

The Bandera PROPHEET

Growing Up In Bandera

By Glenn Clark
The Bandera Prophet

One of the first question asked when someone finds out you are a Bandera native. "What was it like growing up around here?". Times were really hard for certain periods but the good times were never far behind.

We lived for a time with my Granddaddy Kindla in a house that was probably one of the last in town to have indoor plumbing. I remember as a small boy carrying firewood with my mom to heat water in those big cast iron pots on laundry day. A wood stove in the kitchen provided fire for heat and cooking. We didn't get scared when we had to go to the outhouse late at night because zombies hadn't been invented yet.

We moved into a small house on Pecan Street owned by Mrs. Davenport when the kid count was only 5. Little sister Debbie hadn't been born yet. I look at that house today and wonder how we managed. The greatest thing to happen for me at that point was meeting Honey and Nanny Blackwell who lived behind us. They gave me my first taste of fishing fever and it has stayed with me throughout my life. Nanny always told me I was her favorite. She was my favorite too. The Blackwells had a cinder block wall in front of their house and it served as a landing point when I was learning to ride a bike.

We got our first tv while living there and the thing I remember most is Granddaddy Kindla coming over on Friday night to watch wrestling while we went to the football game.

I had a steady income on Saturday morning after a home game by scratching around in the pea gravel in front of the concession stand. Under the bleachers was good too but that grave was the honey hole.

Living so close to the stadium gave me an advantage over some of the local competition like John Rico and others.

My mom and dad soon purchased the house further up Pecan Street where I tell everyone I grew up. Some people question whether I have actually ever really grown up.

While attending St. Joseph School I had to walk 3 blocks south and then in high school I had to walk 3 blocks north. Yes, it was uphill both ways.

We were only a block from the freedom of the Medina River and I took full advantage of it. Back in those days no one questioned what a young boy was doing with a 22 rifle on the river. It was pretty commonplace at the time.

It was around this time that Arkey Blue was wrangling on a local dude ranch and courting his future wife near our house. He was driving a Model T or Model A at the time and he ran off the road and hit one of my mom's laying hens. My mom jumped in our old 47 Chevy truck and ran him down and made him pay for that chicken. We probably ate that chicken for supper that night too. It was a running joke for a long time afterwards as we were all friends and spent many nights in The Silver Dollar with Arkey after he gained ownership.

I can tell all the stories of growing up here in Bandera but there is no way I can make people feel what it was like to live it. All the stories of life before my time told by my mom, dad, grandparents and uncles are just folklore in the minds of people migrating in from Houston other places. They are fascinated by the history and want the cowboy way to live on but it is actually they who are helping to erode that lifestyle.

Back in the day there were a lot more sheep and goat ranches than cattle ranches. Look around at the hill country hilltops and you will see houses being built as high up as possible. Soon there will be houses with a view of nothing but other houses. The times they are a changin'.