

The Bandera PROPHEET

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Growing Up In Bandera

By Glenn Clark
The Bandera Prophet

Having a hot bowl of oatmeal on a cool morning recently before heading out the door triggered thoughts about some of my childhood days in my momma's kitchen. It was always the warmest room in the house on cold winter mornings. The oatmeal would be steaming hot with sugar, butter and cinnamon added. I could add some extra sugar from the ever present sugar jar on the kitchen table if momma wasn't looking. You know the kind of container with the little metal flap in the top which made for slow pouring. Those were widely used by restaurants back in the day too.

Brother Eddie and I had our bedroom out on the back porch and there was no heat available. The only way of dealing with the chilly awakening was to burrow further down under the blankets piled high on the bed or make a quick dash for the bathroom or kitchen while making a grab for some clothes on the way. On school mornings my mom sometimes had to use a broom handle to poke around in the blankets to get us out and moving. That old concrete floor was like ice so it offered very little incentive to get out of bed.

There were times when the screened opening at the end of the porch which had been covered with plastic and a tarp for the winter offered only a slight barrier to keep out the cold. Now in the spring and fall it was a thing to be envied as we rolled up the tarp. Even today I can still recall those peaceful nights as I lay on my bed listening to the sounds of a less civilized Bandera nighttime. Listening to the call of the Whip-poor-will is an incomparable soothing way to be lulled into a deep sleep. Sure beat counting sheep.

Even today if I manage to stay up long enough for darkness to fall while I'm sitting outside on my front porch I will occasionally hear that familiar Whip-poor-will sound in between all the sirens and horn honking invading the night air.

On the nights when we had a full moon we had to roll the tarp down because our room would be completely lit up. The screened end faced the south which worked well as we enjoyed the prevailing winds during the warm summer nights. On stormy nights that tarp made enough noise to wake the dead.

The door going out to the back yard from the porch was just an old screen door. Keeping the screen repaired to deal with the mosquitoes and flies trying to get in was a constant struggle with six kids living in the house. I wish I could hear my momma hollering one more time, "You kids quit slamming that screen door!!!" I seriously doubt we were the only kids Growing Up In Bandera who heard that one.

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