

The Bandera PROPHEET

April 19, 2022

Growing Up In Bandera

By Glenn Clark
The Bandera Prophet

Recently while visiting with one of my go to friends for some history of an earlier Bandera I gained some interesting information on how his days of growing up in our town were both similar and yet different from mine.

John Tucker was telling me about the little building that was Little Eva's (Eva Mae Wright) Photo Shop where today we see J&S Liquor Store. He said that Smith Wright had a pool hall there at one time. I was only aware of his Red Goose pool hall when the location was down on Main Street next to the old two-story National Bank building.

John said there was a barber shop across the street somewhere in the area of what is the Cowboy Store parking lot today. That is where he did shoeshines for a nickel which he had to split with the shop owners. The barbers were Bill Martin and A.J. Taylor. Unlike in the big city where you would see those fancy shine stands with a seat, John had a homemade shoeshine box similar to the kind I would be seen carrying around town some years later. Inflation being what it was after ten years or so had me getting fifteen cents for shining shoes and twenty-five cents for boots. I was owner and operator so I got to keep all of my earnings. John had his shine business at the barber shop while at the same time Joe Rodriquez would be set up at Nesting's Corner Drug Store. Further up Main Street around the courthouse was Eldon Pierce's territory. It seems everyone respected the territory of others and especially Eldon's area. As John put it, "He was a pretty tough hombre so you didn't want to mess with him."

During my time of shining shoes around town with Stevie Mazurek during the tourist season we ranged from one end of town to the other. We never went inside any places but worked the area around the front doors. The Silver Dollar and The Purple Cow were the best spots. The Cabaret people would always run us off. They didn't want us to be getting a quarter that someone might use to buy a beer inside would be my guess.

During those times of Growing Up In Bandera both for John and myself it was the era of The Stompede and the town was packed with out-of-towners. It was a special treat whenever I was paid with a silver dollar for shining a pair of boots. I don't know how it came about but we always figured they were from Houston if they paid with a silver dollar.

GLENN CLARK

#326