

The Bandera PROPHEET

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Growing Up In Bandera

By Glenn Clark

The Bandera Prophet

It is often said that I'm difficult to buy a present for at Christmas time. Well, I pretty much buy what I need as I go along these days. My taste in fishing tackle and bourbon is well known but it is also already in ample supply year round in my house. I'm a very light drinker but a very heavy bass angler.

One bottle of bourbon is plenty. Twelve tackle boxes is never enough. Take my advice and never try to buy fishing lures for a bass fisherman. Giving them gadget things like a Billy Bass is a huge no-no too. I have a supply of those type of gifts that I have to sneak into our yard sales so as not to offend.

I like to think back to the days of my youth when it took so little to make me happy. To find a discarded soda or beer bottle I could turn in for deposit was always something to celebrate. Even finding a single penny meant I could go to McGroarty's store for a piece of penny candy or bubble gum. Doing my morning walks these days has revealed just how little people care about the penny they dropped on the street. I pick up each and every one I come across with my handy litter picking stick just in case penny candy should ever make a comeback.

When I take my mental trips back to the adventures I had as a kid so many years ago along the river it gives me almost unbelievable feelings when I realize how much freedom I enjoyed back in the day. Sadly, I pass by now and see the posted property signs and I know that type of freedom is gone forever. There are many areas which are still accessible but they have become almost unrecognizable with the changes that have been made in the name of progress. People will come and enjoy the new

look without ever realizing that it also represents a change in a way of life for some of us. The times they are a-changin'.

My Native American artifacts are a reminder of what my early ancestors in the area experienced. Both good and bad. It's a well documented history we have about the still untamed surroundings the early settlers faced in Bandera. Polish settlers who were living in tents as the cypress mill began operating would lay the foundation of our community. I have some early examples of tools the shingle makers used in their trade. For some of us, "Keep Bandera Polish" is more than just a bumper sticker you might see around town.

My collection of old marbles is not only a nice colorful display but a reminder of many happy hours I spent wearing holes in the knees of my jeans on the playground at St. Joseph's Catholic School. Even the spankings I must have endured as my mom tried to figure out how to add a knee patch to my already patched pants didn't keep me off the battlefield in my quest to obtain more cat eyes and aggies. Actually I don't recall the spankings at all so they must have not been too severe. The memory of the close relationship I had with a small group of friends back in my early years of Growing Up In Bandera is special beyond anything material I can think of from my past. When one of them passes it is like losing a family member and the hurt is enormous. The penalty of growing old is sometimes unfair.

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