

# The Bandera PROPHEET

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Growing Up In Bandera

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The Bandera Prophet

Camping along the river around Bandera back in the day was pretty common. Campers included folks on vacation, overnight visitors or people in town for some event and just needed a place to stay. During my high school days I camped many times with friends to do some catfishing and maybe drinking a few beers on the sly. A couple concrete picnic tables up by the dam were the only improvements anywhere along the river at that time.

Sometimes in our rush to fix things we end up destroying a part of our past. For whatever reason it was decided years ago to remove the boulders which were remnants of the old mill dam down on the river loop. Then the last traces of the millrace were filled in to make the river area more appealing, I suppose. I don't know who decided or why these things were done but looking back I think better decisions and better planning would have benefitted us as a community trying to preserve our history.

As an individual who constantly battles the trashing of our town and river area I understand why the river access is now limited. The freedoms my friends and I enjoyed on the Medina River have been taken away due to the actions of others.

It was a blessing of our times back when we had the freedom of unlimited access to the river around Bandera. Being hampered by the limitations of our financial status we were often drawn to the river for entertainment. During the summer our swimming and tubing might have been interrupted by a day of hauling hay for a couple pennies per bale. That day too would likely have ended with a dip in the Medina River to

wash away the sweat and itch associated with hay hauling. It was a reality check and reminder of what we could expect from the real world after high school graduation. Even that harsh thought was easily wiped out by a dive into that cool river water.

Among my favorite memories of going to the river are the visions of my mom driving a truckload of kids down to Dripping Springs. That old truck logged many miles down that dusty road serving as a taxi ride to paradise. Many times it was my reward for pulling weeds out in the back lot or cleaning out the the chicken pen. Cash rewards were unheard of and we didn't have a pizza parlor to go out for supper even if it had been affordable. You oldtimers will understand what I mean while youngsters will be scratching their heads. Growing Up In Bandera has taken some mighty big turns over these many years. Are they good or bad? Who am I to judge? Moms are working just like the dads so no one is available to take the kids swimming and that's a rotten deal.

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