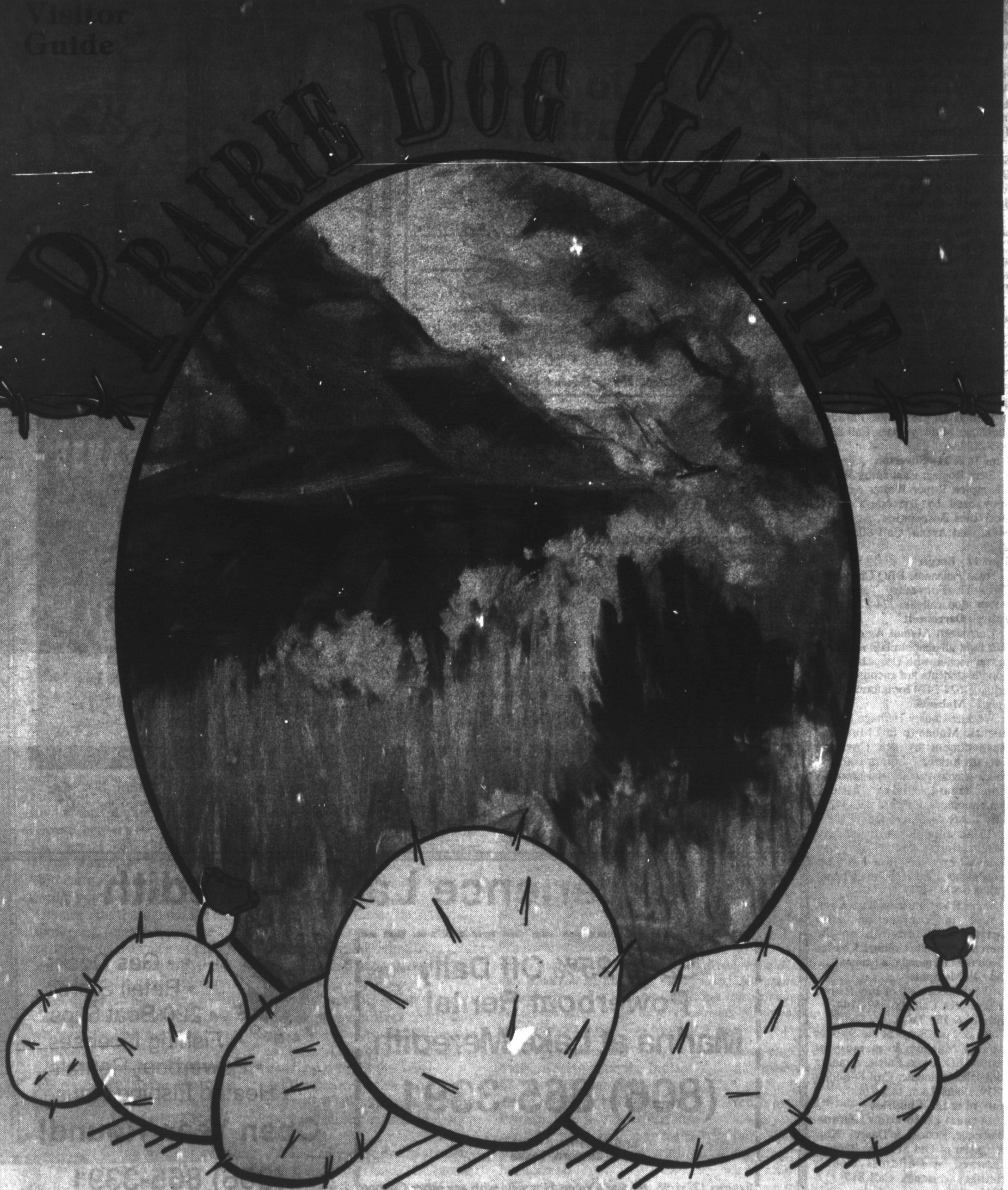


Visitor
Guide



SPRING 1995

EVENTS

May 13 & 14 - Amarillo

Fine Arts Show & Sale, benefits High Plains Epilepsy Association. At the Ambassador Hotel, Sat. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sunday 12:00 to 5 p.m.

June 3 - Quitaque

National Trails Day: Parade, Arts & Crafts and Antique Car Shows, Barbeque, Caprock Canyons Trail tours. Call 806-455-1700.

June 4-10 - Clarendon

Elderhostel, an educational adventure, marks its fifth year with Clarendon College as host. Field trips to area attractions highlight the activities. Call 806-874-3571.

June 4-11 - Spearman

Spearman Heritage Days: Events all week long. Saturday's include Craft Fair, Parade, Antique Car Show & Rally, Barbeque, Street Dance following Rodeo, Old Timers' Reunion. Call 806-659-5555.

June 7-10 - Dumas

Dumas Dogie Days: Parade, Barbeque, Midway Rides. Call 806-935-2123.

June 10 & 11 - Silverton

Steer Roping: Chaired by World Champion Roper Walter Arnold, sponsored by Briscoe County Activities Association. At Wood Memorial Arena. Call 806-823-2125.

June 17 - Borger

Texas Panhandle BBQ Champion Cookoff. For entry forms or information, call 806-274-2211.

July 1 - Darrrouzett

Darrrouzett Alumni Association will hold all-school class reunions in conjunction with Deutsches Fest. Former students are encouraged to call 806-624-3474 for information.

July 1 - Mobeetie

Wheeler County Heritage Day at historic Mobeetie Jail Museum. Reenactment by 4th Cavalry, buffalo hunters, Indian traders, chuck wagons, author and historian Bob Izzard, living history demonstrations. Call 806-826-3427.

July 1, 3 & 4 - Clarendon

110th annual Fourth of July Celebration: Rodeo at 7:45 followed by Dance (live band) all three nights. Parade on 4th at 2 p.m. Call 806-874-2421.

Saints Roost Museum hosts Open House in conjunction with Celebration. Activities on the museum grounds. Colonel Charles Goodnight memorabilia featured.

July 4 - Memphis

Old fashioned 4th of July festival & fireworks. Call 806-259-3144.

July 14 & 15 - Tulla

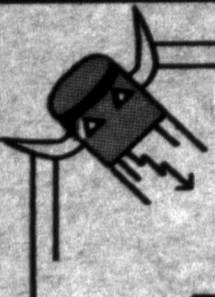
Bit & Spur Show at the Swisher County Museum in memory of artisan J.O. Bass. Entries, trading and sales welcome. Call 806-995-2819. Hours 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

July 14 & 15 - Childress

Annual celebration: Parade, Barbeque, Rodeos & Dances. King & Queen of Old Settlers' Reunion crowned at Childress County Heritage Museum. Call 817-937-2261.


July 29 - Farwell

Border Town Days: Parade, Entertainment, Open Houses.



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About Our Cover:

The pastel drawing of Palo Duro Canyon was created by Amy Winton of Amarillo. She can be contacted at (806) 358-3319.

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Welcome To The Panhandle - She's A Beauty!

Prairie dogs have always understood the beauty and allure of the Texas Panhandle. However, many two-legged critters have not.

I suppose you've heard the bad jokes about the Panhandle - the weather, the terrain, lack of water - whatever. Who hasn't heard that we use oil derrick chains for wind socks or that a tree is a landmark? Natives giving directions by saying "Go 12 miles to THE tree and turn left."

The Indians were perhaps the first people who grasped the full public relations potential of the Panhandle. The Cheyennes invited the Comanche and Kiowas here for their annual Sun Dance (no joke). They used, but did not abuse, the grandeur of the Palo Duro Canyon as shelter during winter and traded beautiful Alibates flint throughout the Southwest, forever fixing the reputation of the value of this land, at least to other tribes.

Spanish and Anglo explorers never did catch on. When Coronado didn't find gold, he wrote off the entire area as a wasteland.

U.S. Army explorers dubbed this region the "Great American Desert." Early trailblazers used it as a path to "somewhere else."

My Great Uncle Chuck Wagner, pioneer rancher Charles Goodnight's chuckwagon mascot,



Ol' Pete
Our Prairie Dog Town
Correspondent

noticed that hidden treasures were waiting in every arroyo, as ranches were established and people began to stay awhile.

But most of the cattlemen saw only the economic opportunities of free grass and unlimited rangeland and exploited both to the fullest.

After windmills began to pump life-saving water from newly dug wells, females saw the Panhandle as "Hell on horses and women." But they weren't that easily defeated. After a few shade trees and rose bushes began to flourish, the Panhandle began to look more like home.

Rancher and Nester never could agree about this land. The rancher maintained that the "correct" side of the prairie was already up. But

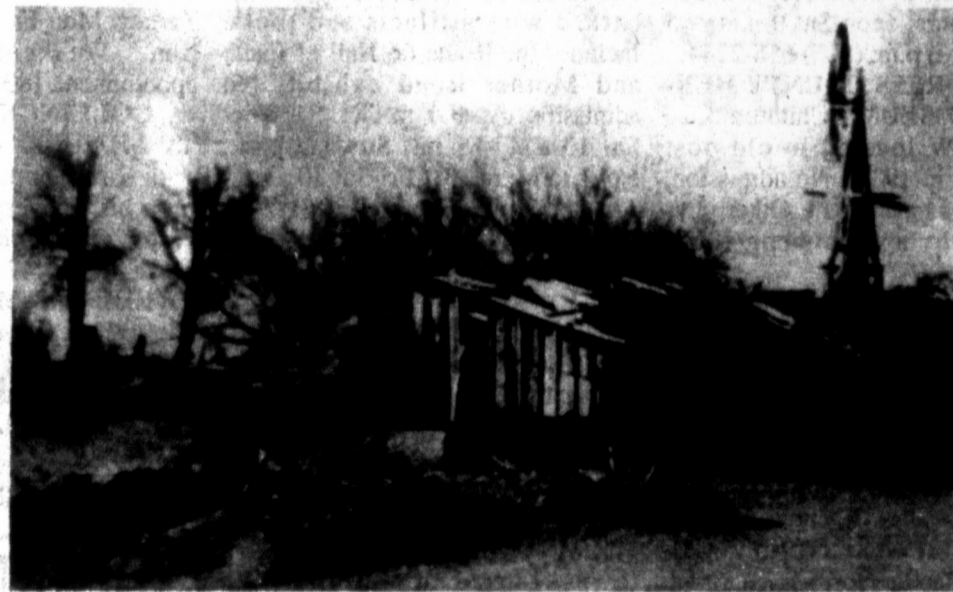
the nester insisted on plowing it under for cropland.

Despite determination and hard work, a long-term drought and lack of knowledge about conservation measures led to the infamous "Dust Bowl" years. We lost a lot of ground to Chicago and a lot of relatives to California back then.

roads will lead you there. Any sunset in the canyonlands will take your breath away as Panhandle skies live up to their legend.

Our numerous museums will "put you on horseback and into the past."

The *Prairie Dog Gazette* wants to be your good scout. Within



This is what many people think the Panhandle looks like. However, This scene was only around during the "Dust Bowl" years. The Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum provided us with the photograph. Its caption reads: "For Sale - One farm, one broken wagon. A sign on the door reads, 'Ninety miles to water, 100 miles to wood, 10 miles to Hell. God bless our home. Gone to see the folks.'"

Today, visitors are rediscovering what the Indians knew so long ago. Beauty is, after all, more than skin deep. The Panhandle is like a mysterious and alluring woman. She takes some courting before revealing her secrets.

Take time to know her. It will be a great adventure. All side

these pages, discover the past and the present Panhandle.

As for the future, we are rediscovering what the Indians always understood. We're taking our responsibility for the preservation of this land more seriously.

It is a beautiful place!

You Can Walk Through These Doors And Into Our Past

AMERICAN QUARTER HORSE HERITAGE CENTER MUSEUM - Amarillo: 2601 Interstate 40 East at Quarter Horse Drive. The comprehensive history of this most western of horses. Tue-Sat 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. (806) 376-5181.

AMARILLO MUSEUM OF ART - Amarillo: 2200 S. Van Buren. Changing art exhibits plus a growing permanent collection from Russell to Rembrandt. Tue, Wed. & Fri 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Thu 10 a.m. - 9 p.m.; Sat & Sun 1-5 p.m. No admission. (806) 371-5050.

HUTCHINSON COUNTY MUSEUM - Borger: 618 N. Main St. Dedicated to the oil boom days of Hutchinson County. No admission, (806) 273-6121.

JULIAN BIVINS MUSEUM - Old Tascosa, now Cal Farley's Boys Ranch, 36 miles NW of Amarillo on Highway 385. Housed in old Tascosa Courthouse. Has skin of largest rattle snake ever killed and longest braided rawhide rope plus huge barb wire collection. Mon-Sat 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. No admission. (806) 534-2211.

RIVER VALLEY PIONEER MUSEUM - Canadian: 118 2nd St. Fine displays of early pioneer life and high plains living through the 1940s. Tue-Fri 9 a.m. - Noon and 1-4 p.m.; Sat & Sun 2-4 p.m. No admission. Closed Monday. (806) 323-6548.

PANHANDLE PLAINS HISTORICAL MUSEUM - Canyon: 2401 4th Ave. on WTSU campus. THE Museum of the Panhandle, the largest and oldest state supported museum in Texas. Takes more than one visit to appreciate. No admission. Hours: Mon-Sat 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Sun 2-6 p.m. (806) 656-2244.

CHILDRESS COUNTY HERITAGE MUSEUM - Childress: 210 3rd St. NW located in old post office built in 1935. No admission, Mon-Fri 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Other days and tours by appointment. (817) 937-2261.

SAINTS ROOST MUSEUM - Clarendon: Route 70 South. Located in former Adair Hospital. Area museum focusing on ranching and farming in Donley County. No admission. Sun 1-5 p.m. Other days and tours by appointment. (806) 874-2259.

ARMSTRONG COUNTY MUSEUM - Claude: North Trice Street. Pioneer history of county settlers and ranchers as well as Palo Duro Canyon and JA Ranch. Tue-Sat 12-4 p.m.; Sun 1-5 p.m. Closed Mon. (806) 226-2181.

CASTRO COUNTY MUSEUM - Dimmitt: 404 West Halssel St. Pioneer artifacts, 3 windmills and a half-dugout home. Houses the largest collection of Italian World War II POW artifacts in Panhandle. Mon-Fri 1-5 p.m. (806) 647-2611.

DALLAM-HARTLEY COUNTY XIT MUSEUM - Dalhart: 108 E. 5th St. Houses a fine collection focusing on 3-million acre XIT Ranch which once sprawled across the Panhandle, but goes far beyond ranch history. Tue-Sat 2-5 p.m.; First Sunday each month open house

2-5 p.m. No admission. (806) 249-5390.

MOORE COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM - Dumas: Dumas Ave. and West 8th St. in Lew Haile Annex. Good displays of flora and fauna of High Plains and ranch life thereupon. No admission. Oct. through April Mon-Fri 1-5 p.m.; May through November Mon-Fri 10 a.m.-5 p.m. (806) 935-3113.

LAKE MEREDITH AQUATIC & WILDLIFE MUSEUM - Fritch: 104 N. Robey St. The only museum with aquariums in Panhandle. Displays over 20 species of fish indigenous to Lake Meredith. Dioramas depict area wildlife and vegetation. A pleasant surprise. No admission. Tue through Sat 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sun 2-5 p.m. (806) 857-2458.

DEAF SMITH COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM - Hereford: 400 Sampson Street. Creative displays of pioneer life in the 1800s and 1900s attractively exhibited. Mon-Sat 10 a.m.-5 p.m. No admission. (806) 364-4338.

LIPSCOMB COUNTY MUSEUM - Lipscomb: Main and Willow Streets. Open the last Sunday of each month and by appointment. No admission. (806) 862-4781.

McLEAN-ALAN REED HISTORICAL MUSEUM - McLean: 116 Main Street. Pioneer settlers of Gray County are remembered with artifacts and mementos. Tue-Fri 10 a.m.-4 p.m. No admission. (806) 779-2731.

DEVIL'S ROPE MUSEUM - McLean: corner of Kingsley St. and Old Route 66. Large collection of barbed wire artifacts and tools. Includes the Route 66 Hall of Fame and Mother Road exhibit. No admission, April 1 to Oct. 31, Tue-Sat 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Sun 1-4 p.m.; Nov 1 to March 31, Fri-Sat 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.; Sun 1-4 p.m. (806) 779-2225.

HALL COUNTY HERITAGE HALL - Memphis: 101 S. 6th St. on Town Square. "Not your usual museum" with a little bit of everything including a two-headed calf and three-toed lobo wolf. Open by appointment. (806) 259-3253 or 259-2511.

ROBERTS COUNTY MUSEUM - Miami: on Highway 60 in town. Housed in restored train depot. Includes early dugout home and complete blacksmith shop dioramas. Tue-Fri 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sun 2-5 p.m. Closed Sat and Mon. (806) 868-3291.

OLD MOBEETIE JAIL MUSEUM - Mobeetie: 1 mile south of highway 152, Old Mobeetie. Housed in first jail in Panhandle. Focuses on first settlement in Panhandle. No admission. Daily 1-5 p.m. Closed Wed. (806) 826-3427 or 845-2353.

WHITE DEER LAND MUSEUM - Pampa: 116 S. Cuyler Street. Outstanding arrowhead collection, clothing, furniture and dishes. Unique History Wall. No admission. Tue-Sat 1:30-4 p.m.; Sun 1-5:30 p.m. (806) 669-8041.

CARSON COUNTY SQUARE HOUSE MUSEUM - Panhandle: 5th and Elsie Streets. Award winning museum. More than a morning's worth. No admission. Mon-Sat 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m.; Sun 1-5:30 p.m. (806) 537-3524.

MUSEUM OF THE PLAINS - Perryton: Highway 83 north of city. General history exhibits of Texas and Oklahoma Panhandles. Tours by appointment only. (806) 534-6400.

BRISCOE COUNTY SIDEWALK MUSEUM - Quitaque: Highway 86. Historic memorabilia displayed in store fronts.

PIONEER WEST MUSEUM - Shamrock: 204 S. Madden Street. Housed in former Reynolds Hotel. Mon-Fri 10 a.m. to noon and 1-4 p.m. No fee (806) 256-2501.

STATION MASTER'S HISTORICAL MUSEUM - Spearman: 30 S. Townsend. Two-building complex includes a station master's home and office. No admission. Tue-Sat 1-5 p.m. (806) 659-3008.

SHERMAN COUNTY MUSEUM - Stratford: Main Street downtown. No admission. Weekdays 2-5 p.m. Closed Sat & Sun. (806) 396-2582.

SWISHER COUNTY ARCHIVES AND MUSEUM - Tulia: 127 SW 2nd St. in Swisher Memorial Building. Historical displays through the 1930s and 40s. Complete collection of military uniforms from pre-Civil War through Desert Storm. Mon-Fri 9 a.m.-5 p.m. (806) 995-2819.

BOB WILLS MUSEUM - Turkey: 6th and Lyles Streets. Dedicated to the king of western swing music who grew up in Turkey. Mon-Fri 8 a.m. to noon; 1-5 p.m. Weekends by advance appointment. (806) 423-1033.

COLLINGSWORTH COUNTY MUSEUM - Wellington: 1406 15th Street and 824 East Ave. "A little bit of everything" plus an art center. Open 7 days a week from 1-5 p.m. (806) 447-5133 or 447-5327.

FREEDOM MUSEUM USA - Pampa: Located in the park just East of Hobart St. (It's hard to miss, it's the building with the self-propelled 8-inch howitzer parked outside.)


Opened in 1994 is a tribute to veterans of all branches of the service. Built over a period of years from donations and volunteer labor, museum contains memorabilia and artifacts concerning military service.

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WESTERN SWING

Life On The Road With A Dance Band

By Bill Russell

Western Swing music was born here in the Panhandle and roared out into the rest of the world like a West Texas tornado.

People couldn't get enough of the jazzy country-western music with a dance beat as played by Bob Wills of Turkey and his Light Crust Doughboys (and later the Texas Playboys) and Milton Brown of Fort Worth and his Brownies.

These pioneer groups, joined by Oklahoma native Spade Cooley, played to packed houses throughout the west.

As soon as they could afford it, these original groups settled down to recording contracts and performances in larger cities. The tough life on the road of one-night stands was left to other musicians who had not reached the plateau of contracts and concert hall engagements.

Life on the road was rough in those days. The *Prairie Dog Gazette* found three musicians who followed that musical path and asked how they remembered life "On The Road."

"It might seem like a glamorous life at first glance," said R.T. "Windy" Wood of Claude who spent more years than he would like to remember traveling with his and other western swing bands. "We lived life on the edge. Some of us fell over."

"It was fun a lot of the time, but it was no kind of a life for a family," remembers Ruby Robison of Sharon, Oklahoma who was married in Claude in 1937 while the band she was singing with was playing there. "I was on the road for five years. I was sad when it was over, but sometimes things have to be over so you can settle down in life, I guess."

"It was a rough life," said Lloyd "Little Tex" Worrell who played with his father's Starlite Riders Band. Lloyd's father, "Big Tex" Worrell was the man who married Ruby in Claude. Lloyd later toured with Jimmy Wakely and Tex Ritter playing guitar, bass and keyboards.

TRANSPORTATION - ALWAYS A PAIN

WINDY WOOD: "We mostly had old cars or maybe an old bus and it was a long way between towns. I'll bet I traveled over 100,000 miles with my neck bent around a bass fiddle."

RUBY ROBISON: "We were always jammed in an old car of some sort. We dragged along a little trailer to hold our instruments and many's the time I wished I could go back and ride in that trailer."

LLOYD 'Little Tex' Worrell: "The long drives were killers. One time we took off from San Berdo (San Bernardino) and drove straight through to Hobbs, New Mexico for

a performance. The next day we played in Portales, then Roswell in New Mexico; Amarillo, Texas and Hollis, Oklahoma. Then we doubled back to Clarendon before winding up in Vernon for the Santa Rosa rodeo and show. We were booked there for a week, but I was up the next morning loading my stuff into the car, ready to go to the next town. I couldn't believe we were going to stay in the same place for more than one night."

RESTAURANT FOOD AND DIRTY LAUNDRY

WINDY WOOD: "Restaurant food wore a little thin after a while. Pretty soon you forgot what good food tasted like."

RUBY ROBISON: "You had to watch what you ate. The plate lunches mostly consisted of peas and beans and you knew the next stop was a long ways down the road. We soon learned not to order the Blue Plate Specials."

LITTLE TEX: "You got so you just hated some of that restaurant food. Some restaurants were pretty decent. I won't comment on the others."

RUBY: "I hated doing the laundry. I had to do all of the white shirts for the band, so I would have to find a washateria and wash them all. There were no dryers then so I had to hang them out in the hotel room to dry and then iron them. I wish there had been women's liberation in those days."

LITTLE TEX: "It always seemed like you had a bundle of dirty clothes and no place to wash them. We didn't have drip dry then and wherever you were sleeping was always hung with damp clothes."



The Starlite Riders: Standing: Tex Worrell, Ruby Robison, Jim Wilder and Tommy Tomlin. Seated: Lil Tex Worrell and Albert Brooks.

THE CROWDS

WINDY WOOD: "People would come from everywhere to hear us play. I recall one night in Clarendon, we were playing in the Opera House which was located upstairs above the ice house. The place got so packed people couldn't dance, just hug each other and wiggle. Finally it got so crowded someone was forced off the balcony onto the top of a car parked below."

RUBY: "The best part of being on the road was the music and the people. They were hungry for that music. I remember one time in Borger we were actually kidnapped from a boarding house and taken out to play at a ranch dance. We wound up playing until after 3 a.m. and we had to get back on the road that morning."

LITTLE TEX: "No matter where we played people showed up from all over. We played in dance halls, veterans halls, school auditoriums and even roped off streets. I can never remember lacking a crowd."

Continued on page 6.

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Touring Took Its Toll On Troubadours

Continued from page 5.

We had fantastic crowds in small towns. I never did figure where all of the people came from."

BOOTLEGGERS, STORMS AND ROBOTS

WINDY WOOD: "I remember a bootlegger always seemed to show up when we played a dry county or town. Drink was one of the hazards of being on the road. There was always some head-bustin' whiskey available. But in one case I was convinced we had the same bootlegger following us from place to place. I almost asked him for a ride to the next town. He had a better car than we did."

RUBY: We had a crowd at one dance that wouldn't dance or even tap their feet. We tried everything we could think of but they just stood there like robots. It was a little scary. Finally I took a bow after a number and our bass player made like he was going to kick me off the stage when I bent over. Well that woke those robots up. Then we were worried they might lynch the bass player."

LITTLE TEX: "I vividly remember one night we played in Clarendon. It was late when we finished and we were staying in a brick hotel next to the railroad tracks.

The biggest thunder storm I had ever seen brewed up. Between that storm and the trains rumbling through I don't think I got a wink of sleep."

THEN THERE WAS THE MONEY

WINDY WOOD: "Booking agents had no mercy. I've been cheated, lied to, stolen from, all without a gun being pulled on me. I wouldn't take anything for what I've been through, but we were musicians, easy pickings for the dishonest."

RUBY: "It was a great time but there was no way you could make a living at it. Musicians didn't get paid half of what they were worth back then. Now it seems musicians get paid more than double what some of them are worth."

LITTLE TEX: "You didn't make anywhere near the money musicians make today. If you could get a

recording company to back you, you might do pretty well, but it was not the way to get rich, or stay out of debt for that matter."

WOULD YOU GO ON THE ROAD AGAIN?

WINDY WOOD: "Not today, even with jet travel. You have to be young for that sort of thing. I'm glad I did it, but once is enough."

RUBY: "Not now. Well, at least not for long. And I wouldn't launder any shirts for anybody."

LITTLE TEX: "If my health permitted I might give it a short try, but not for long. It's one of those kinds of things that if you do it once, you're seeking wisdom. If you do it twice, you're a fool."



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Are They Wild Dogs Of The Prairie?

By Bill Russell

Prairie dogs have an image problem. They are considered adorable little creatures frolicking in the prairie grass by some humans and large pains in the pasture by others.

One thing is certain, however, prairie dogs are as much a part of the Panhandle heritage as the buffalo, coyote, Longhorn and mustang.

Noted western researcher and author Elmer Kelton is of the opinion that the lowly prairie dog was a more important part of the plains food chain than the buffalo, and their reduction in numbers has

led to the gradual lowering of the water table in the huge Ogallala Aquifer. Without the innumerable prairie dog burrows, Kelton contends, surface water does not have sufficient drainage channels down into the aquifer that prairie dog burrows once provided.

Ranchers, cattlemen and property owners are skeptical.

"They are nasty, flea bitten, germ carrying environment destructive brothers from the rat family tree," said Vergil Welch, a Donley County landowner whose pasture is home to a persistent and growing prairie dog town.

Despite unlimited hunting, trapping and poisoning, the prairie dog has thus far resisted all attempts at complete eradication. While not totally successful, these efforts have not been ineffective. The overall number of prairie dogs in existence today is a mere shadow of the immeasurable populations of the past.

Early explorers in the Texas Panhandle reported the largest prairie dog city anyone has ever seen. This rodent metropolis measured 250 miles long by 100 miles wide. Its population was estimated at five billion!

To early explorers prairie dogs

were considered amusing and interesting creatures. The Lewis and Clark Expedition went to great lengths to trap a representative sample of the "Prairie Dog" and send them back to Washington D.C. The bill of lading on the shipment listed them as "wild dogs of the prairie" and President Jefferson was informed that these animals existed in "infinite numbers."

Prairie dogs have meant different things to different people throughout history.

To Abilene, Kansas saloon owner Josiah Jones they meant money. When Texas cattle drives were in their heyday and

Abilene was a wild and woolly railhead, Jones was making so much money selling prairie dogs to greenhorns coming west he turned management of his saloon over to an employee and began trapping "dogs" full time. Jones would also pay cowboys \$2 a head for live prairie dogs and resell them for \$5.

To the Kiowa and Comanche chiefs returning home in 1874, after a term of imprisonment in Florida following the Red River War, prairie dogs meant they had arrived.

"I saw the brown hawks gliding over the land today and tonight I hear the chirping of the prairie dogs in their villages," Chief White Horse told his guard.

"I now know your words are true and that you have brought me home."

To one pioneer, remembered only by the last name of Armistad, prairie dogs meant a type of insanity.

After laying claim to a section of Panhandle land and building a dugout for his family, Armistad declared war on the prairie dog town near his homestead. He shot them, trapped them, tried to dig them out by hand, and eventually ordered a case of dynamite from Kansas City. When the explosives arrived he began blasting the prairie dogs out.

Neighbors and cowboys came to watch as day after day Armistad detonated dynamite he had stuffed into prairie dog burrows. He finally gave up when the dynamite was gone, the roof of his dugout had collapsed from the continued detonations, and the prairie dogs had not vacated his land. According to local legend the would-be farmer packed up and moved on, a victim, old timers said, of "prairie dog fever."

Living in elaborate underground labyrinths, prairie dogs feed on grasses and leafy weeds. It is estimated that each animal eats more than twice its weight each month.

But the "crunch" is coming for this doughty little plains resident. Ranchers and farmers are becoming less able to absorb the losses in irrigation water and crops caused by the rodents. Relocation attempts continue to fail and habitat reduction is relentless.

While many are speaking out for a new ecological ethic allowing the survival of every species, harried agriculturists contend that in extinction the prairie dog would be little missed.

However, prairie dogs may be cultivating future allies in their battle for survival. A growing segment of children's literature is building around such characters as "Dupper," a prairie dog with an artistic flare created by Betty Baker and "Flick" and his prairie dog family created by Janette Oke.

As long as Dupper and Flick fans don't grow up to battle with prairie dogs for a living, they may become allies of the "wild dogs of the prairie."

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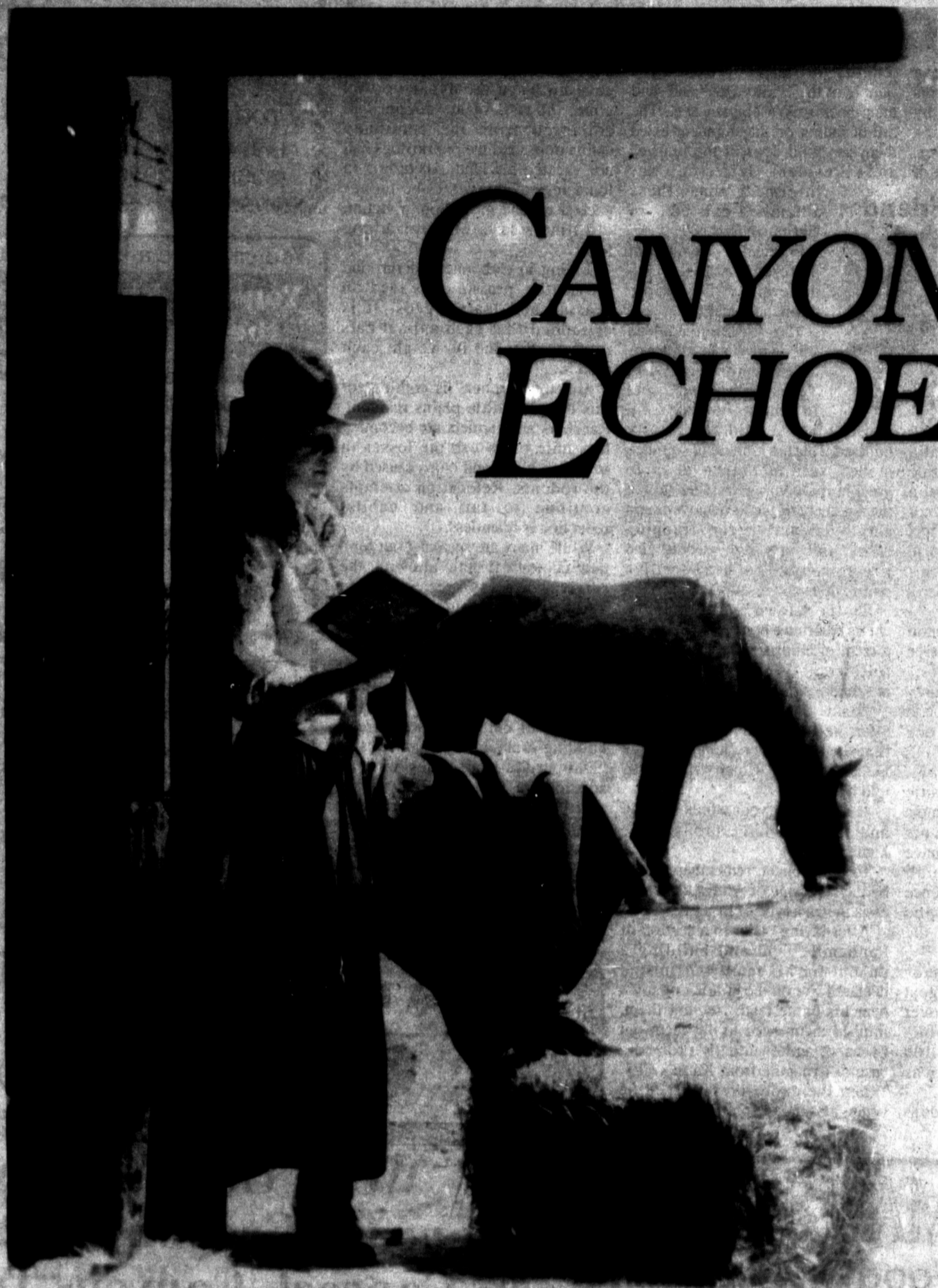
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Quilts Are A Patchwork Of The Past And Present



The tradition of quilting is in good hands in the Texas Panhandle.

By Bill Russell

The gunslingers and Indian fighters are gone, as are the buffalo and Longhorns. Prairie schooners, dugout homes, the oil boom and the Dust Bowl bust are only history now, but one Panhandle tradition survives and thrives in our part of Texas.

Quilts remain the most enduring icons of our pioneer heritage.

"It is no exaggeration to state that life in early Texas would not have been the same without the quilt," wrote Panhandle native Suzanne Yabsley in her book "Texas Quilts, Texas Women." "Everyone from cowboys and dance-hall girls to presidents and first ladies used quilts."

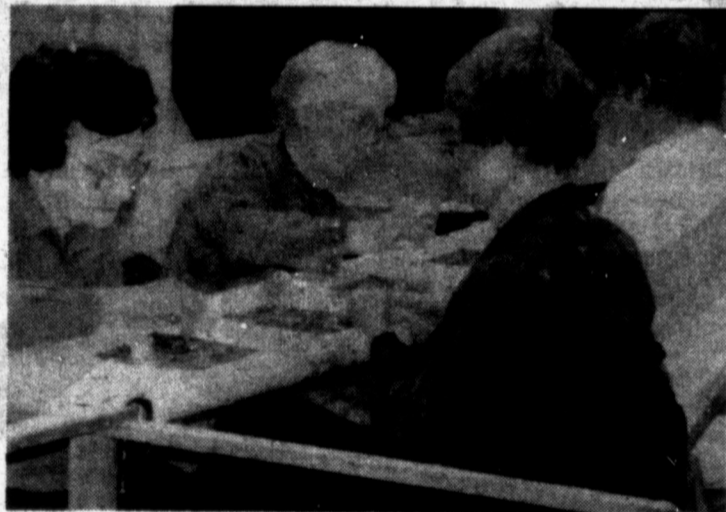
The first Texas quilter is believed to have been Jane Wilkinson Long who came to wild Texas in 1819 to be with her adventurer husband, Dr. James Long, who had led an impromptu invasion of Spanish territory and captured Nacogdoches. Jane was only 21 at the time and brought with her a black teenager named Kian who was also adept at the quilter's art. Even after her husband was captured and executed, Jane remained in Texas and, with Kian, became a part of history.

Quilting was not practiced among the Spanish settlers and the Indians of Texas. Therefore, from the first, quilt patterns showed a strong Texas theme. Early arrivals found fertile ground in the new territory for quilting. Despite its reputation as "cattle" country, Texas was never short of sheep to provide wool, and cotton was always an important crop in the state. To color quilts, dyes were made from various trees, bushes and berries native to the region.

Quilting Bees provided a welcome break in the almost total isolation pioneer families faced. These gatherings established an enduring social structure, provided for an exchange of information and ideas, as well as reinforcing the cooperative spirit that made frontier survival possible.

Quilting Bees were not "for women only." Men attended to undertake projects too large for a single family. Men took the opportunity to converse on everything from politics to farming and ranching techniques. Quilting Bee get-togethers also provided the social milieu for young unmarried people to meet and get to know one another.

The quilting spirit is alive and well in the Panhandle today. In addition to numerous private quilting conclaves, a group of women have been meeting for 10 years at the Carson County Square House



Clockwise from far left: Eula Chote, Elma Tate, Beulah McLeod and Lena Moore quilting at the Square House.

Museum in Panhandle to quilt and carry on a pioneer tradition.

"They say we're the only live things in this museum," said Elma Tate, one of the quilters who meet each Thursday afternoon.

"We've made quilts for everyone in our families," said Eula Chote.

"We do it to pass the time and to create something beautiful."

The museum quilting society was founded by Pauline Lyles and includes Lena Moore and Beulah McLeod. The ladies estimate that they spend between 200 and 300 hours on some quilts and have sewn quilts consisting of over 400 patches of material, no two alike.

Numerous regional museums have quilt collections. The largest is at the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum in Canyon. It consists of over 200 quilts, including one thought to be the oldest in the state, a "Tree of Life" pattern in reverse applique which dates from 1809.

The Square House Museum rotates a display of 32 quilts, one of them over 100 years old, and the Deaf Smith County Museum in Hereford exhibits at least one of its quilts in a display that changes frequently.

The role played by quilts in history is just now beginning to be fully recognized.

"More and more quilts are being regarded as historical documents," said

David Hoover, registrar at the Square House Museum. "They chronicle not only state history but family history as well."

Unfortunately, the Panhandle-Plains Museum quilt collection is not currently on display. The last time the quilts were brought out of

storage was for a traveling exhibit that toured the Panhandle for the Bicentennial.

Storage of heirloom quilts is an art in itself.

"In an ideal storage situation each quilt would be spread out flat," said Susan Denney, curator of textiles at the Panhandle-Plains Museum. "But it must be remembered that quilts are made of naturally biodegradable material and are not going to last forever, no matter what you do."

Denney said the museum's quilt

collection has been carefully rolled and placed in acid-free cardboard tubes, buffered with acid-free material. Then the quilts are hung on support racks. She said the museum did not have the shelf space to store them flat.

Denney advises heirloom quilt owners who must fold quilts for storage to fold them in as large a segment as possible and to carefully refold them every three to six months. The longer folds are in

Continued on page 10.

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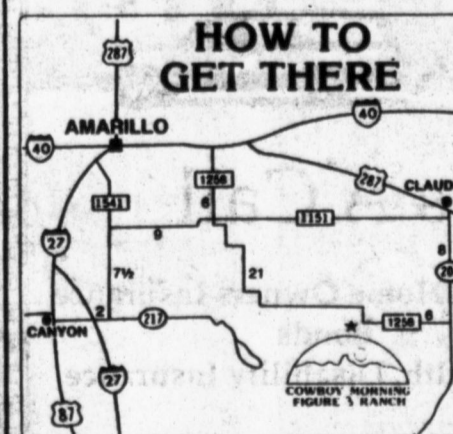
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From Bull Durham Sacks To Worn Socks, Quilts Show Creativity

Continued from page 9.

place the more the fabric fibers break down. Quilts should be padded with or wrapped in clean sheets that have been washed but not bleached. If old quilts must be washed it should be done by hand with detergent, not soap.

"Dish detergent and hand washing in the bathtub works pretty well," Denney said. "Quilts should be laid out flat to dry."

Denney also cautioned against using newspaper in the storage of quilts. "Newspaper is much too acidic and is about the quickest way I know of to help a quilt deteriorate," she said. "It's the worst thing to use around quilts."

A wide variety of materials were used by pioneer women to construct quilts. One quilt was made entirely from hand dyed Bull Durham tobacco sacks. Baby quilts were made from the tops of men's heavy work socks that had been cut off after the bottoms had worn out. There were "stomach" quilts made from that part of women's dresses

usually covered by an apron and therefore less faded or worn. There were also "shirrtail," "Dresstail" and "necktie" quilts as well as "britches" quilts.

"Some of those old quilts made from pants were so heavy they almost crushed a body," recalls Lena Moore. "We made quilts out of everything. Nothing went to waste in those days."

"There was always a quilt hanging from the ceiling," remembers Lena Moore. "When we finished working on them for the day we'd roll them up out of the way."

Quilt patterns varied widely. The Lone Star Flag, the Alamo, and the outline of the state itself were popular, but few subjects were avoided. The autographs and comments of all the cowboys riding for the XIT Ranch were sewn into one famous quilt, and a 30-panel cartoon quilt depicting the Great Depression was pieced together in 1930.

Portraits of presidents and famous people have also been sewn into

quilts as have images of Longhorn cattle, Texas landmarks, and the signing of the Declaration of Independence. A quilted coverlet made of postage stamp size pieces of material came to Texas in 1859 and was donated by Josie Moore of Arp, Texas to the Rusk County

Heritage Association.

Recently the Smithsonian Institution came under fire when it sent traditional American quilt patterns to Japan to be copied for the museum's display. Although the imported quilts were less expensive, they were not up to the standards of

American quilts.

"Good quilting has at least six stitches to the inch," said Eula Chote as her group put the finishing touches on a quilt at the Square House Museum. "The stitches of our Japanese sisters are more than a quarter of an inch long."

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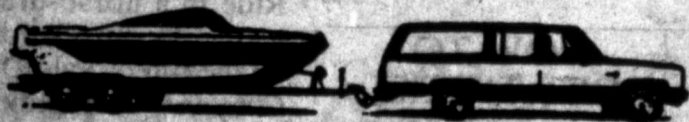
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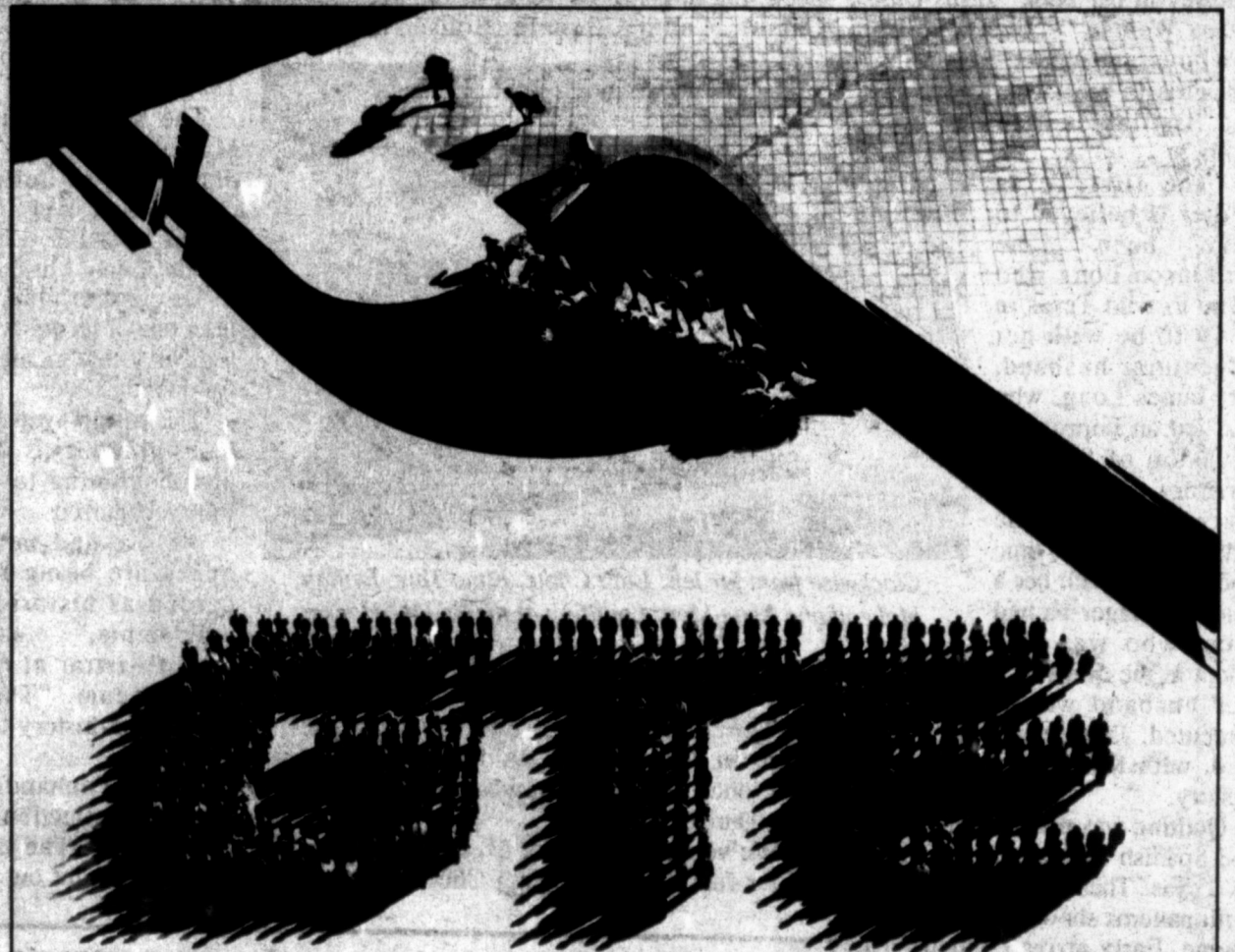


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Rustlers Met Their Match On XIT

By Bill Russell

When the sprawling XIT Ranch declared unconditional war on rustlers in 1885, range foremen doubled their life insurance policies, cowboys oiled their sixguns and everyone prepared for the worst.

It turned out to be a long and bitter battle, but despite wholesale firings, shooting scrapes and cross border raids it brought law and order to the western Panhandle and cost only one XIT rider his life.

All divisions of the XIT were plagued by rustlers and horse thieves throughout the history of the ranch, but no division suffered more than the Escarbada, which included all of what would later become Parmer County and about half of Deaf Smith County.

The reasons rustlers favored the Escarbada range was its vastness, its lack of law enforcement, and its proximity to the New Mexico border.

Bands of rustlers would cut the XIT fence, spend a day rounding up all of the unbranded calves and branded yearlings they could, then drive the stolen herd into New Mexico to be sold and/or rebranded. Some of the rustling gangs became so bold they would chase XIT riders off the range with gunfire before selecting the beef they planned to steal. Other XIT riders were bribed to look the other way. Some even joined in the rustling effort.

The situation was out of control when XIT owners sent former District Attorney and member of the Texas Legislature, A.L. Matlock, in for an unannounced inspection of the ranch. Matlock found things in a mess. Known rustlers, gunmen and horse thieves were on the ranch payroll. Rustlers were eating XIT grub and feeding their horses XIT grain before running off with XIT cattle. Managers, wagon bosses and foremen seemed unable or unwilling to control the outlaws and sometimes were working with them.

When he arrived at the Escarbada Division, Matlock recognized the

range boss as a notorious rustler he had once helped to convict. An investigation of the ranch's roster turned up the names of dozens of outlaws, rustlers, horse thieves and other criminals who had been run out of other parts of Texas.

Matlock's report pulled the trigger for the XIT owners. Mass firings followed and nearly everyone who had worked for the XIT found themselves unemployed and riding the grub line. Then XIT began hiring honest cowboys and a few "hard cases" of its own. Castro County Sheriff and former Texas Ranger Ira Aten was hired to keep XIT cattle on, and rustlers off, the Escarbada. Aten took the job knowing his chances of being killed were better than average. He doubled his life insurance and his safety precautions, and waded in against the outlaws.

To discourage the cross border raiding Aten sent fully armed fence riders out daily from each line camp. If they saw anyone along the fence, they were to open fire without asking questions. Recreational riding in the area came to a standstill, sightseers disappeared and fence cutting and rustling forays decreased.

Aten took other measures to stamp out lawlessness. He instituted a system of log books at each line camp. Every passing rider and wagon was logged and, if considered suspicious, followed. Aten also formed what could be called a "commando" group of riders known to be "handy with a gun." If a cut fence was discovered, this "commando" would ride immediately into New Mexico to recover as many XIT cattle as possible and punish the rustlers. The most modern technology was used in the battle. Telephone lines strung along fences between line camps made for better communications and more rapid reactions.

Aten became a careful man and stayed alive because of it. He never rode the same route going to and

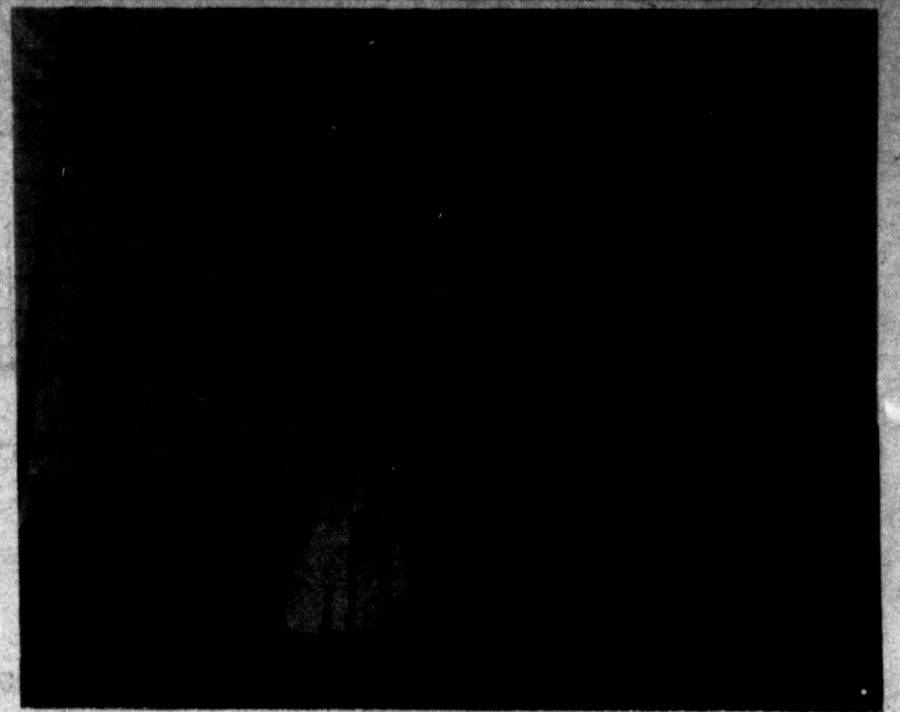
from a line camp. He never went anywhere unarmed and he even had the windows of the Escarbada Headquarters building painted dark green so he couldn't be seen from outside. Rustlers came to fear Aten and other former lawmen and rangers the ranch hired to stop depredations against the XIT.

After many months of denying rustlers easy pickings on the Escarbada, the XIT war on rustlers began to bear fruit. The ranch did for the western Panhandle what the Stockman's Association did for the eastern counties. It brought rustling and horse theft under control. But the twin evils of the range were never completely stamped out. In 1908 the XIT was still battling horse thieves and rustlers, and it was in that year the first and only XIT casualty was suffered.

It happened in Bovina. John Armstrong was then foreman of the Escarbada. He found a cow with an altered brand. He swore out a warrant for the arrest of J.W. Williams for theft. Williams in turn swore out a warrant for the arrest of Armstrong for killing the cow in question to inspect the hide for an altered brand.

The two men met at the Bovina railroad depot November 18, 1908 and Williams opened fire with a 30-30 as Armstrong rode up, killing the foreman instantly.

At his trial Williams claimed that Armstrong had roped him and was dragging him along the ground. He claimed to have fired in self defense and even produced a witness. But to no avail. Other witnesses testified that Armstrong's catch rope was coiled and done up on the saddle



Escarbada Division manager Ira Aten in rare quiet moment with his daughter. Photo courtesy Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum.

horn when the dead man's horse was caught the next day and the witness for the defense had been in jail in another town at the time of the shooting. The perjurer was sentenced to two years and the rustler to ten.

Until the ranch finally ceased operation in 1912 the XIT never gave up the battle against rustling.

The ranch owners set forth a strict set of rules governing its operations and the riders working for it. Though men groused about the restrictions and their strict enforcement, the XIT became and remained a ranch where an "honest" cowboy could ply his trade in relative peace and quiet and expect his horse to remain where he left it.

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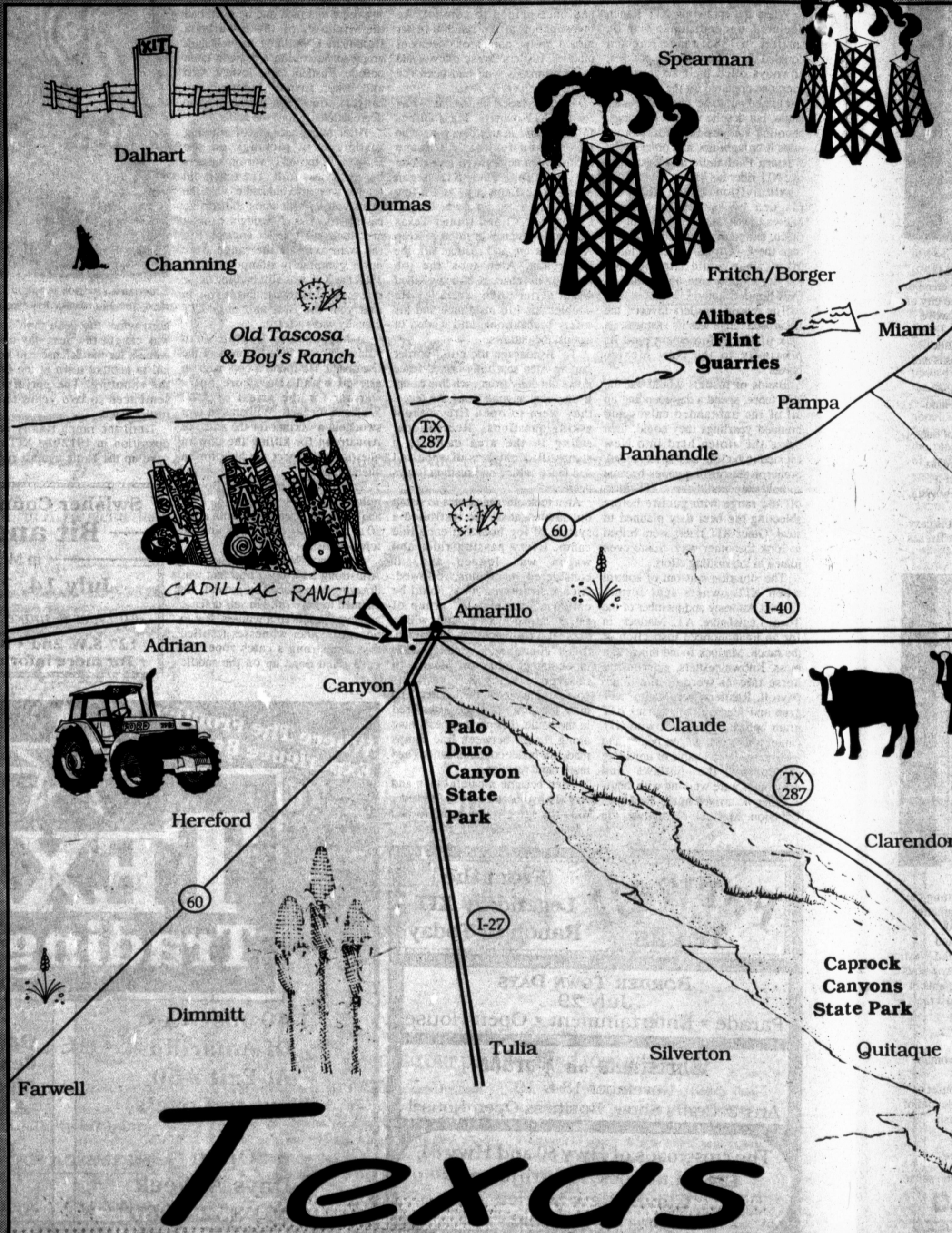
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FRYER LAKE - Pleasant recreation spot along Wolf Creek 12 miles southeast of Perryton off U.S. 83. (Not shown on most maps.) A 700-acre lake complete with fishing, boating, swimming, picnicking and RV camp sites.

GREENBELT LAKE - 5 miles north of Clarendon on Texas 70. A 1,990-acre reservoir on Salt Fork of Red River offers water recreation for a large area of the Panhandle. Facilities include boat ramps, a marina, swimming, water skiing and fishing for bass, crappie, walleye and catfish.

LAKE MARVIN - 10 miles east of Canadian on Highway 60 North, then turn on to Formby Road. A tiny 63-acre lake offering fishing, camping and nature trails.

LAKE MEREDITH - On Texas 136 one mile east of Fritch. About 16,504 acre lake built by U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, this blue gem nestles among cliffs of Canadian River valley. Facilities include boat launching ramps, marina, camping, and picnic areas. Fishermen take walleye, bass, crappie and catfish. Administered by National Park Service. Details and map available at Park Headquarters.

LAKE McCLELLAN - 28 miles south of Pampa via Texas 70 and FM 2477 east. Small lake (376 acres) provides water for several area towns. Wooded picnic areas, camping with RV hookups, boat launch ramps, swimming and fishing for black bass, crappie, blue catfish and hybrid striped bass.

LAKE MACKENZIE - 12 miles northwest of Silverton on Texas 86 West or Texas 207 North. A 910-acre lake in scenic and historic Tule Canyon. Facilities for picnicking, camping, RV hookups, boat ramps plus a swimming area. Popular with water skiers. Fish caught include bass, walleye and catfish.

PALO DURO RESERVOIR - 10 miles north of Spearman on Highway 760. 2,400 acre reservoir offers recreation on its north shore. Facilities include fishing, camping, playgrounds, a kids' fishing pond, and RV hookups with water and electricity.

PARKS

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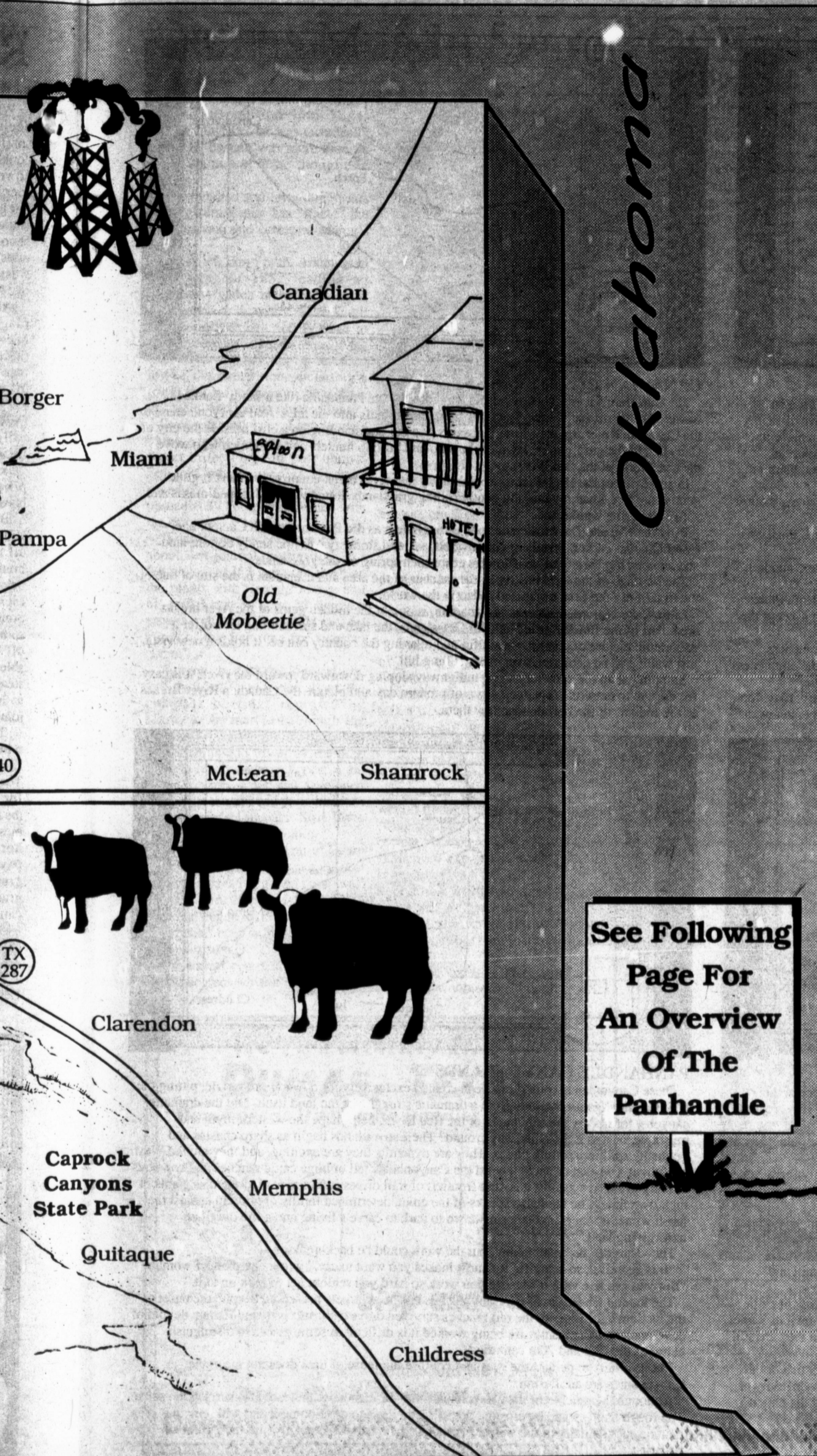
PALO DURO CANYON STATE PARK - Located 12 miles east of Canyon on Texas 217. At 15,103 acres one of the state's largest parks. On the tabletop expanse of the plains the Prairie Dog Town Fork of the Red River has carved a canyon of breathtaking beauty. Colorful canyon walls plunge a thousand feet into the canyon. Facilities: scenic drives, horseback trails and seasonal horse rentals, campsites with water and restrooms, interpretive center. Admission charged. (806) 488-2227.

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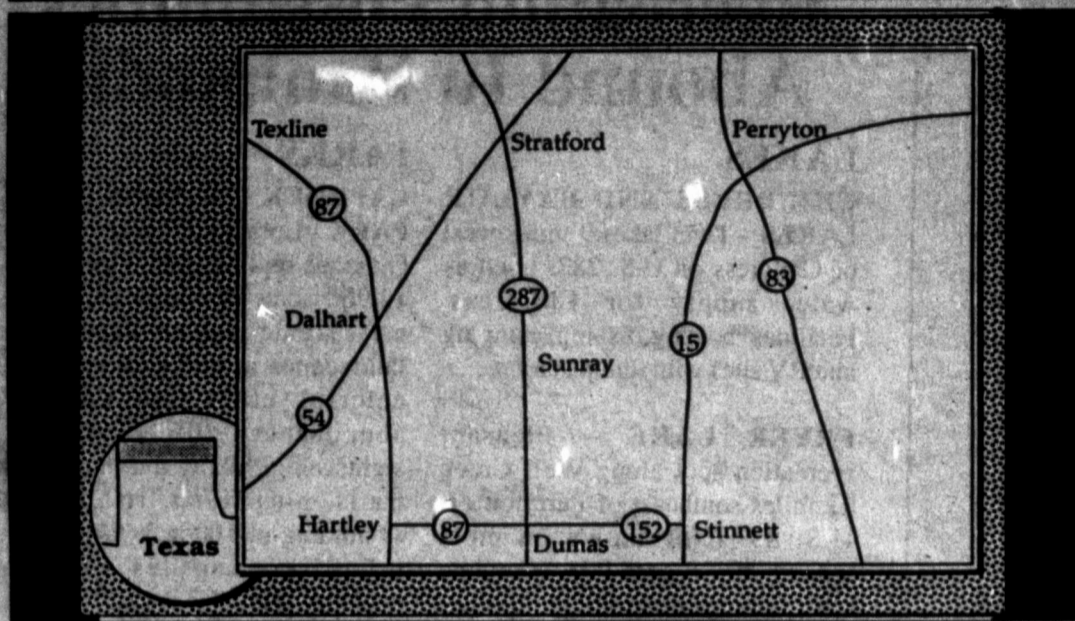
BUFFALO LAKE WILDLIFE REFUGE - Features 4.5-mile auto interpretive trail. Activities include picnicking, bird watching, photography. Campsites with tables but no water. Open daily 8 a.m. - 10 p.m. Refuge headquarters 3 miles south of Umbarger on FM 168.

LAKE MEREDITH RECREATION AREA - Eight primary and several secondary recreation parks fringing the lake offer facilities ranging from off-road vehicle trails to picnic and camping areas.

ALIBATES NATIONAL MONUMENT - A true "diamond in the rough" and well worth the extra time needed to visit. Flint quarries mined from about 10,000 years ago until the 1800s can be visited. The multi-colored flint mined here was prized by flint-using societies. Still under development by the National Parks Service, entry is by guided Ranger tour. Tours conducted twice daily from Memorial Day to Labor day. Tours limited to 25 and form up at Bates Canyon off Texas 136 about 6 miles south of Fritch.



See Following
Page For
An Overview
Of The
Panhandle



HIGH PLAINS

Heritage and history lie close to the surface of the Panhandle High Plains and have an uncanny habit of jumping out to alert the nodding passerby. Small towns that have difficulty raising a quorum at city council meetings boast a thriving historical society and a museum. Casual questions about pioneers and cowboys bring interesting and informed responses.

In Channing the past leaps out at you in the form of a Victorian XIT Ranch headquarters building being carefully restored.

Between Sunray and Stinnett a forest of historic windmills suddenly looms beside a modest farm house.

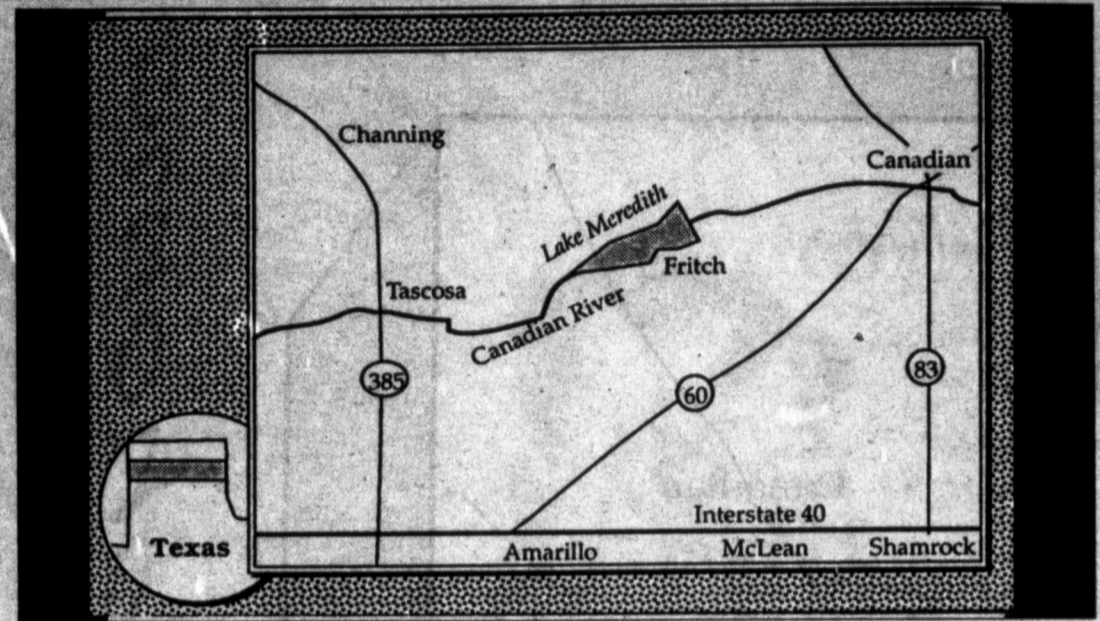
The bustling city of Dalhart boasts a robust and growing museum and additional museums and historical monuments dot the top tier of Panhandle counties.

There seems to be more sky than land in this country dotted with playa lakes and nodding pump jacks bringing oil to the surface.

"The distances are great but so are the people," said a lifetime resident of the High Plains. "Sometimes the wind is so keen you can use it to sharpen your pocket knife, but it keeps the 'skeeters' away and turns the windmills."

It was across the grand vista of these high plains that the explorers, warriors, ranchers, pioneers and oilmen trekked, fought, mapped, drilled, and came to realize that the uniqueness of this "Top of Texas" had come to reflect itself in the people who called it home.

"You can't get lost up here," said one resident. "You can look back and see yesterday, look forward and see tomorrow, and look around and see today. What more could a person want?"



CANADIAN RIVER BREAKS

The Canadian River, which winds its way through the Panhandle like a sandy-flanked snake, was the magnet which first drew men and animals into the area. And everyone came to the Canadian River Breaks - from dinosaurs like the one standing on a cliff outside the city of Canadian to the gunfighters, lawmen, buffalo and buffalo hunters and cattlemen who wove the true fabric of the Old West.

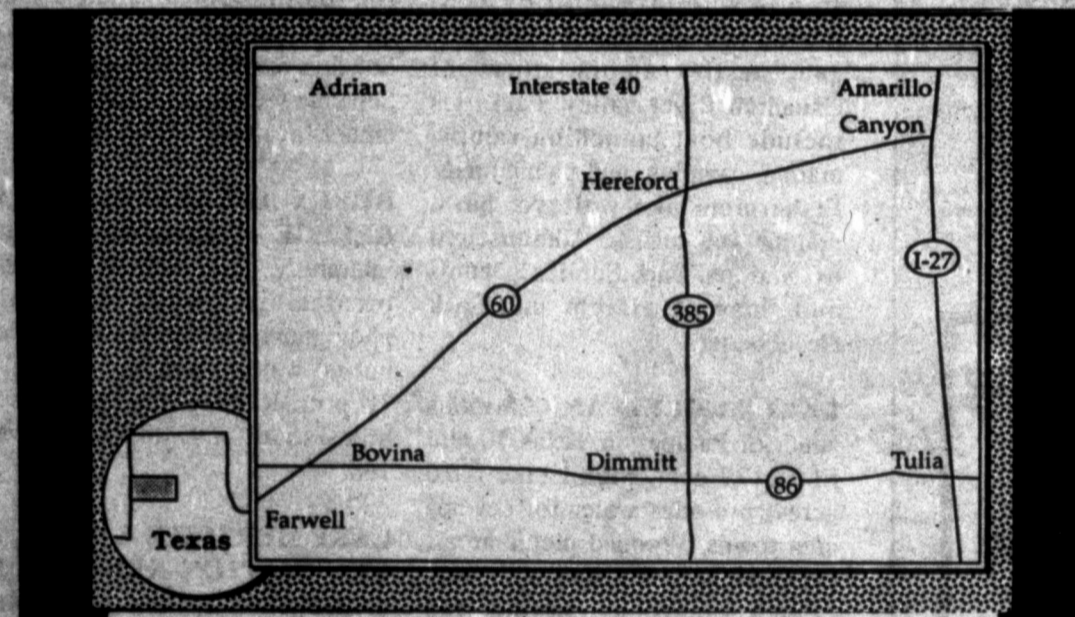
In some places the High Plains drop abruptly into river break country, in others it glides gently into tree-lined ravines and gently rolling grasslands dotted with flat topped mesas and softly clattering windmills.

Billy the Kid and Bat Masterson rode through here as did Pat Garrett, Kit Carson, and Chief Quanah Parker. Stands of cottonwood, ash and shinnery oak line sandy bottom land and an amazing variety of wildflowers erupt each spring on the grasslands.

The heritage of the west is alive in the ranches of the area and Canadian is the site of one of the first, if not the first, organized rodeo in the world.

Little Lake Marvin, northeast of Canadian, is one of the hidden gems of the river breaks area. Part of the Black Kettle National Grasslands, the lake and surrounding area offer a panoramic picture of just how beautiful and relaxing the country can be. It holds a new vista, just waiting to be explored, over every rolling hill.

Stopping at an old cemetery along a highway sloping downward toward the river, it is easy for the eye to erase the few overt signs of modern day and picture the Canadian River Breaks as the Indians or the buffalo first saw them.



SOUTH PLAINS

The rolling hills of grass and the open spaces of the South Plains inevitably make the traveler think of the isolation Coronado and his men must have felt when they first crossed the prairie in search of the Seven Cities of Gold.

Coronado never found his gold, but those who followed him did, because the gold was not locked up in seven fabled cities, but was beneath his feet, in the soil itself.

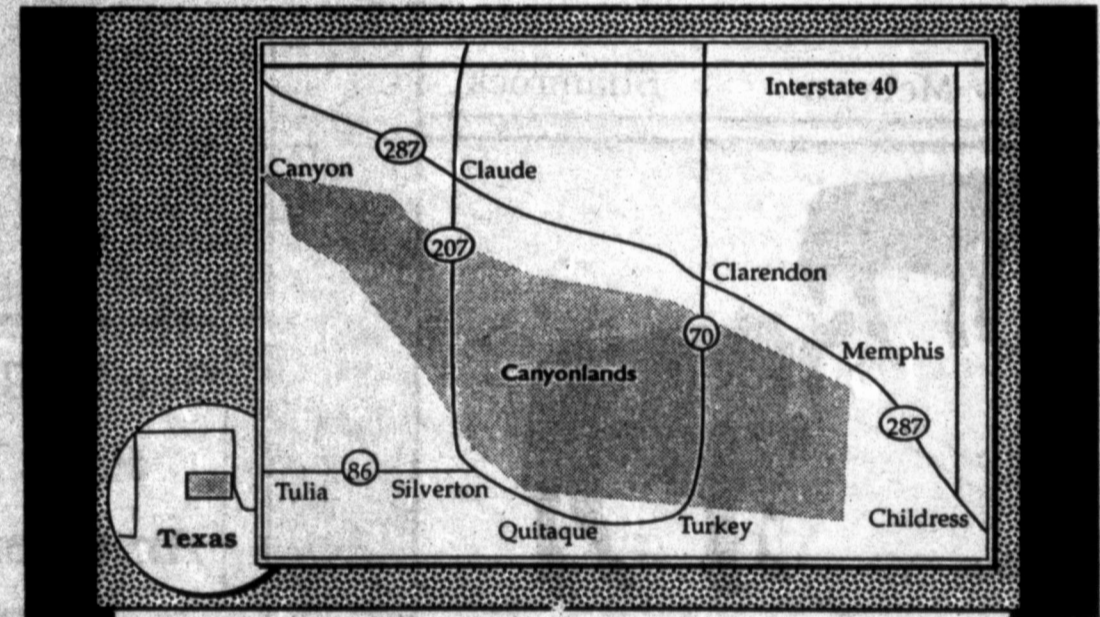
Although the vast fields that grow those crops of gold may resemble an empty sea to some travelers, it is always surprising to consider just how many people from far away places have come this way since Coronado.

A group of German Catholics found a home for themselves and their religion in Nazareth. The Farwell brothers came from city streets of Chicago to oversee a cattle empire on the empty prairie, and thousands of Italian prisoners of war captured in the North African fighting of World War II gazed out over the plains from their camp near Dimmitt and admired the sweep and grandeur of the land even while longing for their homes.

The South Plains has always showcased the gold its land contained. Vast herds of cattle wandered across the railroad tracks, stopping trains at Bovina and giving the town its name. Those herds of cattle now have shorter horns and are confined to feed lots, but they are still there.

Grain elevators soar into the big sky, dwarfing the more modest farm houses that dot the land. Sugar processing plants and meat packing plants are also signs of the productivity of this land. There can be little doubt that the South Plains is a significant part of the nation's "breadbasket."

New people come from far away lands to buy cattle and grain and to study the techniques and methods used to "mine" the renewable gold of the Panhandle South Plains.



PANHANDLE CANYONLANDS

These Canyonlands could have been created exclusively for a John Ford movie, pitting the U.S. Cavalry against the Indians in a dramatic struggle for the land itself. Did the dramatic canyons, formed by the tributaries of the Red River, help shape the western myth and mystique, or was it the other way around? The Canyonlands begin as sharp chasms and gradually spill into rolling plains. They are dynamic, they are exciting, and they are the West.

Without a written or spoken word the Canyonlands tell of huge cattle ranches and cowboys striving to survive against a hostile frontier; of trail drives and men who loomed as giants in their own time. The land also speaks of the quiet, determined family digging in against the harsh winter northers and laboring dawn to dark to carve a living and a life out of an unforgiving land.

The vistas can be breathtaking, but the work could be backbreaking. "It is beautiful, so beautiful it almost makes you want to cry," wrote one pioneer woman. "But you can live with it because you work so hard you seldom get to look up at it."

The natural landscape of the Canyonlands has been largely preserved despite the onset of the modern age. Some of the old ranches survived or partially survived and remain devoid of development. When cattle are being worked it is difficult in some places to distinguish between the 19th and 20th centuries.

But its ability to delight the eyes and confuse the sense of time does not mean the Canyonlands are an illusion.

Although the ranches of the Canyonlands may be changing, they are also staying the same. The rough land, etched by erosion, doesn't lend itself to development and will remain a picturesque reminder of the western heritage that is carved so deeply into the psyche of America.

Dumas Man In Search Of Early Explorer's True Trail

By Bill Russell

When Captain Randolph Marcy led his expedition into Texas territory in 1852 he was technically lost. The captain was more than 50 miles from where he thought he was.

One hundred and forty-three years later a Dumas man has "found" the good captain and corrected Marcy's error.

Marcy left Fort Smith, Arkansas in the spring of 1852 leading an expedition which included soldiers, surveyors, ox wagons and a small herd of cattle. His orders were to find and map the headwaters of the Red River. Marcy kept a detailed log of the expedition, including a long list of compass bearings, distances, and terrain observations.

Over a century later, Fred Squyres came across a copy of Marcy's report in the Fort Sill post library. Squyres, who was doing his army reserve training at the time, immediately became fascinated with the trek.

"I don't know exactly what it was about that journal, but reading it, I felt almost as if I were out there on the plains with Captain Marcy and his men," said Squyres. "I started a project right then that would take up much of my free time for years to come."

Squyres studied the logs closely, and decided to plot out all of the compass bearings reported by Marcy as he marched through the Panhandle. From his work in soil conservation and his army training, Squyres had become an expert in the use of a compass and had developed an eye for terrain, which helped him with Marcy's journals. Still there were obstacles to overcome.

"It took me a long time to figure out that he was using a nautical compass instead of a land compass," Squyres said. "Before I figured that out I had begun to think that Captain Marcy had been a little too long in the Texas sun."

A nautical compass shows North at 360 degrees while a land compass



Fred Squyres is on a serious quest.

has North at 180 degrees. Once Squyres made that adjustment, translating the logs onto a map became much easier.

Working in his spare time Squyres collected large scale topographical maps of the entire Panhandle and painstakingly plotted Marcy's movements day by day. One of the first things he discovered was that Marcy was lost.

"The expedition camped the night of June 10, 1852 on Sweetwater Creek in what is now Wheeler County," Squyres explained. "He left a detailed description of the campsite, but the position he put in the log was about 53 miles off."

After making that determination Squyres was able to reconstruct the entire course of the expedition as it wound through the Panhandle. In so doing Squyres was not only able to correct Marcy's journal, but also has challenged existing scholarly works concerning the trek. Accounts of the expedition written by Foreman in 1935 and Peffley in 1952 either ignored the inconsistencies in Marcy's report or glossed over them.

"Marcy confused the two forks of

the Red River," Squyres said. "He looked down on one and believed he was looking down on the other. I'm pretty sure I'm bullet proof on my facts here," Squyres continued. "I believe I'm the only person who has gone back, using the original bearings and good aerial survey maps, and plotted it all out."

Squyres has determined that Marcy did not venture into what is now Armstrong County, as had been reported, but did cross Collingsworth County, which had not been commented upon in any written history.

"It's been exciting to me to find all of this out and figure exactly what happened back in 1852," Squyres said. "It's like a jigsaw puzzle and a mystery all rolled into one."

Squyres refers to his unique hobby as "trail tracing" and says he took it up because he "didn't drink, play poker or carouse around."

Now that he has completely reconstructed the Texas portion of Marcy's expedition, Squyres is going to seek the final proof of his findings. He's going to follow his version of Marcy's footsteps, looking for clues.

On June 16, 1852 Marcy and his men camped on the edge of the high plains south of where Pampa would later stand. Marcy buried a note in a bottle beneath a cottonwood tree and entered that fact in his log. This summer Squyres is setting out to find that bottled note and any other sign of the expedition's passage.

"I've got the site located on the map," said Squyres. "I'll find some sign of them, if not there, then somewhere else along the route. I

know where they were 143 years myself on the same spot and start ago. Now all I have to do is put digging."

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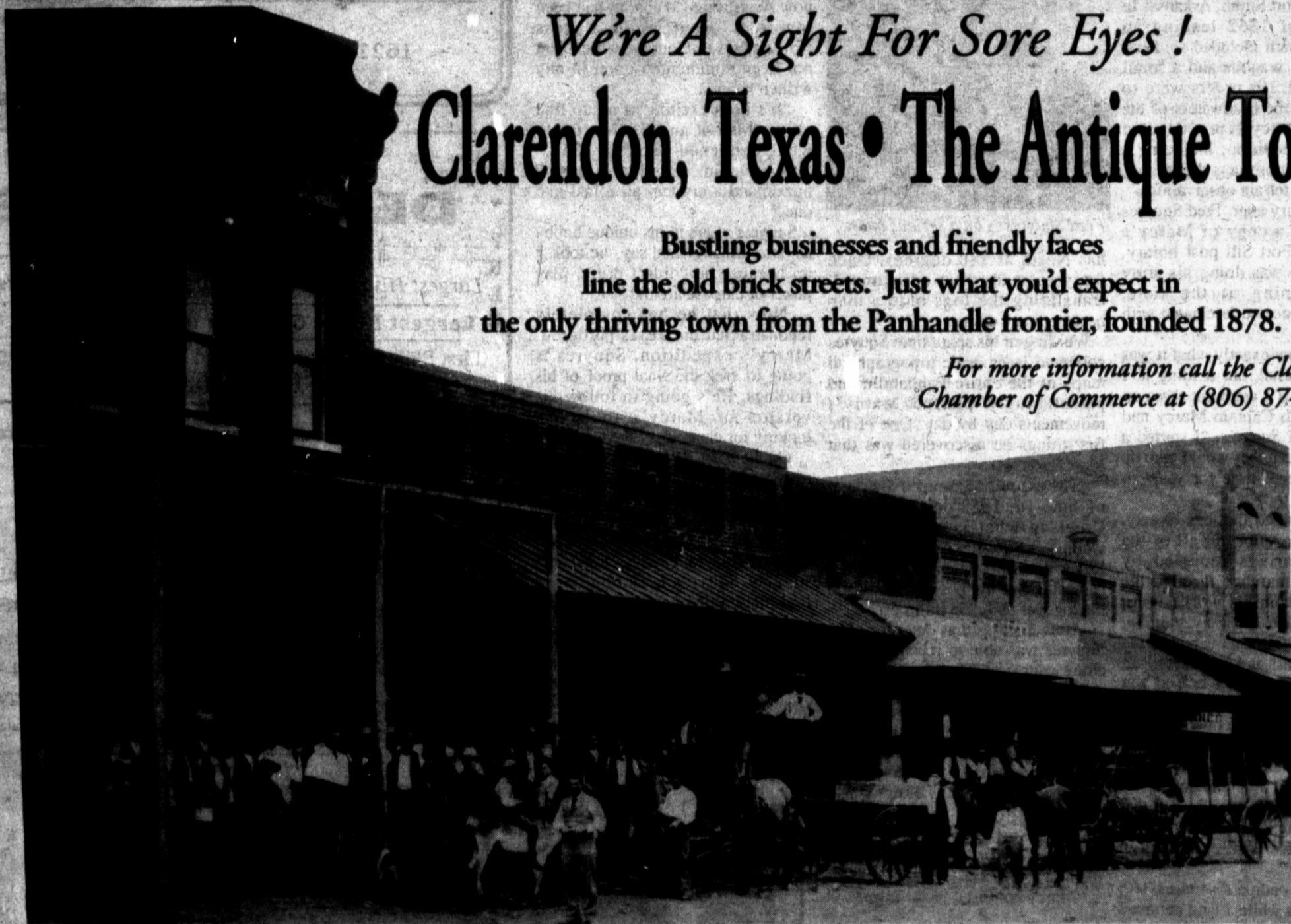
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Clarendon in 1906. Photo courtesy Saints' Roost Museum.



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Artist's Work Preserves Cowboy Life In The West

By Bill Russell

Bob Hunnicutt is a sculptor with a dual mission in life, the preservation of an artistic tradition and an ongoing chronicle in bronze of the American West.

"I try to stay with contemporary western themes in my sculpting," said Hunnicutt. "Remington and Russell and those artists did everything you could do up to a certain date. I was born in 1930 and I'm trying to keep the continuity going from then."

Hunnicutt's bronzes range in subject from wildlife dramatic, (a grizzly bear snatching salmon from a river) to cowboy everyday (a ranch hand digging the muck out of the bottom of a stock tank). In each, Hunnicutt strives for authenticity as he did with the Coors Traveling Trophy for Ranch Rodeos, a sculpture of a fully rigged chuck-wagon.

"The cowboy is the greatest critic in the world," he said. "If you get something wrong a cowboy isn't shy about bringing it to your attention."

Hunnicutt began sculpting after he decided to quit trying to ride bulls in the rodeo. One day he just picked up a ball of wax and started shaping it into a Brahman bull. He had no art training, just desire.

His first work of art taught him a lesson in economics, resulting in Hunnicutt building his own forge in Channing. "It cost me \$300 to get that first bull cast in bronze," Hunnicutt said. "I saw right off that a beginning sculptor wasn't going to make anything that way." Since then he has cast over 100 original works in that northern Panhandle town.

Hunnicutt uses the "lost wax" method in producing his sculptures. The casting takes longer than the creation of the original wax sculpture which, in this method, is destroyed in the process of making molds.

"It goes pretty fast for me at the start," Hunnicutt said. "I can make a piece in about 40 hours. That's the easy part. It takes a lot longer than



Channing's Hunnicutt creates bronzes that show ranch life after the trail drives such as cleaning water tanks.

that to make the molds and get the piece ready for casting."

For 10 years Hunnicutt worked steadily at his art, creating

sculptures and castings, then traveling to art shows all over the southwest. By the time a decade had passed he had grown tired of the

gypsy life and returned to Channing to settle down.

"I just got tired of life on the road and selling," he said. "I thought it

was time I settled down and earned a real living."

That "real living" did not mean an end to art. Hunnicutt still casts about 30 bronzes each year. Some are made from his previous molds and at least one is cast from a totally new design.

"I haven't lost any of my enthusiasm for the art," Hunnicutt said. "One day here pretty soon I'll take it up again full time. I've never lost interest in it and don't suppose I ever will."

Hunnicutt receives a lot of support and encouragement from many Channing residents including artist Don Ray and spur maker "Red" Skelton.

"We've got quite a little 'Lum and Abner' art colony going here in Channing," said Hunnicutt with a chuckle. "Ain't one of us got a lick of formal training, but we don't let that stop us one bit."

Hunnicutt was born in Achillee, Oklahoma but moved with his
Continued on page 18.

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Artist Devotes His Talents To Capturing West

Continued from page 17.

family to Channing at an early age. He worked on ranches and rode in rodeos, even while serving in the Air Force. He has been a Hartley County Commissioner for 20 years and is a bail bondsman. He also has one of the largest and most comprehensive collections of arrowheads and paleo-points in the Panhandle.

"I'm a creek hunter. I'm out every chance I get, looking for flint shining in the sun," Hunnicutt said.

Hunnicutt estimates he has approximately 25,000 arrowheads in his collection. He also has a garage full of artifacts recovered from an old XIT Ranch dump, artifacts which include a pair of "store bought" false teeth as well as numerous coins and bottles.

Despite all of his accomplishments, Hunnicutt is not completely satisfied with his art, nor is he discouraged.

"If you get to the point where you are happy, you might as well quit and get into something else," Hunnicutt said. "As far as getting discouraged, I don't think I ever will. It's a gift I was blessed with and I doubt I'll tire of it until I get tired of living."

Bob Hunnicutt is far from reaching that point in his span of years. It looks like we can expect the chronicles of the contemporary American cowboy to carry on as the Channing sculptor continues to preserve the present in bronze for the future to admire.



Hunnicutt fills a room with his collection of arrowheads and treasures.



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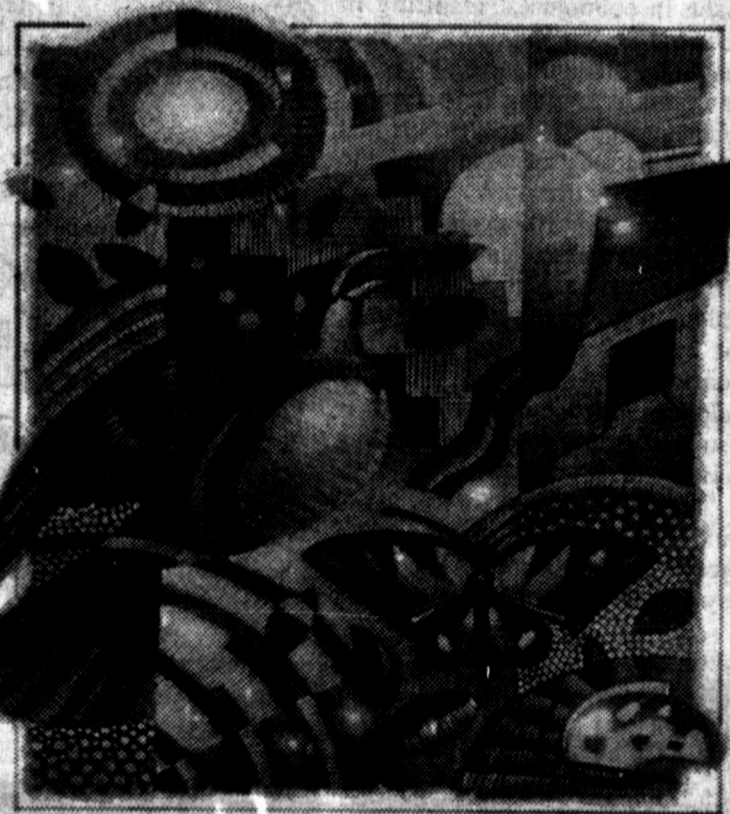
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“Bombs Away” Echoed In Childress

During the Second World War more bombs fell on certain parts of the Texas Panhandle than on some German cities. The big difference was that the Texas bombs were 100-pound training bombs dropped by fledgling “bomb aimers” on empty prairie. Those falling on Germany were high explosive dropped by Texas trained bombardiers.

A large number of those bombardiers who took the war to the enemy homeland were trained at Childress Army Air Field (CAAF).

CAAF officially opened Feb. 14, 1943 with the dropping of a ceremonial “Valentine of Steel” practice bomb from a training tower at the field located three miles west of the city of Childress. The facility had been under construction since the early summer of 1942. The newly completed CAAF became the final leg in the “West Texas Bombardier Quadrangle.” Training fields were already in operation at Midland, Big Spring and San Angelo.

The Childress Army Airfield 50th Reunion will be held October 13, 14, 15. It will include a “fly in” of vintage aircraft.

The first class of cadets arrived in Childress by train Feb. 20, and from the beginning CAAF established itself as the home of the “hot” bombers. That initial class finished with the best record of any first bombardier class, and the following summer the first “Bombing Olympics” was held at CAAF. This competition awarded the “Pickle Barrel” trophy to the most accurate bombing team. The name of the trophy came from the claim that a good bombardier could “put a bomb in a pickle barrel from 10,000 feet.”

What enabled bomb aimers to accomplish this feat was the Norden Bomb Sight. One of the most closely guarded secrets of the war, the Norden dramatically increased the accuracy of bombers. At CAAF

rookie bombardiers were first introduced to this device after undergoing an intensive indoctrination into the uncompromising world of “National Security.”

A modified Beech twin-engine transport plane, the AT-11, took the bombardiers aloft to practice their deadly trade. The sturdy Beech aircraft were fitted with a plexiglass nose to house the Norden and the bombardier and were fitted with a bomb bay into which ten sand-filled practice bombs could be loaded. About 90 AT-11’s operated from CAAF and were kept busy flying up to three sorties per day. The base newspaper, the *Bomb Blast*, reported on Nov. 17, 1944, that in the near future training might be reduced from seven days a week to six!

Flying day and night over the 5,700 square mile area of target range, the cadets at CAAF learned bombing, navigation and combat flying. Included among the 100 pilots at CAAF were 16 Women’s Auxiliary Service Pilots (WASP). For every flyer there were sixteen support personnel on the ground. The base population fluctuated between 5,000 and 9,000 civilian and military personnel. When the revolutionary technique of low altitude “skip-bombing” was introduced against Japanese shipping in the Pacific, the procedure was taught at CAAF with Lake Childress doubling as the Pacific Ocean.

By the spring of 1946 the need for bombardiers had declined drastically and CAAF was closed.

Childress sorely missed its Army Airfield, not only for the income it had brought to the city, but for the people and pride the base had



Loading practice bombs in Childress. Photo: Childress Heritage Museum.

brought with it. From the beginning Some of them are still here, having CAAF, its mission and its people returned to settle in the Panhandle were taken into the hearts and they had once spent so much time homes of the people of Childress. “bombing.”

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Archivist Translates Stories From Prisoners Of War

By Bill Russell

Long before leaving Pompeii to marry an American, 3,000 of Rosetta Bellinghausen's countrymen were unwittingly and unwillingly forging an enduring link between the Texas Panhandle and her native country of Italy.

The 3,000 were Italian prisoners of war, and Rosetta would become their archivist, their voice in history.

During World War II the Hereford Military Reservation and Reception Area was home to officers and enlisted men of the Italian Army who had been captured while fighting on the Axis side in Europe and North Africa.

After the war all were repatriated, but they left behind a bitter-sweet history in the form of letters, books, works of art and memories of the plains of Texas, a place very different from their home.

Rosetta knew little of this as she and her family struggled to survive in postwar Pompeii. She began a correspondence with an American,



Rosetta Bellinghausen peruses the documents in the Dimmitt archives.

and eventually came to this country, fell in love, and married. He was a Castro County farmer. When she moved to the Panhandle the change was nearly as traumatic for her as it

had been for the POWs.

"It was culture shock in a big way," Rosetta said, her lilting accent adding emphasis to the words. "I can remember crying a lot at first."

Rosetta got over the homesickness and settled into the busy life of homemaker, mother, teacher and eventually a grandmother.

"I've had a very busy life and it seemed to go by so fast," she said. "Sometimes I wonder where it all went."

During those busy years the subject of those 3,000 POWs kept coming up.

"Some of the former prisoners would make trips here to show their wives where they had been held prisoner," Rosetta explained. "Sometimes I was asked to translate for them."

In 1959 General Franco DeBello brought his wife to visit the site of the camp. In Italy newspapers were requesting letters and remembrances from former POWs in Texas. Rosetta met the general and an informal agreement was made for the donation of letters and mementos to the Castro County Museum in Dimmitt. Rosetta was asked by the museum to translate them, and eventually became archivist for the burgeoning amount of POW material.

Rosetta was soon flooded with papers and artifacts and eventually helped establish the POW exhibit at the museum.

Included in the display is a handwritten chemistry book used to teach classes to internees, art objects made from tin cans and a ring pounded out of a silver dollar with a spoon. The collection keeps growing and many

additional documents and artifacts being preserved in America. Rosetta has been promised in the wills of POWs. is the only curator of that history and she takes the responsibility

This chapter of Italian history is *Continued on page 22.*

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It Was A Long Way From Italy To Texas



Italian prisoners labored in Panhandle fields. Photo courtesy Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum.

Continued from page 21.

seriously.
"It is important to me to do this," Rosetta said. "The documents I am translating and the mementos are the only record of what happened here."

Rosetta said she enjoys the work, the correspondence and the challenge of thinking in two languages about a now distant period of history.

"It has helped me keep my Italian language and keep my ties with Italy," she said. "I really enjoy the work and love answering the questions of people who visit the museum."

It's all volunteer work for Rosetta, but she becomes emotionally involved anyway.

"Sometimes I have to stop reading and go outside and walk around the building to cry a little bit," she said.

Among the documents in the archives are translations of Texas newspapers written by bilingual prisoners for their fellow POWs and

letters sent home to loved ones. It looks as if Rosetta will be kept busy for a long time into the future.

"Things keep coming in all the time," she said. "People send me newspaper clippings about former prisoners and bequests are coming in. It wasn't a pleasant time for them, but they are interested in keeping that part of history alive."

Enlisted Italian POWs worked on area farms while some of the officers, including Alberto Burri

who later became a world famous artist, decorated the church at Umbarger. Burri recently died and Rosetta is busy translating his obituaries for inclusion in the POW archives.

"I feel like it is up to me to save this portion of history," Rosetta said. "I've become very involved with these men I never knew. They were Italians very far from home. I understand how they must have felt, and I feel very close to them."

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McMurtry's Aunt "A Pretty Wild Cowgirl," Not A Lonesome Dove

Editor's Note: Archer McMurtry was an aunt of Pulitzer Prize winning author Larry McMurtry of Lonesome Dove fame. Her husband, Jo, came to the Panhandle, as did his brothers, at the turn of the century.

By Mary Beth Nelson

"I guess I had a hand in about everything we did. We just worked together as long as we could both ride."

The truth of this statement became quite evident as Archer McMurtry, colorful early Clarendon settler, related some of her favorite memories about her marriage to her husband, Jo. Theirs was a side-by-side, lifetime, devoted partnership in the pasture as well as in the kitchen.

Her involvement in Jo's ranch work brought an exceptional meaning to the term, "cattle-woman." To Jo's delight and with his approval, she assisted in everything from feeding, moving and cutting cattle, shoeing horses, doctoring screw worms, killing rattlesnakes, hunting coyotes and raising calves.

Archer's part in ranch work was a treat for her, and the horseback riding was like frosting on the cake.

At one time, the McMurtrys raised horses for the United States Cavalry. "Jo loved to break them, and I loved to ride them," she remembered fondly. The Army expected the horses to be well broken and well reined. Performing before Army officers, Archer was in her element as her expert handling demonstrated the value of each horse in walking, trotting, loping and running while the officers made their decisions.

Riding horses was a passion with Archer from as early as she could

remember. "I was practically raised on a horse. We had an old mule that I could ride when I was about three years old. Lots of times, Mother would take me out and just set me on that old mule. He'd just graze around and keep the yard mowed. Papa took me everywhere on his horse, and let me hold the reins. That's where I first learned to guide, start, and stop a horse."

Archer's parents, Daniel and Lucille Van Eaton, arrived with their daughters in the Texas Panhandle in 1904 when Archer was 7 years old.

Mrs. Van Eaton was especially interested in settling near a good college. Clarendon, with its Methodist college, a few stores, and a railroad appeared very promising. The saloons displeased them, but after being told these establishments would soon be closed, the Van Eatons decided to settle in this area.

Archer and Jo's teenage years were not a time of pizzas, movies, and television, but just as much fun was experienced at picnics, parties, and bronc breaking by the boys before an adoring female audience. Meeting the passenger train at

sundown every evening was also prime entertainment.

Archer always said she wouldn't marry until she met a brown-eyed cowboy. "My ability to handle a cold-jawed horse is what got Jo interested in me," she said, remembering the day when "all the boys and girls in our bunch picnicked by the river where that new McMurtry boy from A&M was camping." They admired the Arabian horse Jo had just saddled.

Jo told them it was gentle, but cold-jawed, and would take a good rider to handle him. When Archer volunteered to ride him, Jo's brown eyes twinkled as he said, "Bet you don't know that a cold-jawed horse is."

He was apparently impressed by his future wife's reply that "a cold-jawed won't give to the bit, will turn better to the left; reins need to be held in the left hand and a rope in the right hand to help with the right turns!"

While recalling favorite memories during her sunset years, Archer often mentioned her dogs, a Greyhound called "Black Pup" and a pair of purebred Russian

Wolfhound puppies.

The Russian Wolfhound puppies added pleasure and excitement to one of Archer's favorite pastimes, chasing and catching coyotes. "I could really catch coyotes with those dogs. My little Arabian horse loved to chase coyotes as well as I did. If the dogs couldn't quite catch the coyotes, I'd just circle them, and that little old horse would turn with them like it would a calf. The dogs could cut across to get them," Archer said.

"Those times that I didn't go with Jo to feed cattle, I'd take the dogs,

and go coyote hunting. Jo often said, "I know good and well that I'm gonna pick up Archer dead around here somewhere from chasing those coyotes," she added.

A good indicator of the life Archer McMurtry would lead rests in her childhood memories. She loved to ride her pony while her sister played with dolls. Perhaps it wasn't typical of women in those times but it was a life that embraced the West.

"Well I was a pretty wild little cowgirl, I suppose, but nothing ever suited me better than to run a horse," Archer said.

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