

The Bandera PROPHECY

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Today in Texas history

Death of "Cattle King" Lum Slaughter touches off family financial scandal

By Bandera Spirits of Texas

On Jan. 25, 1919, rancher C. C. (Lum) Slaughter died, precipitating a tangled family financial scandal. Born in 1837 in Sabine County, Lum Slaughter claimed to be the first male child born of a marriage contracted under the Republic of Texas.

About 1877 he established one of the largest ranches in West Texas, the Long S, on the headwaters of the Colorado River, and around 1898 he bought almost 250,000 acres in Cochran and Hockley counties and established the Lazy S Ranch.

Frequently titled the Cattle King of Texas, Slaughter became one of the country's largest individual owners of cattle and land (over a million acres and 40,000 cattle by 1906) and was for years the largest individual taxpayer in Texas.

Less than a week after his death, however, his younger brother, Bill, with whom he had had a long and strained financial relationship but who managed the Long S, was accused of fraud. Bill had attempted to sell his nephew Bob Slaughter's new Western S Ranch on the Rio Grande in Hudspeth County to an "unknown company" from Mexico.

Learning of the fraudulent negotiations, Bob, backed by his brothers, confronted and fired his uncle. Although he later filed a \$3 million slander suit against his nephews, Bill Slaughter apparently never collected anything from it.