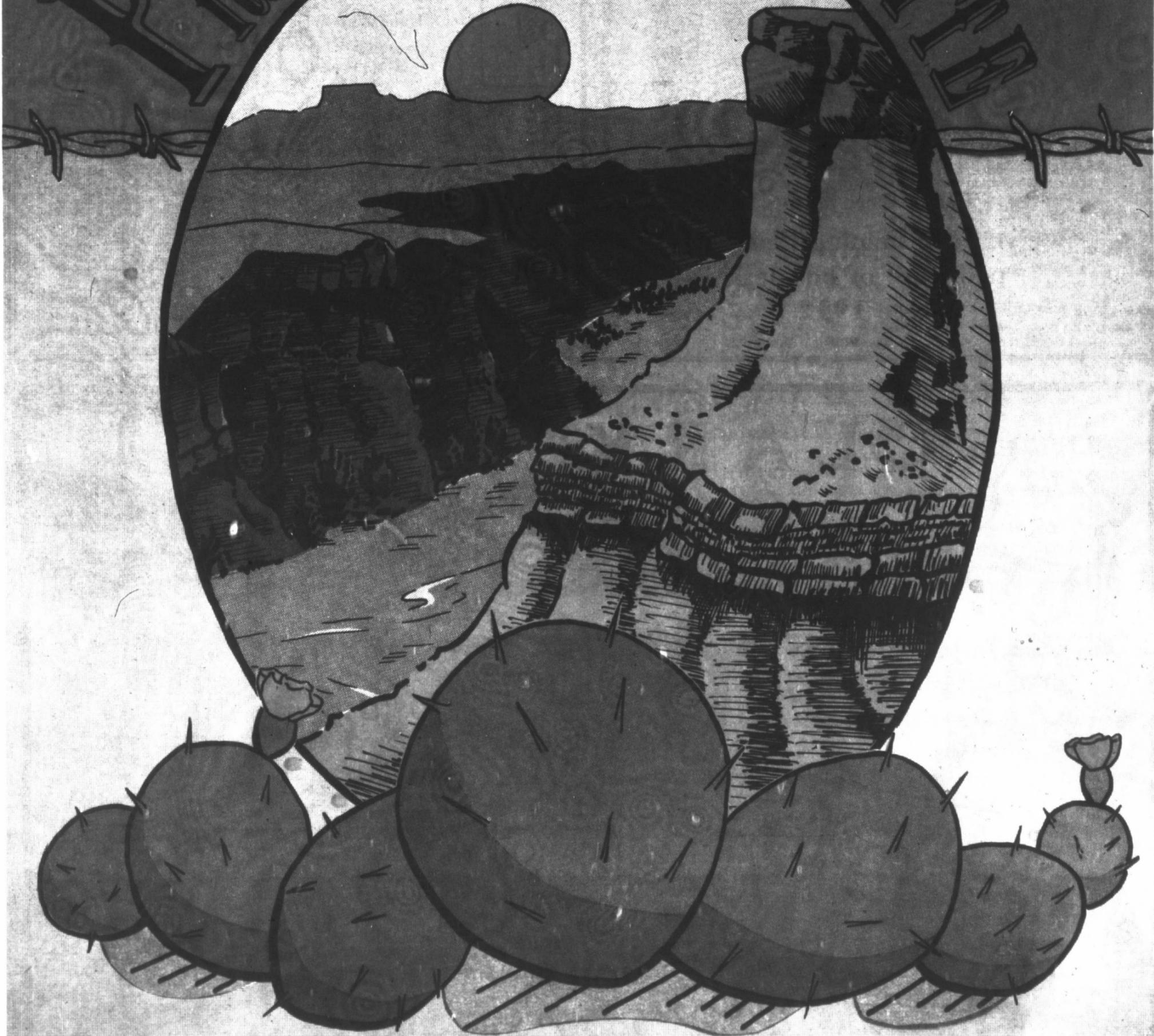


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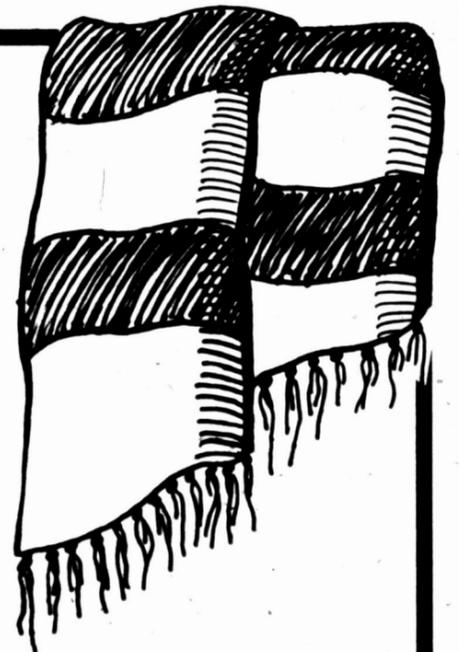
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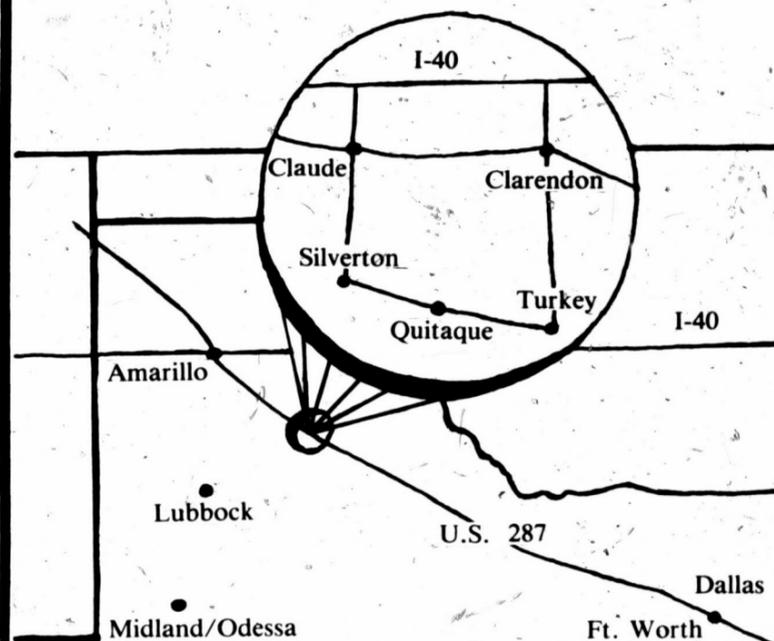
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*Prairie Dog Gazette Staff:
Kevin Welch, Judy Welch,
and Pat Sikes*

Orientation Map



For more detail see pages 10-11.

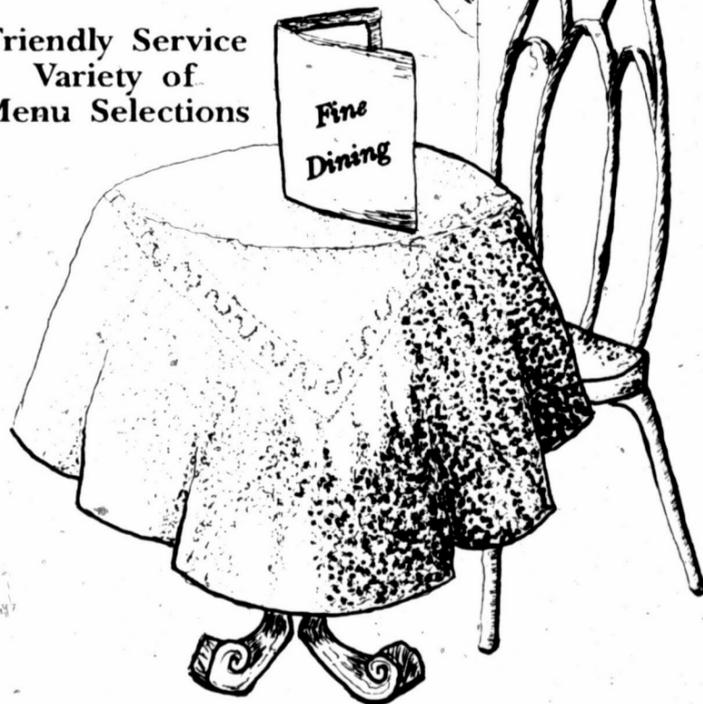
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DISCOVERY, DOMINANCE AND DESTINY

The Prairie Dog Gazette has chosen to begin life in a particular region of the Texas Panhandle where a drive through the land stirs up ancient dust.

Every particle, as it settles, has a tale to tell. Of cataclysm and cowboy. Of tribe and trailblazer. Of discovery and dominance. Of industry and integrity.

Early settlers saw nothing but vast expanse and loneliness in this short-grass country.

But they came. No matter that rattlesnakes and sinners outnumbered Christians, 15-1; preachers packed a pair of six-shooters with their bibles. No matter that the wind blew from north to everlasting; it drove the mills that generated precious water for crops and pesky flies from the cattle. Stockfarmers came, despite Range V. Grange conflicts.

And with the settlers came the railroads which moved the cattle and developed the towns.

The towns and the pioneer lifestyle produced the kind of people who can size up their environment and meet the challenge. To survive, they had to devise ways to make the land work for them. And they learned that the wilderness and evil can never be entirely tamed. Mother Nature and human nature can be unpredictable and unyielding.

Some distinguished names from the honor roll represent leadership in a variety of ways that influenced or perpetuate the regional culture we find today. Spanish explorers Jose Mares and Pedro Vial. Soldier and Indian fighter Col. Ranald McKenzie. Cattleman Col. Charles Goodnight. Comanche Chief Quanah Parker. Quintessential cowboy Tom Blasingame. Benefactress Cornelia Adair. Novelist Larry McMurtry. Writer and editor Laura V. Hamner. Western swing king Bob Wills. Cowboy artist Harold Bugbee.

Local historian Paul Hancock observed that "each era in passing has left its imprint on generations to follow." While it is true that imprints leave legacies and fond memories and ties that bind, imprints are also road maps. For the generations who follow, the imprints can serve to inform, to direct, to lead, to inspire.

Will brighter lights and better jobs force the young down a different path? Or will they re-evaluate their stake in the past and invest it for the future health of their hometowns?

Where will the imprints take us? What is just over the rise?

Will the western heritage village, "Thunder Junction," locate north of Clarendon? Will the State of Texas designate Texas 207 an official scenic drive?

Will rumor become reality, and life overtake legend?

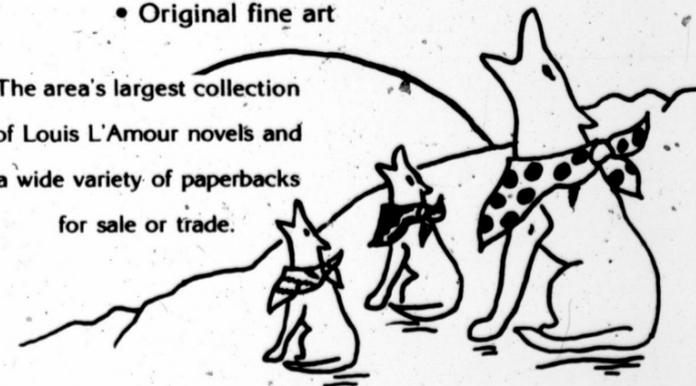
The Prairie Dog Gazette staff plans to follow the imprints and share its discoveries. Coverage will span the lower forks of the Red River, retrace the old, established trails and explore new ones. As the sunrise slices the horizon of the new day, so will we be on the cutting edge, where our past meets its destiny.

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COW COUNTRY CRADLE

As one discovers this legendary area of Texas, the landscape itself provides a grand stage. Its terrain stirs the imagination with scenes of the lonely Llano Estacado tumbling down the rugged Caprock Escarpment, finding comfort at last in the gentle, rolling plains.

Enter the players: Nomadic Indians, stalking herds of buffalo, encamping long enough to gather sparse supplies or find temporary shelter; Spanish explorers rushing to cities of gold, continuing northward in vain; Anglo pioneers searching for peaceful valleys, instead finding danger in stark canyons and dashed hopes for crop-sustaining rainfall.

Most were driven by vague dreams of dominance and destiny, but they drifted elsewhere, leaving the land unfulfilled. Thus the region remained veiled in whispers longer than any part of the Texas frontier.

Drawing aside the veil, Col. Charles Goodnight saw these canyon lands as a sheltered sea of golden grass. In 1876, he came to stay with his cattle, drovers, and horses -- the keys to the kingdom.

Other ranchers also laid claim to parts of the free range. With money from foreign investors and the skills of savvy horsemen, they made the prairies of the Texas Panhandle their empires, fostering the Cowboy Legend.

Today, highways encircle the cradle of Panhandle cow country from Claude to Clarendon, Turkey, Quitaque, and Silverton. Pickup trucks and cattle trailers may rumble along the roads, but one can also hear the gentle jingle of spurs in cafes at noon. The ranches are all fenced now, yet the headwaters of the Red River patiently continue to etch shadows in the sand. The mercurial, mischievous moods of the sky still test the mettle and humor of every soul.

Life here in the stomping grounds of the quintessential cowboy still evokes the myth he inspired. The values of the West's most potent symbol remain in the hearts of the people. His spirit lingers, proud and free amidst the dramatic natural beauty for all to experience.

Saints' Roost Museum Always Improving

To recapture a sense of frontier life in the Texas Panhandle, make Saints' Roost Museum in Clarendon a first stop on the way west. A growing collection of period furnishings, ranch heritage, photographs and related memorabilia re-creates the late 1800's and early 1900's when people confronted the land and survived to tell the story.

The Saints' Roost Museum is housed in the former Adair Hospital which was built in 1910 to care for nearby JA Ranch cowboys. (Saints' Roost is the name thirsty cowboys once called the town of Clarendon, a "colony" established in 1878 to promote education, Christian ethics, and temperance.) Cornelia Adair, whose husband John co-founded the JA, financed the hospital project.

The building exterior exemplifies a fine town house of the period. The reception foyer conveys a stately idea of home and everything that

means in terms of comfort, relief and beauty. The beveled lead glass windows, rich oak mantel, glazed brick fireplace, four graceful oak columns, and hexagonal ceramic tile floors are original to the structure.

Some of the rooms are settings for a turn-of-the century parlor, bedroom and kitchen. One room reproduces a hospital surgery. Another contains a country doctor's buggy and the "Clarendon" station sign from the old railroad depot.

Work continues toward a display of natural history, including prehistoric animal bones of the archeological Clarendonian Age, named for and unique to the area. Texas artist Olive Vandruff painted the mural, a view of the JA Ranch, for the display background. One of the museum's goals is to acquire and exhibit more Indian artifacts to preserve the 3,500-year-old native culture.

A representative prairie house has been moved to the site and will be restored as a cowboy bunkhouse. It will also feature the museum's collection of Western saddles, bridles, bits, branding irons and barbed wire.

The museum hopes to develop an educational program, particularly a catalog system for research purposes and an oral history project. A special event during Clarendon's annual July 4th Celebration may demonstrate musket loading and shooting, Indian dancing, chuck wagon cooking and fiddle playing.

To reach the Saints' Roost Museum from U.S. 287, take TX 70 south for nine blocks; turn west and drive two blocks. The museum is open to the public for guided tours on Sunday afternoons, 1:00-5:00 p.m., and at other times by appointment. For more information, call 874-3517, 874-2546, or 874-3839 in Clarendon.

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Let 'Er Rip! July 4th Clarendon Rodeo Coming

In the grand tradition, Clarendon's Fourth of July Celebration, beginning with a mid-morning parade and followed by an arts festival, barbeque, games and fiddlers' contest, continues to bring together old friends and welcome new visitors, just as it has for many years. Each evening of July 4th, 5th, and 6th, the excitement builds to a climax at the rodeo grounds, where unabashed flag waving, whoopin' and hollerin' give expression to the heartfelt spirit of the Old West Rodeo.

Although the roots of this tradition are well over 100 years old, the seeds from which it sprang had to overcome less than ideal growing conditions.

During that relatively short span of time when the great cattle drives occurred, the cowboys would provide their own entertainment at the end of the roundups, doing what they did best -- riding and roping at the drop of a hat.

There were no admission fees, no grandstands or arenas, no bucking chutes, just spectators on horseback in a semi-circle where they could see the action, but form a barrier so that the bucking broncs would not bolt the wrong way and head out to the open prairie (they hoped).

According to the famous Rodeo announcer, Foghorn Clancy, the first riding and roping contest in



Photo Courtesy Clarendon College Rodeo Club

which cash prizes were awarded and the public paid admission was held on the Fourth of July at Prescott, Arizona in 1888.

During the early years of its existence, many obstacles to the survival of rodeo presented themselves: lack of uniformity in rules, dates set too close together and distances too far apart, even jealousy among producers and promoters.

In the early 1900's there were still no regular rodeo circuits, but there were a few annual events, such as at Cheyenne, Wyoming and even the New York Stampede out of

which grew the famous Madison Square Garden championship rodeos. Wild West shows helped cowboys and cowgirls fill in some time and travel expenses until they would get near another rodeo.

Despite all drawbacks, however, both the courageous and "straight-shootin'" character of the American cowboy and the unforgettable chills and thrills experienced by the public saved rodeo from extinction.

No stranger to the cowboy tradition, Clarendon, Texas displays the rodeo colors with pride and joy.

There's a long-standing rivalry between the two towns of Clarendon and Canadian as to which was the site of the first organized rodeo in the Panhandle of Texas. Clarendon Outdoor Entertainment President John Grady remembers his grandfather telling him about the big celebrations, beginning about 1882, where there were surrey races, a carnival, and even a barbecued bear at the picnic.

Grady also remembers bucking chutes in the football field in the 1940's Clarendon rodeos. But by 1952, the rodeo association built the fine arena where the Fourth of July rodeo has been held ever since.

This amateur rodeo draws contestants from all over America (two saddle bronc riders came from

Australia last year). Events include calf roping, team roping, bareback bronc riding, barrel racing, bull riding, Wild Mare races, and Three Man Double Muggings.

There will be three performances this year: July 4th, July 5th, and July 6th. Beginning at 7:45 p.m. each night, Scott Stutzman, who has been the announcer for the past 15 years, will say those magic words, "Tonight's first ride out of chute # 1..."

After each performance, dancing to a live band will take place. The country western music will be provided by "Slow Motion" on July 4th; the famous former Texas Playboy Leon Rausch and his band, "Texas Panthers" on July 5th; and "Randy Mitchell & Southern Draw" will wrap it up on July 6th.



He's about the worst bucker I've seen on the range,
He'll turn on a nickel and give you some change,
He hits on all fours and goes up on high,
Leaves me a-spinnin' up there in the sky.

He turns over twice and I comes back to earth,
I light and a-cussin' the day of his birth,
I know there are ponies that I cannot ride,
There's some of them left, they haven't all died.

I'll bet all my money the man ain't alive
That'll stay on old "Strawberry" when he makes his high dive.

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Museum Hours? We Never Close

As in any museum the Hotel Turkey preserves moments from the past. The key difference here is that there are no keys. When most museums are locking their doors for the evening, the Hotel Turkey is serving dinner and starting the entertainment. Guests do not have to leave at night; they just stroll down the hall to their rooms in this "living museum." Jane Johnson, who with her husband Scott own the hotel, points to the vintage telephones and radio in the lobby as examples noting "these all work... this is the only museum in Texas where you can come and spend the night."

The Johnsons are continually renovating Hotel Turkey which is a Texas Historical Landmark in addition to being listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Guest room fixtures and

Hotel Turkey No Longer A Secret

It seems the people of Turkey, Texas just cannot keep a good thing to themselves. Their favorite son Bob Wills spread the Western Swing sound around the world and now Jane Johnson shares the story of Hotel Turkey just as widely.

Savvy marketing is the key to hotel's success. Jane and her husband have owned the Hotel Turkey for only two years, saving it from years of decline and probable closing. Renovation and interior

decoration are a constant challenge, but hotels also must coaxe customers to their doors to pay the bills. Jane recently took a trip to San Francisco to do just that. She took her genteel Louisiana drawl and stories of the Texas plains to a radio interview in California's asphalt-and-steel, oh-so-hip City by the Bay.

As the interview wound down and Jane told of the many reasons why everyone should experience Turkey, Texas and the canyonlands of the

Caprock, her interviewer unintentionally set up a humorous and revealing exchange. When he asked her to locate the town of Turkey for listeners interested in going there, she earnestly replied, "not far from Quitaque and just down the road from Gasoline." The puzzled look on his face revealed what most of San Francisco's radio fans were thinking... "Where are these strange-sounding towns? I never knew there were any places in Texas more exotic than Dallas and Houston."

ways as well. Cowboy poets, local musicians and the western art in the Otho Stubbs Gallery reinforce the heritage surrounding them. As the hotel's surrey passes the front porch at dusk, one finds it easy to conjure up the echoes of Bob Wills in the dining room shaping a song like "Faded Love." Animated conversations or crackling radio shows drift from yesterday, through lace curtains, on a summer evening breeze.

With many options for tour groups and individuals, the Johnsons can steep visitors in West Texas history. Guests from 16 countries and 46 states have enjoyed surrey rides and outdoor chuck wagon style meals in the canyon lands around Turkey. Various preplanned tours are available or with a few hints, guests can hit the trail on their own.

furniture are original to the hotel, dating to 1927 when H.B. Jordan built it. With careful restoration,

the building itself still proudly displays its natural wood detailing and embossed tin ceilings.

With all its rooms full of the past, Hotel Turkey conveys the ambience of by-gone days in other

The Post Office, 1907 Claude.

Remember when... postal service

was all first class

and stamps cost 3¢ each?

Photo Courtesy Judi Synek



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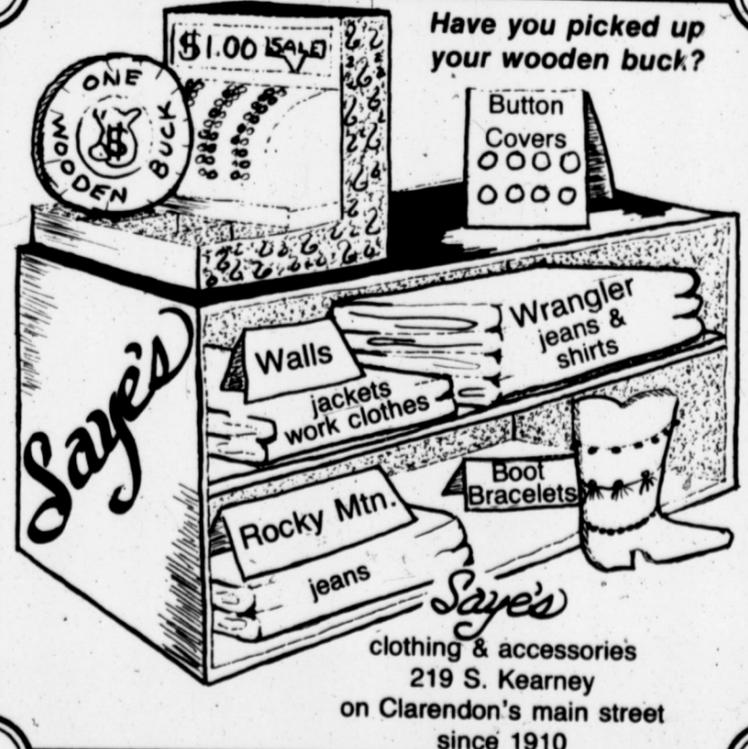
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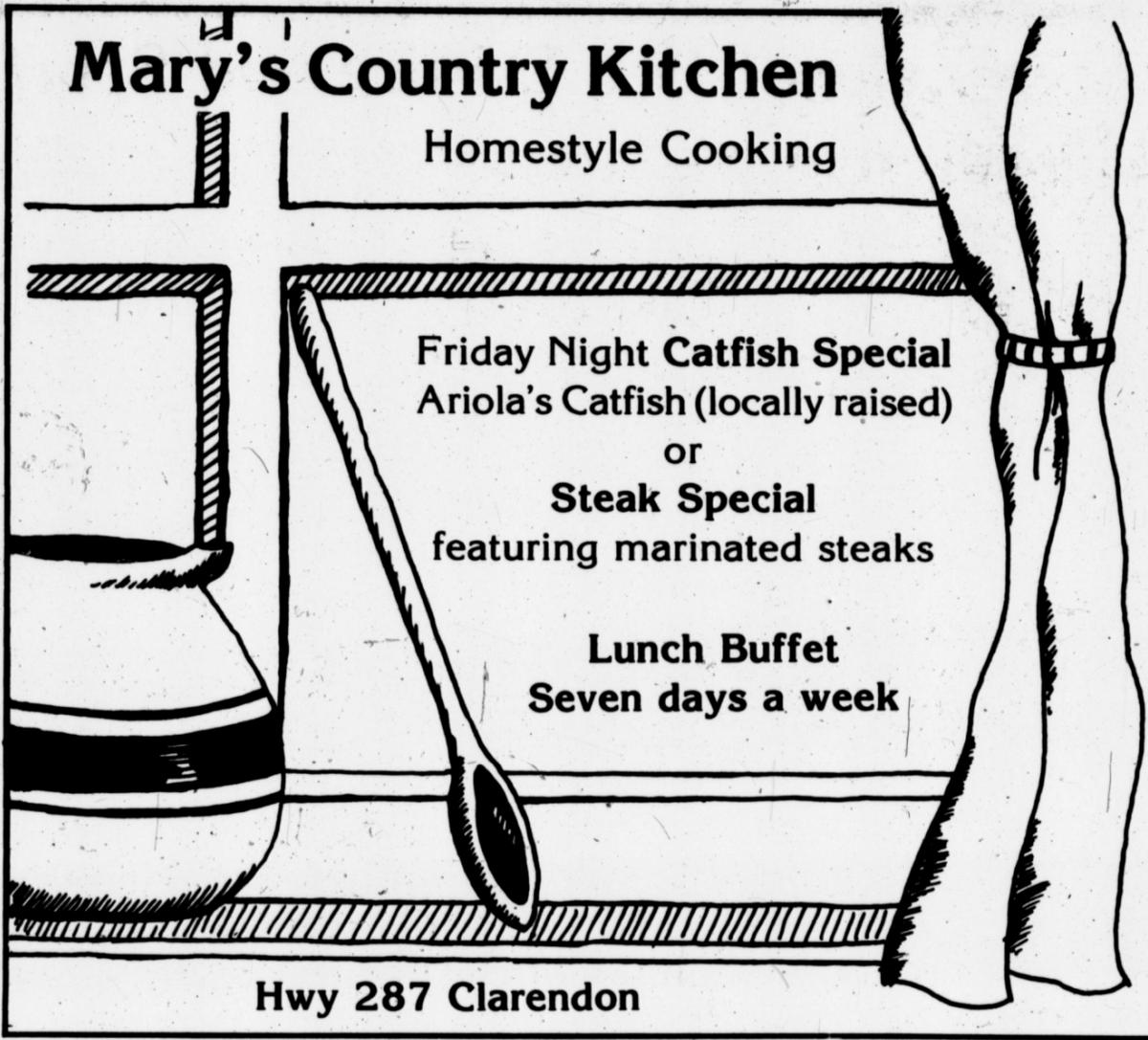
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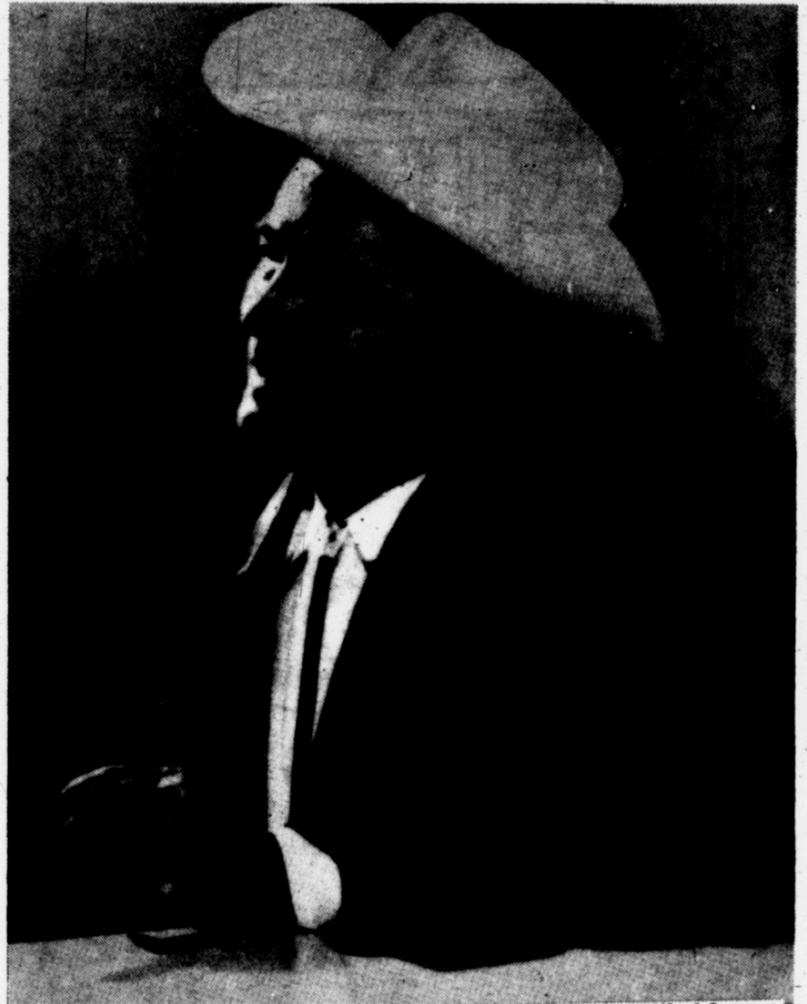


Photo Courtesy Bob Wills Museum

Bob Wills grew up "between the rivers" near Turkey, Texas and for a short time during the 1920's was a barber at Ham's Barber Shop. In the early 1930's Wills and his Texas Playboys band developed a style of western music that became immensely popular. "Western Swing" was a unique combination of folk melodies, "skat" and other elements, but most of all, as Bob Wills himself emphasized, it was dance music. Indeed, the shyest wallflowers as well as the rest of the world find it impossible to keep their toes from tapping to that incomparable Playboys rhythm. Bob Wills' music captures the free spirit of westerners — the brass and sass, the strength and tenderness deep within their hearts.

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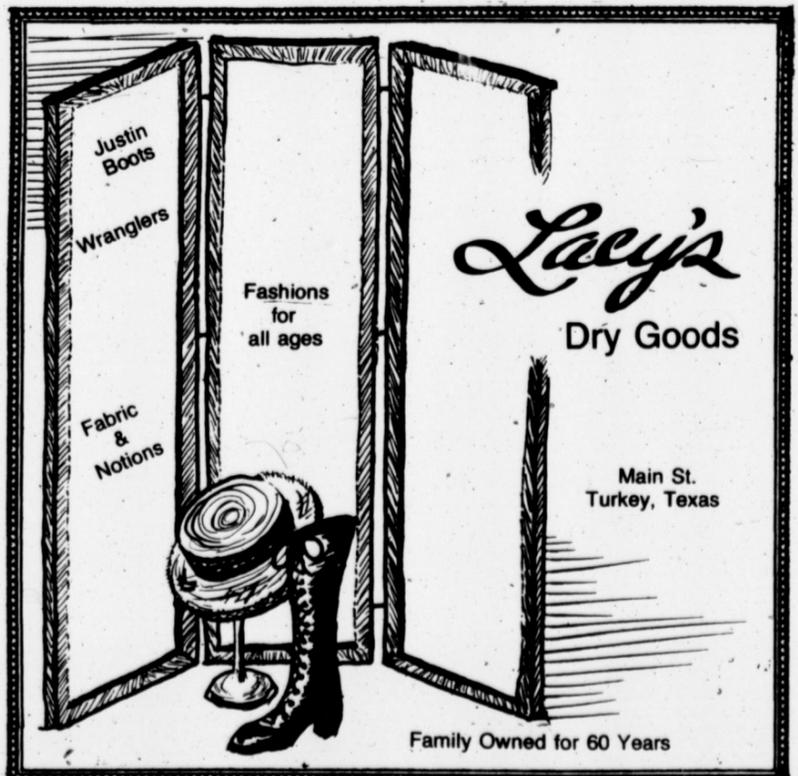
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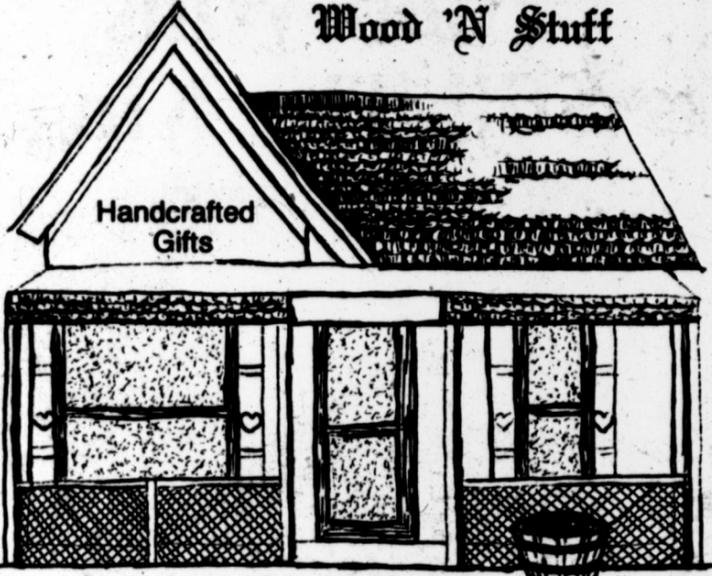
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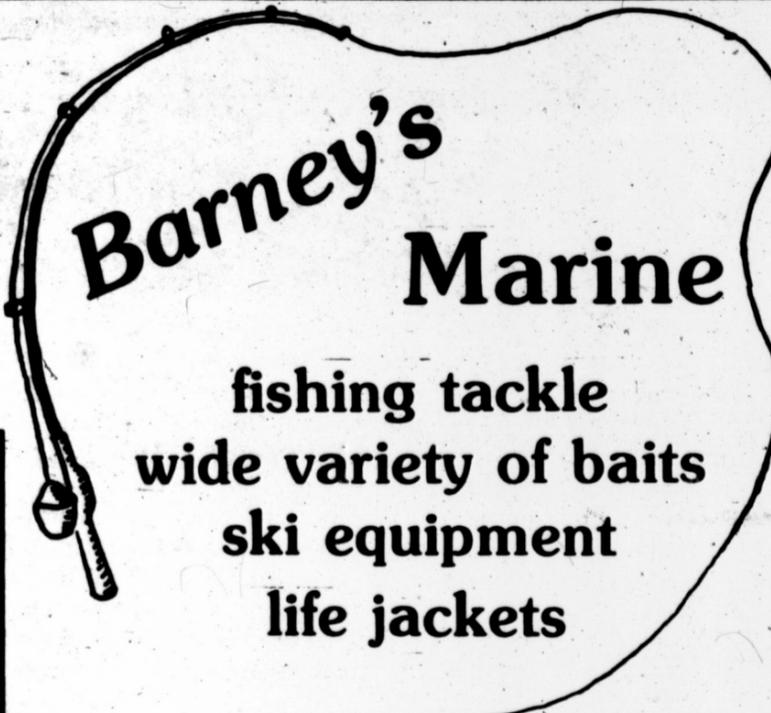


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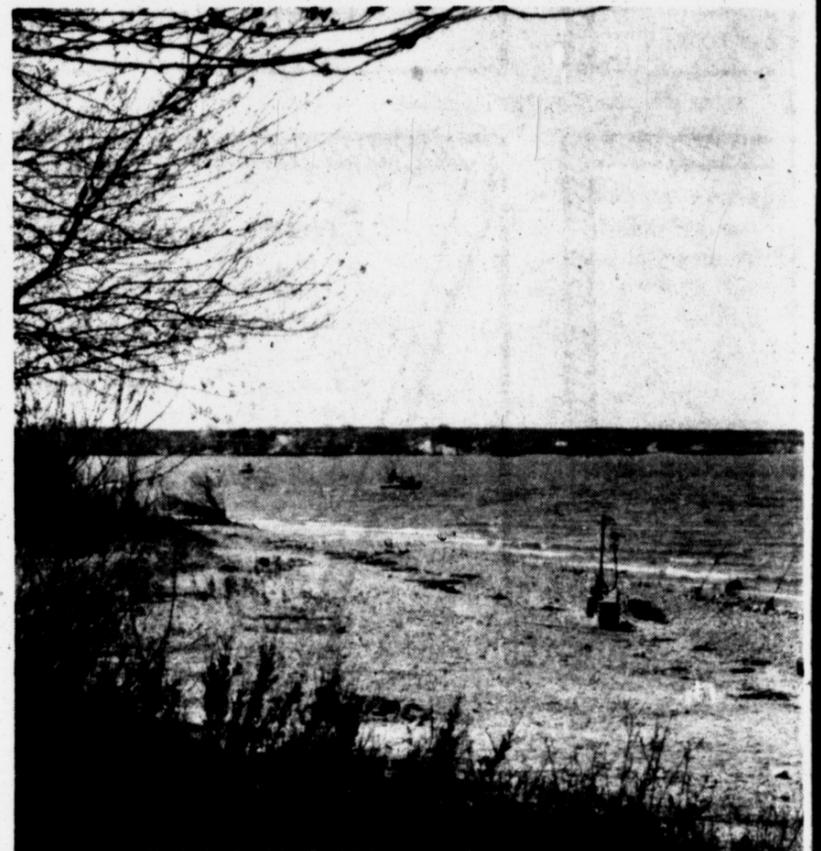
Greenbelt Reservoir Lake Theo

Motorists who travel U.S. 287 through the Texas Panhandle may appreciate the highway only as a means of passage to and from Colorado. A visit to Lake Greenbelt near Clarendon, three and one-half miles north from U.S. 287 on TX 70, is a destination in itself, worthy of a day's visit.

The lake covers 1,990 surface acres at maximum level within the 3,200-acre grounds and is bounded by a 40-mile shoreline. The state legislature authorized the reservoir in 1954. Since 1968, Greenbelt Water Authority has managed it. The clear spring-fed lake, at the mouth of Carroll Creek which empties into the Salt Fork of the Red River, is not dependent on rainfall to remain at a constant level. Historically, the lake area was the original 1878 townsite of Clarendon before the railroad and floods moved the town to its final and present location in 1890.

Cottonwood trees surround Lake Greenbelt and help make it a refreshing oasis on a scorching day on the plains. The lake is known among fishermen as the Northern

**See Page 17 For
Lake Mackenzie**

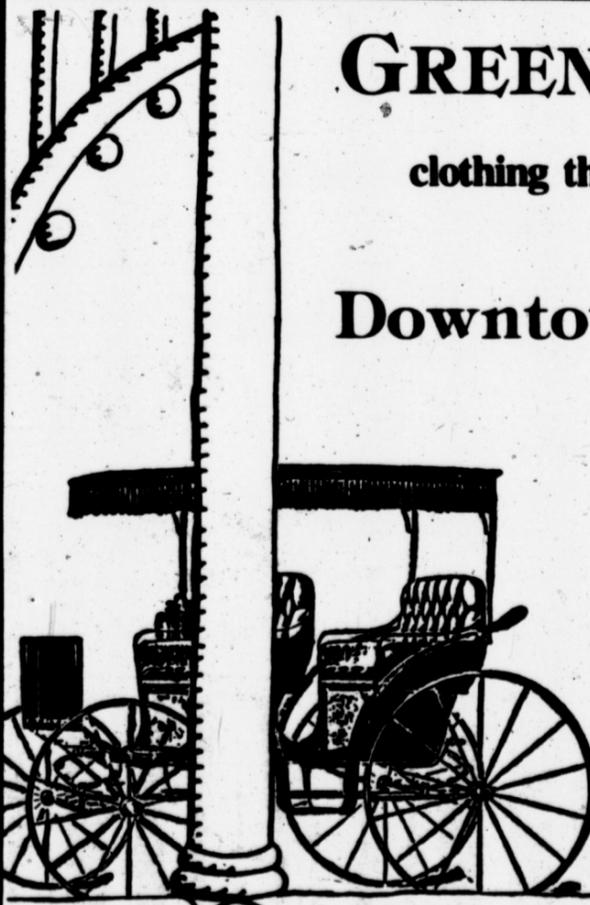


Greenbelt Reservoir is a 1,900 surface-acre spring-fed lake.

Pike Capital of Texas. Walleye, a tasty fish, plays its puzzling pranks in Greenbelt waters by changing locations according to the seasons; it is a challenge to Texas anglers who experiment with crankbait, Canadian nightcrawlers and jigging spoons for a sporting catch. The lake is stocked with typical game fish like crappie; bluegill and yellow

perch; blue, channel and flathead catfish; and bass (black smallmouth, Florida largemouth and sand).

Lake Greenbelt, under a magnificent West Texas sky famous for glorious sunrises and sunsets, offers a recreational retreat at a nominal permit fee for camping and picnicking. For boaters,



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in our gallery



there is a public marina, free ramps and a bait house. Lovers of water sports enjoy swimming from a sandy beach and skiing. Private concessionaires provide fishing licenses and supplies, gasoline, groceries, and RV parks. The adjoining 18-hole golf course at Clarendon Country Club overlooks the lake and is available to the golfing public by paying green fees at the Pro Shop on the club grounds.



Anglers, picnickers and water-sport enthusiasts will find summer recreation at area lakes.

For more information, contact the Manager, Greenbelt Water Authority, P.O. Box 665, Clarendon, Texas 79226, phone 806-874-3650.

Approaching Caprock Canyons State Park on Texas Ranch Road 1065, four miles northwest of Quitaque, the eye discovers one of the exceptions to nature's laws. In the Texas Panhandle, vast grassland leads to rugged canyon country. Suddenly, the earth is ruptured by raw outcroppings, mountain-like formations peaking on the canyon floor.

The overall setting is visually and aurally haunting, evoking a spiritual bond with the landscape. The spice-colored earth, striped by magenta sandstone and flaked with juniper and wildflowers, is alive with scittering lizards, whispering cottonwood trees, gobbling wild turkey, squawking hawks.

In the midst of the magic is Lake Theo. With plentiful rainfall, it is a 120-acre lake, developed in 1981 inside the park, in a small canyon at the head of Holmes Creek. It attracts Canadian geese, mallard

and northern pintail ducks, and rare fowl like red-throated loons and red-necked grebes. Over 175 species of migratory birds and waterfowl have been identified at Lake Theo.

The lake is one of two in Texas that is home to the saltwater blueback herring; fresh-water stunts its growth to make it food for the bass and catfish. Automatic feeders at the lighted fishing pier also sustain an abundance of largemouth and smallmouth bass, catfish species like channel, yellow and black butthead, green sunfish, bluegill perch and crappie. Very popular with trout anglers is the annual rainbow trout stocking program which releases some 8,000 pan-size trophies every December.

The water is cold year-round at Lake Theo which especially affords respite from the summer heat. Facilities accommodate the entire family for picnics, camping, hiking and horseback riding. Shaded

tables are near the lake with a playground and comfort station. A beach, away from lake undergrowth and fish, appeals to swimmers and includes outdoor rinse showers. The boat speed limit is five miles per hour. A private concessionaire rents paddle boats, canoes and waterwagons (a locally-designed fishing buggy) for water sport, and serves snack foods. Overnight campers can enjoy a variety of nearby facilities, from hot-water showers and electricity to primitive badland sites where sturdy shoes, tents and sufficient water canteens are essential equipment.

The modest park entrance fee permits vehicle access to Lake Theo. Overnight camping requires an additional fee, according to the desired type of shelter. For reservations and more information, contact the Park Superintendent, Caprock Canyons State Park, P.O. Box 204, Quitaque, Texas 79255, phone 806-455-1492.

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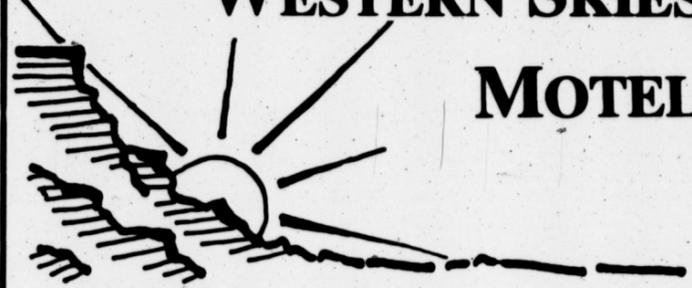
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Dairy Queen, Hwy 287W, Clarendon This is DQ Country! Full-line breakfast. Playground. Clean restrooms. 7:00 am-10 pm, seven days a week.

Donut Stop/Vince's Pizza, Hwy 287E, Clarendon • 806-874-2529
• Baked on premises, pizza made the original Italian way, and donuts prepared fresh daily.

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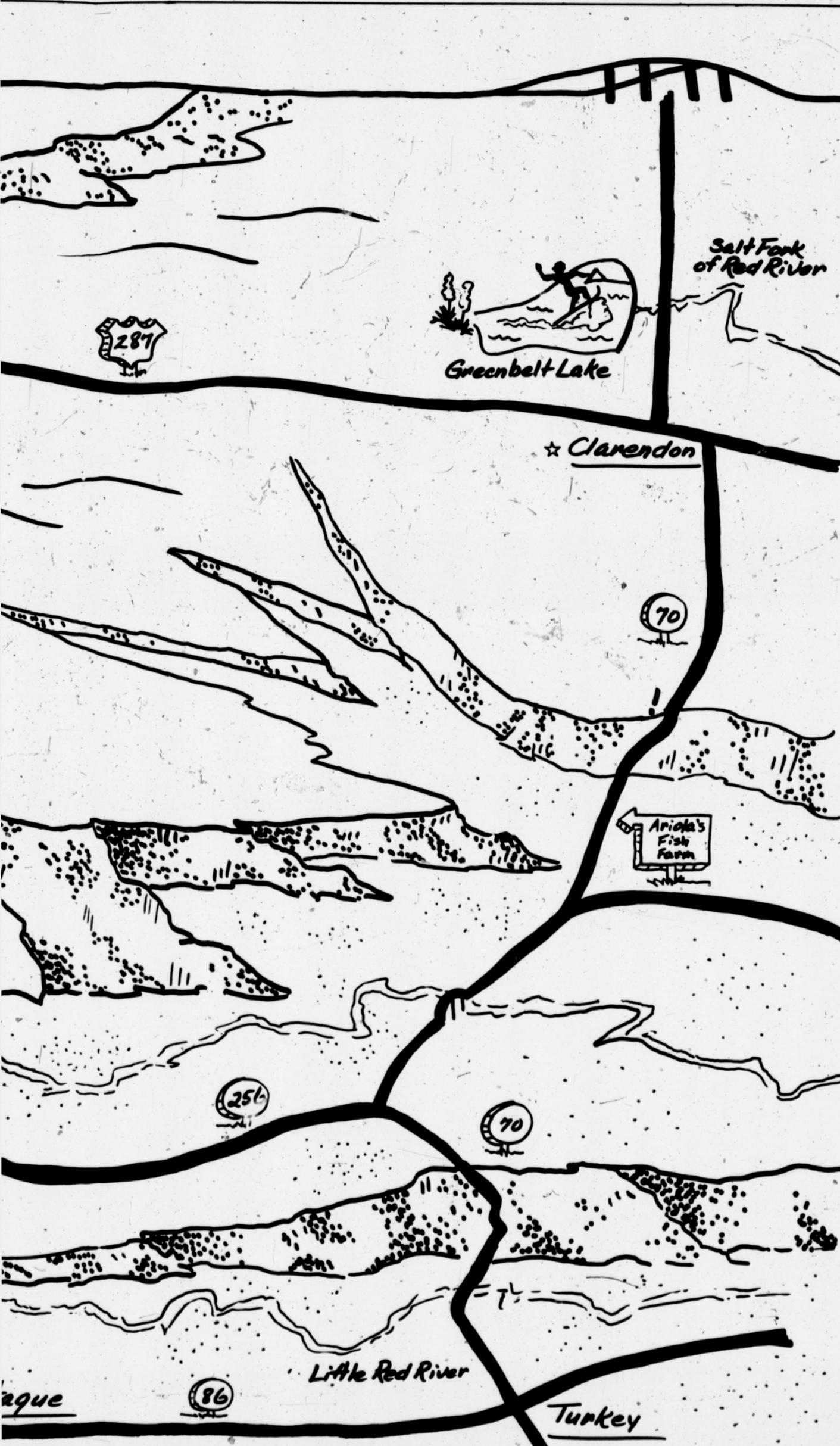
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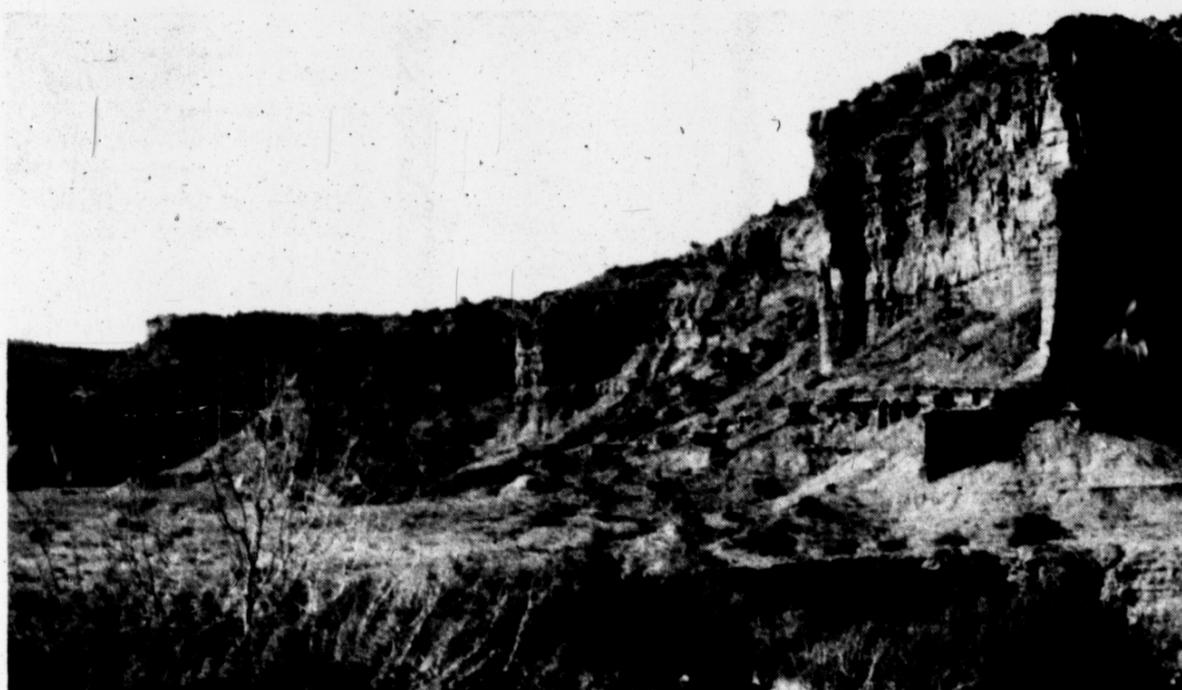


New Ways To See An Old Beauty

Quitaque's Caprock Canyons

From her isolated rosy sandstone walls to her untamed rangeland habitats, Caprock Canyons State Park is now more accessible than ever. Motor vehicles are still restricted to a modest paved road, but this year mountain bike trails and expanded equestrian facilities have been added to the system of hiking and riding trails.

Within these 14,000 acres the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department has protected the topography, flora and fauna which quickly captivate even the most jaded eye. From the top of the Caprock, down sheer walls and roughly carved badlands, to the sandy fledgling creek bottoms, the altitude changes 1,000 feet within the park. The greens of mesquite, yucca, and juniper provide a counterpoint to the red cliffs streaked with white gypsum. Admire the vibrant scenery dwell mule deer, buffalo, raccoons, turkeys, foxes, golden eagles, and numerous other birds, reptiles, and mammals who have found sanctuary in these canyons



since before the Spanish Conquistadors came upon the Caprock Escarpment and the Llano Estacado in 1541.

Although the park was established in 1981, the Parks Department still limits most development so that large areas remain undisturbed by manmade "improvements."

Within the park, Lake Theo (120 acres) attracts local and visiting

anglers with catfish, bluegill, crappie, bass, and in winter months, rainbow trout. Some of the land's history is revealed in the near by Folsom Culture site which dates back 10,000 years. The lake is located close to the park entrance and has picnic tables, a group shelter, boat ramps, a fishing pier, and Big C's Trading Post on its banks.

Further up the road are camping areas with water and electricity, an amphitheater for educational presentations, primitive campsites, and trailheads interspersed with interpretive exhibits.

The unique, new Equestrian Camping Area has 12 campsites with tables, fire rings, and private 3-4 horse corrals. They are located

one mile off the road well away from "civilization." Water is provided for the horses only. Sorry, unless you are used to sharing a water trough with Ol' Paint, humans must haul their water from more developed areas of the park.

With other 16 miles of hiking and riding trails, much of Caprock Canyons' wilderness can be seen from the perspective of the early explorers. For a more modern approach, eight miles of challenging mountain bike trails have been added. They are separate from other trails and more are still in development for all-terrain bicycle enthusiasts. Don't forget, the altitude changes 1,000 feet within the park so there is plenty of rugged riding in store for the strong of heart.

The town of Quitaque is the gateway to Caprock Canyons State Park and provides services and shopping for visitors. The park entrance is on F.M. 1065 about three miles north of TX 86. There is a \$2.00 per car entry fee and reservations for campsites should be made in advance. For further details write to the park at P.O. Box 204, Quitaque, TX 79255 or call 806-455-1492.

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Sweet Relief

Outside it's hotter than Hell's Kitchen -- one of those infamous Texas summer days. "Old Dan and I, with throats burned dry, and souls that cry for ... SNOWCONES!"

Could it be true? Look closely; don't be fooled by the shimmering mirage. Out here in the middle of this canyon?

And a big guy with a big grin -- looks like Santa Claus wearing a gimme cap. Says his name's James Cathey.

What kind of snowcone would I like? Homemade Syrup? (This must be a dream.) Blueberry,

strawberry, raspberry -- so many.

Such an important decision ... can't make a mistake. Finally, the answer comes flooding back from childhood memories of similar summer days. "Can you make a, a, a Rainbow snowcone?"

Mr. Cathey cocks his head and says, "Well, I can't make a Rainbow...but I can make a real Yucky one." Wow.

Squirts of red, yellow, green, even purple, oozing down and around those precious nuggets of ice.

That's the kind of snowcone that lasts and lasts.

Citizens Revitalize Downtown

When a deep economic recession occurs, vacant buildings in a big city are not as noticeable as in a small town. They merely are swallowed up by the sheer numbers of signs, cars, people. But empty buildings, as well as people, in small towns stand out.

In Quitaque, however, the people stood up. With characteristic pride and grit, they rolled up their sleeves and went to work about two years ago.

"Come to work and bring your hoes," was the slogan which brought out almost everyone to their All-Community Hoe Down. On that day old buildings were repainted and weeds cleared from cracks in the sidewalks. Some of the women decided to decorate a large display window of the recently vacated Dry Goods building.

The idea produced such good results that they continued to work with owners of other vacant and even occupied buildings toward the same goal: a Sidewalk Museum.

"Texas Horsepads," a manufacturing company, cleared out large rolls of fabric which filled two large display windows. These same windows now feature wagon and buggy wheels, and an assortment of western paraphernalia, including an authentic U.S. Mail pouch carried by horseback.

A Branding Party was held at which local ranches brought and burned their brands onto a

weathered wood corral fence assembled especially for another display window. A few of the brands dated back to the 1800's, having been passed down through generations of ranching families. Jim Stroup, a pioneer in his 80's remarked, "I've never seen this many dressed-up people at a branding!"

Where once grain and equipment had been stored, a country kitchen display, featuring an old kerosene cook stove, churns, sausage stuffer, canner and various kitchen furniture and implements, now lends old-fashioned charm to the streets of Quitaque.

Strollers can also enjoy exhibits of a vintage bedroom, toy room printing press, sewing room, and military uniforms.

For one of the displays, ladies of Quitaque gathered up hats they had saved for many years to lend a certain panache to the "Millinery Shoppe."

Old cotton scales, a scythe, plow and other farm tools can be seen in the window of the local hardware store, bringing together methods of the past and current activities associated with cotton, a crop which is still very much a part of the area economy.

The people of Quitaque just won't listen to the dire predictions that "small towns in Texas are dying." Generously giving their time, talents, and possessions, these citizens have clearly demonstrated hope and faith in their community. They put real meaning in the words they grew up believing, "standing all in the saddle."

Editor's Note: Many thanks to Mrs. O. R. (Mary) Stark of Quitaque for compiling the information from which this article was written, and to all the wonderful people who participated in the revitalization project.

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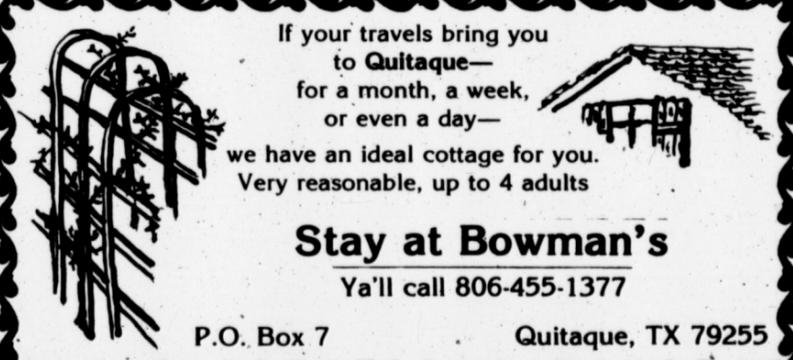
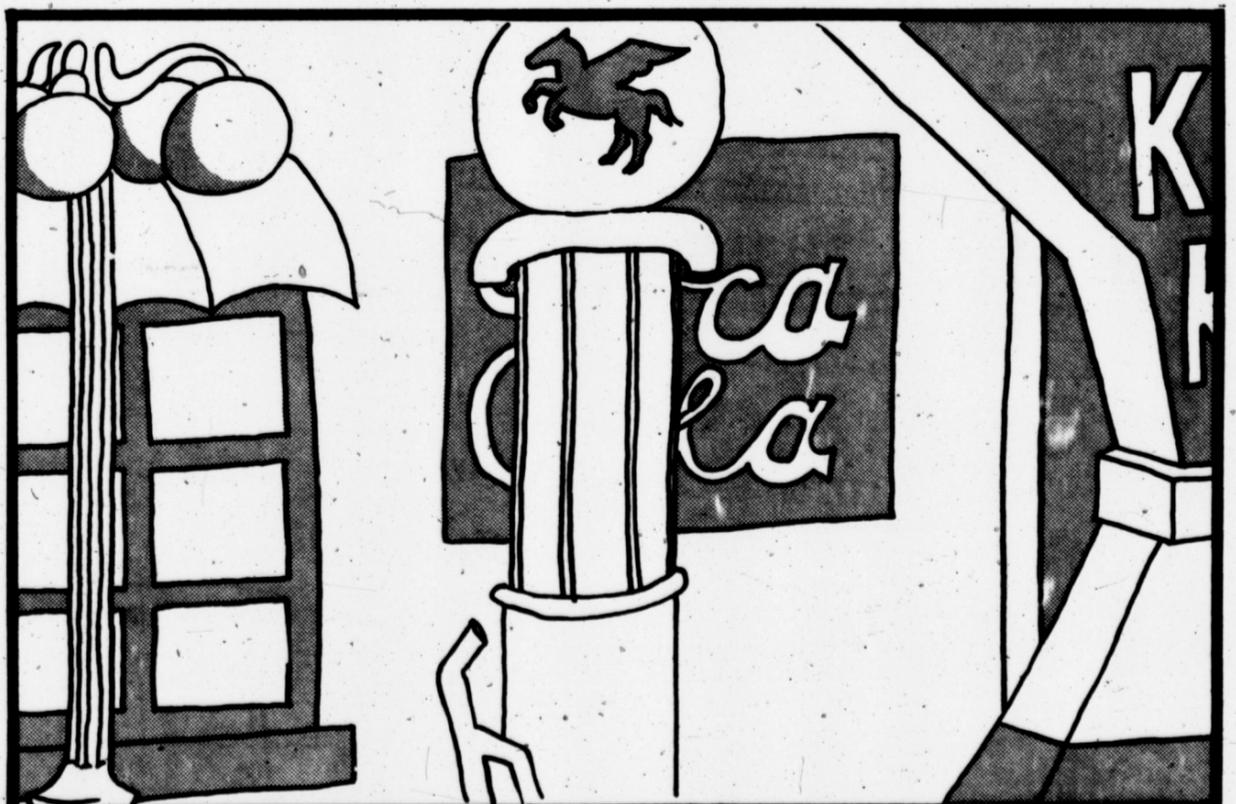
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Claude: Of Railroads, Ranching, and

Claude's beginning is a familiar story of the settlement of the Panhandle, the same story of many small rural towns which gambled on being "the grand junction" of the railroads and winning the craps shoot to become the area's large financial and commercial center. The towns were speculative plats which enterprising land owners donated or visionary developers scrambled to buy. They sprang up almost overnight just ahead of the rails; when the dust settled, there were tents, wagons, dugout shelters and people.

Stockyards and cattle cars appeared on the horizon as the railroads connected the dot-to-dot townsites. The Plains cowboy stayed home on the range; after 1887, the 40-day ride, through stampede and sandstorm to the Dodge City railhead, was history.

Claude's original name was Armstrong City; no one really knows why except that the town lay within the 1876 boundaries established for Armstrong County by the State of Texas. And perhaps the Fort Worth and Denver City Railway Company needed a quick way to identify the site on its map. How the town eventually came to be called Claude is a story in itself. (See sidebar.)

Claude became the Armstrong County seat in a general election on May 8, 1890. According to local legend, Col. Charles Goodnight, co-founder of the still-operating JA Ranch, cast the vote that broke the tie between Washburn and Claude.

The JA, a site on the National Register of Historic Landmarks, is south of Claude off Texas 207 and east of FM 2272. Historian J. Evetts Haley describes the JA, founded in 1876, as "probably the finest and best managed ranch in the Great Plains region." It is "an institution of high-hearted action, square shooting and fair dealing."

Col. Goodnight and his wife are buried in the cemetery north of U.S. 287 in the town of Goodnight, 14 miles east of Claude.

Claude today is a small community of just over 1,000 people. They and their forebears have endured drought, grasshopper plagues, blue blizzards and prairie dogs. Barbed wire and windmills represent the life and economy. Because ranching and farming are occupations which require much acreage and few people, the basic lifestyle is not likely to change substantially, and that may be the secret of Claude's charm.

The Checker Game, 1912, Claude.

Remember when... families entertained themselves at home without video games?

Photo Courtesy Judi Synek



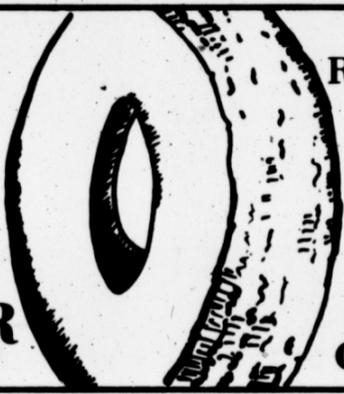
Calf's Brains With Butter

Soak the brains in cold water until white, carefully removing the outer membrane. Drain, place in a saucepan with one pint of boiling water, two tablespoonfuls of vinegar, a half teaspoonful of salt, a slice of onion, quarter of a bay leaf and part of a blade of mace. Simmer very quietly for 15 minutes. In the meantime place two tablespoonfuls of butter in a small saucepan and heat slowly until it becomes a dark brown. Drain the brains, arrange on a hot platter, add to the browned butter one tablespoonful of vinegar, pour over the brains and send at once to the table.

--"All Around the House,"
The Claude News, November 17, 1911, Vol. X, No. 7;
L.V. Hamner, Publisher.

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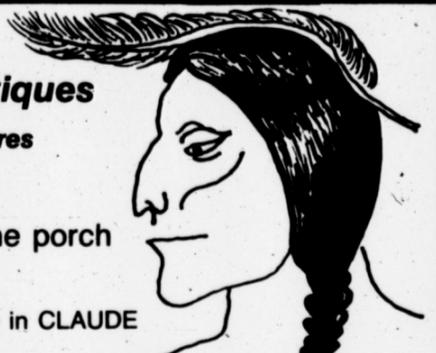
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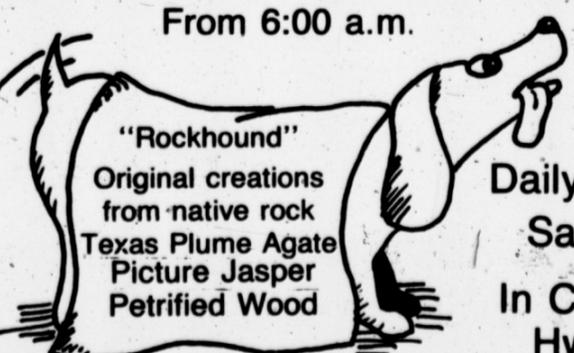
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... Rattlesnakes, Too!

When he saw a group of surveyors near the tracks, Claude Ayres, a FW&DC engineer, stopped the freight train at the new railroad townsite in the Texas Panhandle.

"What are you going to name this burg?" he asked them. Local historians record different versions of the conversation that followed. But, apparently, after exploring the viable options, the simple answer to Ayres' question was, "We don't know."

"Why don't you name it for me?" he suggested, and proceeded down the track, working his way west with every new spike.

Perhaps he had more than a passing interest; some reports indicate that Claude Ayres lived in Clarendon but had filed a settler's claim on land in or near the new FW&DC townsite.

The fuzzy details of land claims don't really matter now. The fact is that the town's people, having exhausted other alternatives, named

their community for Claude, the friendly freight train engineer. The affection must have been mutual because Ayres requested that he be buried in Claude.

And so he was. At Claude Ayres' funeral on October 7, 1915, his brother, A.W., recalled the newly-settled area as it was in 1887. The loneliness and inconvenience, just to maintain a settler's claim, made the days long and life miserable, he said. Rattlesnakes were the last straw—they were under the bed and on the pantry shelves!

"With eleven rattlers in one pocket and thirteen in another, with a bundle of clothes and two guns, I dashed for Claude's train which I knew was approaching." The expressman thought A.W. was an outlaw trying to rob the train until he threw his guns into the cab and was able to swing inside.

"I told my brother that he need not count on me to hold down his old rattlesnake den, for I was leaving—in fact, I had left."



In the Spring of 1866, Charles Goodnight bought the gear of a government wagon and had it entirely rebuilt with seasoned bois d'arc. Its axles were iron instead of wood. At the rear of the wagon, he built the first chuck box with a hinged lid that let down on a swinging leg to form the cook's work table. It was driven on the trail by the cook and a four-mule team. In the days of the open range, this JA mobile home rolled from the Canadian River to the Brazos. After barbed wire, until the late 1880's, the chuckwagon accompanied the drives from Greer County, Oklahoma, to the Palo Duro Canyon, from the Salt Fork of the Red River to the Quitaque. (Source: Charles Goodnight, *Cowman and Plainsman*, by J. Evetts Haley, 1949, University of Oklahoma Press)

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Silverton Jamboree: Coming Home To My Senses

Returning to my native Texas after some 30 years in the East has restored a soul too long estranged from her roots. I learned two things: that Texas, eventually reclaims its own is not an exaggeration, and the culture which nurtured me to adulthood is a precious link to my continuity.

Just the sight of the Texas Panhandle, at the junction of earth and sky, was uplifting but also humbling. Here in the West, a sense of space for freedom to be and grow is balanced by the sense that one human being is a very small part of the universe, and a relative newcomer at that. Matters of the heart seem so insignificant under an endless sky, whether it's full of cotton clouds or shooting stars, or at the rim of a canyon, creatively carved over billions of years. The drive between Claude and Silverton down TX 207 offers exactly that kind of spiritual experience.

Satisfying a deprived sense of

taste was easy: barbecue, Tex-Mex and Whataburgers. And that familiar scent in the wind—manure and petroleum—brought a smiling memory to my face. Nothing sweeter, the old-timers used to say, than the smell of money.

But what I had missed most, never realizing the depth of the void, were the sounds of Texas—the drawl and the music. To speak the language means slowing the tongue, making two-syllable words of one, and remembering the down-home expressions. I love the word "visit." Old gents visit "of a morning" over coffee and politics: "That old dog won't hunt." Bankers and homebuyers visit before negotiating mortgage terms: "My son's an Aggie, too." Church members visit with strangers and ask, "Where're you-all from?" or "Where're you out of?" To visit is the friendly way to conduct business and to love your neighbor; it's a state law and, therefore, divine.

Last winter, I visited with the good folks at the Caprock Jamboree in Silverton. It's a first-Saturday-of-the-month, family-style musical evening, "no bedroom songs." Mostly local talent stage a pickin'-n-singin' at the community center, a WWII-vintage quonset hut just south of the Briscoe County Courthouse. Supper at \$3.50 per person is something like homemade chili, with or without beans, brownies and coffee.

The cowboy music is "take it away, Leon" Texas swing to fiddle and guitar, singalong, toe-tapping, hand-clapping. The gospel is born-again tent revival when Daddy sang bass and Momma sang tenor. Wear faded jeans, wrinkled boots and a sweat-stained hat— and bring your own chair. The Caprock Jamboree draws a right good crowd. (Smoke outside except in November when the cotton wagons are parked nearby and loaded for the gin.)

--Pat Sikes



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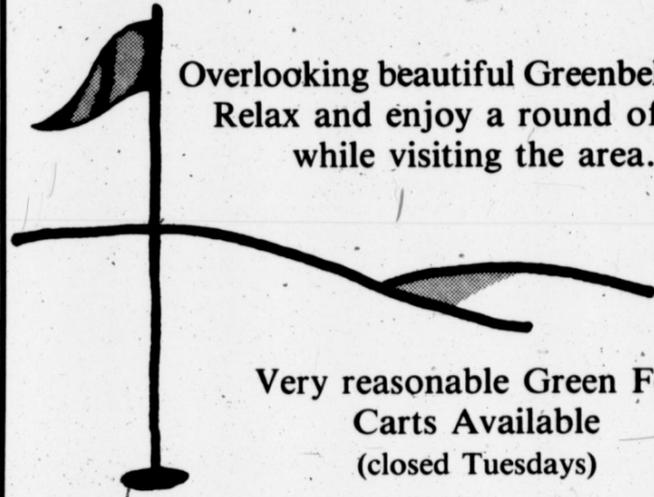
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Tule Canyon Holds Lake Mackenzie

Many outstanding historic remnants come together in Lake Mackenzie. It is located in Tule Canyon (12 miles northwest of Silverton via TX 86W or about 45 miles from Claude via TX 207S) where the Prairie Dog Town Fork of the Red River leaves Palo Duro Canyon.

About 1542, a hunting expedition by Coronado explorers discovered friendly Tejas Indians in the canyon. The lake's namesake Col. Ranald Mackenzie, known as America's best Indian fighter, led his 4th Cavalry down these canyon cliffs in 1874 to attack an encampment of Cheyenne, Kiowa and Comanche and essentially finished a 35-year Indian war. The troops drove some 1,400 Indian horses and mules up the canyon walls. Bone

Ford was named for the bleaching bones of the captured animals which were destroyed at the army camp west of the lake. Oldtimers speak of ghost herds thundering across the caprock rims on moon-silver nights.

"The Narrows" gorge with opposing 300' steep walls is one of the most dramatic canyon formations on the High Plains. Evidence of ancient Indian cultures which inhabited the wilderness is still uncovered in canyon arroyos and gullies, and on canyon walls.

Opened in 1976, Lake Mackenzie is an 896 surface-acre reservoir created by state legislation in 1965 to supply municipal water. The water treatment plant south of the lake conducts guided plant tours. Lake Mackenzie recreational

facilities provide for picnicking and camping, including RV hookups. Boat ramps and floating docks accommodate fishing and water skiing, regulated in a counter-clockwise direction. Swimmers are responsible for their own safety.

The lake is stocked with fish by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Anglers will find catfish, crappie, bass, stripers, walleye and perch. Lake visitors may also see delightful animal life like mule deer, African Aoudad sheep, bald eagles and other wild fowl.

Hunting, firearms, motorcycles, motorbikes and houseboats are prohibited. For more information or large-group reservations, contact the Mackenzie Water Authority, Rt. 1, Box 14, Silverton, Texas 79257, phone 806-633-4326.



Lake Mackenzie, an 896 surface-acre reservoir near Silverton.

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Ol' Pete

Our Prairie Dog Town correspondent
Covering the spit and whittle
tale-telling circuit

**Goodnight's
Wheelbarrow**

Yesterday morning, ol' Tommy Saye whistled me over to his store across Main Street. Seems he was hiding from doing inventory like I was dodging my deadline. Well, after we dispensed with current local goings on, the subject turned to taxes--not ours but Charlie Goodnight's.

The Old Man (Colonel Goodnight) was what you might call a strongwilled sort of gent. According to Tommy, he even has a monument in Austin to back that up. Of course, he did big things to settle this part of Texas; but when it came to taxes, he probably felt a lot like you and me. Haven't you ever been tempted to pay up your "tax liability" with several rolls of pennies sent C.O.D.?

Anyhow, me and Tommy had a good chuckle about the ornery in all of us when he told the story about "Goodnight's Wheelbarrow."

"About 1970, or let's see '75, well anyway, in the seventies, I carried some Boy Scouts down to Austin for the Governor's Inauguration. On Congress Avenue (the main street that runs to the Capitol), we spotted a monument. The Scouts read the inscription about Charles Goodnight, and did that ever fascinate those boys: They couldn't believe that tales about people from their own stomping grounds reached all the way to Austin."

"You see, the marker said Mr. Goodnight walked down Congress Avenue pushing a wheelbarrow full of silver dollars to pay his taxes. He brought a cowboy guard on each side of him and they were carrying six-shooters. At the Capitol steps the State Treasurer came out and refused the payment in currency (a considerable sum in those days). So Mr. Goodnight noted he had tried in good faith to pay what he owed, took his money, and headed home."

Now, Tommy couldn't say whether or not those taxes ever got paid, but the story did make quite an impression on the boys. And like I said, we had a good chuckle, but by then it was about time to meet the guys for coffee down at the cafe. I thanked him for giving me a story to beat my deadline and told him to get back in the store to see if his wife Lucy had finished inventory without him.

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CALENDAR AND ATTRACTIONS

SILVERTON

Attractions

Briscoe County Courthouse, 1922. County organized 1892. Jail House Museum, 1894, Briscoe County Courthouse.

Special Events

1st Sat, Jun/Jul/Aug, Caprock Jamboree, 6:30 pm, Silverton Show Barn. Cowboy music. 6:00 pm, mesquite-grilled hamburgers. Contact 806-847-2619.

May 10, Salt River Productions, 7:30 pm, Silverton Show Barn. Western music concert. \$6 advance, \$7.50 door. Contact 806-847-2619.

July 13 (tentative), Rocking W Ramblers, Silverton Show Barn. New Mexico cowboy music. Contact 806-847-2619.

Aug 8, 9, 10, Briscoe Co. Rodeo, 7:00 pm, Wood Memorial Rodeo Pen, Silverton. Contact 806-823-2236.

Aug 10, Briscoe Co. Celebration, 10:00 am, Courthouse lawn. Live entertainment, games, crafts, parade, contests. 3:30 pm, BBQ. Contact 806-847-2619.

QUITAQUE

Attractions

Sidewalk Museum, Downtown. Storefront displays depict heritage.

Special Events

1st Sat, Dec., Caprock Country Christmas, all day. City-wide

celebration, Open House at shops, businesses. Activities and entertainment.

Briscoe County Centennial, 1892-1992. Monthly events during 1992 to celebrate. Contact Quitaque City Manager, 806-455-1456, or mail inquiry to Quitaque Area Chamber of Commerce, Box 207, Quitaque, TX 79225.

TURKEY

Attractions

Bob Wills' Museum, City Hall. Bob Wills' Memorial, TX 86W at Turkey city limits, Main St.

Special Events

Last weekend in Apr. annually, Bob Wills' Day, all day, Bob Wills Center. Texas Playboys Reunion. Old fiddlers' contest, dance, parade, BBQ.

CLAUDE

Attractions

Armstrong County Courthouse, 1912. County organized 1890. In the Claude area, the flat terrain and brilliant sunsets have made perfect film settings you will recognize from TV commercials and movies ("Hud," "Sunshine Christmas," and "Indiana Jones: The Last Crusade").

Special Events

1st week, July, Caprock Round-up/Old Settlers Reunion. Beauty

pageants, parade, beard-growing contest, rodeo, BBQ, cow pattie bingo, entertainment.

CLARENDON

Attractions

Donley County Courthouse, 1890. County organized 1890. Saints' Roost Museum, TX 70S off US 287. Open Sun, 1-5 pm, and by appointment. Contact 806-874-3517, 2546 or 3839.

Take time to drive around town to see turn-of-the-century architecture, from prairie style to formal Victorian.

Special Events

Jun 9-15, 1st annual Elderhostel, Clarendon Junior College. Continuing education program for age 62+: archeology, cattle ranching, Western swing music. Register by May 15. Contact CJC Administration 806-874-3571.

Sept 14, JA Ranch Reunion Dance, 8:00 pm, Clarendon Community Center. Public welcome.

Following events sponsored by Clarendon-Donley Co. Chamber of Commerce, Contact 806-874-2421:

May 17, Desert Storm Vet Parade, 3:00 pm, Kearney St., Downtown Clarendon, From depot (N of Hwy 287, S to city park).

May 17, Old-Fashion Box Super Auction, 7:00 pm, CHS ten-

nis court or old gym. Entertainment.

Saturdays, May 18-Aug 31, "Saturday Night Live in Downtown Clarendon," 7:00 pm/May, 8:00 pm/Jun-Jul-Aug, Kearney St. locations. Fun booths, live music (country western, gospel, bluegrass).

Saturdays, Jun 1-Aug 31, Live music concerts, 9:00 pm, Lake Greenbelt west of main marina. C-W, bluegrass.

June 21, 22, 23, City-wide Garage Sale.

July 4, 5, 6, 4th of July Celebration, 12 noon BBQ, Donley Co. Courthouse Square. Parade, vendors, rodeo, dance.

July 6, Merchants' sidewalk sales, farmers' market, Downtown Clarendon. Artisans, races.

1st Sat, Aug/Sept/Oct, Trades Days, 10:00 am, Community Center and rodeo grounds. Vendor booths, farm produce, local merchants.

GENERAL

Attractions

All the highways of the area provide beautiful views; however, TX 207 south of Claude and TX 256 east of Silverton have especially dramatic views of canyonland!

Historical markers:

Armstrong Co. Courthouse Square, US 287, Claude.

• Dugout, TX 207, between Claude and Silverton.

• Overlook, TX 207, near Briscoe Co. line.

• Lake Mackenzie overlook, TX 207.

• Briscoe Co. Courthouse Square, TX 86, Silverton

• Comanchero Trail picnic area, TX 86, between Silverton and Quitaque.

• Sites within towns of Clarendon and Claude.

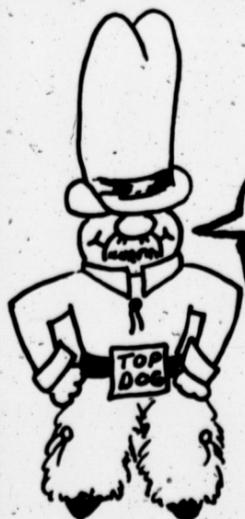
• Goodnight House, US 287, Goodnight

Caprock Canyons State Park, 13,960 acres, recreation and archeological sites, north from Quitaque. Contact 806-455-1492.

Three lakes in the region offer recreation and summertime respite: Greenbelt near Clarendon, Mackenzie northwest of Silverton, and Theo in Caprock Canyons State Park.

Goodnight Cemetery, north of US 287 at Goodnight. Goodnight's grave and a feeling of lonesome prairies.

Prairie Dog Gazette welcomes calendar entries for public events. Please submit written information to P.O. Box 1286, Clarendon, TX 79226. Include contact name and phone number. **Prairie Dog Gazette** verifies to the best of our abilities each entry at press time; however, we cannot be responsible for changes in activities. We suggest calling sponsors of the events for confirmation.



Wear a 10-gallon hat for a pint-size price!

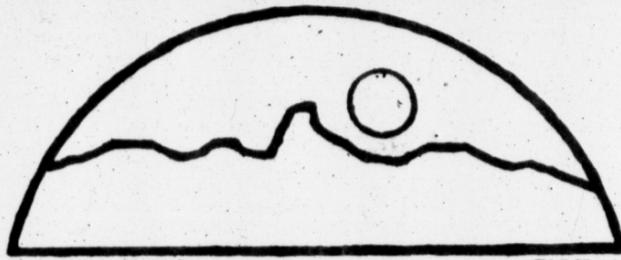
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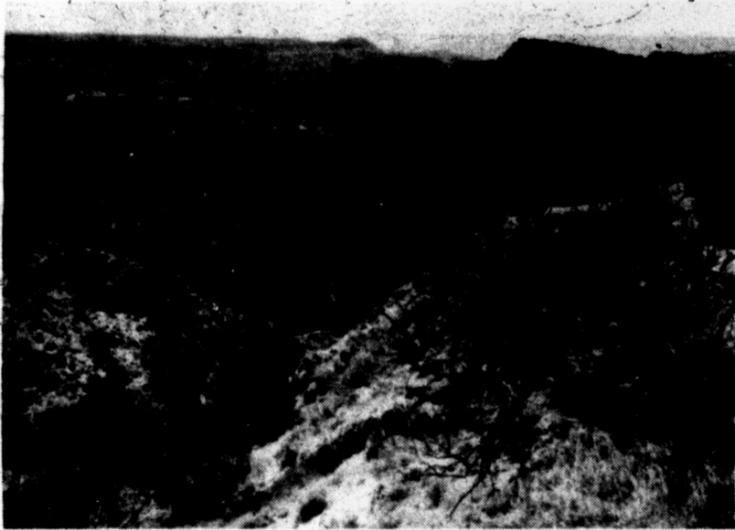
Ride to the rim of our campsite in a horse-drawn wagon. As the mist retreats, revealing miles of breathtaking canyon scenery, you can bet your boots you're about to experience the best of the west.



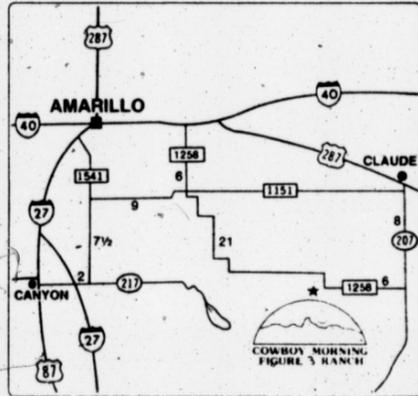
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