

# The Bandera PROPHEET

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Growing Up In Bandera

By Glenn Clark

The Bandera Prophet

Being free to run the banks of the Medina River at my leisure while the outside world was beginning to change into what you see today in Bandera seems like centuries ago. More cars, more motorcycles and more and more people are showing up.

I'm looking back at that kid with no shirt or shoes and realizing that I had the best the world had to offer at the time. The river was a place that could make troubles disappear. I could talk to my friends and receive support therapy in a fashion unacceptable in today's society. We mocked and made fun of each other until everyone was laughing and the trouble magically disappeared. All of our splashing and spitting of that sacred river water on each other seemed to work miracles. Later in life when hearts were being broken it became a place to be alone.

Hauling hay was a popular way to make a few bucks in the summertime back in the day. Hot fields along with hot barns led us into pure itchy misery that surely represented what entering the gates of hell would be like. Thinking every second that the day would never end as we ate dirt and dust while fighting wasps who wanted to keep the barn all to themselves. The one thing that always offered some hope was knowing the cool waters of the river were waiting and would end the day no matter how late we worked.

The river was always the perfect place to enjoy a watermelon.

Everyone's story is the same if you were raised around these parts. You placed the watermelon in the water among the cypress roots to cool while swimming. When your mom decided the swimming time was over then it was game on. There was nothing better than watermelon eating,

seed spitting and rind chunking on a hot summer afternoon. We would eat like pigs with juice running down our belly because relief was just one dive away in the cool water. That's about the time we wondered what the rich folks in the city were doing.

When the appearance of a car wash in Bandera was still years away we simply drove our cars into the river and got to work with rags and buckets. As a teenager it gave me an excuse to ask my dad if he wanted me to wash the car. If he said yes then it gave me a chance to drag main when the job was done. There was an old wagon crossing just below the Silver Spur Bridge and above Dripping Springs that was the popular place for car washing.

While Growing Up In Bandera I spent so much time in and on the river that it would be pretty accurate to say I lived on the Medina River. I have asked my wife to scatter my ashes along the river when my time on earth is up. What better place for my earthly remains to rest in peace?

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