

The Bandera PROPHEET

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Today in Texas History

By Bandera Spirits of Texas
The Bandera Prophet

On this day in 1877, botanist and doctor Levi James Russell was whipped for being an infidel and freethinker.

The Georgia native was born in 1831 and in 1868 moved to Harrisville, Texas, where he bought a farm and practiced medicine. Russell was for several years the chairman of the committee on medical botany of the Texas State Medical Association (now the Texas Medical Association), which published his report in the Transactions for 1886.

He was an incorporator of the Little River Academy, devoted to the study of science; in 1875 he became a charter member and president of the Association of Freethinkers of Bell County. Because of his radical views, he was expelled from the Masons and Knights of Pythias.

On the night of Oct. 6, 1877, Russell was assaulted for being an infidel. He continued his medical practice and his natural-science collection in Bell County until his death in 1908 at Temple.