

The Bandera PROPHEET

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Growing Up In Bandera

By Glenn Clark

The Bandera Prophet

Facing the reality of our changing world has become almost unbearable at times for me. Some of the biggest challenges that I struggle with are right here in my hometown. The times they are a changin'. It's like I'm holding on for dear life to the past but I'm slowly losing my grip. When will I wake from this nightmare of a quickly disappearing seven decades old way of life?

Wasn't it just a few short years ago that I was a young kid running wild in this place full of adventures called Bandera? It never seemed to stop giving as each new day brought promises of better tomorrows. I could hardly go to sleep some nights knowing I would be on the river the next day shortly after sunup with my friends. We were living a life that kids in the city could only experience on weekends if they were lucky.

Getting to the ballfield behind the nun's convent after classes let out at St. Joseph's Catholic School held the promise of a little game of flies and skinnners before the sun went down, or Angel and Joey's mom called them home for supper. My mom might call out from our house too, but it was two blocks away so I could pretend I didn't hear her. If she started honking that old familiar sounding horn on our old truck it was time to start laying tracks. That was a serious calling not to be ignored.

We had a biker gang too back in the day. It consisted of Brandy Humphries, Charlie Fellows and myself. No motors involved except when Brandy's grandfather rigged up a lawnmower motor on his bike. It ended up causing more trouble than it was worth for his grandparents and was soon removed. I used to tie balloons on my bike where they would rub on the spokes to imitate a motor sound. I'm reminded of that

sound almost every weekend when I'm around the 11th Street area these days.

We didn't have ducks, geese, buzzards or deer populations in town back then like we have today, but we did have other attractions. We had Frank Caffel with his donkey drawn wagon and Harold Jenkins keeping count of how many cars passed down Main Street almost every night. He would need a good calculator to count cars in this day and time. I always wondered if he included the same teens dragging main over and over in his total.

Each time I hear the bells in the steeple of St. Stanislaus Catholic Church I'm reminded what an excitement it would cause when someone suggested sneaking up there to get a good view of the surrounding area. That was a big no-no while Growing Up In Bandera, so it just had to be done. And for those few girls who would take the challenge to sneak up there with us if we promised not to tell, your secret is still safe with me.

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