

The Bandera PROPHEET

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Growing Up In Bandera

By Glenn Clark

The Bandera Prophet

Bandera kids in the late 50s often referred to the area between Main Street and the River Loop as Polander Town. Back in the day it was our entire world it seemed. We pretty much had freedom to roam without any of the worries of our modern day world. I couldn't imagine anyone wanting to kidnap any of the crew that I ran with in those times.

There wasn't any big money connected to any of us that could have paid a ransom. I laugh to myself thinking my folks might have been happy to get a little relief from having six mouths to feed. Even as a skinny kid I had a big appetite so I would have been returned pretty quickly by the kidnapers.

There were rare occasions when we ventured out of our neighborhood. During pecan gathering season in the fall we had a favorite huge pecan tree far downstream from the dam on the river. The Clark boys would join up with the Evans clan and head to McGroaty's Store for some penny candy and bubble gum supplies for the journey. It was probably only a half mile or so but seemed farther because we couldn't ride our bikes down along that area of the river.

John Evans who was the oldest and biggest of the crew was a great asset because he could throw big thrashing sticks to the very top of that huge tree. The fact that the pecans were the small native variety didn't matter to the guy over on Pecan Street near our house who did the buying.

What little money we had from selling the pecans just financed another trip to the big penny candy display at McGroarty's Store.

I prefer the taste of those small native pecans over any other type. My nutcracker has no problem cracking them and as for as my dogs are

concerned they couldn't care less about variety as long as I share with them. I have learned a hard lesson about leaving a bag of pecans outside overnight after shelling on the table in the yard. It's amazing how many nuts squirrels can make off with in just one night.

I walked with my classmate Bubba Montague a few times to his house behind the courthouse on the other side of town after class at St. Joseph's Catholic School. We then got into a jeep and drove out to the Montague Ranch on Ridge Route Road. This was back when it was a dirt road with cattleguards. Today the area around the ranch and that road resemble very little of what I remember from when I was a kid.

It wasn't all that unusual to see young people driving vehicles around the area in those earlier times. It was an unwritten rule that you didn't drive on Main Street while running errands as an unlicensed driver in town.

Growing Up In Bandera ain't what it used to be for sure. That old hometown feel is rapidly disappearing.

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