

The Bandera PROPHEET

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Growing Up In Bandera

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Special to the Prophet

When people react as I tell my tales of what my young life was like here in Bandera it reminds me of the many times I tried to imagine what it was like for my mom and dad. Their early life wasn't too far removed from the early pioneers of our community. They had to endure The Great Depression and the difficulties brought on by World War II. It makes me reflect back to my early life experiences and then I wonder if they somehow affected my later life decisions without me even realizing they were guiding me.

I think a lot of modern family members are becoming less connected than we were back in the day. The world of social media and fast evolving technology has separated the generations and dictated what is important and/or irrelevant to each of them. Large families were common not too long ago but now it is more of a rarity. The idea of raising your kids as farm and ranch hands is a thing of the past.

As I sit and watch my great-grandson playing I can almost read his mind as he busies himself with making his mark on the world. Unfortunately he doesn't have the paradise available to him like I did back in the day. He is too young at this time to hear about the adventures of my childhood. One day I will begin to share stories of what it was like in an earlier Bandera just as my parents did with me. I just can't picture his mom ever letting him roam free like I did. It is a different world we live in today. Even in little ol' Bandera.

We still have a small town but it's not the same. We still have the Medina River but it's not the same. Even some of the oldtimers around here will

disagree on subjects of an earlier Bandera. Trying to go back and reclaim things that have fallen by the way can prove to be impossible at times. I wish that a portion of the old millrace could have been preserved in the city park. There were still traces of it when the park idea originated. Some things, like our Polish ancestry, are now celebrated and a point of pride. But that wasn't always the case. Even into my generation a prejudice existed among some people. I thank God that our newer generations are not hung up on such nonsense.

As a community we just keep plugging along trying to hang on to the old while controlling the new. How do we survive as The Cowboy Capital of the World when the very idea of what that means keeps evolving? Mansfield Park with the rodeo arena should play a big part in the plan. In my mind the history of our rodeo cowboy champions directly connects to the dirt in that arena.

I find myself stepping back more often these days to see where things are headed in my current Growing Up In Bandera days. Thanks to social media I can now check out daily the opinions of people I don't know. They constantly voice displeasure about things in Bandera not being up to the standards of from where they came. Some folks have a knack for finding a problem for any solution you might suggest.

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