

The Bandera PROPHEET

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Growing Up In Bandera

By Glenn Clark

The Bandera Prophet

One of the most entertaining things I encounter these days is having someone who didn't grow up in Bandera trying to explain to me what makes Bandera, Bandera. I know it was never just about horses, cows and cowboys on cattle drives for me and my friends. It might interest some to know it also involved sheep, goats and cypress shingle making. Growing up alongside some of the oldtimers gave me insight into what the early years were like in Bandera and the surrounding area. Both sides of my family were here in the very beginning. They witnessed the surveying of the land as settlers were welcomed into this part of the state. They saw the working sawmill and some even worked on the millrace which was hand dug to bring water from upstream to the mill. I saw remnants of that millrace in my early years and still marvel at what was accomplished by some of those early pioneers .

The early Polish settlers must have been shocked when only a few years after their arrival in Bandera the American Civil War erupted. While starting a new life in a place that was still brutal and uncivilized at times had to give some regret for leaving their homeland.

It was after the war ended that the long cattle drives to the north were really getting started and lasted into the 1890's. During those times Bandera experienced some of the old wild west as it has been depicted in western movies. Drunken drovers letting off steam after time on the trail is a scene which has been repeated on film many times. Considering Bandera was just the first leg of a long trip makes me think the towns further up the trail had better (or worse) tales to tell.

Walking into the Western Trail Antiques and Marketplace today brings back memories of going to that building with my great uncle Phil Kindla to sell his wool. The Herrera shearing crew going through his herd of sheep and filling a huge burlap bag that barely fit on his pickup truck was a sight I witnessed first hand on several occasions. My brother Eddie and I manned the gate where the sheep had been rounded up and penned by a couple of border collies. It wasn't unusual for those dogs to get trimmed too. Great memories of some things never to be seen again. My Growing Up In Bandera of late has become an emotional journey as I see less and less of the experiences I enjoyed in my youth. Time marches on as more people come and demand modern things to make their Bandera experience more enjoyable. If they only knew.....

#301

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