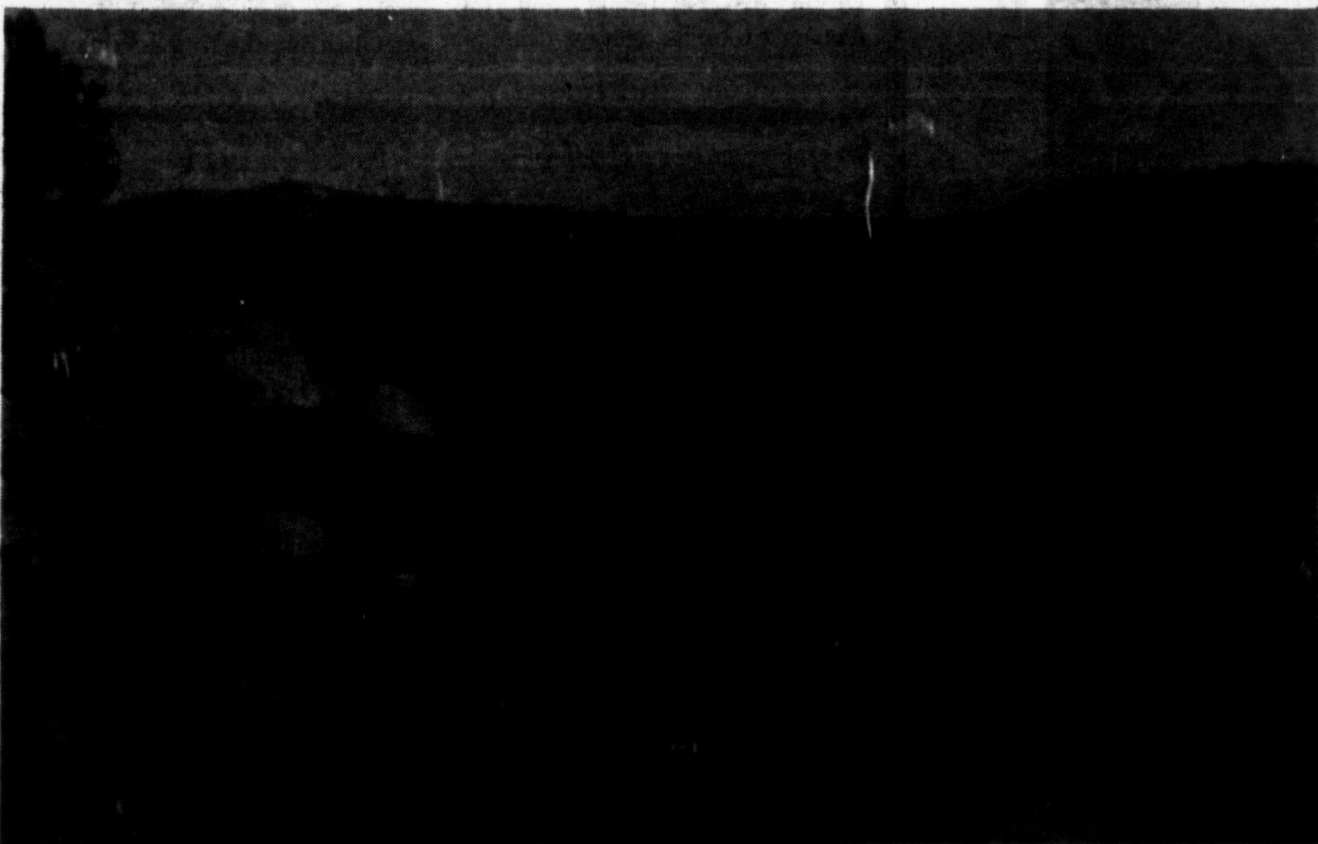
*Deserted schoolhouse at Leslie provides interest on an otherwise monotonous landscape for contented cow.*

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# How Far From The Pacific?

Cleo Russell of Clarendon has been busy organizing the 10th reunion of his 27th Air Depot Group from World War II. Fifty years ago his outfit was in the midst of a war that changed the world on both a grand and personal scale.

Russell says that he is looking forward to the reunion and seeing the men that he spent four years of his life with. "Everybody depended on each other," Russell explained. "It was a close group."

Of the 3,000 soldiers stationed in Port Moresby, New Guinea, during the '40s, Russell arrived Dec. 30, 1942 and served there until July of 1945.

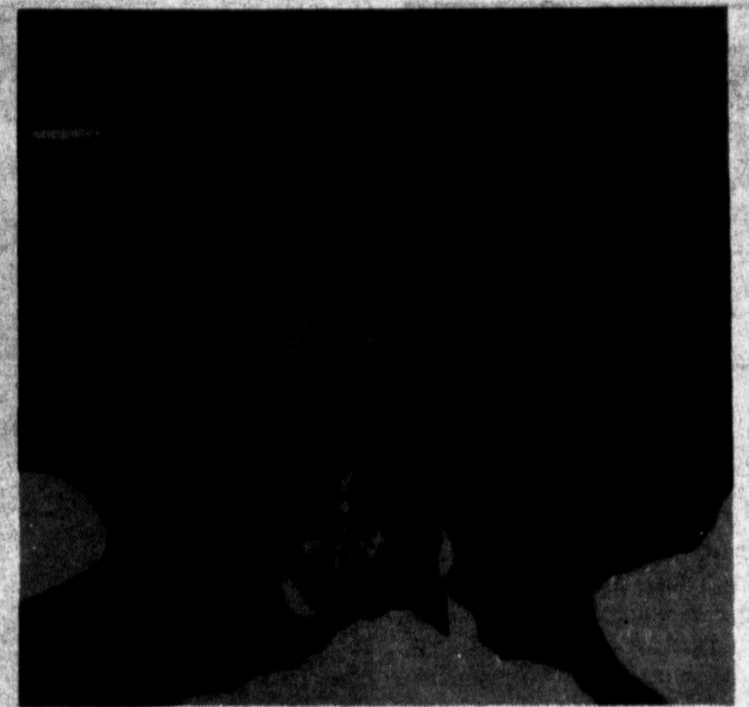
"We rebuilt airplanes, built washing machines, airstrips, workshops and hangars," said Russell. "We were the main supplier and group for the whole Southwest Pacific."

Although there were good times to be had, the war zone was not an easy place to survive. At one point the troops could not receive supplies for six months.

"We ate World War I hard tack, and we gathered bananas and sweet potatoes," Russell recalled. "And we captured a boat load of Japanese rice, it had weevils in it."

In the meantime, survivors on the homefront learned all about rationing and doing without. Forfeiting their right to almost all of the rubber, gasoline and other "luxuries," those that stayed behind did what they could for the war effort.

"There was a surge of patriotism that was unbelievable at that time,"



Famous comedian Joe E. Brown flashes trademark smile at G.I. Joe's during rare entertainment for World War II troops in the Pacific.

O. R. Stark of Quitaque said of his homebound Americans. "The furvor of their patriotism was evident among all ages. Everyone was seeking a chance to go."

Momentum toward the war effort in America was at its peak.

"It left some hardships on our work force and farming communities, but they (workers) had to work harder," Stark explained. "People were satisfied, they made do."

Many believe that the war was not all bad, in fact, some think that it indeed helped our economy.

"The war brought us out of the depression," Roberta Pittman believes. "It provided jobs for the men in the military, and the women filled the jobs they left behind."

However, in the small town, there were not as many jobs available. People would have to look elsewhere for work.

Small towns and farming communities began to dwindle. Armstrong, Briscoe, Donley and Hall Counties took an average decrease

in population of nearly 13 percent from a combined 26,155 to 22,889, while Amarillo added to its population by 43.6 percent, Dallas jumped 47.4 percent, and Houston saw an increase of 55 percent.

"Then, there was a family on every farm, but when they came back, a lot of the men went to the city to get jobs," Pittman said.

Although the population of the smaller towns took a fall in the 1940s, many still thrive in the Texas Panhandle, and are steadily building bigger and stronger communities.

"I wouldn't say that the war destroyed the small town," Pittman said. "It made times more prosperous."


Russell and his friends will have plenty of time to discuss the past during their five day reunion in Amarillo. Through the hard times and the good times, the men of the 27th Air Depot Group will always remember the days that they worked together fighting for our country.

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## A Big Spread, A Big Task

Editor's Note: This is the first installment in a series on T.D. Hobart.

Born in Berlin, Vermont on October 6, 1855, Timothy Dwight Hobart came to Texas at the age of

31 as a surveyor for the New York and Texas Land Company. He surveyed southern, central and northern portions of Texas, and by 1903 was a representative of the White Deer Land Company, based

in Pampa.

In time, Hobart became an important figure in the settling of the Texas Panhandle, but his longest, and perhaps most trying, tenure began in 1915 as the manager of the JA Ranch, south of Claude and Clarendon.

When he came to the JA, Hobart took charge of 550,000 acres of land, 25,000 head of cattle, about 400 horses and 38 employees. Cornelia Adair owned the ranch, founded by her husband John and frontiersman Charles Goodnight.

They kept in constant communication concerning the affairs of the JA, and as World War I began to take its toll on the world economy, Mrs. Adair informed Hobart that she would like to sell the ranch. However, the discovery of oil near Amarillo incited a rush to develop oil throughout the Panhandle and Mrs. Adair put Hobart's efforts to sell the ranch on hold.

Upon the death of Adair in 1921, Hobart became co-executor of her estate. Together with Dallas lawyer Henry Coke, he was faced with settling her affairs in America and England. Their authority was clear; Cornelia Adair's will said they "shall in all respects...manage and deal with all the property...as if they were absolute owners thereof."

Governments in both countries immediately demanded several hundred thousand dollars in taxes. This was a sign of worse times to come for Hobart. Managing the huge ranch was challenging enough, but liquidating it quickly seemed impossible.

On the horizon, loomed the Great Depression.

(To Be Continued Next Issue.)

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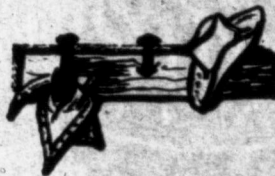
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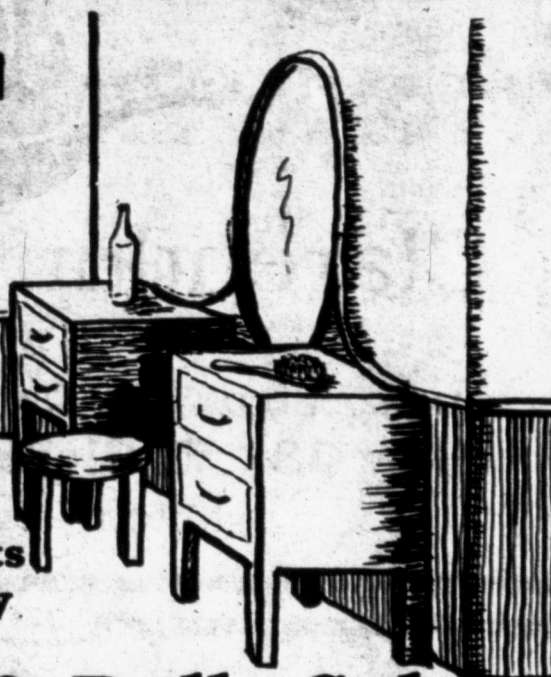


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