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HASKELL, TEXAS 79521, November 26, 1992

8 PAGES-ONE SECTION

Memories of 'Vanishing Varmint' live on

(Haskell native Michael Felker, now an English professor at Texas Tech University, wrote the following article in 1989 about Haskell County's biggest mystery. He first read the article at a joint meeting of the Texas and Southwest Popular Culture Association in Lubbock; it was later published in the West Texas Historical Association's journal.)

By Michael Felker
On October 20th, 1960, editor Alonzo Pate reported in the *Haskell Free Press* that something "looking like a lion" had been seen crossing Highway 277 south of Haskell near Stamford.

Pate was "a little bit dubious" because the sighting followed "so closely on the heels of the wet victory in the Precinct 4 beer election," but he had printed the story because several other people, including a local Justice of the Peace, quickly came forward to

report three more sightings over the last two years. They had not spoken up earlier because they felt the sightings "would be too hard to believe."

Police officers, sheriff's deputies, and hunters from Haskell and Stamford quickly converged on the area but were unable to locate the animal--a scene which would be repeated often over the next five years.

Mountain lions were not totally unknown in Haskell County; R. E. Sherrill, in his book *Haskell County History*, tells of three occurrences where large cougars, including one "measuring nine feet from tip to tip," and another weighing about 300 pounds, were killed by hunting parties, but these incidents had been in 1888, 1891, and 1899 (19-20). There had been no further reports or sightings until Oscar Oates and three other people saw one near Lake Stamford in

1958, a sighting they did not report until 1960.

1960
The 1960 incident might quickly have been forgotten, except for the lion's temerity: the following week's paper (10/27/60) reported two further sightings, one again near Stamford, and a second in the middle of Haskell itself.

Mrs. Richard Riley was awakened at 3 a.m. by the hysterical barking of the family dog. As she and her husband looked out a window, they were shocked to see a lion standing in the middle of the street in front of their house.

The lion, "plainly visible in the glare of a nearby street light," stood watching their dog and moving its head from side to side. As they watched, it turned and began trotting down the street to the east (2). As my own home was five blocks east and only two south of the Rileys', this was the incident that first caught my attention; just

short of my thirteenth birthday, I quickly began trying to convince my parents to keep the family shotgun loaded, "just in case."

My argument got additional support a few weeks later in November, when the lion was again spotted in town, this time near the high school, only three blocks north and three blocks west of our house. Now, every time our collie began barking, the whole family awakened, turned on the outside lights, and rushed to the windows to look out, a pattern repeated all over town.

To add to the confusion, rumors of additional sightings in town soon began to circulate, along with a persistent report that the lion, seen under various streetlights, was not a cougar but a full-grown, male, African lion, complete with a heavy mane.

Although these reports did not make the paper, everyone seemed to

believe them, and calls were made to various zoos and circuses to see if any lions had escaped recently. Pickups all over town suddenly sprouted hunting rifles in their back windows, and the town took on the feel of an armed camp.

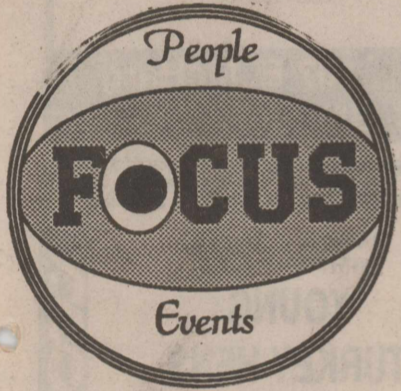
The story might have ended in December when the lion was seen "in broad daylight" by two Highway Patrolmen three miles southeast of Haskell, but it was in a pasture too far from the highway for the officers to get a good shot (12/19/60). And then the lion disappeared.

1961
It returned in the summer of 1961, when it was again spotted by Highway Patrolmen, this time east of town, but it was gone by the time they raced back home, gathered up a rifle, and returned; in September, it was seen by a man from Breckenridge who buzzed it with his airplane, by various drivers

as it crossed the highway in front of their cars, and by a farmhand who drove his tractor within 30 to 40 feet of it before the lion moved away; he said the animal just sat and watched him intently as he made two circuits of the field, but was gone when he drove past the third time (9/28/61). But, after September, there were no further sightings, and everyone assumed that the lion had finally left the territory.

1962
In January of 1962, the lion returned. A man from Abilene saw the lion cross the Throckmorton Highway near the county line, and said it could leap 25 to 30 feet easily (6/27/63). On May 4, it was seen two miles north of Haskell, and stood in the road long enough for the driver from Stamford to stop his car and get a good look at it (5/10/62).

Continued on page 4



Chapman inducted in honor society

Charles Davis Chapman of Haskell was among 171 students inducted into Golden Key National Honor Society Nov. 11 at Texas Christian University.

Golden Key is a non-profit academic honors organization founded in 1977 to recognize and encourage scholastic achievement among students from all fields of study.

Chapman, son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Chapman of Haskell, is a 1990 graduate of Haskell High School. He is a junior finance major at TCU.

Businesses open after parade

Most Haskell businesses will remain open until 8 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 5.

This will allow local residents to do some of their Christmas shopping after the Christmas parade.



Now there are 9

Nine area newspapers are now printed by Rolling Plains Printing Co. of Haskell. Latest additions are the *Western Observer* of Anson and the *Roscoe Times*.

Area program set on AIDS, HIV

An ecumenical services of healing and reconciliation for persons living with HIV and AIDS will be held Tuesday, Dec. 1, at the First United Methodist Church in Aspermont. It begins at 7 p.m.

Persons who have been affected by HIV and AIDS, family members, friends, care givers and persons concerned about others are invited to this service of worship.

The service of reconciliation is an opportunity for the community of faith to pray that whatever separates us from the love of God, and whatever divides or separates the community from itself, will be put aside so that the loving presence

of God may be known and experienced. The healing service is a unique opportunity for the church to offer love, acceptance and affirmation to people who have mostly heard words of condemnation and exclusion.

Leading the service of worship will be the Rev. Carol Crumpton, pastor of the First United Methodist Churches in Rule and Sagerton, the Rev. Todd W. Rasberry, Methodist pastor in Aspermont and Jayton; Donn Palmer, physician's assistant at the Stonewall Clinic; Irene Palmer, Mary Helen Coats, Barbara Nauert, Ann-Marie Coats, Nancy Abernathy and Belinda Hecht.

USDA lists program requirement

A preliminary 7.5 percent Acreage Reduction Program requirement for the 1993 upland cotton program has been announced by the secretary of agriculture.

The Agriculture Act of 1949, as amended, requires that the ARP target a ratio of total stocks to total disappearance of 30 percent. Total disappearance means the total use of upland cotton, including all domestic, export and residual stocks.

Based on USDA's October supply and use estimates, the 7.5 percent ARP level is consistent with this ratio. A final ARP requirement, which may be different from today's preliminary announcement, must be announced by Jan. 1.

Other 1993-crop upland cotton program provisions announced by the secretary include:

¶The established target price will be the statutory minimum of 72.9 cents per pound.

¶A 52.35-cents-per-pound loan level, unchanged from 1992, is established for the base quality. The base quality for the 1993 crop will be color grade 41, leaf grade 4, staple length 1 1/16 inches, micronaire 3.5-3.6 and 4.3-4.9, strength 24-25 grams per tex.

¶No paid land diversion will be offered.

Indian, Maiden basketball teams off to fast starts

The Haskell Indian and Maiden basketball teams, both victorious in their two outings last week, were to meet Seymour at Seymour Tuesday night.

There will be no games this Friday, but next Tuesday, the Haskell teams will journey to Munday to take on the Moguls and Lady Moguls.

Next Thursday, Friday and Saturday (Dec. 10-12), the Maidens will be competing in the Wylie tournament while the Indians will be playing in the Roby tournament.

District 7-2A play begins Dec. 15 when the Haskell teams host the Anson boys and girls.

Maidens open with 2 wins

The Maidens opened the 1992-93 basketball season with their traditional rival, the Seymour Lady Panthers.

The Maidens stepped on the court ready to play since this year's seniors had not won a season opener since beginning high school.

The Maidens dominated the Lady

Panthers from start to finish by outshooting their opponents, 42 percent to 16 percent and also out-rebounding them, 36-21, which resulted in a 58-22 victory

Teresa Diaz and Shana McKenzie shared scoring honors with 18 points each. Diaz and Cynthia Rodriguez each had 7 rebounds, while Diaz had 6 assists and 4 steals. Holly Hobgood scored 8 points and Veronica Gonzalez scored 6.

On Friday, Nov. 20, the Maidens took on former district rival, the Albany Lady Lions. The Maidens appeared to still be enjoying their season opening victory as they were a bit sluggish during the entire game.

Fouls plagued the Maidens early in the game with three starters sitting on the bench with 4 fouls each early in the third quarter.

"I have a young bench this year and had planned on easing them into games early in the year to let them gain some experience," said Coach Kerry Gartman. "But due to the circumstances, they had to step in and fill some big shoes and did an outstanding job."

Continued on page 2



Top scorer

Tommy Isbell (44) was the leading scorer with 18 points in Haskell's Friday night 53-48 victory over Albany. No. 23 is Joseph Rodriguez.



Paces Maidens

Shana McKenzie scored 16 points to lead the Maidens to a 51-43 victory over Albany Friday night. The Maidens are now 2-0 for the young season.



Friday action

Eddie Gonzalez stretches for this rebound Friday night during Haskell's 53-48 victory over Albany. Standing by is Tommy Isbell (44).

Maidens...

Continued from page 1

The Maidens came away with their second victory of the season with a 51-43 win over Albany.

Shana McKenzie scored 16 points and Teresa Diaz added 15. McKenzie had 12 rebounds and Sarah Mullen had 8. Diaz had 7 rebounds and led the team in assists and steals with 6 in each category.

Holly Hobgood scored 6 points, while Heather Hobgood, Sarah Mullen and Georgie Root each scored 4 points. The Hobgood sisters and Jill Mullen each had 5 rebounds. Cynthia Rodriguez and Holly Hobgood each had 3 assists.

Indians defeat Seymour, Albany

The Haskell Indians opened their 1992-93 basketball season last Tuesday with a 46-41 victory over the Seymour Panthers.

The Indians opened up a 15-10 lead in the first period and continued to hold the upper hand for the rest of the contest.

Tommy Isbell score 12 points, Bryan Brzozowski added 9, Eddie Gonzales had 8 and Jonathan Tatum pitched in 7 in the balanced Indian offense.

On Friday night, the Indians made it two in a row with a 53-48 verdict over the Albany Lions. Haskell led 15-6 at the first quarter and 32-16 at halftime, but had to withstand a second-half rally by the Lions who outscored them in each of the two second-half periods.

--Obituaries--

James L. Harrison

James L. Harrison died Nov. 15 at Memorial Medical Center in Las Cruces, N.M. He was 95.

Graveside services were Thursday morning (Nov. 19) at Willow Cemetery, with the Rev. Sid Parsley officiating. Burial was directed by Holden-McCauley Funeral Home.

Mr. Harrison was born Dec. 5, 1896, in Holland, Texas, and was a veteran of World War I. He was a Methodist and was the widower of Kie Avoka Wilson.

He is survived by a son, J. W. Harrison of Las Cruces, and a granddaughter, Susie Harrison of Alamogordo, N.M.

John L. Rodriguez

John L. Rodriguez died Nov. 13 in Methodist Hospital in San Antonio. He was 36.

A rosary was recited Nov. 15 at Brookehill chapel in San Antonio, and a mass on Nov. 16 at St. James Catholic Church in San Antonio. Entombment was in the family mausoleum at San Fernando Cemetery. His oldest nephews served as pallbearers.

Mr. Rodriguez was born in San Antonio on Sept. 26, 1956 and

attended St. Mary's University. He lived in Denver, Houston, Dallas, Abilene and finally in Haskell where he was employed with Wal-Mart Inc. in Stamford, while farming in Haskell County.

He is survived by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Juan Rodriguez; two brothers, Jose Francisco Ozuna and Idelfonso Ozuna; six sisters, Irma Molina, Olga La Point, Mary Frances Meras, Yolanda Garza, Mary Jane Galindo and Margie Lopez; and numerous nieces, nephews and friends.

Correction

In the obituary last week for Brandi Lou Hilliard of Odessa, the last paragraph should have read:

"Mrs. Hilliard's husband (Jarred) is the son of Ron and Edith Hilliard of Odessa. Elmer and Bernice Hilliard of Haskell and Rex and Sena Mae Murray of Rule are his grandparents.

Student inducted

Wes Pierce, a senior, is among four McMurry University students who have been inducted into Sigma Tau Delta, international honor society in English.

He is the son of Glen and Helen Pierce of Old Glory.



These Paint Creek students in grades K-2 participated last Thursday in a Great American Smokeout program to discourage smoking. Shown with them are Darlene Walton, Tammi Wallace and Kristi Byerly. Sonic Drive-In gave soft drinks to the participants.

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Mr. and Mrs. David Ray Hargrave

Hites, Hargrave wed in Lubbock

Miss Kandice Deonn Hites and David Ray Hargrave, both of Slaton, were united in marriage Oct. 10 at Rock of Ages Baptist Church in Lubbock. The double-ring ceremony was performed by the Rev. Lloyd Campbell of Wolforth.

Maid of honor was Miss Darlene Snodgrass of Lubbock. Bridesmaid was Miss Vickie Willeby of Slaton, cousin of the groom.

Gary Scott of Lubbock served as best man. Groomsman was Donny Hargrave of Slaton, brother of the groom.

The groom's cousin, Cortney Vaughn of Slaton, was flower girl. Ring bearer was Douglas Hargrave of Slaton, brother of the groom.

Ushers were Johnny Stout of Haskell, the groom's cousin, and his brothers, Donny and Douglas Hargrave.

The bride wore a gown of white satin, with hoop skirt and Victorian neckline. It was accented with seed pearls and scallops of white organza. She carried white roses with teal ribbon streamers. Tucked in her bouquet was an antique white lace handkerchief, embroidered with blue flowers. It belongs to the groom's mother, given to her by her grandmother, Mrs. Velma Gann of Rice Springs Care Home.

The bridesmaids wore black and white two-piece suits with multi-color floral design. They carried

long stem white roses with teal and white ribbon streamers. The flower girl wore a tea length dress of floral print on a black background. She carried a wicker basket trimmed with teal ribbon of strawberry potpourri.

The groom wore black western jeans and boots with a black tux coat, white tux shirt and teal bow tie and cummerbund. His attendants wore black jeans, white shirts and bolo ties and a teal mum boutonniere.

The bride was escorted down the aisle by Sam Copeland of Lubbock and given away by her son, Justin Hites.

The groom's mother sang, "You Light Up My Life." Music for the ceremony was provided by Mrs. Dorothy Stout of Haskell, the groom's aunt. She played violin solo of "Holy, Holy, Holy," "The Wedding March" and "Processional March."

A reception was held in the fellowship hall after the ceremony. The bride's table was covered with a white lace cloth. It was decorated with a grapevine wreath with teal flowers and ribbon. The four tier wedding cake, made by the groom's grandmother, Bonnie Gann of Lubbock, was decorated with silk teal mums and roses.

Serving at the bride's table was the groom's sister, Christie Hargrave of Slaton, and Mrs. Dorothy Stout.

The groom's table held a chocolate cake decorated with teal wedding bells with the names of the bride and groom.

Birdseed bags, tied with teal ribbon, were handed out by Johnny Stout and Cortney Vaughn.

The bride is the daughter of Stewart Hites of Lubbock and Mrs.

Toni Vest of Idalou. She attends Slaton High School.

The groom is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Rick Hargrave of Slaton, formerly of Haskell. He attends Slaton High School and is employed by Pinnochia's Pizza in Lubbock.

The couple will reside in Slaton until August 1993 when they will leave for San Diego, Calif., where David will serve in the United States Marine Corps.

Tiger Cubs enjoy potluck at meeting

In the spirit of Thanksgiving, the Tiger Cub group held a potluck supper for Tigers and their partners Nov. 10 at the Scout Hut. Each team brought the boys' favorite dish to share with the group.

Tiger Cub Ross Hairgrove and his parents, Dr. Tom and Peggy Hairgrove, were host team for the month. The tables in the Scout Hut were beautifully decorated in a Thanksgiving theme. The topic for the month was "Big Idea #11 Making Your Family Special."

After the meal the boys and adults found the meaning of their names in a name book and played a "pop the balloon" game.

The meeting was closed with the group standing in a circle holding hands and telling something they were thankful for.

Attending were Ross and Peggy Hairgrove, Scott and Debbie Kennedy, C. J. Villegas and Mickey Holloway, A. J. and Randy Shaw and Lisa Shaw, Tiger Cub coordinator.



Fourth place

The Haskell team won fourth place in the district 4-H Horse Judging contest Nov. 14 in Seymour. Team members hown with County Agent Max Stapleton are Brittany Bartley, Roni Morrow, Hegan Lamb and Landon Terry. (Lamb was seventh high individual.)

We would like to express our gratitude to all our friends in Haskell and the surrounding area for the kindness shown us in the loss of our father and brother, Bud Cousins. A special thanks to Dr. Wayne Cadenhead and the staff at Rice Springs Care Home. We appreciate all the calls, cards, visits, flowers and food. A special thanks to the ladies of the Baptist Church that served the delicious meal.
The Family of Bud Cousins

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SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1 Monday There 4:00 JVG, JVB, VG, VB	2	3	4 Wylie Tournament VG Wylie 7th Tournament Roby Tournament Varsity Boys Haskell JV Tournament	5 Christmas Parade
6	7 Anson JH Girls There Boys Here 4:30	8 Monday Here 4:00 JVG, JVB, VG, VB	9 FHA Christmas Party 5:00	10	11 Polk Key City Classic VG Abilene Wylie Tournament VB	12
13	14 Jim Ned JH Girls Here Boys There 4:30	15 Anson* Here 5:00 JVG, VG	16	17 Open House Elementary 5:00-6:00	18 Early Dismissal 12:30 Olney Tournament VG, VB	19
20	21	22 Winters* There 4:00 JVG, JVB, VG, VB	23	24	25	26
27	28	29 Iowa Park Here FRB, JVB, VB Christmas Holidays	30	31		*District Games

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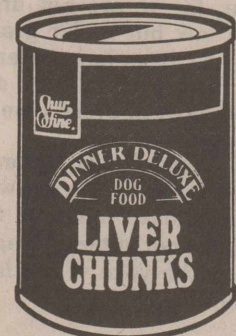
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