

# The Bandera PROPHEET

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Growing Up In Bandera

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Special to the Prophet

When I left the the comfort of my Bandera surroundings every day to pursue my chosen career in the big city it wasn't exactly the smooth transition I had envisioned. I was used to the hard work so that wasn't a problem. I had co-workers and bosses calling me "Clem" and "Country" for the longest time. It has taken me many years to figure out that I will never be able to shed the mark placed on me by my Bandera raisin'. I'm good with that since it is who I am. I think maybe they were just jealous. Thinking back to my cherished memories of early summertimes spent swimming and eating watermelon chilled by the cool waters of the Medina River, I would say I totally deserved the title of "Country". For sure there were no city kids enjoying the everyday paradise I had available to me. My worries were minimal as the summers of my youth came and went way too swiftly.

I do remember being a bit concerned at a young age when an adult would jokingly tell me not to swallow watermelon seeds because they would grow into a melon in my stomach. I shouldn't have worried because those seeds were always saved in my cheek for spitting at anyone who came within range. I was an expert shot if I do say so myself.

Sometimes the afternoon swimming trips to Dripping Springs were a reward for the chores we had done that day. We loaded up in our old Chevy truck and it was usually a truck full of kids by the time we got to

the river. I can still feel the relief from the heat of a long scorching day when I ran and dove into the cool water. Another perk of taking an afternoon swim was realizing I might not have to take a tub bath that night.

City people may have had a front porch to sit on in the late evenings but they didn't have all the amenities common to us country folks. The Whip-poor-wills call is something that can bring the perfect touch to a days end. I'm thankful that even today I can sit in my yard as daylight fades and enjoy that familiar lullaby. You couple that with the roosters crow I hear during my morning walks and it is a reminder of a less stressful time here in my hometown.

I can't imagine any kid having a better life than I had while Growing Up In Bandera. Sure I had to survive hard times and even some tragedies but just the fact that I was in this special place called Bandera and the closeness of the community we had at that time makes me proud to be a country boy.

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