

The Bandera PROPHEET

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Growing Up In Bandera

By Glenn Clark

Special to the Prophet

There were always things involving music back in the early years of my Bandera raisin'. Live bands were plentiful in the area with well established businesses having regular dances every weekend. In addition, other places like Wharton's Dock, Mansfield Park, The Purple Cow or the American Legion Hall would have some hometown talent pickin' and singing most anytime.

Every bar and cafe around town had a jukebox loaded with the type of music suited for the venue. Jack Jones, who owned and loaded the jukeboxes with the 45 records, knew the OST needed a wider variety than the Silver Dollar. Hank Williams was the king downstairs in "The Dollar" and The Beach Boys were regular plays upstairs and across main street in the cafe. Three songs for a quarter was the going rate back in the early sixties. Don't mess with the volume control was a strictly enforced rule which young folks tested repeatedly. If the jukebox was played during a break for a live band the bartender would turn the volume all the way down rather than unplugging it when the band started playing again. That way all the selections would play out and you had to insert money on the next break to start the music again.

Around our home we had a record player and Ray Price got more than a lion's share of play time. My mom dubbed him "Ray Baby" and anytime you are around any of our family members or close friends today you

will hear that term still being used. Ernest Tubb ran a close second as I recall.

As kids when we had friends over we would set up in the living room and roll back the rug to dance on the hardwood floor. A variety of music was played from an ample supply of 45 records on hand. I recall The Corner Drug Store (where Shoebiz is now located) used to sell 45s but I don't recall any albums. Maybe it was because I couldn't afford those big records and I simply ignored them. Playing a 45 on a 33 or 78 setting was always part of the evenings entertainment.

All of this music influence led to a lifelong love of traditional country music for me. For my son who was exposed to it from day one it led to a love of all genres of music and a career as a disc jockey or radio personality as he prefers. Bandera has provided a career launching pad for some of my Growing Up In Bandera friends as well as others aspiring to keep the live music tradition alive.

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