

The Bandera PROPHECY

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Today in Texas History

By Bandera Spirits of Texas

On this day in 1870, in a particularly violent chapter of the infamous Sutton-Taylor Feud, a detachment of Texas State Police under the command of Jack Helm arrested Henry and Will Kelly of the Taylor faction on a trivial charge and shot them. The Sutton-Taylor Feud, the longest and bloodiest in Texas, grew out of the bad times following the Civil War.

The Taylors were descendants of Josiah Taylor, a Virginian who settled near Cuero in DeWitt County. His sons, Pitkin and Creed Taylor, and their sons, nephews, in-laws, and friends were the mainstay of that faction. The other party, originally centering on the Texas State Police, took its name from William E. Sutton, a native of Fayette County who had moved to DeWitt County.

The feud began either in 1866 or 1868, depending on which actions are considered part of the quarrel. Women of the Kelly family witnessed the 1870 murders of Henry and Will Kelly, and their story caused such a public outcry that Gov. Edmund J. Davis could not ignore the outrage. Helm was suspended in October and dismissed in December, but killings associated with the feud were recorded as late as 1876.