

# The Bandera PROPHEET

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Growing Up In Bandera

By Glenn Clark

The Bandera Prophet

I spent many of my summer days on the Medina River at a place that has forever been known as "The Swing." Anytime you see teens gathered in groups on the river you can bet that is where they will be. That's how it was back in the day and has been a constant through the years while our small place in this world has seen many other changes.

I often wondered as a youngster who it was that first chose that perfect spot for a swing and who was brave enough to climb near the top of that giant cypress tree to put the cable in place. Fortunately that particular cypress has survived some historic flooding over the years that wiped out lesser trees.

A recent conversation with John Tucker shed some light on the mystery. He stated that the cable swing from the time associated with my memories was put in place by my uncle Tommy Kindla and his brother Travis Tucker along with help from Donnie and Hubert Risinger. He said around that time the depth of the river in that spot was about 12 feet and that is about what I remember. We did flips and dives many times off the swing and never touched bottom. He said sometime during the drought of the fifties the river had been cleaned out. I haven't been swimming there in many years but I don't think it's that deep now. I do know it's still deep enough to keep the fish happy and wet and that's enough for me.

Most of the fishing stories I have heard over the years related to the old days in this area were connected to Medina Lake. It was quite a big deal when the lake was finally filled to capacity and that's when the tales began. Fishing camps began popping up around the lake and remained

even through my growing up years. Risinger, Leibold, Haby and Goat Hill among others provided places for boat rentals for fishing or sight seeing. Being an antique lure collector for many years I have in my possession some lures made by locals during those early times. Texas made lures are highly sought after. Leibold and Lovelace lures are among some of the rarest.

Early years fishing tales in the area are usually associated with catfish. Anyone who has been around Bandera for any length of time has surely heard and understands the term "Polander fishing." The only demonstration I ever personally witnessed was performed by a non-Polish individual who used the term to describe his intent.

When it comes to bass fishing along the river I always recall a story told to me by my Uncle Melvin (Gotch) Clark about his post-war adventures on the Medina River around Bandera. He purchased Spinno Minnows at the Texaco station in town and said that was the only lure he ever had any success with on catching bass. That lure was made in Waco, Texas beginning on the 40's.

An early Growing Up In Bandera trip to Risinger's Camp with our neighbors Nanny and Honey Blackwell started this kid on a lifetime addiction to all things fishing. Almost 70 years later and the passion still exists both in fishing and lure collecting.

GLENN CLARK

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