

The Bandera PROPHEET

March 1, 2022

Today in Texas History

By Bandera Spirits of Texas

On this day in 1978, the Nature Conservancy, a private concern based in Arlington, Virginia, bought Enchanted Rock for \$1.3 million and agreed to act as interim owner until the state could take over, thus guaranteeing that the area would not be opened to private development.

Enchanted Rock, a spectacular granite dome near the Gillespie-Llano county line in southern Llano County, rises to 1,825 feet above mean sea level and is the second largest such mountain in the United States. Its name derives from Spanish and Anglo-Texas interpretations of Indian legends and related folklore, which attribute magical properties to the ancient landmark.

The first owners of this land were Anavato and María Martínez, to whom a headright certificate was issued in 1838. Over the ensuing 140 years the property changed hands numerous times; eventually Llano rancher Charles H. Moss and his wife Ruth acquired full title to the property but decided to sell it in 1978.

Moss first offered it to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department; the Nature Conservancy stepped in when the agency could not pay his price and deeded the land to the state six days later. Following 18 months of renovations, the site reopened as Enchanted Rock State Park in March 1984.

Today the 1,643-acre Enchanted Rock State Natural Area is a favorite destination of hikers, campers, rock-climbers, hang-gliders, and other outdoor enthusiasts from around the state.