

The Bandera PROPHEET

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Growing Up In Bandera

By Glenn Clark

The Bandera Prophet

Making a hundred mile round trip every day to get to my jobsite in San Antonio was never something I viewed as a hardship. The morning drive was wake up time and the afternoon return trip was wind down time.

Driving in both directions facing the sun was sometimes an issue depending on the time of the year.

Highway 16 was a narrow two lane road with lots of curves during my earliest commuting years. Just like today the deer always provided an opportunity to test your driving skills. Hogs were a bit more scarce back then but occasionally claimed an unfortunate victim. When school was in session the busses in the morning presented a challenge due to a lack of passing zones. Fortunately the bus drivers were courteous and would let you pass after loading or unloading students.

Back in those early years I knew just about everyone on that road between Bandera and San Antonio. As a matter of fact I was kin to quite a few of them. On my drive into town I had to pass The Texas Star Inn before encountering a traffic light. I knew the name of every person working in the gas stations and ice houses along that route too. We hadn't started calling them convenience stores yet.

Co-workers often asked me why I chose to live in Bandera rather than moving closer to my job. We did try living in Leon Valley for a couple years but soon headed back home. Living in or near the big city didn't fit too well with me. I liked the fact that when I reached home I was just a few short minutes from swimming or fishing so that was reason enough for me.

While serving in the U.S. Army I was training at Fort Monmouth Signal Corps School in New Jersey which was located about 30 minutes from the coast. My wife and I would drive there sometimes in the evening and that just blew the minds of some of the guys I was stationed with at the time. I don't think some of them ever believed me when I told them I used to drive over a hundred miles round trip every day for work before my military service. I met people who said they had lived in big cities all their lives and had never seen live animals except in a zoo and had never owned or needed a car. That's when I started to doubt what I had been hearing.

I am happy that my Growing Up In Bandera has progressed beyond having to make that daily commute. I'm truly grateful that San Antonio provided many good opportunities for me to make a living over the years but I avoid having to drive in the city these days. It's bad enough trying to get around Bandera even on the backstreets now. Come to think of it, I haven't even seen Arkey Blue on "The Backstreets of Bandera" in quite some time.

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