

The Bandera PROPHECY

July 1, 2021

Today in Texas history

By Bandera Spirits of Texas

On this day in 1850, a mob of soldiers burned down the store of Fredericksburg merchant John M. Hunter, destroying all Gillespie County records up to that time.

Hunter, the first Gillespie County clerk, had a violent temper and had clashed more than once with the soldiers at nearby Fort Martin Scott. On the night of June 30, Hunter had refused to sell whiskey to a soldier named Dole. When Dole became abusive, Hunter fatally stabbed him in the chest.

Some 50 angry soldiers returned the next night, looking for Hunter, but the merchant had fled town. Several townspeople attempted to salvage the county records from the burning store, but the soldiers prevented them. Apparently neither Hunter nor the soldiers were punished.

Hunter later built a new store on the same block; it opened in time to be used by the district court in October 1850.