

Summer 1994



# Local Writers Pump Strength And Steam Into The Novels They Write About Texas

## The Cowboy Way

By Kevin Welch

Cowboy first and writer second - that's how Sam Brown thinks of himself. He is the author of four novels and a book of poems, but his real love is riding the plains working cattle.

Brown's cowboy wanderlust frequently leads him to travel with his saddle and bedroll, working on various ranches in the West. In between jobs, he writes.

His novels focus, as you would expect, on the working-class-of-the-range, the cowboy. "I'm still a dreamer," Brown said, "a hopeless romantic, if the truth be told." He colors his characters with this romanticism as they strive to make a better life for themselves in a harsh world of rugged landscapes and villains with a more jaded view of life.

This struggle is not made with blind faith.

In his novel *The Long Season*, Brown describes the hero with, "One thing he could count on, one thing sure as a hangover at the end of a three-month cattle drive: he

would always and forever be broke."

Brown doesn't pursue his writing doggedly but recently has finished another novel, *The Big Drift*. It is the sequel to *The Big Lonely* and is set in the Panhandle, New Mexico and Oklahoma in 1889.

He got his first book published with the help of famed western writer Elmer Kelton. "Kelton knew how far it is from West Texas to the New York publishing houses (not in miles alone)," Brown said.

Brown strives for realism and maintains that "to have a cowboy say 'I liked your book' is what it's all about."

## Lust In The Dust

As a writer of historical romances, Jodi Thomas spends as much time doing research as she does instilling passion in her characters. Her next novel is set in Clarendon at a time when it was called "Saints' Roost" and she is in the midst of the six months of research it will take to tell this story.

Characters are more important

that the story in Thomas' opinion. "It's important to get the setting right because it affects the way characters react, but I write about relationships," she said.

Many of Thomas' books are set in Texas. "My editors love Texas heroes," she explained. She believes she captures the way Texas men think in that they consider right versus wrong, rather than legal versus illegal. "It gives them their own value system rather than one adopted from society."

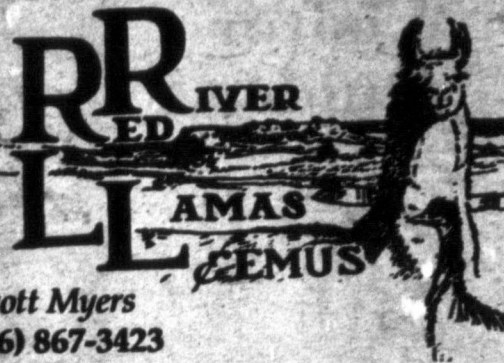
Thomas feels the average reader of her books is a professional woman with some college education, "but overall, they range from 15 to 80 years old." She even has an agriculture teacher and a trucker who have called to discuss her books.

Writing at home with a family can be a chore, but Thomas usually does her creating in the wee hours of the night. However, she adds, "I can be in the middle of a steamy sex scene and answer questions about Boy Scouts."

What about those sex scenes? Thomas says she isn't as explicit as some romance authors. "When I wrote my first book I worried what my strongly Southern Baptist mother would say," she acknowledged, "but my characters don't just fall into bed."

Thomas says her stories play like movies in her head. Right now, a passionate relationship in *Saints' Roost* is probably starting to flash across that screen.


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## Creative Road Signs Made The Miles Shorter

Y'all know how much us Prairie Dogs like highways, you've seen us often enough sitting up on our top porches looking over the traffic passing by and collecting license plates (I lack only Rhode Island, Vermont and Hawaii of getting all 50 this year). So it is really good to see all of those folks who read about our patch of the planet in the *Gazette* whizzing up and down Panhandle highways and byways. Gives a Prairie Dog something to read on a lazy summer day.

We used to have more to read than license plates. Back around the time Route 66 was punching through the Panhandle, those catchy little Burma Shave signs began cropping up along paved prairie roads. Why, I can still remember one that was written by a lady from Shamrock:

DON'T STICK  
YOUR ELBOW  
OUT TOO FAR

IT MIGHT GO HOME  
IN ANOTHER CAR  
BURMA SHAVE

Catchy little ditty that



**Ol'  
Pete**

**Our Prairie Dog Town  
Correspondent**

was. It won the lady \$100. Back then the Burma Shave Company paid for such fanciful verses.

Most folks remember the six little signs being red and white. Actually the signs were red and white one year and orange and black the next to tip motorists off to new verses. The signs were planted 100 paces apart, but had to be moved further apart when cars got faster. Motorists loved the little bits of clever salesmanship along the road, as did Prairie Dogs. But the message was not always about buying the brushless shaving cream. The Company took on drunken drivers:

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BEFORE THE HEARSE  
And Speeding:  
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THEY HAULED AWAY  
WHAT HAD  
BEN HUR  
And forest fires:  
MANY A FOREST  
USED TO STAND  
WHERE A  
LIGHTED MATCH  
GOT OUT OF HAND  
And reckless driving:  
DROVE SO LONG  
DRIVER SNOOZING  
WHAT HAPPENED NEXT  
IS NOT  
AMUSING

Ol' Pete got a special kick out of that last one. One time a snoozing driver went off the road and plumb run over my cousin's yard. They were picking pebbles out of the living room carpet for months. Prairie Dog Repeat (my

cousin) said that big station wagon going over rattled the young uns around like BBs in a boxcar.

Not many folks know that Texas was the last state going west to get Burma Shave signs. They never put them up in New Mexico, Arizona or Nevada. So that little sextet near Glenrio was the last travelers along Route 66 would see until they got to California. At least it offered some advice for the empty miles ahead: AS YOU DRIVE  
PLAY THIS GAME  
CONSTRUCT  
A JINGLE  
WITH THIS NAME  
BURMA SHAVE

It was really sort of sad at the end of 1963 when the Burma Shave signs became part of the past. The jaunty little jingle plaques didn't go without a fight. They put out one last thumb of the nose to progress:  
FAREWELL, O VERSE  
ALONG THE ROAD  
HOW SAD TO  
KNOW YOU'RE  
OUT OF MODE.



# Music Was Important To Cowboys And Much Of It Came From The Irish

By Kevin Welch

British sailors on the ocean blue and American cowboys on the prairie golden - the men were blood relations and the wide-open environment was similar. Perhaps this is the main reason so many songs we think of as "western" or "cowboy music" have their roots across the Atlantic in Great Britain.

Don Edwards, a noted singer of these tunes, thinks there is a kinship there that accounts for the similarity of the two cultures' music. "Most old-time cowboy songs are Celtic in origin," Edwards said, "the words changed to fit the surroundings of the West but the melodies stayed intact."

Edwards goes on to give examples, such as The Streets Of Laredo being based on The

Unfortunate Rake and Whoopee Ti Yi Yo (Get Along Little Dogies) flowing from The Old Man's Lament.

When the young men came from the southeastern United States they brought with them these tunes along with their British blood. They were thrown into the comparatively lonely, harsh environment of the West and so sentimental, romantic tunes were naturally on their minds.

Because many of them were descendants of sailors, these new cowboys also drew from sea chanties. O' Bury Me Not (On The Lone Prairie) is based on British lyrics, "Bury me not in the deep blue sea," according to Edwards.

Cowboys sang these songs while in the saddle to entertain not only themselves but their cattle. The

sounds of their voices tended to calm the herds, especially through the deep, dark nights on the open plains. Upbeat tunes provided a break from work when the cowboys gathered around the campfire, perhaps lubricated by a little whiskey (the Irish would approve).

In the books of folk music research by John Lomax, Jim Bob Tinsley and others, we see that there were no set lyrics, as the songs were passed from one cow camp to the next. The one constant, however, are the melodies and sentiment imported from Great Britain and perhaps mixed with a little border music from Mexico for spice.

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## Amarillo, Texas





## This Road Changed The Way America Travelled

By Kevin Welch

America has always been considered the land of opportunity, a country offering frontiers to be explored. Whether fleeing a desperate situation or bent on discovering adventures, Americans have taken to the road. Prairie "schooners" on dusty trails or automobiles humming down paved highways are images that say America.

No other road is as famous for the escapes it has provided than Route 66.

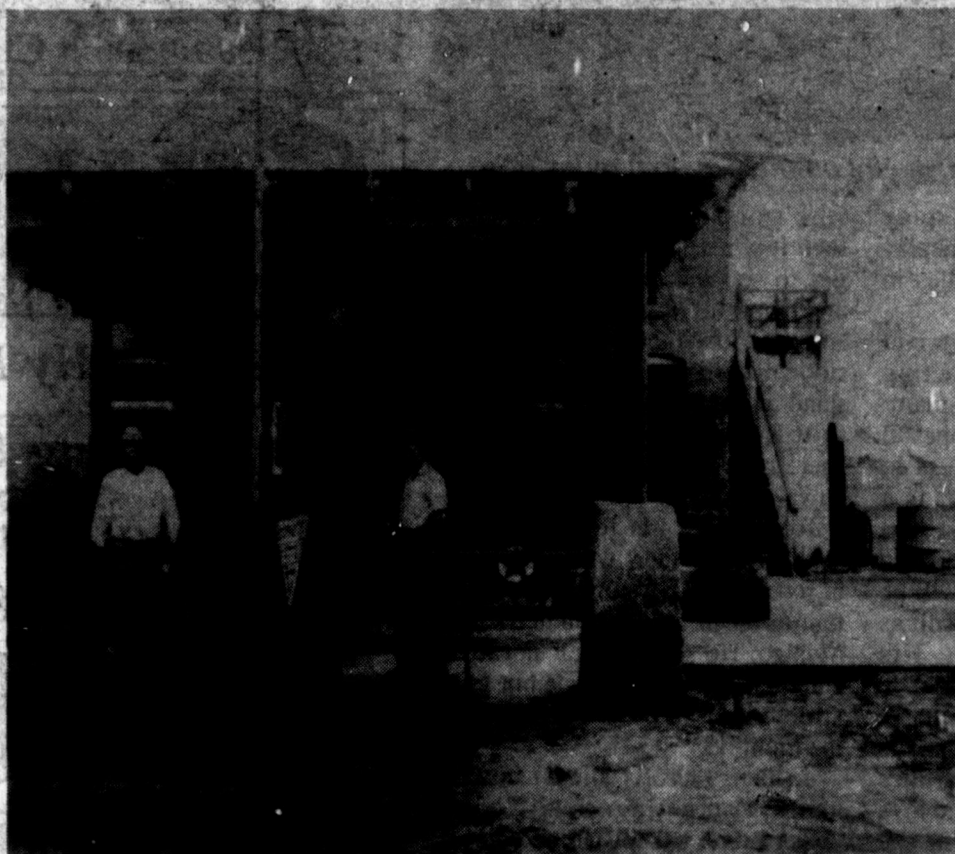
This "Mother Road" has many faces. A blue-collar highway offering Mr. and Mrs. Working Class their first chance for a vacation. A golden highway to the promised land of California for Dust Bowl refugees. And now, a nostalgic pathway to a time before soulless Interstates and McDonalds.

Like many people or things that reach the status of a legend, the fabled Route 66 has more facets than are revealed by its public image. True, the road wasn't impersonal. It was built without huge machines and you could camp next to it with strangers who welcomed you into their traveling society. Also, for people who had never left home (and there were many), the road offered numerous discoveries.

However, Route 66 also was the road to today's high-speed, super-highway travel culture. Fast food, gas stations, rest stops and road building equipment are just a few of the innovations that were created in response to situations encountered on Route 66, according to Delbert Trew, founder of the Old Route 66 and Devil's Rope Museums in McLean.

Trew said, "There were no filling stations in 1926. They developed from blacksmith shops." At that time, gasoline was pumped from barrels by hand, he explained, but with the huge expanse of land opened to travel by the route, more efficient and accurate pumps began to evolve and businesses sprouted to tend to a traveler's automobile.

The road's construction was a huge task. The original Route 66 was smoothed by horse-drawn graders, beginning in 1927. Caliche, a soil rich in crushed limestone and plentiful in the Panhandle, was hauled to the roadbed with wagons driven by local farmers.



Two Vega men at their service station on Route 66 in the early thirties.

Even though Route 66 represents big changes in society during a certain era, there was one constant, Americans' need for food. Cafes that could produce meals quickly sprang up along the route. Although many victims of the Dust Bowl and Depression cooked whatever they could buy or work for over open fires, others fondly remember the tasty dishes in new and interesting cafes. A native of the Panhandle, Hereford's Marian Clark has gathered the reminiscences of those who ate their way across the country in *The Route 66 Cookbook*.

Delbert Trew points out another significant contribution of Route 66, the tourist industry. "People suddenly began to get vacations around 1930. Assembly line workers got vacation time," he said. As more people moved from the farm to factories, they left their small world behind and hit the road that hadn't even existed a few years before.

You can see for yourself where a great deal of this history was made by getting off of Interstate 40 and cruising Panhandle towns like Shamrock, McLean, Alanreed, Amarillo's West 6th Street, Vega, Adrian and Glenrio. Old Route 66 follows the Interstate on the south from Oklahoma to Amarillo and mostly on the north from there to New Mexico.

## Stories All Along The Mother Road

By Kevin Welch

It's a relatively short trip (178 miles of a total 2,400) across the Texas Panhandle along Route 66, but the miles are filled with stories. Delbert Trew of McLean said, "Nearly everyone over 40 has an Old 66 story." Trew has his share to tell, ranging from farmers in Jericho Gap using their horses to pull cars out of the town's famed mudhole to watching a truckload of "Life" magazines burn for days after a wreck.

Richard Smith, president of the Shamrock Route 66 Association, dates his fascination with the road to 1954. He operated a service station in Shamrock and was always amazed when summer arrived. "When school let out in California, about 18 hours later it looked like a tidal wave had hit" as vacationers headed east, he said. Smith is helping establish an Edsel "graveyard" on Route 66 which will include about 30 Edsels. He explained that "some of them died of natural causes and others had a heck of a wreck."

In Amarillo there is another shrine to a certain automobile that traveled this famous road. Cadillac Ranch is just west of the city on the south side of Interstate 40. The thousands who stop to view these cars, buried but displaying their tailfins, take their own Route 66 story home.

Although many of the small towns along 66 in the Panhandle have all but disappeared, the traveler can still get a taste of the road. Its glory days are memorialized at the U-Drop-Inn in Shamrock; its own museum and a restored Phillips 66 station in McLean; shops along Amarillo's West 6th Street filled with antiques and Rt. 66 mementos; the Adrian Cafe; and the nostalgic sights in Vega and other communities all along the way.



The remains of the sort of lodging that was available on 66 in Alanreed.



# Champ On The Mend But Busy



Cooper, 8 time world champion, demonstrates his early dismount on the way to a quick tie.

By Kevin Welch

Along with bronc riding, calf roping is the rodeo event that most closely mirrors the everyday tasks of a working cowboy, and few have had the success in this activity that Roy Cooper has.

Cooper is now recuperating from shoulder surgery at his headquarters outside of Childress in the southeast Panhandle. Just as one would expect, a man who has spent his life galloping through arenas and moving down the road from rodeo to rodeo isn't sitting around watching old westerns on TV. For example, Cooper recently hosted his annual invitational roping, which attracted an audience of about 3,000 people.

During the rest of his eight-month recuperation period, Cooper will be finalizing plans for and beginning the construction of a museum honoring timed-event ropers.

His wife Shari said, "We started

this project as a way to display Roy's prizes. You can only display so many championship saddles in your house."

However, the idea has grown into a much larger project, attracting donations of memorabilia from many other ropers. Cooper hopes to open the museum in Childress in 1995 and feels it will serve as a way to remember both past and future contestants.

Both Cooper and his wife will be ready to take to the rodeo circuit as soon as he has healed. His competitive drive has taken him to the National Finals Rodeo nearly every year since Cooper won the first of six world calf roping titles as a rookie in 1976. That same love of the arena has made him the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association's all-time leader in career earnings.

As for the rest of the Cooper family, Shari describes herself as

"the worst gypsy in the world. I love it when we are rodeoing. You get to see the entire country and meet hundreds of people." Shari and the kids sightsee, too. They've stood where Custer made his last stand and other famous places. She said Roy points out to her that "here I am trying to win and you're on vacation."

Roy traces his love of roping back to his father, who also roped in rodeos, and to growing up on the family ranch near Monument, New Mexico. He sees himself not as an entertainer for the crowds but as an athlete and "a cowboy following the tradition."

In fact, there is almost nothing about competing that Cooper doesn't like, except, he noted, "the miles get old if you aren't winning."

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# Spurs

that  
**Jingle  
Jangle  
Jingle**

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Spurs have a simple, straightforward use, to indicate to your mount what you want it to do and when. The importance of these simple, function implements is indicated by the fact that spurs have been recovered from Middle Eastern tombs dating from 700 B.C.

Spurs have always been a distinctive item of equipment, for the nomadic warrior, the medieval Knight, and the western cowboy.

Cortez brought large-roweled Spanish spurs to the new world in



Spurs come in many varieties but all of them serve the cowboy well.

1520, but the style quickly evolved into numerous unique designs favored by cowboys. Spur manufacture in the Panhandle started in blacksmith shops, but a few blacksmiths began turning out graceful goose neck, gal-leg, or drop shank spurs on an assembly line basis.

Among early Panhandle spur


makers were J.O. Bass of Quitaque and Tulia, P. Kelly of Hansford and Dalhart, Willie West of Silverton and Jack Fuqua of Amarillo.

Sets of spurs made by these men exhibit a craftsmanship bordering on art and those still in existence are prized by owners.

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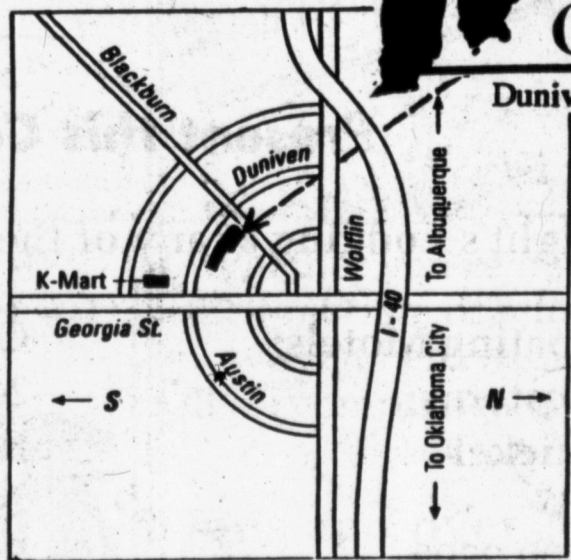
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# A Battle To Tame The Panhandle Brought Pain & Honor

In his book *Heroes Here Have Been* Bob Izzard eloquently describes some of the battles of the Red River War of 1874. One such action, the battle of Buffalo Wallow resulted in the awarding of Congressional Medals of Honor for all six men involved, the only time such an event has occurred.

The following excerpts from the book pertain to the Buffalo Wallow fight. The quotes are from scout Billy Dixon, one of the six.

"Just at that minute more Indians broke out of their circle and made a charge right for us. One bunch tried to run us down. I got the lead horse and Indian. Another bunch from the south mounted a charge. Sergeant Woodhall broke that one up. The fight got so hot I didn't even have time to ask Amos how badly he was hit. Another group came at a full run from the east. We broke that attack up getting two of them right in the middle. Our situation was growing more desperate every minute. I knew something had to be done, and quickly, or else all of us in a short while would be dead or in the hands of the Indians, who would torture us in the most inhuman manner before taking our lives. I could see, to my right, where a buffalo had pawed and wallowed a depression commonly called a buffalo "wallow." I ran for it at top speed. It seemed as if a bullet whizzed passed me at every jump but I got through unharmed.

The wallow was about six feet in diameter. I found its depth, though slight, afforded some protection.

"Come over here," I shouted. "I've found a buffalo wallow."

"Three of them made the run. Woodhall, Harrington and Rath dove to the ground beside me. Smith and Chapman were still out on the flats. As each man reached the 'wallow,' he drew his butcher knife and began digging desperately with his knife and hands to throw up dirt round the sides. The land is sandy and we made good headway, though constantly interrupted by the necessity of firing at the Indians as they dashed within range.

"I looked for the sun. It was noon. This was the first time it had dawned on me that we had stood on our feet, in one spot, without cover and fought the one hundred and twenty-five Indians since dawn. That was six hours ago.

"Now that we had found this small depression the Indians increased their attacks. For an hour we fired at their charges. We would twist and flip from one side to the other of the wallow as they tried to attack us from all sides.

"The Indians were crowding us hard and close when one of the boys raised up and yelled 'No use boys, no use - we might as well give up.'

"Lie down," I yelled back. 'Get your head down before someone

blows it off.'

"He did just as I told him. At the instant he hit the ground with his eyes looking over the rim of our scooped out wallow a bullet hit the sandbank right in front of his face. It completely filled his mouth with dirt.

"At first I howled it was so funny. But I was alone, none of us really felt like doing a lot of laughing right then.

"Not once, all day long, did any of the seriously wounded men cry or complain of falter. They sat bolt upright and fought as bravely as if not a bullet had touched them. We had no water. The chill of the morning had turned to a clear sky and now it was ninety-five degrees. Your tongue tasted like a whetstone. I guess you could say, ours was the courage of despair. We knew what would happen if we were captured alive. Everyone of us had seen too many naked and mangled bodies of white men who had been spread-eagled and tortured with steel and fire to forget what our own fate would be. We were determined to fight to the end. We were not unmindful of the fact that every once in a while there was another dead or wounded Indian. We were running out of cartridges for our rifles. All of us had one bullet for our pistols left, just in case. The Indians seem to feel that we are getting weaker.

"By three o'clock or so it seemed

that the Indians were pressing their charges closer than they had been earlier. It was at this same time that we all spotted a bank of black clouds in the west. You've seen it before. A clear sky, then a few white fluffy clouds, then a bank of black boiling thunderheads. It had all the earmarks of a blue norther.

"That's the most beautiful weather change I had ever seen. The thunder rumbled first, before the clouds got there. Then the top of the clouds blanked out the sun and you could see the lightning dance from the cloud to the ground. We watched the rain march across the parched and burned prairie and the Indians went into a shell. When the rain hit us it smacked the earth in blinding sheets of water. The temperature plunged. The cold water drenched us to the skin. Our buffalo wallow collected the water. All of us drank each puddle dry until finally all of the puddles

merged into a pool of muddy water that covered the bottom of the wallow. It was more than muddy. That water was red with the blood that had flowed from the wounds of all of us. It had dripped to the sand where it clotted and dried in the September sun only to turn to liquid red blood again when the water fell. That north wind that chilled us to the bone and that driving rain proved our salvation. Indians don't like cold rain, and these Kiowas and Comanches were no exception to the rule. They gathered in little groups, just out of rifle range, sitting on their horses with their blankets drawn tightly around them. They weren't trying to kill us while the wind and the rain whipped around.

"We had been fighting now for fourteen hours. It was just starting to get dark. With the Indians out there, it was a forlorn and disheartening situation."


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# Travelers Found Place To Pause In Panhandle Towns

By Bill Russell

They didn't have names like Best Western, Super Eight or even No-Tell Motel, but they provided a home away from home for many early travelers in the Panhandle. Back then they were called wagon yards.

It didn't take nearly as much material to build a wagon yard as it does to put up a motel. All that was really needed then was a fenced area for livestock and a watering trough. Despite these seemingly spartan appointments, during their time, wagon yards were looked upon with fondness by many and with outright anticipation by others.

Almost every town had a wagon yard where those who were traveling could rest up, feed their livestock, and get ready for the journey onward or homeward. Many wagon yards were maintained by area ranches as a layover stop for cowboys and supply wagons.

Other wagon yards were owned and operated by the town livery stable and were as close to a motel as anything in those days when hotels provided the only commercial indoor overnight accommodations. At a wagon yard your wagon was your room, although a few boasted small buildings where riders could throw their bedrolls on the floor and have a roof over their heads.

Cooking was done over an open campfire. The usual charge ranged from 10 cents per day per person and animal to 10 cents for the latter and 50 cents for the former.

Wagon yards flourished from the time Panhandle towns began to spring up (about 1875) until well into the 1920s. Just having a wagon yard was considered important to fledgling Chambers of Commerce and to have two was a selling point. A brochure aimed at attracting residents to McLean in 1903 boasted that the young city had "a post office, lumber yard, a newspaper, furniture store, two banks, two cafes and TWO wagon yards."

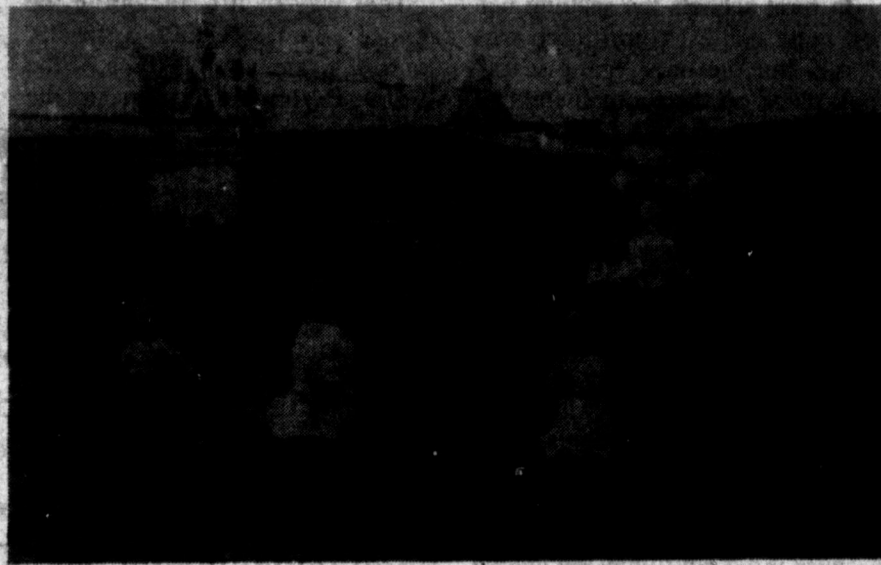
Now there was a reason to move to McLean, even if you only had one wagon!

Back in the Panhandle, the wagon yard at Childress seemed to be a very popular place.

"There always seemed to be something going on there," said Mark Shults of Clarendon who remembers his traveling from the family farm into town and spending the night at the Czewski Wagon Yard in Childress. "On the weekends there would be fiddle music and folks making homemade ice cream. It gave us kids a chance to visit and meet other kids."

Shults remembers that the first "aeroplane" he ever saw was flying over the Czewski yard dropping miniature Baby Ruth candy bars which were just being introduced. He remembers scrambling to get some of the sweets and how good they tasted.

"It just made everybody happy



Travelers and animals gathered in the Czewski wagon yard

that day," Shults remembers. "We got to stay up as long as we wanted and the grownups danced into the night."

As a youngster, western music legend Bob Wills had reason to remember the wagon yard at Childress. The Wills family traveled from Limestone County in 1913, picking cotton enroute to Fort Worth where they stayed at a wagon yard to rest for a few days and visit relatives. It took a month for the family, including Jim Bob (as he was called then) riding his donkey Little Joe, to reach Childress. The family camped at the wagon yard to rest themselves and their livestock and to replenish supplies. It was there that John Wills took his children, including young Jim Bob, to see their first

moving picture.

The Czewski yard came into being through the perseverance of Charolette Czewski.

"My father didn't want to buy the yard," said Kathryn McGhee, daughter of John and Charolette Czewski. "She bought that property with her butter, egg and cream money. It was fun growing up on a wagon yard."

Most farms and ranches were at least a half day's travel from town. Therefore a trip to and from in a single day would leave little time for shopping or business. Once farm families arrived in town, they needed overnight accommodation and hotels were too expensive. So the farm wagon was converted into the equivalent of today's RV (recreational vehicle) for the trip.

Quilts were piled in the back and a waterproof cover taken along in case of rain. Cooking equipment was loaded as well. In some yards one room "camp houses" were available offering little more than a roof and a stove.

Trips to town were looked forward to by every member of the family, and when such events as rodeos, fairs, or court week were scheduled, the wagon yards were full.

Commerce soon gained a foothold at the wagon yards which sometimes came to resemble giant yard sales. Families with eggs, fruit, vegetables or preserves to sell set up shop on the tailgate of their wagon. Artisans who had spent the winter months building furniture or cabinets brought pieces to sell along with hooked rugs and other finished goods. At wagon yards hands were hired, livestock sold or traded, news exchanged, and politics argued. One of the "must" stops for campaigning candidates in any town was the wagon yard.

Wagon yards slowly evolved

from vacant fenced pastures to more elaborate setups with roofed shelters arranged around three sides of a large fenced yard. The fourth side was open for the wagons to enter and exit. This became the classic "U" shape of the auto courts and "motels" which followed.

Gradually "auto courts" began to replace wagon yards for travelers. At first those on the road were still required to provide their own bedding and at most outdoor cooking facilities were still provided.

These "auto courts" gradually evolved into the motels of today, which offer everything from hot tubs to vibrating beds. According to old timers, these new fangled motel places didn't quite measure up to a well run wagon yard.

The weary traveler of today, finally nearing the end of a long day on the Interstate, might disagree. A nice clean bed, even one which vibrates, might seem more enticing than a hard wagon bed and neighbors dancing the night away.

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# Early Rural Schools Provided The "Ties That Bind"

By June Adcock

With all the violence, gun-toting and gang wars in the schools these days, it's a pleasure to take a nostalgic glance back to an era when going to school was not a fearful ordeal but a privilege.

Old timers paint a refreshingly simple picture of American education in the late-1800s. The rural school was a multi-faceted microcosm of religious, political and social life. With built-in moral values supplied by the church, rural students thrived in an environment of parental and community support.

In the Texas Panhandle, as in most of America, a different economy existed then. Although there was liberty, life was not free from hardship. Early settlers were pushing west against all odds, scrambling to carve civilization and prosperity out of a vast expanse of flat, open space. Drought, prairie fires, starvation and sickness made life difficult.

Many of these new Texans didn't know much about farming. Some gathered buffalo bones to sell and lived in primitive dugouts. After a downpour, it was not uncommon to find a waterdog in the bed or a rattlesnake in the pantry.

The rural school student faced different dangers than his modern-day, inner-city counterpart just getting to school. That old proverbial ten-mile walk to school in the snow story was a reality for these early scholars who suffered from exposure to the elements. It was, however, sometimes necessary to pack a gun to fend off wild animals that threatened in the breaks of the canyons. Many students rode horses and staked them out in pastures to graze during school hours.

The rural school teacher was a dedicated pioneer figure. These early mentors rented space in the school or a spare room in the community for meager living quarters.

Old timers who attended Panhandle area schools recall

favorite teachers and consider themselves fortunate to have studied under them. Sid McCubbins, in his recollections and impressions of early childhood wrote, "Those first two years, we were tutored by Miss Price, who was always dressed in black. She wore nose glasses and wielded a mean switch which she seldom spared." Other teachers were remembered more endearingly.

An early incident of near-violence at school did occur at the Mount Pleasant school. According to the history books, Mr. Patterson was having some disciplinary problems with one of his pupils and the child's father came to school to straighten out the matter. A heated discussion ensued and was about to come to blows, but when the irate parent, who was slightly crippled, was about to lose the argument, he bolted and ran. The scene was so comical that someone shouted "Look at that monkey run!" The school was forever after nicknamed "Monkey Run."

In rural schools the spelling bee and math contest competition was fierce, but the only "gang wars" took place on the football field or basketball court.

As the Panhandle grew, changes like the invention of the automobile made towns more accessible and the era of the one-room rural schoolhouse began to fade. Fewer people occupied the rural districts in the 1930s and school trustees found that it was cheaper to hire a bus to transport students to towns than to maintain rural schools.

Busing of the JA Ranch Ward School children began in the fall of 1931. The bus route was unique because it did not follow the graded roads but wound in and out among the mesquite bushes to the widely separated cow camps. Early morning passengers on the bus were able to view nature at its best. Coyotes could be seen returning to their dens. Antelope, meadow larks and prairie dogs would cock their heads suspiciously as the lumbering yellow giant rolled by.

That way of life, including the school years, presents a drastic contrast to the complexities of the 1990s. Perhaps a lesson can be

learned from the past. Communities then were strongly linked to their centralized value system, the "ties that bind."

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# A Mystery Yet To Be Solved Still Lingers In Indian Ruins

By Bill Russell

The pieces of the puzzle were all there as early as 1907 when Dr. T.L. Eyerly excavated some ruins he named the "buried city" on Wolf Creek in Ochiltree County.

From this initial discovery archaeologists should have been well on their way to tracing the history and culture of the forefathers of the Indian tribes living in the Panhandle in pre-historic times.

But it didn't work out that way, and today archaeologists are scratching their heads, sifting through looted or partially destroyed puzzle parts, and trying to figure out who was who and what was what back before things were written down.

Dr. Eyerly was a history professor at the Baptist Academy in Canadian and led his students in partially excavating 12 Paleo-Indian mounds along Wolf Creek.

But for the next 20 years no one picked up the ball. There were visits by nationally prominent archaeologists and one even reported excavating a burial at the Wolf Creek site, also known as the Handley Ruins. But there is no written record of this excavation.

Using a very unscientific slapdash method the Handley Ruins were classified as either Puebloan or Mississippian in form.

It wasn't until 1920 that Warren K. Moorehead of the Phillips Academy saw that the Panhandle

ruins in the Canadian River basin were neither of the above. Moorehead dubbed the ruins the "Texas Panhandle Culture." Others said the ruins belonged to the "Canadian River Culture."

It was obvious by this time that no one was really sure what had been found along the Canadian River drainage or who it had once belonged to.

When the oil boom came to the Panhandle, bulldozers and drilling rigs had little regard for the past, unless it came in the form of oil. Many important sites were destroyed or badly damaged.

While archaeologists wrangled over which culture was living in the Panhandle back then, an insurance salesman, Floyd V. Studer was quietly working away throughout the area locating ruins, surveying sites, and securing "scientific leases" from landowners for further excavations. His work paved the way for serious future archaeological exploration.

Studer called the mystery inhabitants of the Panhandle "Post-Basketmaker Culture," "Texas Panhandle Pueblo Culture," and "Panhandle Pueblo Indians." Indeed some of the ruins excavated indicated pueblo-type dwellings, but numerous other excavations indicated single-family dwelling styles.

When Sanford Dam was constructed and Lake Meredith began to fill there was an uncoordinated

effort to identify and classify as many of the Paleo-Indian habitation or camp sites as possible. Significant sites were located including the Alibates National Monument and the Antelope Creek ruins. These ruins are actually a part of the Alibates Monument, but are not routinely included on tours.

These locations strongly indicated that the pre-historic people living in the area were not pueblo dwellers. These early residents planted crops and may have domesticated some fowl and animals. They also quarried Alibates flint for trade.

All of the work and all of the excavations, good, bad, and mediocre, set the stage for a graduate student at the University of Oklahoma, Christopher Lintz.

Lintz didn't start out to try and put all the pieces of the pre-historic Panhandle puzzle together. The mystery just jumped out and grabbed him.

Lintz was doing research for his Masters Degree in the Oklahoma Panhandle. At the time, there were only two developed archaeological "digs" in that region, so he decided to dip down into Texas to get a broader base for his study.

That turned out to be a fateful decision for the young researcher.

This undertaking was not accomplished as simply as envisioned," Lintz wrote later. "Soon, the problem of cultural variation among Antelope Creek sites in Texas took precedence over

the continued study of the materials in Oklahoma."

To put Lintz's preliminary findings into a single paragraph would be like trying to sum up the history of Texas in a hiaku.

In his report, Lintz characterizes the Panhandle Paleo-Indians as a people in transition and in a crisis phase, a society torn between the forces of an expanding population and a reduction in food supplies caused by climactic and other

conditions. These pressures caused a breakdown in traditional methods of life, including dwelling types and social and religious behavior. It also brought about an increase in the trade of Alibates flint and a regression from farming to raiding. To the non-archaeologists it doesn't really matter what "phase" these people were. What matters is really their battle to survive in a time when such struggles had no biographers.

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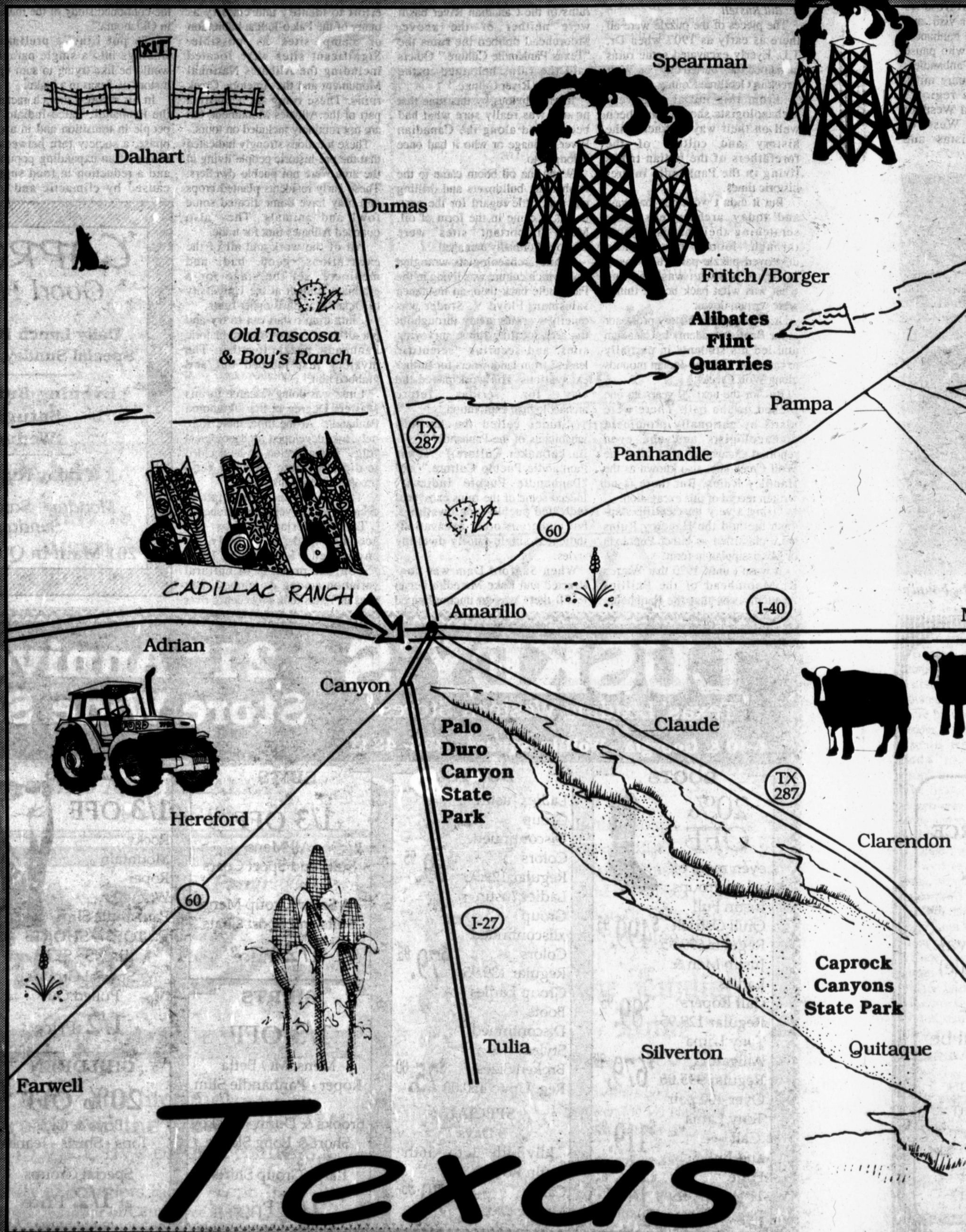
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**FRYER LAKE** - Pleasant recreation spot along Wolf Creek 12 miles southeast of Perryton off U.S. 83. (Not shown on most maps.) A 700-acre lake complete with fishing, boating, swimming, picnicking and RV camp sites.

**GREENBELT LAKE** - 5 miles north of Clarendon on Texas 70. A 1,990-acre reservoir on Salt Fork of Red River offers water recreation for a large area of the Panhandle. Facilities include boat ramps, a marina, swimming, water skiing and fishing for bass, crappie, walleye and catfish.

**LAKE MARVIN** - 10 miles east of Canadian on Highway 60 North, then turn on to Formby Road. A tiny 63-acre lake offering fishing, camping and nature trails.

**LAKE MEREDITH** - On Texas 136 one mile east of Fritch. About 16,504 acre lake built by U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, this blue gem nestles among cliffs of Canadian River valley. Facilities include boat launching ramps, marina, camping, and picnic areas. Fishermen take walleye, bass, crappie and catfish. Administered by National Park Service. Details and map available at Park Headquarters.

**LAKE McCLELLAN** - 28 miles south of Pampa via Texas 70 and FM 2477 east. Small lake (376 acres) provides water for several area towns. Wooded picnic areas, camping with RV hookups, boat launch ramps, swimming and fishing for black bass, crappie, blue catfish and hybrid striped bass.

**LAKE MACKENZIE** - 12 miles northwest of Silverton on Texas 86 West or Texas 207 North. A 910-acre lake in scenic and historic Tule Canyon. Facilities for picnicking, camping, RV hookups, boat ramps plus a swimming area. Popular with water skiers. Fish caught include bass, walleye and catfish.

**PALO DURO RESERVOIR** - 10 miles north of Spearman on Highway 760. 2,400 acre reservoir offers recreation on its north shore. Facilities include fishing, camping, playgrounds, a kids' fishing pond, and RV hookups with water and electricity.

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**CAPROCK CANYONS STATE PARK** - Located 3.5 miles north of Quitaque on FM 1065. Park covers 13,960 acres of one of the state's most scenic regions. Spectacular landscapes at end of Cap Rock, colorful cliffs and canyons, abundant wildlife. Facilities: sightseeing, hiking and horseback trails, picnicking, fishing and swimming in 100-acre lake. Some primitive campsites with RV hookups. (806) 455-1492.

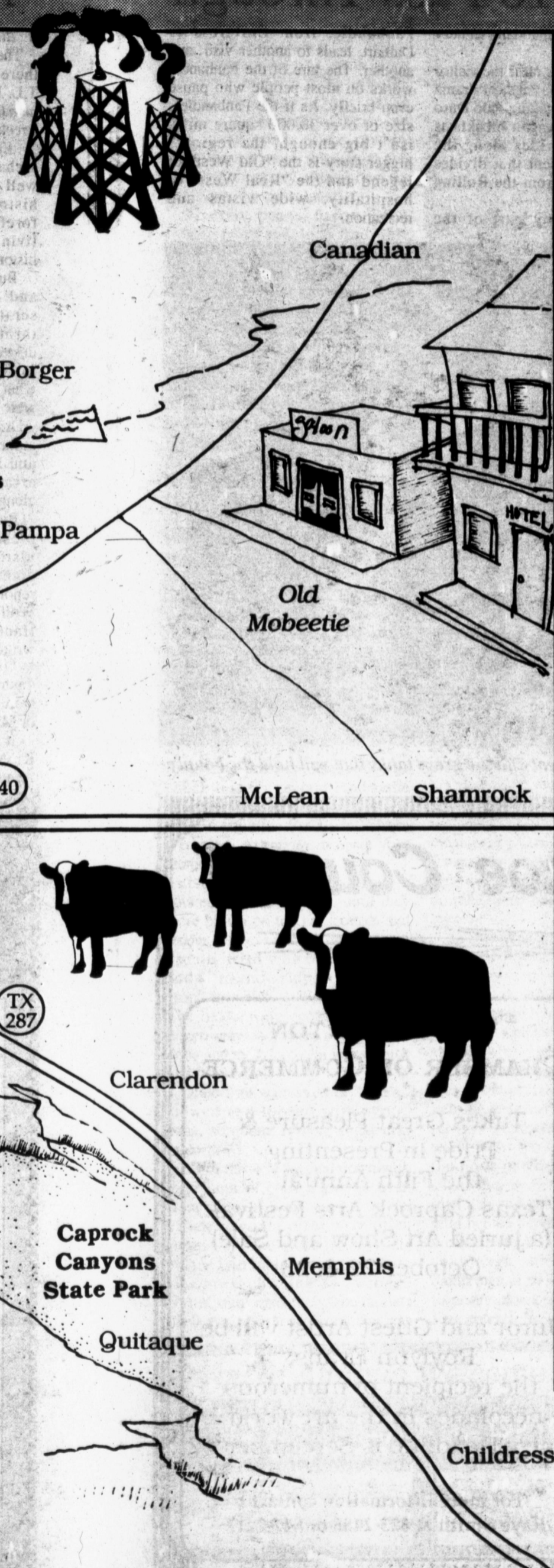
**PALO DURO CANYON STATE PARK** - Located 12 miles east of Canyon on Texas 217. At 15,103 acres one of the state's largest parks. On the tabletop expanse of the plains the Prairie Dog Town Fork of the Red River has carved a canyon of breathtaking beauty. Colorful canyon walls plunge a thousand feet into the canyon. Facilities: scenic drives, horseback trails and seasonal horse rentals, campsites with water and restrooms, interpretive center. Admission charged. (806) 488-2227.

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**ALIBATES NATIONAL MONUMENT** - A true "diamond in the rough" and well worth the extra time needed to visit. Flint quarries mined from about 10,000 years ago until the 1800s can be visited. The multi-colored flint mined here was prized by flint-using societies. Still under development by the National Parks Service, entry is by guided Ranger tour. Tours conducted twice daily from Memorial Day to Labor day. Tours limited to 25 and form up at Bates Canyon off Texas 136 about 6 miles south of Fritch.



Oklahoma

See Following Page For An Overview Of The Panhandle



# The Panhandle: More Than Just A Place To Pass Through

From Spearman and Dalhart on the dramatic sweep of the High Plains to Farwell and Silverton on the fruitful South Plains; from Canadian and Miami in the historic Canadian River Breaks to Clarendon and Quitaque in the majestic Canyonlands, the Panhandle is indeed the Top of Texas. More and more people, instead of passing through, are pausing to enjoy this unique area of the Lone Star State.

People looking for an uncrowded, unhurried and affordable vacation offering a wide variety of things to see and do, are discovering the Panhandle. They are finding it to be a place where the "Old West" is not that far below the surface, and the traditions of that most exciting era

of American history are still alive and well.

The Panhandle, from North to South and East to West, offers hundreds of treasures in the form of museums tucked away in nearly every town and in parks, lakes and recreation areas just waiting to delight and entertain the visitor.

The broad vistas of the High Plains offer scenes right out of the past, with cattle grazing as far as the eye can see (an awesome distance) and windmills dotting the skyline.

What does it take to keep food on America's kitchen tables? You can find the answer on the South Plains, where feedlots and fields provide ample evidence of the Panhandle's agricultural bounty.

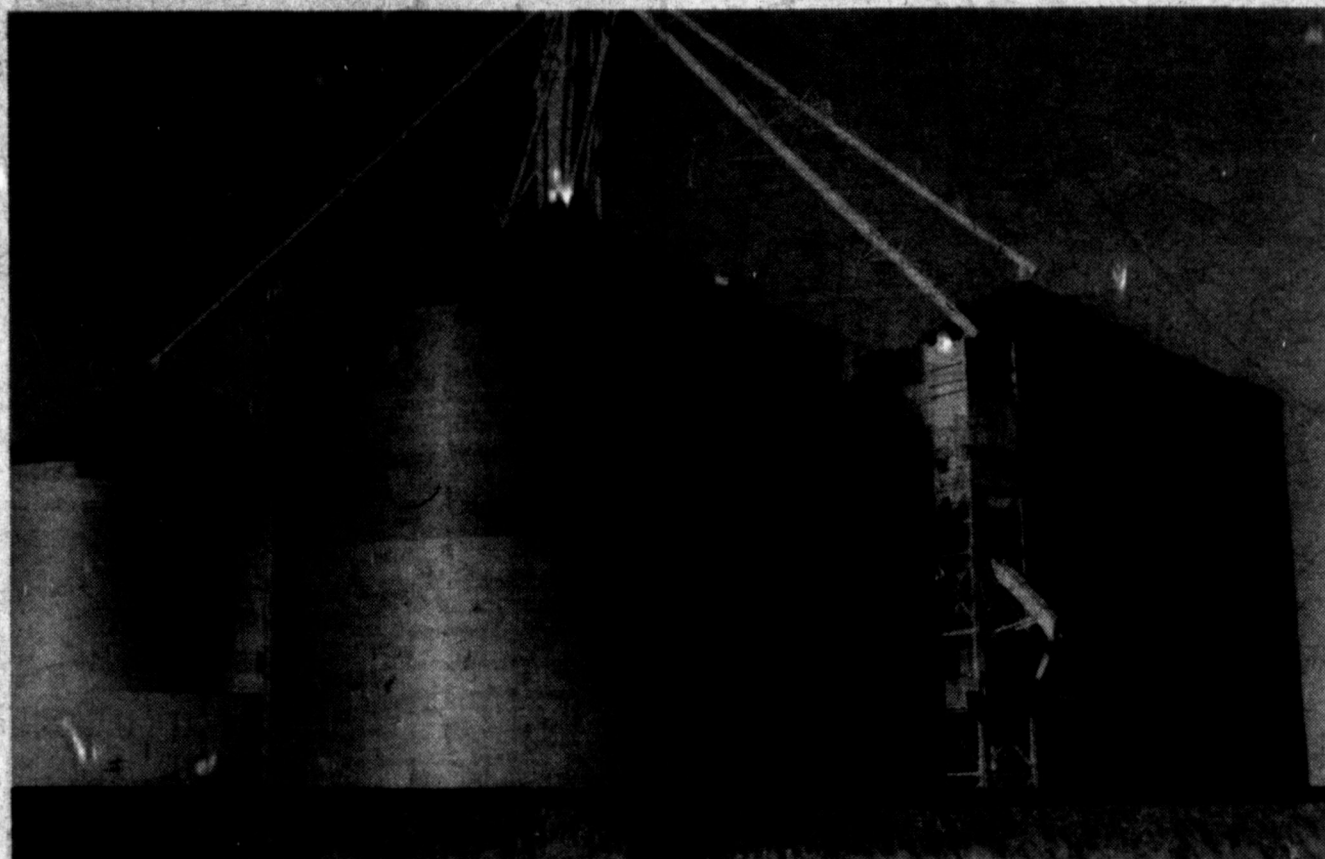
The Canadian River Breaks embrace history. Some of the first towns in the Panhandle were established, Billy the Kid traded horses and bullets, range wars erupted, and the largest ranch in Texas sprawled across these parts. Here Paleo-Indians mined multi-hued flint to trade far and wide. Visitors can tour those Alibates Flint Quarries or simply enjoy Lake

Meredith and the abundant scenery in this area.

The Canyonlands offer the visitor everything from the musical drama *Texas* in the breathtaking Palo Duro Canyon to chuckwagon breakfasts and scenic trail rides along the Caprock escarpment that divides the High Plains from the Rolling Plains.

A visit to any part of the

Panhandle, from Childress to Dalhart, leads to another visit, and another. The lure of the Panhandle works on most people who pause even briefly. As if the Panhandle's size of over 30,000 square miles isn't big enough, the region's bigger story is the "Old West" of legend and the "Real West" of hospitality, wide vistas and recreation.



With abundant farm and ranch land, the Panhandle produces food for millions. Above is a combine harvesting wheat and the grain tanks that will hold the bounty

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# No Slim Fast Allowed In Chuckwagons

By Bill Russell

Although tales of seven mysterious cities of gold lured Coronado and his army into the Panhandle long before cattle ranches were formed, the seven basic food groups of the cowboy proved much more substantial and provided a mystery of their own for dietitians who came later.

Biscuits, beans, bacon, beef, coffee, syrup and dried fruit were the staples dished up from every chuck wagon and cookhouse, and one of the hardest working groups of men in history thrived on this seldom changing bill of fare.

How those hard-riding cowboys would have laughed at the antics of modern folks with their "carbo-loading" diets with "mega doses" of vitamins and "electrolyte replacements." You can almost imagine the look on a cowboy's face when handed a bowl of multi-colored pasta salad, a handful pills of assorted shapes and a glass of yellow-tinged athletic drink.

It still confounds experts how such a large group of men subsisted on such a narrow diet devoid of fresh fruit and vegetables, yet remained as healthy and disease free as any other comparable group in history.

But it is not a mystery to the men who lived on the seven pillars of chuck wagon cuisine.

"It was just good grub," said a long-time cowboy who rode the chuck line for several Panhandle ranches and remembers chuck wagon meals fondly. "There weren't no surprises to upset your stomach."

The biscuits were sourdough, cooked in a Dutch oven until they were brown on top and bottom and tender in the middle. The beef was usually fried with salt and flour added to the drippings to form "sop" in which to dip the biscuits. The beans were cooked any of a dozen ways but were always well done and the bacon was sliced thick and fried crisp.

Dried fruit was desert or "afters," stewed and topped with syrup, cane, sorghum, ribbon, sugar drip or corn.

All of this was washed down with large cups of coffee, ground fresh from sacks of beans carried on the chuck wagon. Cooks were often judged by the strength of their coffee and maintained that there was no such thing as "strong" coffee, only weak men. The mildest brew available at any cook fire was



Cowboys gather for grub around early Panhandle chuckwagon. Photo courtesy Panhandle-Plains Museum.

of "stand a spoon" consistency.

"A lot of people are surprised at just how little water it takes to make a good pot of coffee," said one chuck wagon cook.

Modern dietitians would shy away from recommending a diet so rich in starch and protein and reliant on fried food. But the cowboys were a hardy lot, and few stomach complaints that could not be cured with vinegar and warm water or some baking soda were recorded.

In addition to the seven basic cowboy food groups, chuck wagons were usually equipped with vinegar, soda, sugar, salt, pepper and rice. When served, rice was referred to as "moonshine," indicating a lack of confidence in its nourishment properties, and light or baking powder bread was despised and called "wasps' nest" bread.

Sometimes a case of corn or tomatoes in cans (called airtights) were thrown into the chuckwagon along with a keg of pickles to enliven meals. But such variations were rare and seldom missed when absent.

The sourdough used for biscuits was probably the most versatile item of the cowboy diet. Leftover biscuits were sometimes soaked in warm water, pounded into a mush, then decorated with raisins and sugar before being baked brown into a bread pudding. Pies from wild berries harvested by the hands were baked in a modified sourdough crust. Sourdough dumplings popped up almost every time the chuck wagon stayed put long enough for the cook to put on

a pot of stew. Even a passable cake was baked after raisins and sugar were kneaded into the dough. Of course there were sourdough flapjacks and even a type of cowboy doughnut, twisted strips of sourdough fried in deep hot fat. Sourdough fried pies and turnovers were also popular. It is difficult to imagine a cowboy meal without at least one form of sourdough.

Nutritionist D. L. Rice recently said, "The cowboy diet should have inevitably led to grave digestive disturbances and resulted in bad health and weakened physical condition." Yet cowboys remained one of the most healthy and hardy groups of men in history.

"Come and get it before I throw it to the coyotes!" replies the ghostly voice of the cowboy cook replies to the nutritionist.

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# Bronco Buster Was Also Early Gentleman On Plains

By Bill Russell

When 19-year-old Matthew "Bones" Hooks helped trail a herd of longhorns from a Pecos River ranch to Clarendon in 1886 he was just one of the many black cowboys working stock in the west. But unlike the majority of his brethren, black, white and Mexican, he left a lasting, personal impression on the Panhandle.

After the herd was safely delivered, Hooks decided to remain in the area. The quiet, religious life of Clarendon, known at that time as "Saints' Roost" because of its lack of saloons and bordellos and its growing number of churches, appealed to Hooks although he was the only black man in the region. Eventually he helped found and build the first Negro church in Clarendon.

Hooks was a gentle, religious cowboy in a time when that sort of cowboy was few and far between. In later life he was able to indulge in his flair for helping other people by founding the Dogie Club for disadvantaged black youth in Amarillo. But before that there was the necessity of making a living. Hooks did so by riding "outlaw" broncs, horses no one else would attempt.

He got into this dangerous line of work, he later said, almost by accident, or, as others said, because he was just plain stubborn.

Hooks was working on a ranch near Pampa when he heard all the cowboys talking about a horse that

couldn't be ridden. When the ranch owner and his family went off to church one Sunday the horse, named Old Bill, was tied up in the barn. Bones Hooks was left alone at the ranch, and made up his mind to ride the "outlaw."

"I decided to try him in the barn with the door closed," said Hooks. "I figured even if he threw me he couldn't get away."

The fledgling bronc buster managed to get the boss's saddle on Old Bill and scrambled aboard. But Old Bill wasn't going to give up that easy. The "outlaw" was really angry by this time and kicked the barn door down and dashed outside, Bones still clinging to his back.

The enraged animal raced across the yard and kicked down the gate, Bones still in the saddle. Then Old Bill got the bit between his teeth and raced down the road as if his tail were on fire.

But Bones was fighting back and staying in the saddle as they raced madly down the rutted ranch road. Bones finally got Old Bill slowed down and when the ranch owner's buggy came into sight he got the animal stopped.

"What are you doing with that horse?" asked the rancher. "He'll kill you."

"I'm riding him," replied Hooks. "The Lord made all the other horses so they could be ridden, so I figured this one could too."

After that, all of the "outlaw" broncs were given over to Bones, and he enjoyed every minute of it.

Hooks said that getting all the bad horses made a great rider out of him.

Hooks was born in Robertson County, the eldest of eight children and the son of former slaves. He died in Amarillo at the age of 83, his coffin adorned by a single white Guerdon prairie wildflower.

Hooks started the wildflower tradition when a Panhandle rancher and business partner Tom Clayton died. Bones Hooks picked a white prairie wildflower on his way the funeral. He said that his partner would have liked that.

From then on white Guerdon wildflowers were brought or sent by Bones to the funerals of all the early Panhandle pioneers and later living persons came to receive the flowers as an indication of a job well done. A lone white flower from Bones Hooks became a status symbol.

Perhaps the most enduring legacy from the black bronc buster was the founding of the Dogie Club for black youths of the Panhandle. Bones was most proud of that organization.

"Not a Negro boy was in police court for two years after the Dogie Club came along," he said.

As "range boss" for the Dogie Club, Hooks became active in civic affairs and worked unceasingly for the betterment of black people in the Panhandle. He was the first black man to sit on the Potter County Grand Jury and the first black member of a number of previously all white old settlers and cowboys associations.

Bones Hooks was also a bit of a philosopher who looked at life with a freshness and frankness that

provided guidance and inspiration to others.

"One time I owned some oil land and could see myself a millionaire," he once said. "Then I went broke. I

couldn't even afford to live like I had before. So I just reached up and pulled down my desires to fit my income, and now I am a millionaire again."

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# A Pioneer In The Field Of History In The Panhandle

By Ellen Richardson

A 20-year-old woman fresh out of Peabody College in Nashville stepped down from the train in Claude one day in 1891. Laura Vernon Hamner had no notion that over the next 77 years she would exert her influence on the cultural awareness of Panhandle people as few others have done.

Her own place in history would be assured as the first historian of the Texas Panhandle.

But would she be remembered more as a writer? A newspaperwoman? A teacher? A radio personality? She was all of those, to say nothing of her jobs as postmistress, county school superintendent, retail clerk, camp supervisor, speech writer and lecturer.

"Laura V Hamner's importance to the Panhandle cannot be overstated," says Nova Bair of Amarillo. "She recognized that history was in the making and put it down on paper," Bair added.

"Laura said her parents didn't confine her rearing to girl things. While working on her father's newspaper (in Claude) she got the idea of getting into the business world."

Hamner later taught in the Amarillo school system as well as in West (near Waco), Hillsboro, Wise County, and Temple, finally discovering that high school English suited her best. When her mother's condition worsened (her father's health had failed, too), she returned to Claude to become the postmistress - "a job I detested."

Hamner had been writing for years, supplementing her salary with checks from newspapers and magazines, but there were interims of heavy household and family burdens during which she was able to write very little.

"However, that time was not entirely wasted," she said. She was constantly learning about the people and the history of the Panhandle. "All that time I was accumulating material."

As a member of a younger generation, Bair appreciated Miss Hamner's sharing personality. "She'd make you feel you were a particular friend. She always had an adequate response; you knew she was really listening."

In the early forties, Hamner began writing and recording a weekly radio program on KGNC, "Light 'n Hitch." For many years, says Bair, people would watch the clock closely until time to turn on Laura V. Hamner and listen to stories of people who had developed the Panhandle.

Hamner compiled some of those stories into her 1958 book *Light 'n Hitch*. She dedicated it to the men and women who settled the short grass country, who "had little, but thought in terms of greatness and assurance." The book had no bibliography since all her information came from interviews.

At a PPW meeting on her 92nd birthday, Laura V. Hamner

received the Texas Heritage Foundation National Medal in recognition of outstanding contributions to Texas literature and the writing of Texas history. This honor capped the career not only of a pioneer settler but also a pioneer of Panhandle history.

By Pat Sikes

The approaching 75th anniversary Panhandle Professional Writers (PPW) prompts a backward glance into the life of Laura Vernon Hamner, the person most often credited with its founding. Hers is the story of falling in love in her early 20s with Texas.

She arrived in the Panhandle during a period of rapid change. The dust was just settling from the thundering hooves of the last buffalo herd and the U.S. Cavalry's pursuit of the last Comanche.

## A Love Affair

Towns emerged from make-shift tents and crude dugouts.

Across the free-grass country,

windmills and tornados, barb wire and blizzards, prairie fires and pioneers spread. The Western greeting, "Light 'n hitch," invited the stranger to alight from his horse, hitch it to a post, sit down to supper and stay the night. At age 87, Hamner published a collection of stories about those early years entitled *Light 'n Hitch*.

Hamner attributed the development of the Panhandle to the railroads and the "barb wire telephone." In the 1890s, the lonely settlers ordered a \$30 "box" from a telephone manufacturer in Boston and connected it with wire to their barb wire fences.

The wire ran for miles along the fences that bordered neighboring ranches. "Those phones worked real well," she said, "unless, by chance, a cow wormed her way through that fence and broke the wire."

Charles Goodnight and Hamner were close friends, she said, which "caused him to talk freely to me as I rode with him, notebook on knee,

from salt trough to salt trough in the buffalo pasture, or sat with him in his den on winter days."

Her first book was about Goodnight. Called *The No-Gun Man of Texas*. His friends said that he didn't need to carry a gun because he got everything he wanted without one. He forbade gambling, whiskey and cussing on his range.

*The No-Gun Man of Texas* was adopted as a supplement to the history curriculum in High Plains

schools. The book's supporters believed that it countered the caricature of the whiskey-soaked gunslinger and the snake-infested wilderness with the true story of real people who envisioned a greater destiny for the Panhandle.

In 1965, she moved to a rest home in Alabama where her niece lived. Three years later, Hamner died at the age of 97. She was buried in the Claude Cemetery beside her parents and reunited with her first love, the Texas Panhandle.



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# Finding The Meaning Of Treasures Is Part Of The Fun

By Bill Russell

Each time Craig Clyburn sinks a shovel into the soil of Texas he is looking for fragments of the past, but, instead of providing clues to the puzzle of history, he finds that the artifacts he uncovers create more questions than answers.

"I guess you could say I'm digging up mysteries," the Spearman resident said recently. "I started out looking for answers, but it hasn't quite worked out that way."

As an example, Clyburn once uncovered a cap-and-ball Navy Dagoon pistol with three unfired rounds in the cylinder and the hammer at full cock.

"You just have to ask yourself what happened to the owner of that weapon and what was happening at the very moment it was dropped," Clyburn said. "You don't lose or throw away a loaded pistol on full cock. I will wonder for the rest of my life what was going on when that gun was abandoned."

Clyburn describes himself as a Texas history "nut" and that fact, coupled with boredom, got him into digging for historical artifacts.

"I was working at Eagle Pass down near Del Rio and there wasn't a lot to do in my off time, so I started digging at an abandoned Army fort down there. I was hooked the first time I found something."

That was in 1980 and now, after unearthing thousands of items, Clyburn's interest in excavations is

undiminished although he can't afford to spend as much time at his unusual hobby.

"I'll dig anywhere I think I can

You can see many of these artifacts at the Stationmaster's Museum in Spearman

find things," he said. "Old forts, abandoned homestead sites, racecourses, anywhere. All the easy spots have been picked over, which adds a challenge for me."

A large selection of the artifacts Clyburn has found are on display at the Station Master's House Museum in the northern Panhandle town of Spearman. Each item on display is meticulously identified. The identification, for Clyburn, is part of the enjoyment.

"With things like military brass belt buckles and equipment there is usually a serial number that allows it to be traced back," Clyburn said. "It is interesting to discover that most of the equipment used by the frontier troops was Civil War surplus."

Clyburn said there was much more engraving of personal items in the past than there is today. Rings, watches and other jewelry was often engraved with a name, a name that Clyburn researches to find out as much about its former owner as possible. One item had him puzzled for a while, however. It appeared to be part of a flat brass case which bore a lengthy inscription he could not read. Then, by accident, he

glimpsed the strange engraving in a mirror. Suddenly it was readable.

"I think it was half of a lady's compact that had a mirror as the other half. That way each time she opened the case she could read the inscription," Clyburn said.

Another of the discoveries that interested him was an emblem from a cavalry helmet dating from the mid 1800s. Back then the formal dress uniform of the U.S. Cavalry included a helmet with a horsehair plume. The front of the helmet was adorned with a gold plated eagle. In one claw the eagle clutched a bundle of arrows and in the other an olive branch. During peace time the eagle faced the side holding the olive branch. During war time the eagle faced the arrows. The one unearthed by Clyburn was facing the arrow side.

Even this find presented another mystery. Who did it belong to? What war was being fought? How did it get lost?

Clyburn has dug sites around Old Mobeetie and Fort Elliott and still travels south to do some digging each vacation. Although he is still gets a "thrill" when he finds an artifact, he is always looking for a gold coin or a hoard of coins.

"I would love to find a gold double eagle," he said. "I haven't found one yet, but I have found two gold teeth, molars I think they are. I don't have any idea how they got there or how they got separated from their owner. So there's another mystery for me."

Despite the extensive display in the Stationmaster's Museum and the hundreds of hours spent with a shovel and the buckets of artifacts

still in his garage waiting to be cleaned and catalogued, Clyburn's intensity has not flagged. He is still deeply interested in Texas history, so much so that he named his

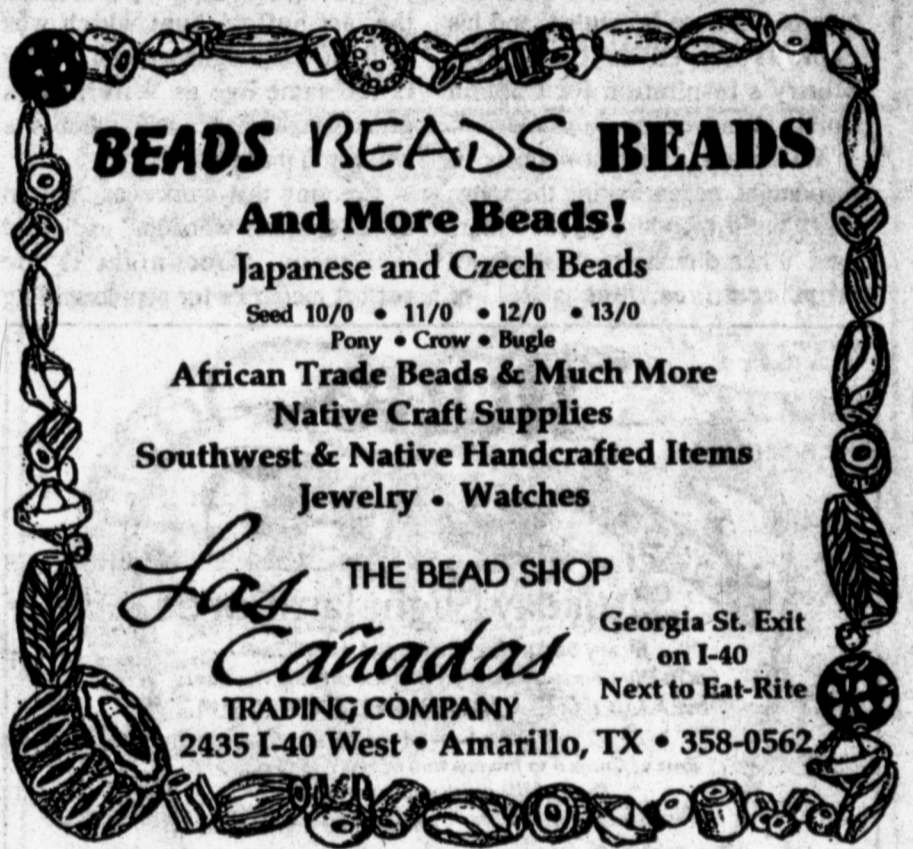
daughter Texana. He is always ready for a new digging expedition.

"If you hear of a likely spot, give me a call," he said. "We might find something real interesting."



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# New Music To Debut In Canyon

By Kevin Welch

In early September, lovers of the Old West will descend into the Palo Duro Canyon State Park to participate in singer Michael Martin Murphey's WestFest. Amidst the entertainment on September 9 will be the debut performance of a collection of songs especially pertinent to the Panhandle: "Charlie Goodnight," written by Andy Wilkinson.

Colonel Charles Goodnight was a larger-than-life figure here, founding the area's first large ranch, fighting Indians, badmen, and the West's harsh elements. He was truly a pioneer in this, the last area of Texas to be settled, and his exploits served as Larry McMurtry's inspiration for Captain Call in his novel *Lonesome Dove*.

Wilkinson, a distant nephew of Goodnight, began writing the songs for "Charlie Goodnight" three years ago. "I heard many of these stories from relatives, but a lot of

academic research and visits to sites where the history happened went into the songs," Wilkinson said.

The research itself inspired a song that tells of Andy looking for a "river that wasn't there." Goodnight had seen his first buffalo on the banks of the Trinity River, but as Dallas grew into a city, the site was destroyed to straighten the river.

Wilkinson will be joined on stage at WestFest by the many people who performed on the recording of "Charlie Goodnight." Even his daughter Emily has a part in the proceedings, reciting a poem about the last buffalo hunt which was held on Goodnight's ranch. Emily is the same age as Wilkinson's great-grandmother was when she witnessed the hunt.

Creating this work was "not an act of ancestor worship," explained Wilkinson. "Goodnight is the perfect metaphor for people settling

the plains." For example, Goodnight loved the free range but put up some of the first fences in the Panhandle. In his early career he fought many Indians but became their defender, saving one from lynching in Clarendon. He ran buffalo off their range in the Palo Duro Canyon but later saved a few that became the seed stock for today's herds. All these incidents combine to make Goodnight the perfect subject, according to Wilkinson.

Tickets and information about "Charlie Goodnight" can be obtained by calling the Amarillo Civic Center at (806) 378-3096. Not only will CDs and cassettes of the work be available at the September 9 performance, but also a book with the songs' lyrics, information about the creation of the recordings, and original art by Duward Campbell can be obtained. An optional dinner of "New Texas Cuisine" will be served prior to the show.

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# Guns Shoot Holes In Tascosa's Reputation

By Bill Russell

It wasn't long after Tascosa was founded in 1877 that a significant segment of the population began to think about law and order for the roughcut cowboy town in the western Panhandle. This element cast suspicious and worried glances at Billy the Kid, who made periodic visits to the young town.

Here, they reasoned, was a probable source of trouble and an unwholesome reputation for the town.

An ironic series of events occurred which must have left some Tascosa boosters gnashing their teeth. The city's reputation as a "gunslinging" cow town came not from the Kid, but, in a large part, from the man they had paid to hunt the outlaw down, Pat Garrett.

Billy the Kid liked Tascosa, nestled in the shade along the Canadian River. He brought horses there to sell on several visits in 1878. The Kid was always well behaved when he visited and it mattered little to the buyer or the seller that the horse in question had been stolen from the territorial governor of New Mexico.

But whenever the Kid left town it seemed a large number of cattle seem-ed to leave with him, which did not endear him to area ranchers, especially on the LS Ranch.

The Kid trailed into town for the last time late that year with four friends and 125 stolen horses. He left, having sold the animals and without causing trouble. Two of the gang members liked Tascosa so much they decided to stay and try life inside the law.

The city fathers and county judge breathed a sigh of relief as the Kid made tracks back to New Mexico. Still, civic minded citizens were worried about Billy the Kid and his fondness for their city. A year later they contributed several men and some cash to the Pat Garrett posse hunting the Kid after a New Mexico jail break. When Garrett shot Billy in Fort Sumner July 14, 1881, the law and order element of Tascosa felt their city had dodged a bullet, a bullet named William Bonney (or William McCarty, or simply The Kid) and was well on the way to becoming a sterling, law abiding community.

After putting the Kid in his grave, Pat Garrett's reputation was riding high, and in 1884 he was hired by the sprawling LS Ranch to head up the "LS Rangers," supposedly a group of stock detectives whose task it was to curb the rustling of LS cattle. In reality the Rangers were hired to drive nesters and small ranchers off the range and to make sure that every last steer, bull, cow and calf on or near LS land was respected as LS property.

The LS was the biggest (and wanted to become the only) ranch in the area and pushed through a series of ordinances designed to freeze small ranch owners out and take away their means to resist. Cowboys not riding for the LS brand were forbidden to wear pistols around their waists, to cut their own brands out of herds being rounded up for an LS drive, or to add a chuckwagon and riders to any LS cattle drive or roundup. The LS even had some smaller ranch cattle brands declared "maverick" (not to be considered proof of lawful ownership).

The LS decrees weren't the only troubles facing city and county law enforcement advocates. A crackdown by city officials and the U.S. Army in Mobeetie sent gamblers, gunmen, prostitutes and saddle bums down the river road from the eastern Panhandle to Tascosa.

Law and order in Tascosa was represented by Sheriff Jim East, a no nonsense sort of a guy with a handlebar moustache and zero tolerance for gunslingers. His predecessor, Cape Willingham had already shot a rowdy trail driver, and East was kept busy dealing with the Mobeetie rejects. He was supported by Oldham County Judge James McMasters who led the law and order ranks.

Tascosa itself seemed to side with the small ranchers against the LS Cowboys. The ranchers were welcomed

in town wearing their pistols in outlandish shoulder rigs or scabbards strapped on their backs or even stuffed in their boots to get around the LS decree. Garrett's LS Rangers were refused service in at least one restaurant and the Equity Saloon on Main Street. For the most part they were relegated to Hogtown, the red light district a half-mile downriver.

The Cowboy Strike of 1883 found Tascosa firmly backing the cowboys who wanted higher pay and a repeal of some of the LS edicts. Tascosa may have backed the cowboys too much. It has been said that most of the striking cowboys drank up the majority of the strike fund at Tascosa saloons. For this and other reasons the strike petered out, a large number of cowboys were blackballed and it became apparent that the LS had won its battle against small ranchers.

Pat Garrett moved on and the LS Rangers were disbanded as a group, but many of the former quasi-lawmen remained, working for the LS as sometime cowboys and trouble shooters.

Sheriff East must have felt as if he were sitting on the lid of a boiling cauldron about this time, and the law and order folks must have worried much more than when Billy the Kid rode into town to peddle a few stolen horses.

The lid blew off the pot March 20, 1886 and put Tascosa firmly in the history books as a gunslinging town along with the likes of Tomb-

stone, Arizona and Dodge City, Kansas.

Four LS riders and former Rangers rode into town from a line camp 11 miles out and attended a dance at the plaza of a Mexican resident. They left the festivities about 2 a.m. and rode back to Tascosa, stopping at the Equity bar on Main Street so that one of the riders, Ed King, could rendezvous with a woman named Sally Emory. He never kept that date.

As the four LS riders dismounted gunfire flashed from a saloon across the street. King went down, and the fight was on. Gunfire thundered and bullets crashed through windows and thudded into adobe walls. The remaining three LS riders ran to King's side, firing at a group of shadowed figures on the other side of the street as they ran. A resident, Jesse Sheets, was shot dead as he looked out of his window to see what was going on.

The LS cowboys, finding King dead, cornered four or five men they thought to be the shooters behind a saloon, but it soon became a question of who had cornered whom.

The gunfire went on for a full five minutes, and when the pistols fell silent all of the LS riders were dead and two townfolk were wounded.

Sheriff East is credited with keeping the whole area from erupting into gunfire. He made quick arrests and made it clear that any more shooters would get what they were trying to dish out from him and Deputy L.C. Pierce. County Judge McMasters backed East all the way. The wearing of firearms by anybody was forbidden for the next several weeks and tempers began to cool. East told LS Ranch managers and foremen that if any LS rider came into town to seek revenge the managers and foremen would be arrested along with the riders.

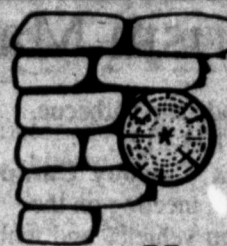
The wounded men recovered and eventually five men went on trial in Clarendon for the killings. It was a long and bitter trial in which all of the old wounds were reopened and even the judge got involved in the argument. That trial ended in a hung jury and the second trial in Mobeetie resulted in a jury acquitting all of the accused men.

The battle was over, but the sterling reputation which had been sought for Tascosa was gone forever.

By 1892 the railroad had bypassed the town and Old Tascosa was beginning to decline, its reputation as a gunslinging town far outlasting this wide-open town's existence.



Jim East, Judge McMasters and Pat Garrett. Photo courtesy Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum.



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### JULY

**11-17 Swisher County's 100th Birthday Celebration** - carnival on the square, baseball tournament in Mackenzie Park; rodeo July 15-16 at Cobb Wheeler Mote Area followed by dance; parade at 10 a.m. on July 16, followed at noon by barbecue and oldtimers reunion at Conner park. Mayo Duke will show his working Border Collies and Steve Hillock will demonstrate flint knapping and bow making at the Swisher County Museum, Tulia. (806) 995-3726.

**15-16 Top o' Texas Rodeo** in Pampa. Dances following rodeos. (806) 669-3241.

**16 Picnic Day Breakfast** - All you can eat, served from 6-8:30 a.m. Adults \$3.50, under 12 \$2. At the Senior Center, 127 SW 2nd, Tulia.

**29-30 Hart Days Celebration** - Hart.

**30 Border Town Days** - Farwell.

### AUGUST

**6-7 Collectors Show** at Amarillo Civic Center. Buy, sell, trade coins, stamps, sport and other cards, knives, crafts, jewelry. (806) 355-1702. Sponsored by Golden Spread Coin Club.

**13-Howdy Neighbor Day** celebration in Fritch. (806) 857-2458.

**9-14 Old West Days** - at the Civic Center, Amarillo. Variety of activities featuring a taste of the Old West. Displays, cowboy poets, art and craft shows, chili, rib and red-bean cook-offs, gunfights, parade, rodeo. (806) 378-4297.

**9-13 Castro County Harvest Days** - Fair, Arts & Crafts Show, Parade, Rodeo, Car Show, Street Dance, Barbecue, Square Dance.

**12-13 Briscoe County Birthday Celebration** - Rodeo and Dance both nights, homecoming

celebration, parade and barbecue, Silverton. (806) 823-2125.

**18-21 Caprock Cowboy Camp Meeting** - Gospel meeting on the ranch. Recreation vehicles and tent camping welcome. Free admission, meals furnished, Silverton. (806) 823-2524.

**19-20-21 Texas Inter-Tribal Indian Homecoming Pow-Pow** - Arts & Crafts, Indian Dancers, Musicians & Singers. (806) 358-3277. At Tri-State Fairgrounds, Amarillo.

### SEPTEMBER

**4-5 Boys Ranch Rodeo** - Rip-roaring rodeo action featuring the residents of Cal Farley's Boys Ranch. Located at Boys Ranch arena near Old Tascosa.

**4-9 Cattle Drive** - Spend 6 days and 5 nights on the range punching cows the way they did in the Old West. Bar H Dude Ranch, Clarendon. (800) 627-9871.

**10-11 Michael Martin Murphey's Texas WestFest** - at Pioneer Amphitheatre in Palo Duro Canyon State Park. Featuring fine western art, Indian village, mountain man encampment, live entertainment by many top stars. (806) 655-2181.

**10-17 Malze Days** - Miss Friona Pageant, Little Miss Pageant, Carnival, Gospel-in-the-Park, Photography Show, Parade and barbecue, Friona.

**17 - Carson County Square House Museum Day** in Panhandle. Two exhibits of Japanese and American Indian art, pioneer and Indian demonstrations, Country store, barbecue dinners. Call (806) 537-3561.

**17-18 Fritch Bluegrass Festival** at Harbor Bay, Lake Meredith. Tentative date, call (806) 857-2458.

**24-25 Arts & Crafts Fair**, Tulia.

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**Caprock Jamboree** - First Saturday night of each month from 7-11 p.m. See the best country and western jamboree between Dallas and Amarillo at the Briscoe County Show Barn, 6 blocks south of historical jail. Free admission, 6 p.m. mesquite grilled hamburgers with all the trimmings. Silverton, (806) 623-2524.

**Panhandle Plains Historical Museum** - Located in Canyon, this museum represents the state's oldest and largest collection. Ongoing exhibits through the fall of 1994 include: "Outdoor Recreation in the Texas Panhandle"; and, "Finished in Beauty: The evolution of Navajo Weaving, 1860-1960."

**Nance Ranch** - Jamboree every Saturday night through Labor Day Weekend. Western & bluegrass bands, Cowboy poets and storytelling. Moderate prices for chuckwagon meal at 5:30; free admission to Jamboree at 7 p.m. Located near Canyon. (806) 488-2265.

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**HUTCHINSON COUNTY MUSEUM** - Borger: 618 N. Main St. Dedicated to the oil boom days of Hutchinson County. No admission, (806) 273-6121.

**JULIAN BIVINS MUSEUM** - Old Tascosa, now Cal Farley's Boys Ranch, 36 miles NW of Amarillo on Highway 385. Housed in old Tascosa Courthouse. Has skin of largest rattle snake ever killed and longest braided rawhide rope plus huge barb wire collection. Mon-Sat 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. No admission. (806) 534-2211.

**RIVER VALLEY PIONEER MUSEUM** Canadian: 118 2nd St. Fine displays of early pioneer life and high plains living through the 1940s. Tue-Fri 9 a.m. - Noon and 1-4 p.m.; Sat & Sun 2-4 p.m. No admission. Closed Monday. (806) 323-6548.

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**CHILDRESS COUNTY HERITAGE MUSEUM** - Childress: 210 3rd St. NW located in old post office built in 1935. No admission, Mon-Fri 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Other days and tours by appointment. (817) 937-2261.

**SAINTS ROOST MUSEUM** - Clarendon: Route 70 South. Located in former Adair Hospital. Area museum focusing on ranching and farming in Donley County. No admission. Sun 1-5 p.m. Other days and tours by appointment. (806) 874-2259.

**ARMSTRONG COUNTY MUSEUM** - Claude: North Trice Street. Pioneer history of county settlers and ranchers as well as Palo Duro Canyon and JA Ranch. Tue-Sat 12-4 p.m.; Sun 1-5 p.m. Closed Mon. (806) 226-2181.

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**DALLAM-HARTLEY COUNTY XIT MUSEUM** - Dalhart: 108 E. 5th St. Houses a fine collection focusing on 3-million acre XIT Ranch which once sprawled across the Panhandle, but goes far beyond ranch history. Tue-Sat 2-5 p.m.; First Sunday each month open house 2-5 p.m. No admission. (806) 249-5390.

**MOORE COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM** - Dumas: Dumas Ave. and West 8th St. in Lew Haile Annex. Good displays of flora and fauna of High Plains and ranch life thereupon. No admission. Oct. through April Mon-Fri 1-5 p.m.; May through November Mon-Fri 10 a.m.-5 p.m. (806) 935-3113.

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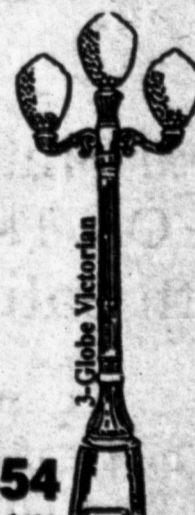
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