

The Bandera PROPHEET

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Growing Up In Bandera

By Glenn Clark

The Bandera Prophet

Recently as I was walking down the alley which passes directly under our landmark water tower I felt like a kid again. I was in this area often as a kid seeking my dad who would be playing dominoes in the back room of the old Red Goose Pool Hall. Early on I was trying to get a quarter so I could go to the movies at the Bantex theater. Years later I wanted to borrow the car so I could drag main with my girl.

Among the familiar faces known to "shuffle the bones" on those tables included Octavio and Raul Herrera, Taylor Wooten, Vince Anderwald, and Harmon Smith. I don't recall exactly when the old pool hall closed but that whole crew transferred over to the Bandera Ice House where they were a little more visible. By that time I had my own car and money so my visits were purely social.

Al "Squeaky" Evans left his mark on that building back in the day when Smith Wright, who was the owner hired him to repaint the red goose on the front of the building above the canopy. Young kids were often seen swinging on the supporting bars holding up the canopy. My mom wasn't pleased when I was one of those kids hanging around there. Maybe she was just concerned that we might bother Shorty Fries as he was napping on that old worn sofa while he was managing the pool table operations. Sometimes a dime rack would last quite a while.

My memories of Smith Wright include other things besides the pool hall. He also had a bar-b-que stand and ran the Best Yet cafe along with his wife Ruby. When Medina Lake was low he was a farmer too. He planted a field in the dry lakebed downstream from Wharton's Dock.

Any time my younger brother Eddie and I saw Mr. Wright he always said the same thing to anyone nearby. "Them's Ray Clark's boys". Even to this day my brother and I remember those times and use that description of ourselves in conversation.

The Wright family is another familiar pioneer name that has been around since the beginning of the Bandera community. Clay, Smith, Spot and Honey Pug were just a few of the oldtimers I recall as I was Growing Up In Bandera. Gene, Patrick, Billy Clyde and Carolyn were some of the Wrights from my generation.

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