

The Bandera PROPHEET

January 5, 2021

Growing Up In Bandera

By Glenn Clark

The Bandera Prophet

I have to stop and wonder where we are heading in this once little town of Bandera as I watch the population exploding. It used to be gradual and therefore I didn't take much notice but it is in high gear now. The negative impact of the influx is tempered by having made some really great new friends who made a smooth transition into our community. Due to the amount of complaining I hear from some of the newbies to the area maybe we should require some sort of temporary residency requirement as a "test the water" plan. Did you not notice the lack of big city conveniences while scouting a new place to live? From the looks of things they will be here soon enough without offering encouragement. Bandera has always been a place where out-of-towners could come for a little peace and quiet getaway along the banks of the Medina River. Back in the day this native country kid did that too. Just one short block from our house and I was in my element. It was like entering another world when I hurried down that little bluff on a hidden trail that opened to the river just below the old Mayan Road bridge.

That old county gravel road that passed through the Mayan Ranch probably didn't see a dozen cars on a normal day. One exception was on Tuesdays when late in the evening folks were headed to The Wranglers Roost in the old ghost town to hear Adolph Hofner and The Pearl Wranglers playing a weekly dance.

Other events in Bandera were a draw for obvious other reasons. The Stompede was an open wild weekend that was anything but an offering of peace and quiet. Some folks are in awe of the crowds we attract during the Cowboy Mardi Gras celebration but those crowds pale in

comparison to the Stompede crowds I witnessed as a kid in Bandera. For three solid days the town was gridlocked. The only exception was at parade time when things would move a little bit better down Main Street.

As hunting season approached there were telltale signs weeks ahead of time. Walking into The Bandera Ice House you might encounter strangers in camouflage clothes and the smell of skunk urine floating in the air. Camouflage clothing was a rarity in those earlier times and locals didn't use cover scents to avoid alerting the deer to human presence. We lived among wild animals every day.

Way back when the opening day for whitetail hunting season was set at November 15 every year it was a holiday for local schools in the area when it fell on a weekday. Not sure if that was because it was viewed as a great day worthy of special recognition or school officials realizing that attendance would be poor anyway. The next scheduled school day was filled with classmates telling stories of the big buck that got away. A memory that brings to mind some tales being offered by my bass fishing buddies today.

These later years of Growing Up In Bandera have not only seen a human population increase but the deer herds have prospered as well. Game management education has come a long way. Even though I love venison I'm not mad at anything and have no desire to kill. That being said, those darn squirrels better start leaving me some pecans on my trees or I might have a change of attitude.