LONE STAR LORE: MYTH, MYSTERY, AND HAUNTED HISTORY

TSHA
Texas State Historical Association
An Independent Nonprofit Since 1897

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Texas State Historical Association
3001 Lake Austin Blvd.
Suite 3.116
Austin, TX 78703
www.tshaonline.org

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Dear Texas History Community,

Texas has a special place in history and in the minds of people throughout the world. Texas symbols such as the Alamo, oil wells, and the men and women who worked on farms and ranches and who built cities convey a sense of independence, self-reliance, hard work, and courage that speaks a universal language. At the same time, Texas has long been a meeting place of many peoples and cultures, sharing much with the rest of the world.

For more than a century, the Texas State Historical Association (TSHA) has played a leadership role in historical research and education and has helped to identify, collect, preserve, and tell the stories of Texas and the Southwest. TSHA works in collaboration with numerous colleges and universities, especially its host the University of Texas at Austin to carry on and expand its work. In the coming years these organizations, with their partners and members, will continue to create a collaborative whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. The collaboration will provide passion, talent, and long-term support for the dissemination of scholarly research, educational programs for the K-12 community, and opportunities for public discourse about the complex issues and personalities of our heritage. This collaboration, at its best, will demonstrate that it is possible to find both simple truths and nuanced meanings in the study of the past.

TSHA's core programs include the *Texas Almanac, Southwestern Historical Quarterly, Handbook of Texas*, TSHA Press, and education programs that reach out to students and teachers at all levels throughout the state. The central challenge before TSHA is to seize the unprecedented opportunities of the digital age in order to reshape how history will be accessed, understood, preserved, disseminated, and taught in the twenty-first century. In recent years, we have capitalized on these momentous opportunities to expand the scope and depth of our work in ways never before possible.

In the midst of this rapid change, TSHA will continue to provide a future for our heritage and to ensure that our history and the complex, always evolving, cultures found in the Southwest continue to serve as a resource for the people of Texas and beyond. I encourage you to join us today as a member of TSHA, and in doing so, you will be part of a unique group of people dedicated to an inclusive Texas heritage and will help us continue to develop innovative programs that bring history to life.

Since 1897, TSHA has sought to spread the rich and varied history of Texas and the Southwest across not just the country but the world. As we celebrate progress across more than 120 years, we look forward to bringing our region's past into your life through ever-shifting digital presences, the expansion of publications, and the growth of our immersive educational programs. With your membership, donations, and support, all these things are possible.

With appreciation for the past and hope for the future,

Brian A. Bolinger
CEO
Texas State Historical Association

Walter L. Buenger

Walter L. Buenger
Chief Historian
Texas State Historical Association

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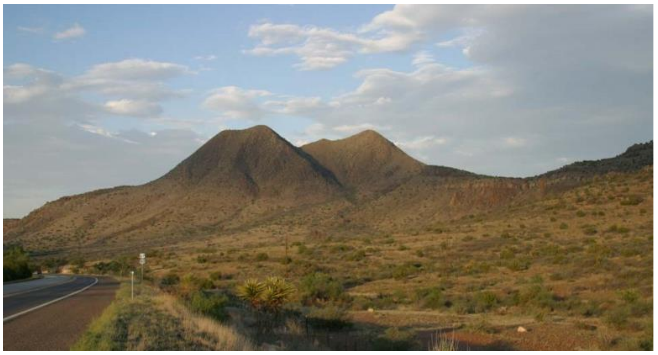
FOLK NARRATIVE

Elton Miles

In the range of Texas folk prose narrative, *myth*, *legend*, and *tale* keep the same meanings they have in world-wide folklore studies. In their natural state, examples of these genres are communicated mainly by word of mouth in differing versions within groups of people. They might be quite long or as brief as a single anecdote. True myths, rare in American folklore except among the Indians, are prose narratives of supernatural or religious content meant often to explain the origin of life, geographical features, or natural phenomena. The mythology of the Lipan **Apaches** of the Texas South Plains includes a culture hero, Killer-of-Enemies. During his stay among the mortals, he killed men's foes, created deer, horses, and other animals, and taught Lipans all they knew, including warfare and raiding. Among Caucasian Americans a few spurious Indian myths circulate, such as the explanation of how Twin Sisters Mountains near Alpine, came to be. Two Indian girls quarreled and the Great Spirit turned them into a mountain as punishment. Mythic elements are sometimes present in legends and in tales such as the story of how God, having created the world, took dominion over most of it but gave Texas to the devil.



Twin Sisters Mountains near Alpine, Texas.
Courtesy of Maria “Kiki” Holguin

A legend purports to be a historical account of events and persons in the remote or recent past. Regardless of its content, it is told as truth or believable rumor. Many legends include supernatural details, and most

Texas communities, like communities everywhere, have their own accounts of local people caught up in eerie doings at a nearby haunted house or graveyard. Witchcraft may be involved, as in the Waco legend of a cotton-gin worker who cut off the head of an attacking cat, only to return home and find his wife decapitated. Often such a story becomes a localized legend. A very common one of these tells of a farmer or rancher "just a few miles from here" who died of a rattlesnake bite. Afterward, one or more of his sons died because the snake's fangs were left in the inherited boots. A more recent urban legend states that Houston sewers are infested with alligators that breed after being flushed down toilets and live on white marijuana that grows in the dark. Sometimes this legend is used to warn children not to play in storm drains. Personal legends include anecdotes of local persons or the teller's own family. They may tell, for instance, of a local simpleton or skinflint such as the dying rancher who arranged to have a telephone installed in his coffin so that he could carry on his business. Some books are devoted to Texas folk place names with their legends, others to legends of treasures and lost mines from the Gulf Coast to the **Panhandle**. Historical legends about actual persons and events claim to relate regional history, sometimes that of a great white buffalo, an oil strike, a killing, or an outlaw, and often with violent contests for revenge or ownership of property. These sometimes evolve into lengthy cycles of legends, or sagas, about the same persons and general theme. One cycle is about the supposed quarter-century conflict over the ownership of the **Fort Leaton** trading post and other lands near Presidio.

Fort Leaton State Historic Site. Courtesy of Texas Parks and Wildlife.

One legend in the cycle says that in the late 1840s Ben Leaton lured a large number of Indians to a barbecue in the fort, then massacred them with a concealed cannon. This legend seems an alteration of an actual event of 1837, when Leaton was in New Mexico with a scalp-hunting party led by John Johnson, who perpetrated a massacre. In a newly-settled country, historical records help folklorists observe the vernacular legend-building process. Additionally, historical legends give the historian clues to follow in searching for facts.

A tale for entertainment is not usually meant to convey facts, though it is sometimes told to dupe the listener. Texas folk narrative is replete with such animal tales as that about the hunting dog that drives quail into a prairie-dog hole and releases them one at a time with a forepaw; with fables and magic tales for children, especially in the Mexican-American tradition; with Aggie jokes, simpleton tales adapted to students and professors of Texas A&M University; with stories about oil-rich "shirt-sleeve millionaires"; with stories in dialect, especially that of blacks, Mexicans, or European immigrants ("Throw dot hoss over der fence some hay"); or with punning jokes about white Texan speech: "She's some doll." "Yeah, a crocodoll.“

Ben Leaton and wife, Juana Pedraza.
Courtesy of Marfa Public Library.

The tall tale has been the special object of serious study by Texas folklorists **James Frank Dobie** and **Mody Coggin Boatright**. As Dobie observes, the

Texas tall tale has changed in nature since 1940. Earlier Texas humor "bragged on the worst." Instead of cutting out a longhorn from the thick brush of South Texas, for instance, a cowboy gave up and rode away when he saw a rattlesnake try to crawl into the brush and have to back out. "Now," says Dobie, "we are veering rapidly to the California style of bragging," as "so many Texans...have felt called upon to justify their Texan pride." The Texan of Dobie's time modestly explains to a New York friend that though his forty acres is not a ranch and has no brand or name, "some people call it downtown Houston." Boatright calls "tall lying" an art. The tall tale is made up of authentic details rather than generalized exaggeration, and these details are ludicrous in their combination. It includes such circumstantial detail as names, places, and tangential facts. In structure, "it begins plausibly and builds carefully to a climax, and the narrative must not topple until the climax is reached." One tall tale relates that at his noon break on a hot autumn day of knocking cornstalks, a farmer went for a swim in the creek. As he dived in, the southwest wind dried up all the water. Before he crashed on the rocks, a flash flood filled the creek up again. Before he could come up, he was trapped as a sudden **blue norther** froze the surface. But he didn't drown because the sun came out to melt the ice, and the farmer climbed onto the bank with no injury besides a sunburn.

ENCHANTED ROCK LEGENDS

Martin Donell Kohout

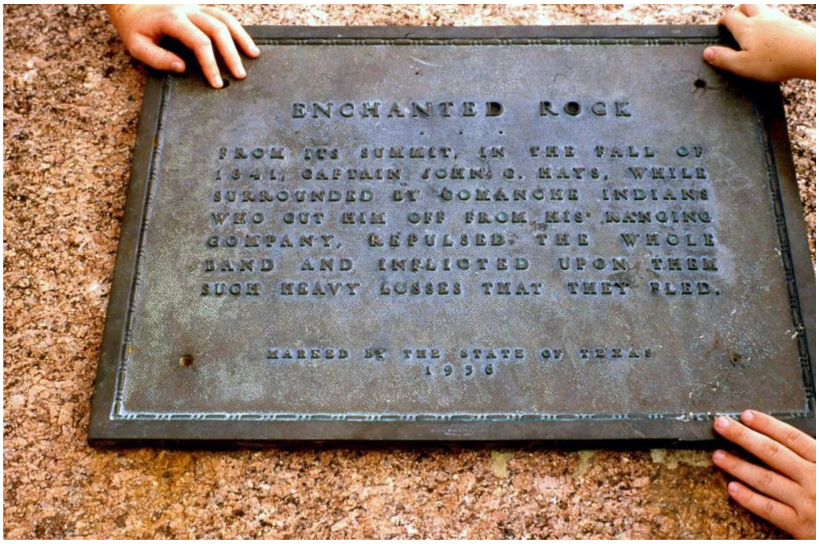
Enchanted Rock, a granite dome in southwestern Llano County about twenty miles north of Fredericksburg, has long been the center of various legends. The local **Comanche** and **Tonkawa Indians** both feared and revered the rock, and were said to offer sacrifices at its base. One Indian tradition holds that a band of brave warriors, the last of their tribe, defended themselves on the rock from the attacks of other Indians. The warriors, however, were finally overcome and killed, and since then Enchanted Rock has been haunted by their ghosts. Another legend tells of an Indian princess who threw herself off the rock when she saw her people slaughtered by enemy Indians; now her spirit is said to haunt Enchanted Rock. Yet another tale tells of the spirit of an Indian chief who was doomed to walk the summit forever as punishment for sacrificing his daughter; the indentations on the rock's summit are his footprints. Finally, there is the story of a white woman who was kidnapped by Indians but escaped and

Enchanted Rock State Natural Area. Courtesy of Texas Parks and Wildlife.

lived on Enchanted Rock, where her screams were said to be audible at night. The Indian legends of the haunting of Enchanted Rock were probably bolstered by the way the rock glitters on clear nights after rain, and by the creaking noises reported on cool nights after warm days. Scientists have since theorized that the glittering is caused either by water trapped in indentations in the rock's surface or by the moon reflecting off wet feldspar, and the creaking noises by contraction of the rock's outer surface as it cools.

A number of stories involve rumors of great mineral wealth to be found at Enchanted Rock. Spanish explorers believed it was one large chunk of silver or iron. They also sought legendary gold and silver mines nearby, and some early Texans believed that the lost "Bowie Mines" were in the vicinity west of Enchanted Rock. Some gold has in fact been mined near Enchanted Rock, but not enough to be commercially profitable. According to an account written in 1834 the rock was once supposed to be of platinum.

One of the most enduring and romantic stories involving Enchanted Rock is that of a young Spanish soldier, Don Jesús Navarro, and his rescue of the Indian maiden Rosa. Navarro supposedly came from Monterrey to **San José y San Miguel de Aguayo Mission** in San Antonio in 1750. At the mission he met and fell in love with Rosa, the Christian daughter of the Indian chief Tehuan. But Rosa was kidnapped by a band of Comanches bent on sacrificing her to the spirits of Enchanted Rock. Her daring lover followed them there and managed to rescue her as she was about to be burned at the stake.


ENCHANTED ROCK
FROM ITS SUMMIT, IN THE FALL OF
1841, CAPTAIN JOHN C. HAYS, WHILE
SURROUNDED BY COMANCHE INDIANS
WHO CUT HIM OFF FROM HIS RANGING
COMPANY, REPULSED THE WHOLE
BAND AND INFLICTED UPON THEM
SUCH HEAVY LOSSES THAT THEY FLED.
MARKED BY THE STATE OF TEXAS
1936

Enchanted Rock historic plaque.

Another tale, given official credence when the state of Texas commemorated it with a plaque near the summit of Enchanted Rock in 1936, relates a heroic episode in the life of Capt. **John Coffee Hays**. Cut off by Comanche raiders from his company of **Texas Rangers** on a surveying trip in the fall of 1841, Hays took refuge on Enchanted Rock and singlehandedly held off the Indians in a three-hour battle that ended when the frustrated Indians fled, convinced even more firmly than before that Enchanted Rock was possessed by malevolent spirits.

Enchanted Rock
STATE NATURAL AREA
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

Enchanted Rock State Natural Area in Llano County.

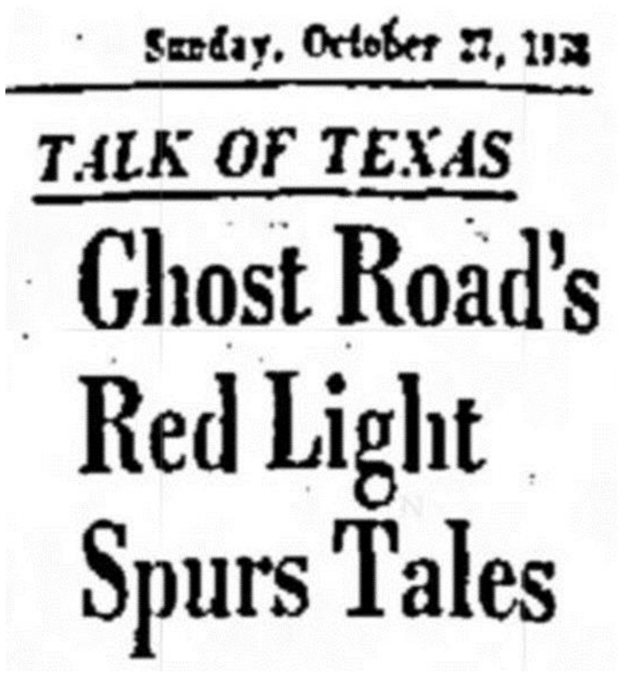
BIG THICKET LIGHT

Frances E. Abernethy

The Big Thicket light (or the Saratoga light) is a ghostly light that periodically appears at night on the Old Bragg Road that runs through the heart of the Big Thicket in Hardin County. Bragg Road was originally a seven-mile bed for a Santa Fe branchline from Bragg Station, on what is now Farm Road 1293, to Saratoga. The rails were laid in 1901 and pulled in 1934, but the bed remained and became a well-used road through some of the densest woods in the Big Thicket. The Big Thicket light was reported while the tracks were still down. In summer 1960 **Archer Fullingim**, editor and publisher of the Kountze *News*, began running front page stories speculating on the nature of the light; these stories were picked up and carried in metropolitan newspapers in Texas and elsewhere. Light seers visited Bragg Road by the hundreds. They described the light, disagreeing as to its color or characteristics, but agreeing that a ghostly light of some sort frequented the road. The lights were variously rationalized as the reflections of car lights going in to Saratoga, patches of low-grade gas, a reflection of fox fire or swamp fire, or the figment of hysterical imaginations.

The Old Bragg Road, also known as the "Ghost Road," between Bragg and Saratoga in Hardin County.

More romantic explanations produced stories about local history. The light was a mystical phenomenon that typically frequented areas where treasure was buried, and some early Spanish conquistadors had cached a golden hoard in the thicket but had failed to return for it. The light was a little bit of fire that never was extinguished after the Kaiser Burnout or the ghost of a man shot during the burnout, when the Confederate soldiers fired part of the thicket to flush out Jayhawkers who did not choose to fight for the South. Another story tells of a railroad man who was decapitated in a train wreck on this part of the Saratoga line; they found his body but never could locate his head, and the body continues to roam up and down the right-of-way looking for the lost member. And one tale tells that the light comes from a spectral fire pan carried by a night hunter who got lost in the Big Thicket years ago. He still wanders, never stopping to rest, always futilely searching for a way out of the mud and briars.



Sunday, October 27, 1978

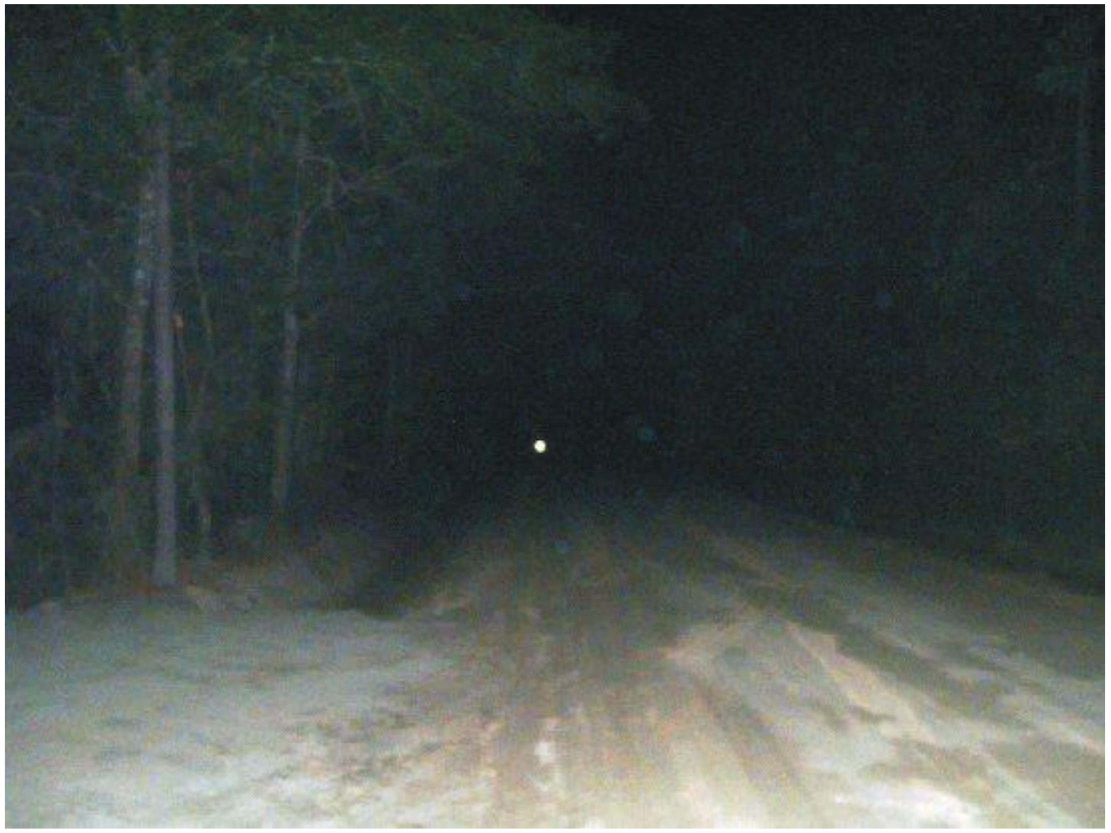
TALK OF TEXAS

Ghost Road's Red Light Spurs Tales

An October 1978 headline from the Denton *Record-Chronicle* mentions the "Ghost Road."

The story of the Mexican cemetery tells of a crew of Mexicans who were hired to help cut the right-of-way and lay the tracks. But, rumor has it that the foreman of the road gang, rather than pay them a large amount of accumulated wages, killed the men and kept the money. They were hurriedly interred in the dense woods nearby, from whence come their restless, uneasy souls, clouded in ghostly light to haunt that piece of ground that cost them their lives. And there is the story of a man who sold his farm and parted with everything that he couldn't pack in a suitcase, to work on the railroad. He was devoted to the line and became a brakeman on the

"Saratoga." When the Santa Fe began to cut down on its runs, he found himself without a job or prospects. He died soon after, and his lonesome and troubled spirit still walks the road bed with its brakeman's lantern, the Big Thicket light, looking for the life that left him behind.

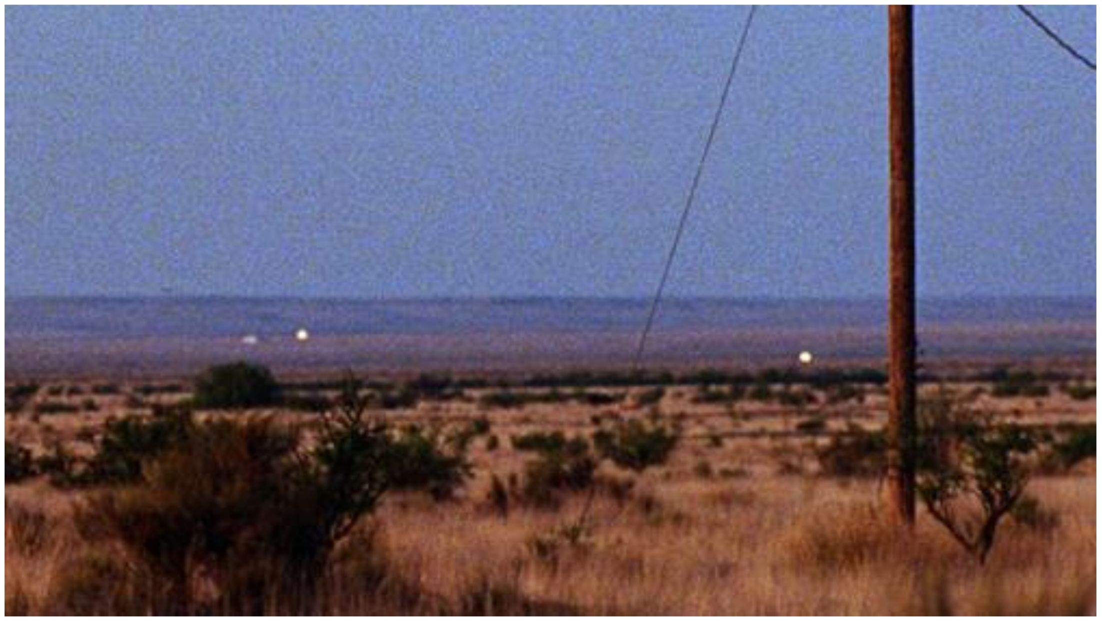


The “Light of Saratoga” on Bragg Road.

MARFA LIGHTS

Julia Cauble Smith

The Marfa lights are often visible on clear nights between Marfa and Paisano Pass in northeastern Presidio County as one faces the Chinati Mountains. At times they appear colored as they twinkle in the distance. They move about, split apart, melt together, disappear, and reappear. Presidio County residents have watched the lights for over a hundred years. The first historical record of them recalls that in 1883 a young cowhand, Robert Reed Ellison, saw a flickering light while he was driving cattle through Paisano Pass and wondered if it was the campfire of Apache Indians. He was told by other settlers that they often saw the lights, but



The Marfa Lights seen from the Marfa Lights Viewing Area at early dawn. The two bright circular white lights are Marfa Lights, probably a few hundred yards away. The leftmost light is due to vehicle headlights traveling north toward Marfa on Route 67 from Presidio. Photograph by Edson C. Hendricks.

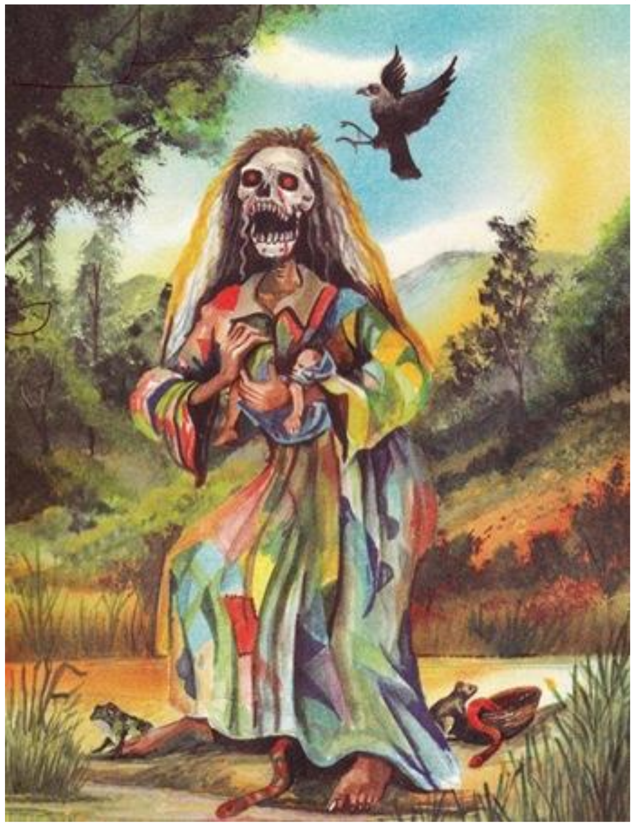
when they investigated they found no ashes or other evidence of a campsite. Joe and Sally Humphreys, also early settlers, reported their first sighting of the lights in 1885. Cowboys herding cattle on the prairies noticed the lights and in the summer of 1919 rode over the mountains looking for the source, but found nothing. **World War I** observers feared that the lights were intended to guide an invasion. During **World War II** pilots training at the nearby **Midland Army Air Field** outside Marfa looked for the source of the elusive lights from the air, again with no success.

Those who have viewed the lights over a long period personify them and insist that they are not only harmless but friendly. Mrs. W. T. Giddings, who grew up watching the lights and whose father claimed he was saved from a blizzard when the lights led him to the shelter of a cave, considers the lights to be curious observers, investigating things around them. Over the years many explanations for the lights have been offered, ranging from an electrostatic discharge, swamp gas, or moonlight shining on veins of mica, to ghosts of conquistadors looking for gold. The most plausible explanation is that the lights are an unusual phenomenon similar to a mirage, caused by an atmospheric condition produced by the interaction of cold and warm layers of air that bend light so that it is seen from a distance but not up close. In recent years the lights have become a tourist attraction. The **Texas Department of Transportation** constructed a roadside parking area nine miles east of Marfa on U.S. Highway 90 for motorists to view the curious phenomenon. The Marfa Mystery Lights Viewing Center was built at that site in 2003.

LA LLORONA

John O. West

The ghostly woman who wanders along canals and rivers crying for her missing children, called in Spanish La Llorona, "the Weeping Woman," is found in many cultures and regions. Her story includes some strong similarities to that of Medea. She is perhaps the most widely known ghost in Texas. Her New World history goes back to the time of Hernán Cortés and links her with La Malinche, the mistress of the conquistador. As tradition has it, after having borne a child to Cortés, La Malinche, who aided in the conquest of Mexico as a translator for the Spanish, was replaced by a highborn Spanish wife. Her Aztec pride plus her jealousy drove her, according to the story, to acts of vengeance against the intruders from across the sea. Sometimes the story is told about a Spanish nobleman and a peasant girl. Some years ago, the story goes, a young hidalgo fell in love with a lowly girl, usually named María, who over a period of time bore him two or three children. She had a *casita*—a little house—where the young man visited and brought his friends, and in almost every way they shared a happy life together, except that their union



A depiction of La Llorona from a Colombian children's book. Illustration by Carlos Daniel Ardila Mateus.

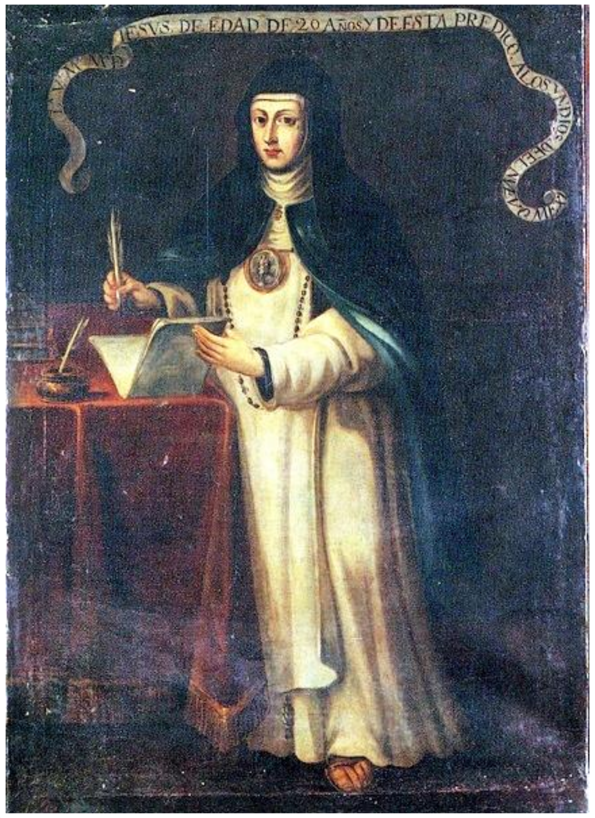
was not blessed by the church. His parents, of course, knew nothing of the arrangement and would not have allowed him to marry beneath his station. They urged him to marry a suitable lady and give them grandchildren. Finally he gave in, and sadly he told María that he must marry another. But he would not desert her, he promised—he would still take care of her and the children and visit them as often as he could. Enraged, she drove him away, and when the wedding took place she stood veiled in her shawl at the back of the church. Once the ceremony was over she went home, and in a crazed state killed the children, threw them into a nearby body of water, and then drowned herself. But when her soul applied for admission to heaven, *el Señor* refused her entry. "Where are your children?" He asked her. Ashamed, she confessed she did not know. "Go and bring them here," the Lord said. "You cannot rest until they are found." And ever since, La Llorona wanders along streams at night, weeping and crying for her children—"*Ay, mis hijos!*" According to some, she has been known to take revenge on men she comes across in her journey. She usually dresses in black. Her face is sometimes that of a horse, but more often horribly blank, and her long fingernails gleam like polished tin in the moonlight.

The story of the Weeping Woman is told to youngsters as a "true" story of what might get you if you're out after dark. But the most frequent use of the story is to warn romantic teenage girls against falling for boys who may have nice clothes and money but are too far above them to consider marriage. The Cortés variant is said to be used in the late twentieth century to express hostility to European culture. La Llorona's loss is compared to the demise of indigenous culture after the conquest of Mexico by the Spanish.

MARÍA DE JESÚS DE AGREDA

Donald E. Chipman

María de Jesús de Agreda (the Lady in Blue) was born in the Spanish village of Agreda near the border of Aragon and Navarre in April of 1602, the eldest daughter of Francisco Coronel and Catalina of Arana. In her youth María, baptized María Coronel, demonstrated unusual piety and remarkable memory. At the age of sixteen, she convinced her father that he should convert the family castle into a convent for Franciscan nuns. She took religious vows on February 2, 1620, and the name María de Jesús. The new order soon expanded beyond the confines of the castle and moved to the convent of the Immaculate Conception in Agreda. The nuns' habit was colored Franciscan brown (*pardo*) with an outer cloak of coarse blue cloth.



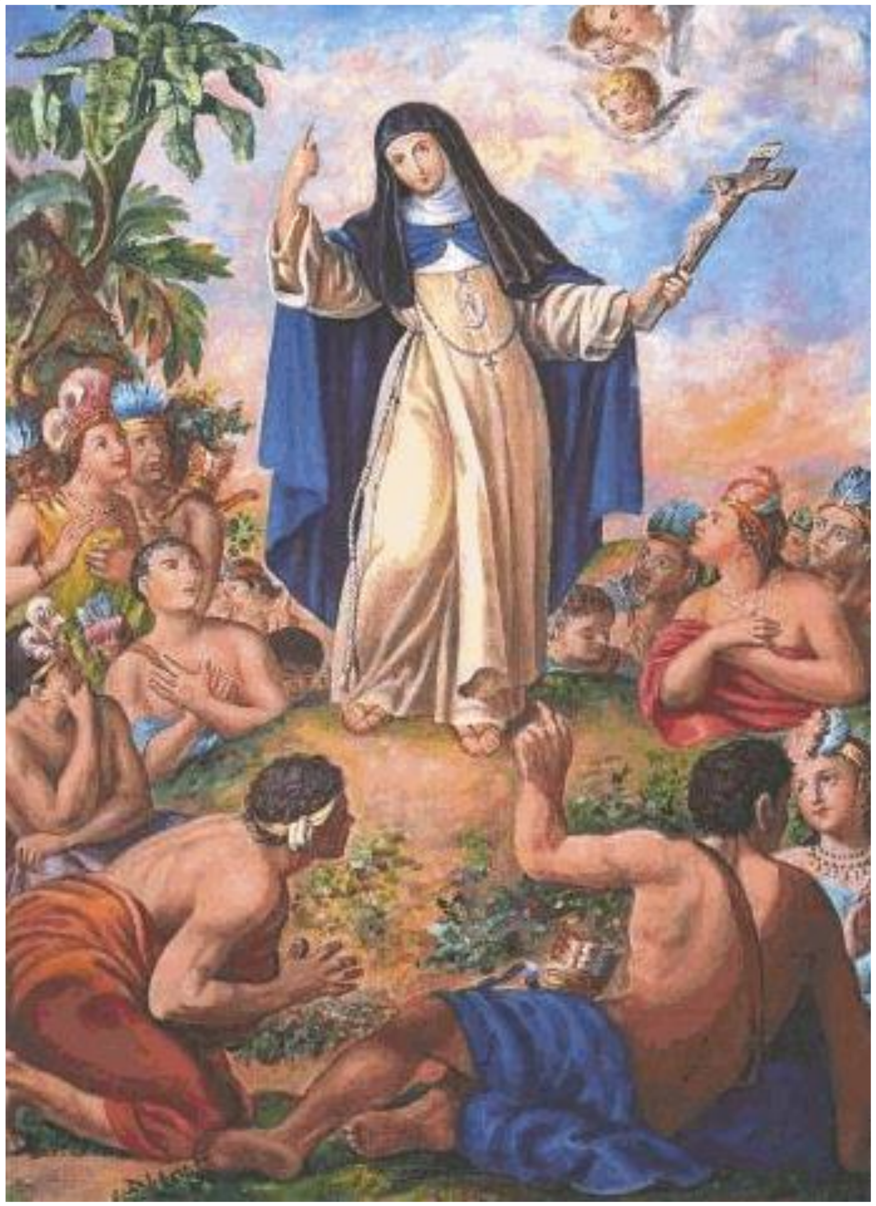
Portrait of María de Jesús de Agreda on display in the Museum of the Viceroyalty of New Spain in Tepotzotlán, Mexico. Artist Unknown.

Throughout the 1620s María de Jesús would repeatedly lapse into deep trances. On these occasions she experienced dreams in which she was transported to a distant and unknown land, where she taught the Gospel to a pagan people. Her alleged miraculous bilocations took her to eastern New

Mexico and western Texas, where she contacted several Indian cultures, including the Jumanos. Sister María related her mystical experiences to her confessor, Fray Sebastián Marcilla of Agreda. His superiors contacted the archbishop of Mexico, Francisco Manso y Zúñiga. The archbishop, in turn, wrote the religious superior of New Mexico in May of 1628, requesting information regarding a young nun's alleged transportations and teachings in northern New Spain. That communication arrived in New Mexico shortly before a delegation of some fifty **Jumano Indians** appeared at the Franciscan convent of old Isleta, south of present Albuquerque, in July 1629. The Jumanos had come to request religious teachers for themselves and their neighbors. They demonstrated rudimentary knowledge of Christianity, and when asked who had instructed them replied, "the Woman in Blue.“

An expedition headed by Fray **Juan de Salas**, organized in New Mexico, set out for the land of the Jumanos. Guided by the chief of the Jumano delegations, it reached a locale in Southwest Texas where it was met by a large band of Indians. The Indians claimed that they had been advised by the Woman in Blue of approaching Christian missionaries. Subsequently, some 2,000 natives presented themselves for baptism and further religious instruction. Two years later, Fray **Alonso de Benavides**, a former religious superior in New Mexico, traveled to Spain, where he sought more information about the mysterious nun. He interviewed María de Jesús at Agreda. Sister María admitted that she had experienced some 500 bilocations to New Spain and acknowledged that she was indeed the Lady in Blue.

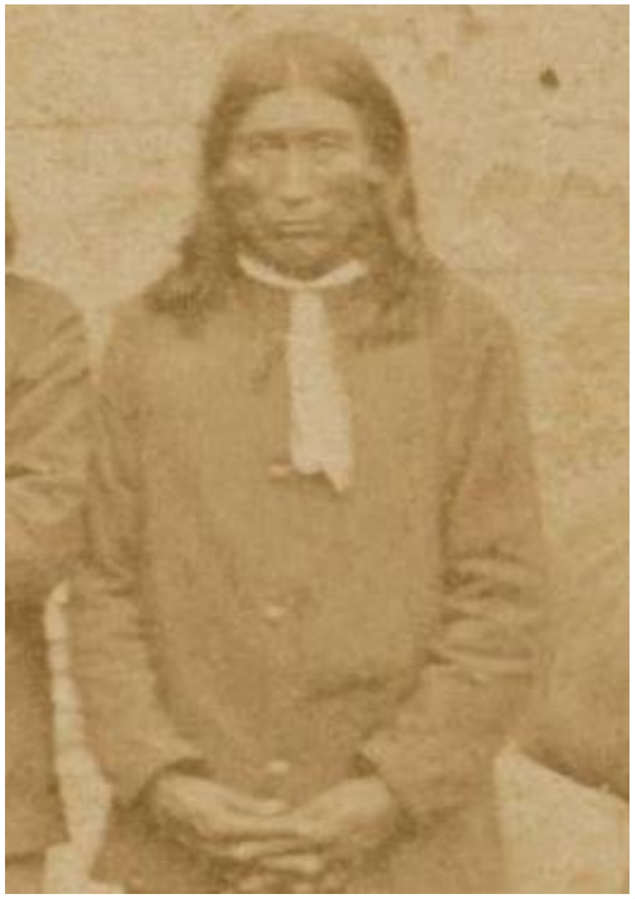
During the last twenty-two years of her life, María de Jesús was an active correspondent with the Spanish king, Philip IV. She died at Agreda on May 24, 1665. Her story was published in Spain several years after her death. Although the abbess said her last visitation to the New World was in 1631, the mysterious Lady in Blue was not quickly forgotten in Texas. In 1690 a missionary working with the Tejas Indians heard the legend. In the 1840s a mysterious woman in blue reportedly traveled the Sabine River valley and aided malaria victims, and in the twentieth century her apparition was reported as recently as **World War II**.



Portrait of María de Jesús de Agreda by Maria Coronel y Arana.

MAMAN-TI

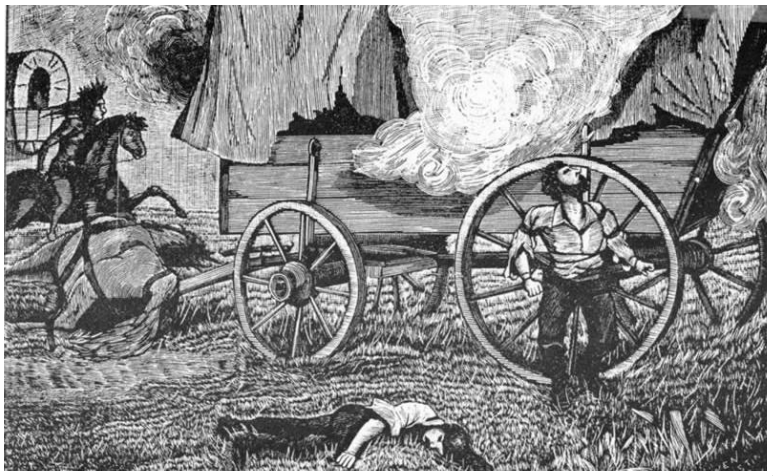
H. Allen Anderson



The only known image of Maman-ti, taken shortly before his death at Fort Marion in 1875. Courtesy of the DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University.

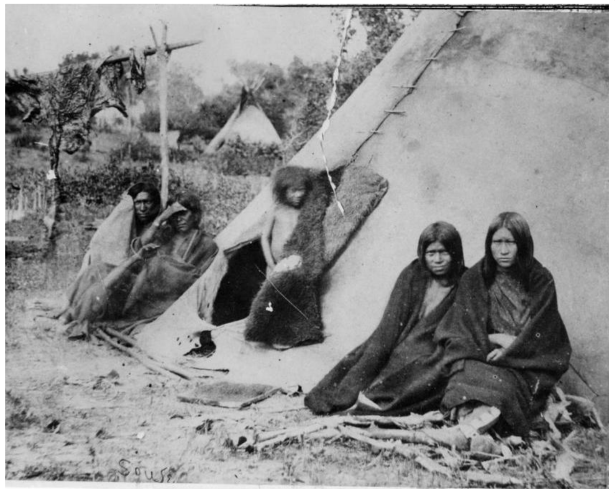
Maman-ti (Mama'nte), a Kiowa chief and medicine man also known as Swan, was born about 1835. He was a mysterious and somewhat sinister character whose name has been variously translated as Sky Walker, Walking Above, Walks-in-the-Sky, and Man-on-a-Cloud. He supposedly assumed the power that was once **Dohäsan**'s after the latter's death in 1866. Originally a member of the tribe's buffalo-medicine cult, Maman-ti reportedly obtained new "medicine" when he "communicated" with a screech owl, a bird the **Kiowas** believed was the embodied spirit of a dead relative. Shortly thereafter, while ill with a fever, he had a dream vision in which he died momentarily and traveled to the spirit world, or "dead men's village." As a result, by the early 1870s he had become not only a fierce and popular war chief but also a powerful shaman, or *dohate* (medicine man, "owl prophet"). In this role he was revered among his people since he gave advice based on spiritual messages he allegedly received by a cured owl's skin that he manipulated like a hand puppet. Maman-ti was married twice and had three children by his first wife and several more by his second. In addition, he adopted a young white captive, **Tehan**, into his family.

Maman-ti masterminded most of the Kiowa raids into Texas and led some of them himself. He was the real power behind such prominent chiefs as **Lone Wolf** and **Satanta**. On January 4, 1871, he led the foray in which **Britton (Brit) Johnson** and three other black teamsters were killed and scalped near Flat Top Mountain in Young County. Maman-ti next made plans for a big raid in the vicinity of Jacksboro. Shortly after noon on May 18, more than 100 Kiowa and Kiowa-Apache warriors, concealed by the rocky terrain of a hill overlooking the Butterfield Trail through the Salt Creek valley, sighted the party escorting generals **William T. Sherman** and **Randolph B. Marcy** to **Fort Richardson**. Maman-ti, however, restrained his followers from mounting an ambush, declaring that his medicine decreed that the second party that passed by should be attacked. Hours later, the Indians attacked Henry Warren's wagontrain, killed seven teamsters, and destroyed the wagons. Subsequently the other participating chiefs, notably **Satank**, **Big Tree**, and Satanta, bore the blame for the episode; Maman-ti went free, since he was virtually unknown to the whites at that time (*see* **WARREN WAGONTRAIN RAID**).



Woodcut depicting the attack on Henry Warren's wagontrain. Courtesy of Texas Beyond History.

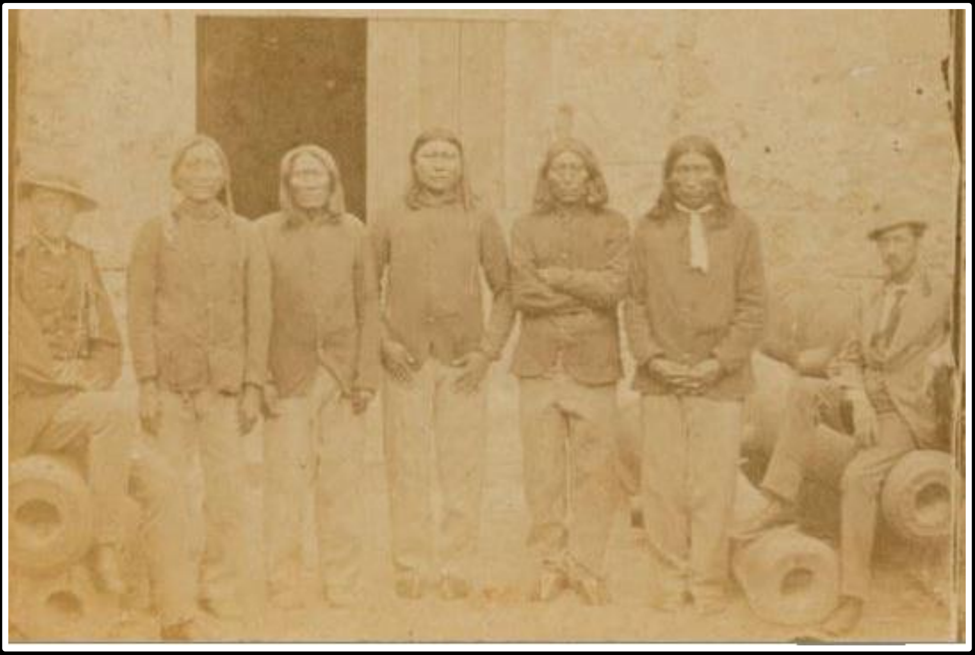
He continued in his occult practices, but his following diminished somewhat as more Kiowas joined **Kicking Bird**'s peace faction. Lone Wolf's son and nephew died at the hands of soldiers in the fall of 1873, however, and several members of Lone Wolf's band shared their leader's thirst for revenge. Maman-ti helped Lone Wolf recruit warriors and foretold through "owl medicine" that the raid would be a success. The resultant **Lost Valley** fight against Maj. **John B. Jones**'s **Texas Rangers** on July 16, 1874, fulfilled the dohate's predictions and satisfied Lone Wolf. Even so, factionalism became more evident among the recalcitrant warriors, particularly the followers of **Big Bow**, who was increasingly scornful of Maman-ti's prophecies; for more than a month the chiefs quarreled over whether to stay holed up along Elk Creek or move west to the **Llano Estacado**. When the dohate used his magical owlskin to guarantee complete safety under the walls of **Palo Duro Canyon**, the war faction voted overwhelmingly for the latter move. Maman-ti thus witnessed the five-day siege of **Lyman's wagontrain** on September 9–14, 1874, during which his nephew Botalye won tribal acclaim for his daring. However, Maman-Ti's magic apparently ran out when Col. **Ranald S. Mackenzie**'s **Fourth United States Cavalry** sacked the Indian villages in Palo Duro Canyon on September 27. Afterward, Maman-ti was one of the Kiowa leaders who surrendered to the authorities at Fort Sill, on February 26, 1875. (*see* **RED RIVER WAR**).



A scene from the camp of Mow-Wi in Palo Duro Canyon, one of the last to hold out during the Red River War. Courtesy of the University of Texas at Arlington Library.

That summer Maman-ti was among those singled out by Kicking Bird, his his number-one rival for tribal leader leadership, to be incarcerated at St. Augustine, Florida, for his role in the Kiowa depredations on the Texas frontier. Since Kicking Bird cooperated so closely with the whites, the dohate cursed him and promised to cause his death by witchcraft. Soon after the prisoners' departure, Kicking Bird died from apparent poisoning. Maman-ti, assuming the efficacy of his hex, declared that since he had destroyed a fellow tribesman, his own life would be forfeited as punishment. Not long after the arrival of the prisoners at Fort Marion, where they were confined, Maman-ti fell ill, apparently with dysentery. On July 28, 1875, he called the other Kiowa inmates together and told them that he would soon be departing this life; the next morning, according to Kiowa sources, he shook hands with his friends, took to his bed at the hospital barracks, and died. He was buried in the post cemetery.

Maman-ti's daughter and oldest child, Hoodle-tau-goodle (Red Dress), subsequently became an important source of information concerning the owl prophet, his family, and his exploits in the spirit world. She was among those who discredited Rev. Joseph Griffis's claim of being her long-lost foster-brother, Tehan. Her younger half-brother, who reportedly resembled Maman-ti in appearance, was known in later years as Rainy Mountain Charlie.

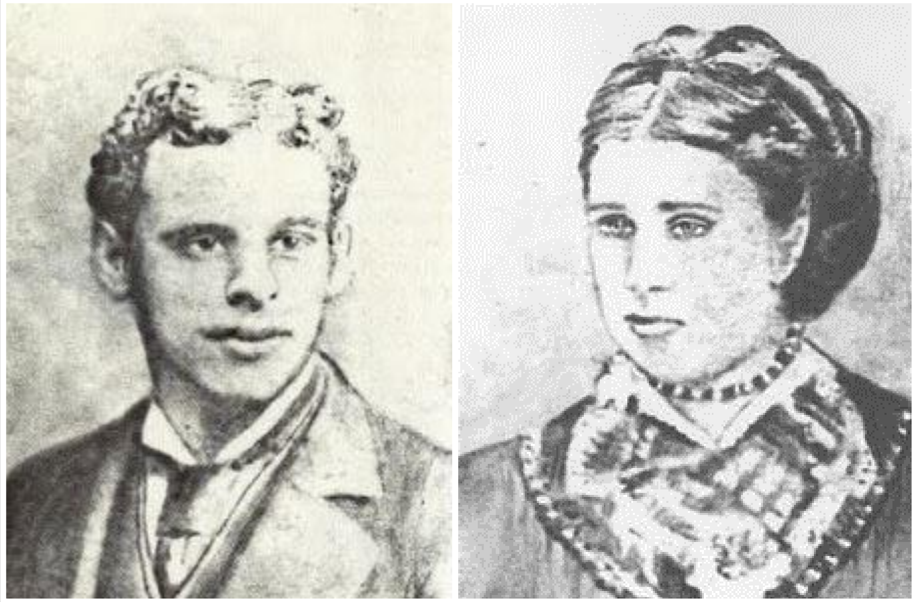


A group of Kiowa prisoners at Fort Marion, 1875. From left to right: Lone Wolf, Double Vision, White Horse, Woman's Heart, and Maman-ti. Courtesy of the DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University.

DIAMOND BESSIE MURDER TRIAL

Walter F. Pilcher

When a well-dressed man and woman calling themselves "A. Monroe and wife" got off the train and registered at the Brooks House in Jefferson on January 19, 1877, events were set in motion that led to the first big-name trial in Texas. A. Monroe was in reality Abraham Rothschild, the son of Meyer Rothschild, a Cincinnati jeweler. He was a traveling salesman for his father's jewelry business. During his travels he had met Bessie Moore at a brothel in Hot Springs, Arkansas, several years before the journey to Jefferson. Bessie was born Annie Stone to a successful shoe dealer in Syracuse, New York, in 1854. According to newspaper accounts, she became the mistress of a man whose last name was Moore when she was fifteen. Although the association did not last long, Bessie did keep the man's name.

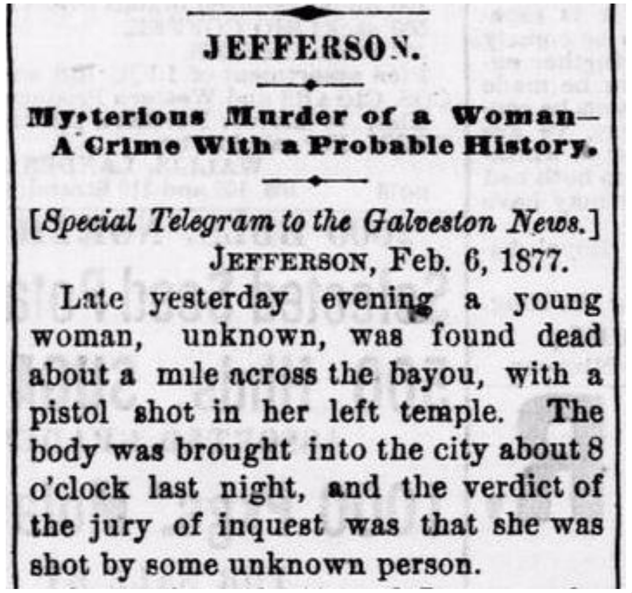


Contemporary sketch of Abraham Rothschild and “Diamond” Bessie Moore. Artist Unknown.

Articles written after her death alleged that she was a prostitute in Cincinnati, New Orleans, and Hot Springs before meeting Rothschild. Although they traveled together as husband and wife, there is no evidence that they ever married. On January 17, 1877, the couple arrived in Marshall by train and stayed in the Old Capital Hotel for two days, where they registered as A. Rothschild and wife. From Marshall, they rode the train to Jefferson and took a room at the Brooks House under the name Monroe. On the Sunday morning after their arrival, Abe Rothschild bought two lunches for a picnic from Henrique's Restaurant, and the couple were seen disappearing into the fog as they crossed the footbridge over Big Cypress Creek. Abe returned to town that afternoon by another path and was seen casually going about his affairs around town. When asked about his wife, he replied that she was in the country visiting friends and that she would meet him Tuesday morning to leave town. But on Tuesday morning the staff of the Brooks House found room 4 empty and "A. Monroe" gone. Witnesses later stated that Rothschild had left town alone on Tuesday morning on the eastbound train with the couple's luggage.

The Brooks House in Jefferson, Texas. Courtesy of the Marion County Historical Commission.

A week of snow and bad weather followed this, and after it began to warm up, Sarah King, while out looking for firewood, found the body of a well-dressed woman, without jewelry, near a twisted oak. The remnants of a picnic lunch were also found near the tree. The coroner ruled that the woman died due to a gunshot wound in the head. The citizens of Jefferson took up a collection and buried the unidentified body at Oakwood Cemetery. An initial warrant was issued for the arrest of A. Monroe on suspicion of murder. After determining that Monroe had left on an eastbound train and that in Marshall he and Bessie had registered as A. Rothschild and wife from Cincinnati, Ohio, a new warrant was issued for Abraham Rothschild of Cincinnati, and the victim was identified as Bessie Moore. Meanwhile, in Cincinnati, Rothschild had been drinking heavily and swore someone was following him, after which he walked into the street and attempted to kill himself, but only succeeded in blinding his right eye. While he was in the hospital he was arrested, and Texas and Marion County officials were sent to Cincinnati in order to identify and extradite him. Rothschild's family put up a fight, but on March 19 extradition was approved.



JEFFERSON.

Mysterious Murder of a Woman—A Crime With a Probable History.

[*Special Telegram to the Galveston News.*]

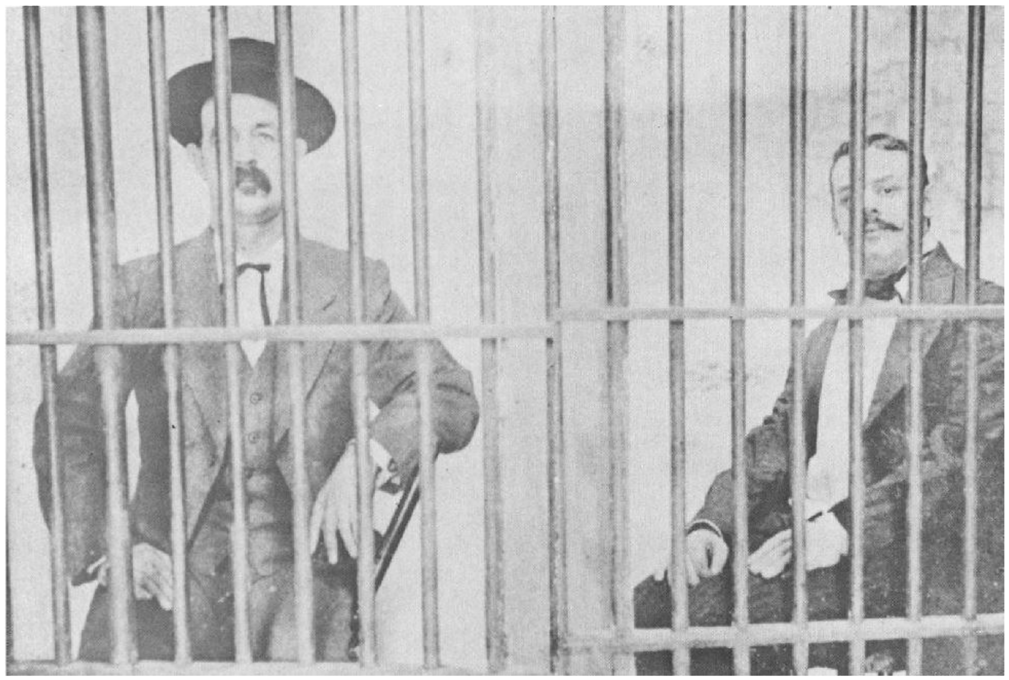
JEFFERSON, Feb. 6, 1877.

Late yesterday evening a young woman, unknown, was found dead about a mile across the bayou, with a pistol shot in her left temple. The body was brought into the city about 8 o'clock last night, and the verdict of the jury of inquest was that she was shot by some unknown person.

Headline from the Galveston *Daily News*, February 7, 1877.

The murder site, located along a footpath near Big Cypress Creek. Courtesy of Kay Warren.

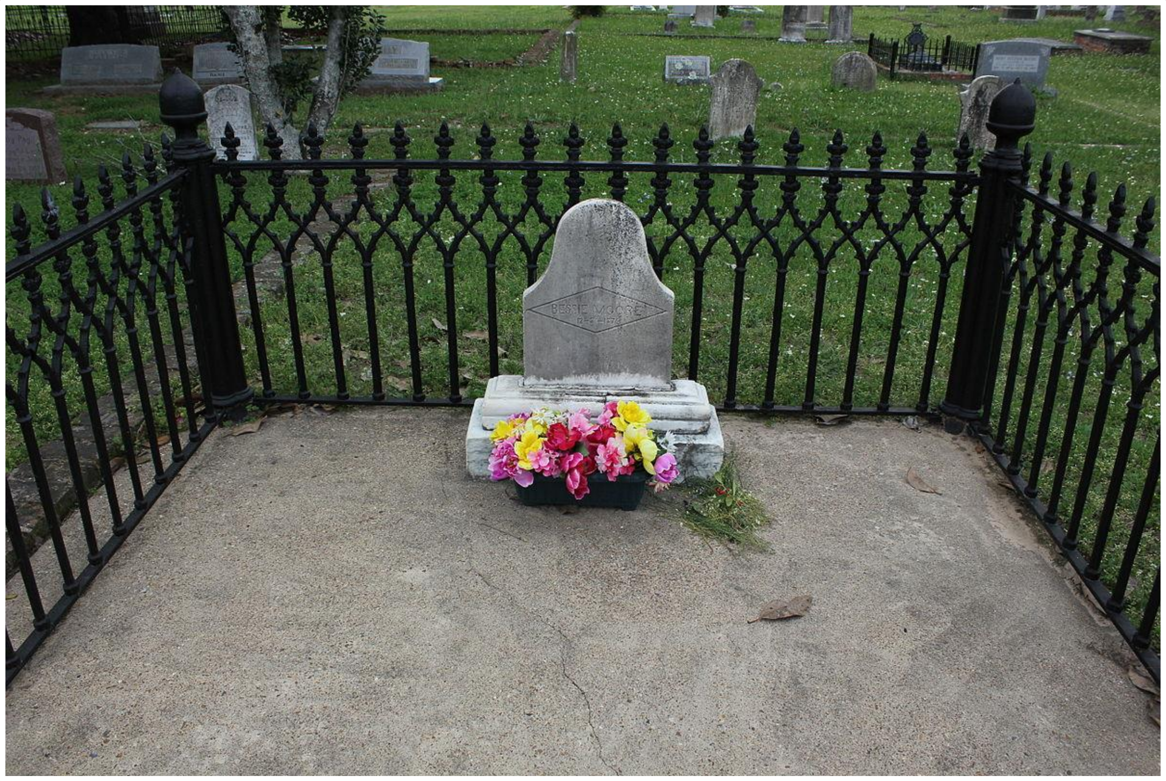
The trial became very notorious. Most of the lawyers in East Texas tried to become involved either on the side of the state for prestige or on the defense for the money to be provided by the Rothschilds. The governor of Texas personally sent a letter to two attorneys, Campbell and Epperson, appealing for aid with the prosecution, and two Texas assistant attorney generals were involved. The defense had an impressive array of legal talent including a future governor of Texas, Charles A. Culberson, and a United States senator, **David B. Culberson**, among other legal minds who undoubtedly were paid very well for their efforts. With the lawyers in place a series of indictments, trials, and appeals set forth, and a legal battle began that took 2½ years to conclude. The first trial did not begin until December 1878 for several reasons: both sides filed a writ of habeas corpus, the lawyers were involved in state and national legislatures, and the defense moved for a change of venue. After three weeks of testimony with the closing arguments alone lasting three days, the jury found Rothschild guilty of murder in the first degree and sentenced him to death by hanging. Tradition says that during jury deliberation over the verdict, jury foreman C. R. Weathersby drew a noose on the wall, signed it, and stated that that was his verdict. After the sentencing, the defense appealed to the Seventh Texas Court of Appeals and Judge J. Clarke for reversal of the case on the grounds that the trial had been unfair. Clarke found that the trial had indeed been unfair and that the court had been in error in ignoring a motion by the defense and by accepting a potential juror after the man stated that he had an opinion in the case. The judge declared a mistrial.



Rothschild (right) awaiting trial in 1878. Courtesy of V.H. Hackney.

The state issued another indictment against Rothschild on December 2, 1880, and the second trial began on December 14 in Jefferson. The jury was whittled down from the 156 men initially summoned to the requisite twelve, two of whom were black—an unusual occurrence in Texas at the time. The defense focused on the testimony of Isabelle Gouldy, one of the women who had prepared the body of the victim for burial, who claimed to have seen the victim in the company of a man who was not the defendant on Saturday, January 20, and on Thursday, January 25. Although the prosecution attacked Gouldy's credibility, the defense managed to plant a seed of doubt in the jurors' minds. Also, Rothschild's lawyers argued that the body was too well preserved to have been in the woods for fifteen days and that the murder must therefore have happened after their client left town. The strategy worked. On December 30, 1880, the jury found Rothschild not guilty.

There the actualities of the case ended and the rumors began. Many stories about the case and Rothschild circulated during and after the trial, and some of them became part of the folklore surrounding the trial. Several rumors concerning the jury were heard. It was said, for instance, that twelve $1,000 bills were lowered into the jury room during deliberations, and that all twelve jurors met violent deaths within a year of the trial. The rumor that a hack was waiting outside the door of the courthouse and that the verdict was not announced until after the train whistle blew has not been substantiated; nor has the rumor that Rothschild was later imprisoned on a twenty-year sentence for grand theft. The popular rumor that Bessie was pregnant when she died has also never been proved. In the 1890s a handsome, elderly man wearing a patch over his right eye asked to be shown the grave of Bessie Moore. Upon seeing it, he laid roses on it, knelt in prayer, commented on the goodness of the citizens to provide a decent burial, and gave the caretaker money for the care of the grave. Folklore asserts that this was a repentant Rothschild visiting the grave. In the 1930s a headstone mysteriously appeared on the grave where none had been before, and in the 1960s the Jessie Allen Wise Garden Club built an iron fence around the grave. In 1941, E. B. McDonald admitted putting up the headstone because it had not seemed right for Diamond Bessie to sleep in an unmarked grave. Thus ended at least one mystery surrounding the case. The case, still officially listed as unsolved, attracts many investigators and lawyers to this day. Furthermore, since 1955 a courtroom drama relating the story has been presented each spring as part of the Jefferson Historic Pilgrimage.



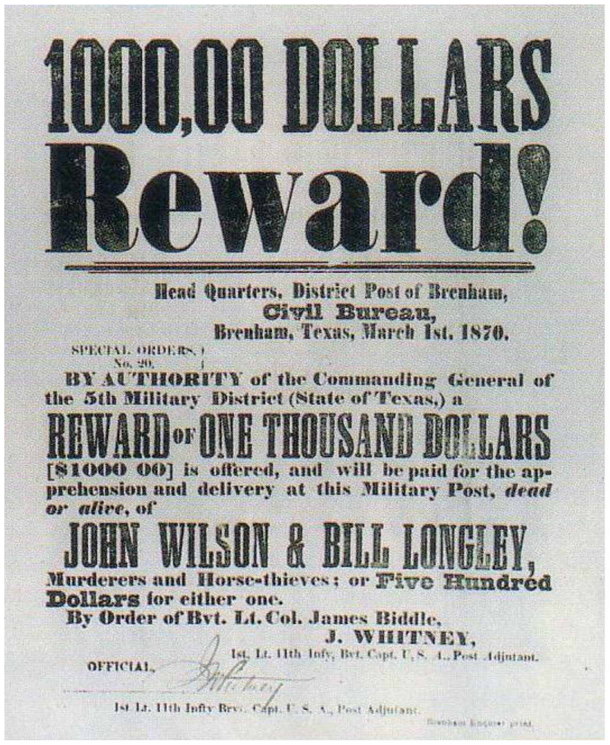
Grave of Annie "Diamond Bessie" Moore at Oakwood Cemetery in Jefferson, Texas. Courtesy of Nicolas Henderson.

BLOODY BILL LONGLEY

Rick Miller

Portrait of Bill Longley taken shortly before his death in 1878. Courtesy of the University of Oklahoma Libraries.

William Preston (Bill) Longley, outlaw, son of Campbell and Sarah Longley, was born in Austin County, Texas, on October 6, 1851. By April 1853 his family had moved to Evergreen, in what was then Washington County, where Longley went to school and worked on the family farm. Tales of Longley's criminal career are a mixture of actual facts and his boasts, but it is known that at the end of the **Civil War** a rebellious Longley took up with other young men and terrorized newly-freed slaves. On December 20, 1868, Longley, Johnson McKeown, and James Gilmore intercepted three ex-slaves from Bell County; this incident resulted in the death of Green Evans. Longley would later claim that after this he worked as a cowboy in Karnes County, and then killed a soldier as he rode through Yorktown, but there is no corroboration for these stories. He also claimed that he rode with bandit **Cullen M. Baker** in northeast Texas, but this is unlikely. In 1869–70, he and his brother-in-law, John W. Wilson, were terrorizing residents of south central Texas, and it was alleged that in February 1870, in Bastrop County, they killed a black man named Brice. In March the military authorities offered a $1,000 reward for them. They were also accused of killing a black woman. After Wilson's death in Brazos County, Longley traveled north, later claiming that he killed a traildriver named Rector, fought Indians, killed a horse thief named McClelland, and killed a soldier at Leavenworth, Kansas, for insulting the virtue of Texas women. None of these claims have been corroborated. At Cheyenne, Wyoming Territory, Longley joined a gold-mining expedition into the Wind River Mountains, but was stranded when the United States Army stopped the group. In June 1870 he enlisted in the United States cavalry and promptly deserted. He was captured, court-martialed, and sentenced to two years' confinement at Camp Stambaugh, Wyoming Territory. After about six months he was released back to his unit, where he remained until he again deserted on June 8, 1872. Longley claimed that he lived and rode with Chief Washakie and his Shoshone Indians, which is questionable, and then returned to Texas via Parkerville, Kansas, where he claimed he killed a Charlie Stuart, of whom there is no record. He returned to Texas and Bell County, where his parents had moved, and claimed that he worked as a cowboy in Comanche County and what was then Brown County, allegedly killing a black man and engaging in a gunfight at the Santa Anna Mountains in Coleman County.



1000,00 DOLLARS

Reward!

Head Quarters, District Post of Brenham,
Civil Bureau,
Brenham, Texas, March 1st, 1870.

SPECIAL ORDERS,
No. 20.

BY AUTHORITY of the Commanding General of the 5th Military District (State of Texas,) a

REWARD OF ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS

[$1000 00] is offered, and will be paid for the apprehension and delivery at this Military Post, *dead or alive*, of

JOHN WILSON & BILL LONGLEY,

Murderers and Horse-thieves; or **Five Hundred Dollars** for either one.

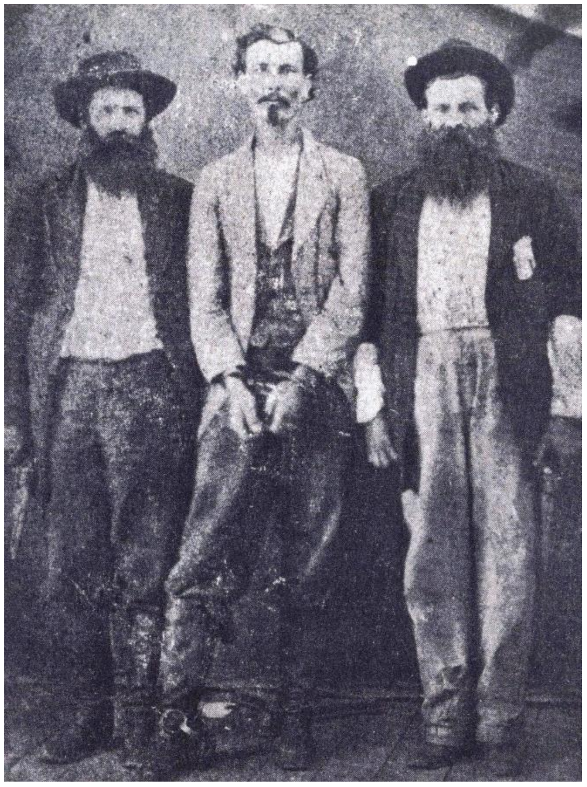
By Order of Bvt. Lt. Col. James Biddle,
J. WHITNEY,
1st. Lt. 11th Infy, Bvt. Capt. U. S. A., Post Adjutant.

OFFICIAL,

1st Lt. 11th Infty Brv. Capt. U. S. A., Post Adjutant.

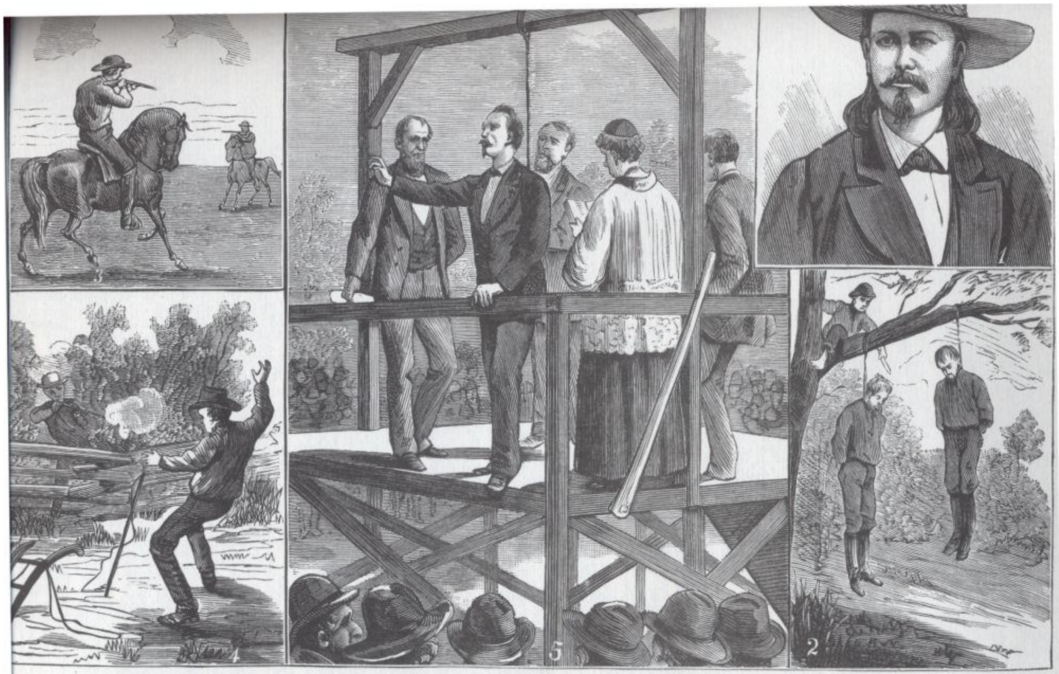
A March 1870 handbill offering $1,000 for the capture of Bill Longley and John Wilson. Courtesy of Dr. Johnny Spellman.

In July 1873 Longley was arrested by Mason county sheriff J. J. Finney in Kerr County and taken to Austin so that Finney could be paid a reward. When the reward was not paid, Finney was supposedly paid off by a Longley relative and Longley was released. In late 1874 Longley and his brother James Stockton Longley rode from Bell County to the Lee County home of their uncle, Caleb Longley, who implored Longley to kill a Wilson Anderson for allegedly killing his son. On March 31, 1875, Longley shotgunned Anderson to death while Anderson was plowing a field, and the two brothers fled north to the Indian Territory. They returned to Bell County in July, where James turned himself in; James was later acquitted of any part in Anderson's murder. In November 1875 Longley killed George Thomas in McLennan County, then rode south to Uvalde County, where, in January 1876, he killed William (Lou) Shroyer in a running gunfight. By February 1876 Longley was in Delta County, Texas, sharecropping for the Reverend William R. Lay. A dispute with a local man over a girl led to Longley's arrest. He burned himself out of the Delta County jail and, on June 13, 1876, killed the Reverend Lay while Lay was milking a cow. On June 6, 1877, Longley was captured in DeSoto Parish, Louisiana, by Nacogdoches county sheriff Milton Mast; Longley was returned to Lee County to stand trial for the murder of Wilson Anderson. Longley promptly began writing letters to a local newspaper about his "adventures," claiming that he had killed thirty-two men. On September 5, 1877, he was found guilty of murder and sentenced to hang. He was held in the Galveston County jail until the Court of Appeals affirmed his conviction in March 1878. Longley was baptized into the Catholic Church. On October 11, 1878, before a crowd of thousands in



Longley shackled in chains shortly after his 1877 arrest, flanked by Nacogdoches county sheriff Milton Mast (right) and deputy Bill Burrows (left). Courtesy of the East Texas Research Center, Stephen F. Austin State University.

Giddings, Texas, Longley was executed by Lee county sheriff **James Madison Brown**. Just before his execution, Longley claimed that he had only killed eight men. Rumors persisted that Longley's hanging had been a hoax and that he had gone to South America, and a claim was made in 1988 that he had later reappeared and died in Louisiana. Between 1992 and 1994 an effort was made to find his body in the Giddings Cemetery, but to no avail. There is also some evidence that his body may have been returned to Bell County after his execution.



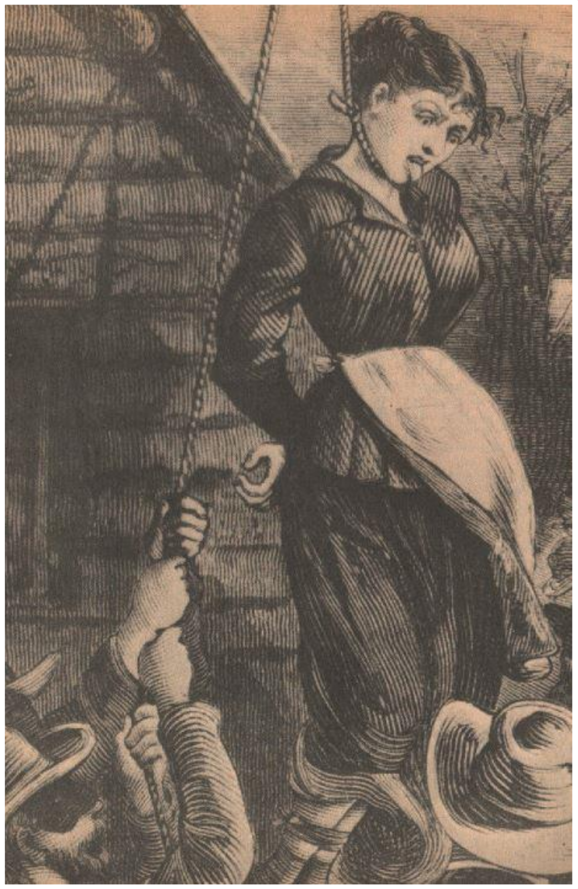
THE LAST OF LONGLEY—EXECUTION OF "BILL" LONGLEY, THE "MAN KILLER," AT GIDDINGS, TEXAS—SEE PAGE 6.

1—The desperado on the eve of the hanging. 2—A narrow escape—hanged as a horse thief, but cut down and resuscitated. 3—Fatal duel on horseback, on the prairie. 4 Assassination of Wilson Anderson, the crime which brought him to the gallows. 5—Acknowledging on the scaffold the justice of his doom.

An illustration depicting Longley's hanging, as well a some of his most infamous exploits. From the *National Police Gazette*, October 26, 1878.

JOSEFA (CHIPITA) RODRÍGUEZ

Marylyn Underwood

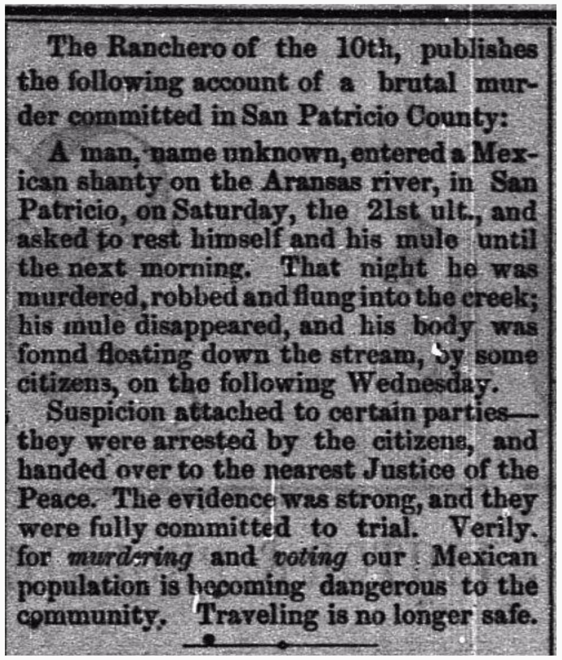


Woodcut depicting the hanging of Josefa (Chipita) Rodríguez. Artist Unknown.

Josefa (Chipita) Rodríguez was for many years considered to be the only woman legally hanged in Texas. Most of her story verges on legend; facts surrounding her arrest, trial, and execution are scant, and many aspects of her story, including the name Josefa, cannot be verified. She is believed to have been the daughter of Pedro Rodríguez, who is said to have fled from **Antonio López de Santa Anna**. Chipita moved with her father to San Patricio de Hibernia, Texas, while quite young, and for many years after Rodríguez's death furnished travelers with meals and a cot on the porch of her lean-to shack on the Nueces River. When Cotton Road traveler John Savage was murdered with an ax, presumably for the $600 in gold which he had been carrying, Chipita was accused of robbery and murder. Recovery of the gold from the Nueces River north of San Patricio, where Savage's body was found in a burlap bag, raised substantial doubt about the motive for the crime, but Josefa Rodríguez and Juan Silvera (who sources suggest may have been her illegitimate son) were indicted on circumstantial evidence and tried before Fourteenth District Court judge **Benjamin F. Neal** at San Patricio. After

Chipita pleaded not guilty, the jury recommended mercy, but Neal ordered her executed on November 13, 1863. For some time she was held at sheriff William Means's home in Meansville, where two attempts by a lynching mob were thwarted. According to legend, Chipita was kept in leg irons and chained to a wall in the courthouse. There, local children brought her candy and shucks to make cigarettes. At the time, she was described as "very old" or "about ninety," but was probably in her sixties.

The court records, except for a week of transcripts, were burned in a courthouse fire or lost in a flood, and many discrepancies exist in trial accounts. From these it has been determined that no list of qualified jurors existed, but the sheriff, instructed as jury foreman to produce "at least twenty qualified men," produced closer to thirty; at least three members of the grand jury also served on the trial jury; the foreman of the grand jury was the sheriff who arrested her; members of both juries had been indicted on felony charges; Chipita had little in the way of defense counsel, and her sole defense was the words "not guilty." There was no appeal or motion in arrest of judgment, and though some talk of a retrial may have occurred, none took place. Lore says that resident Kate McCumber drove off hangman John Gilpin when he came for her wagon to transport Chipita to the hanging tree. At least one witness to the hanging claimed he later heard a moan from the coffin, which was placed in an unmarked grave. Many tales have arisen as a result of the trial and the hanging, one of which claims that Chipita was protecting her illegitimate son. Other sources indicate she may have been involved in gathering information to influence the state's decision about which side



The Ranchero of the 10th, publishes the following account of a brutal murder committed in San Patricio County:

A man, name unknown, entered a Mexican shanty on the Aransas river, in San Patricio, on Saturday, the 21st ult., and asked to rest himself and his mule until the next morning. That night he was murdered, robbed and flung into the creek; his mule disappeared, and his body was fonnd floating down the stream, by some citizens, on the following Wednesday.

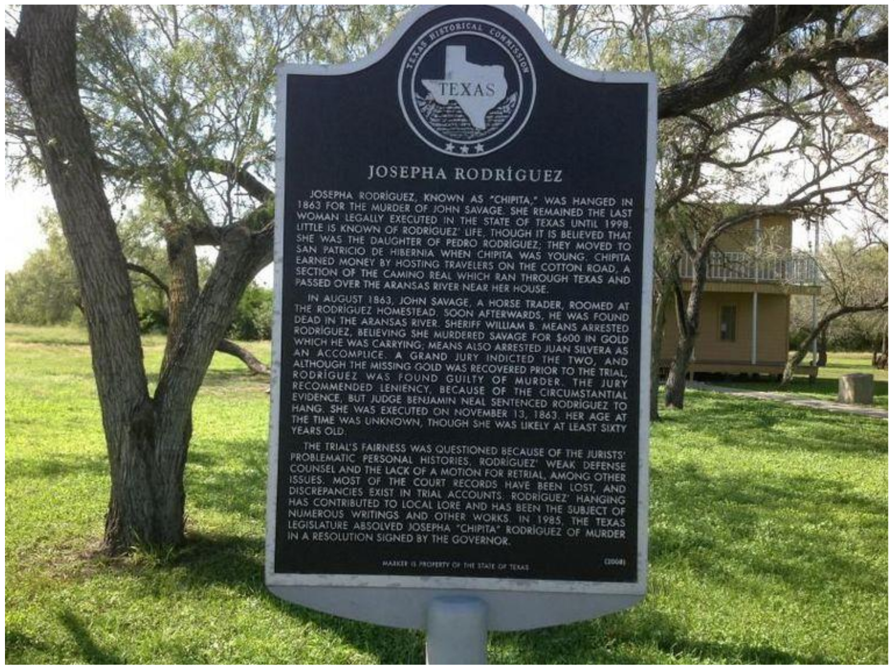
Suspicion attached to certain parties—they were arrested by the citizens, and handed over to the nearest Justice of the Peace. The evidence was strong, and they were fully committed to trial. Verily. for *murdering* and *voting* our Mexican population is becoming dangerous to the community. Traveling is no longer safe.

An early report of the murder of John Snow from the Austin *State Gazette*, September 23, 1863.

to take in the Civil War and was framed as a political act. Her ghost is said to haunt the area, especially when a woman is sentenced to be executed. She is pictured as a specter with a noose around her neck, wailing from the river bottoms. She has been the subject of two operas, numerous books, newspaper articles, and magazine accounts.

In 1985 state senator Carlos Truan of Corpus Christi asked the Texas legislature to absolve Chipita Rodríguez of murder. The Sixty-ninth legislature passed the resolution, and it was signed by Governor Mark White on June 13, 1985.

Jane Elkins, a slave convicted of murder, was hanged on May 27, 1853, in Dallas. She was the first woman legally hanged in the state.



JOSEPHA RODRÍGUEZ

JOSEPHA RODRÍGUEZ, KNOWN AS "CHIPITA," WAS HANGED IN 1863 FOR THE MURDER OF JOHN SAVAGE. SHE REMAINED THE LAST WOMAN LEGALLY EXECUTED IN THE STATE OF TEXAS UNTIL 1998. LITTLE IS KNOWN OF RODRÍGUEZ' LIFE, THOUGH IT IS BELIEVED THAT SHE WAS THE DAUGHTER OF PEDRO RODRÍGUEZ; THEY MOVED TO SAN PATRICIO DE HIBERNIA WHEN CHIPITA WAS YOUNG. CHIPITA EARNED MONEY BY HOSTING TRAVELERS ON THE COTTON ROAD, A SECTION OF THE CAMINO REAL WHICH RAN THROUGH TEXAS AND PASSED OVER THE ARANSAS RIVER NEAR HER HOUSE.

IN AUGUST 1863, JOHN SAVAGE, A HORSE TRADER, ROOMED AT THE RODRÍGUEZ HOMESTEAD. SOON AFTERWARDS, HE WAS FOUND DEAD IN THE ARANSAS RIVER. SHERIFF WILLIAM B. MEANS ARRESTED RODRÍGUEZ, BELIEVING SHE MURDERED SAVAGE FOR $600 IN GOLD WHICH HE WAS CARRYING; MEANS ALSO ARRESTED JUAN SILVERA AS AN ACCOMPLICE. A GRAND JURY INDICTED THE TWO, AND ALTHOUGH THE MISSING GOLD WAS RECOVERED PRIOR TO THE TRIAL, RODRÍGUEZ WAS FOUND GUILTY OF MURDER. THE JURY RECOMMENDED LENIENCY, BECAUSE OF THE CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE, BUT JUDGE BENJAMIN NEAL SENTENCED RODRÍGUEZ TO HANG. SHE WAS EXECUTED ON NOVEMBER 13, 1863. HER AGE AT THE TIME WAS UNKNOWN, THOUGH SHE WAS LIKELY AT LEAST SIXTY YEARS OLD.

THE TRIAL'S FAIRNESS WAS QUESTIONED BECAUSE OF THE JURISTS' PROBLEMATIC PERSONAL HISTORIES, RODRÍGUEZ' WEAK DEFENSE COUNSEL AND THE LACK OF A MOTION FOR RETRIAL, AMONG OTHER ISSUES. MOST OF THE COURT RECORDS HAVE BEEN LOST, AND DISCREPANCIES EXIST IN TRIAL ACCOUNTS. RODRÍGUEZ' HANGING HAS CONTRIBUTED TO LOCAL LORE AND HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF NUMEROUS WRITINGS AND OTHER WORKS. IN 1985, THE TEXAS LEGISLATURE ABSOLVED JOSEPHA "CHIPITA" RODRÍGUEZ OF MURDER IN A RESOLUTION SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR.

MARKER IS PROPERTY OF THE STATE OF TEXAS (2008)

Chipita Rodríguez historical marker in San Patricio County.

DEVIL'S BACKBONE TAVERN

Jennifer Cobb

Devil's Backbone Tavern was established in 1932 and is located at 4041 Ranch Road 32 in Comal County, Texas. Devil's Backbone Tavern is known not only for its long-running live music performance but also for what some believe is its haunted history.

Exterior of Devil's Backbone Tavern. Courtesy of Michael O. Varhola.

Stretching from Wimberley to Blanco, the ruggedly scenic area known as Devil's Backbone resulted from an earthquake that occurred in the region more than thirty million years ago. The powerful earthquake helped separate the land into two different regions, the **Edward's Plateau** to the west and the lower Gulf **Coastal Plains** to the east. The Devil's Backbone Tavern is situated on one of the most picturesque spots along this earthquake fault, providing the historic venue with a spectacular view of the surrounding **Texas Hill Country**.

Ghost stories are an important part of the history of both Devil's Backbone and Devil's Backbone Tavern. The most famous of these stories describes a woman who walks down the road and is carrying a baby and calling out for her husband. Some people even claim to have witnessed an entire **Civil War**

View of the Devil's Backbone fault from a scenic overlook. Courtesy of Richard Childress.

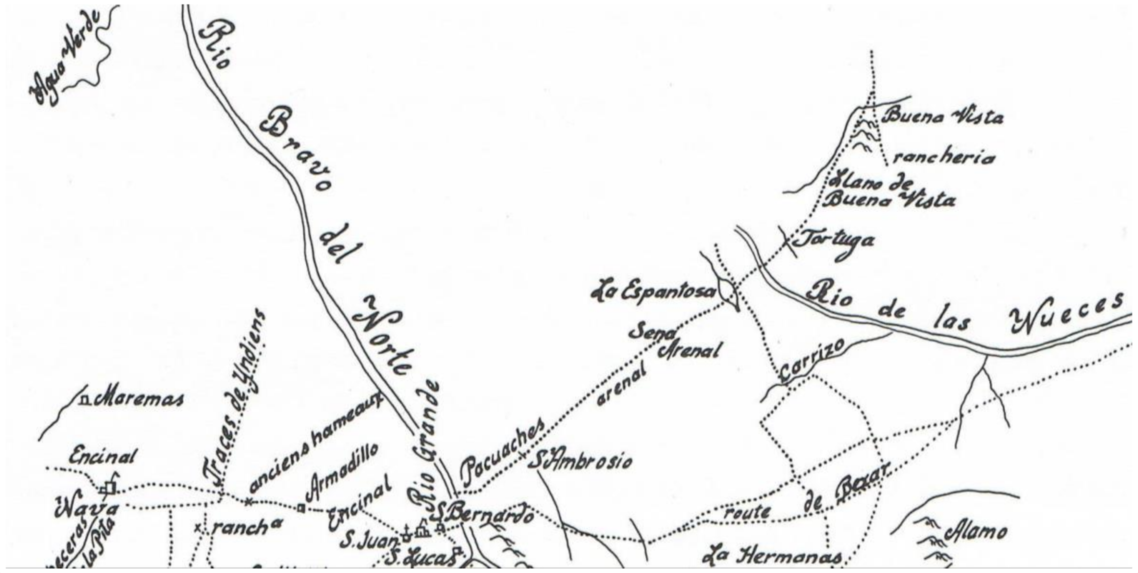
battle on the Devil's Backbone. Others say that the tavern itself is haunted, with some patrons claiming to have encountered ghostly visitors.

Whether or not these stories are true, the Devil's Backbone Tavern certainly has long been a favorite "haunt" for musicians and music fans alike. In the 1950s a dancehall was constructed at the venue, although it is no longer in use. By the late twentieth century and into the early twenty-first century, the club had become a haven for singer–songwriters. In 2010 Devil's Backbone Tavern was owned by Helen and Rick Ferguson, who began hosting live performances there in 1994. Some of the artists who have performed at Devil's Backbone Tavern have acknowledged the venue through their song lyrics. One of the most prominent of these is singer–songwriter Todd Snider, who wrote the song "Ballad of the Devil's Backbone Tavern," which he included on his album *Happy to Be Here* (2000). Snider recalled driving along the Texas Hill Country backroads and trying to find a bar in which he was scheduled to perform. He never did locate that bar, but he did stumble across the Devil's Backbone Tavern. After going inside to ask for directions, Snider decided to stay and play for the patrons there instead. According to Snider, the song has served as a personal reminder as to why he chose to pursue a musical career. Many other entertainers have visited Devil's Backbone Tavern. Musician, author, and politician Kinky Friedman has been known to stop by. Actors Jason Earl and Crispin Glover filmed parts of their comedy *Drop Dead Sexy* on location at the tavern in 2005.

In the 2010s Devil's Backbone Tavern was open every day. Local songwriters still met every Wednesday at the club to perform their original material, and a variety of other musicians played an acoustic jam session on Friday nights.

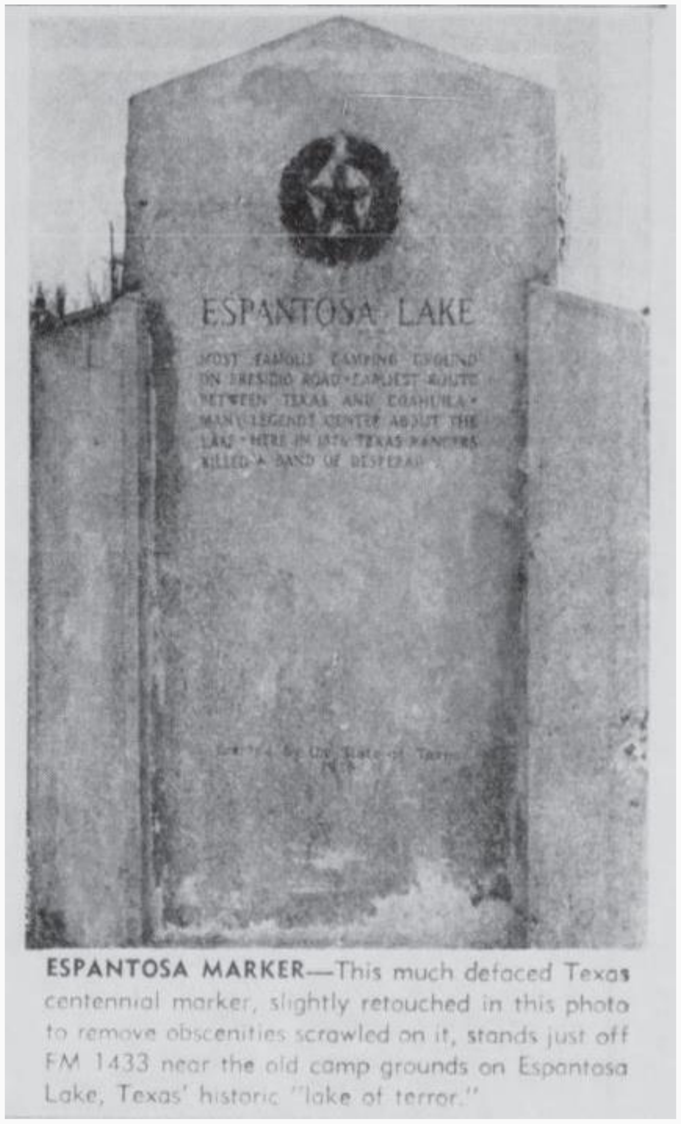
ESPANTOSA LAKE

Espantosa Lake, five miles northeast of Carrizo Springs in north central Dimmit County (at 28°35' N, 99°49' W), drains into Soldier Slough. The natural lake was once a campsite on the **Old San Antonio Road**. Perhaps because of a ghostly fog that frequently obscures the lake after dark, however, it was often avoided by travelers who feared its reputation as a haunted place of evil (*espantosa* is Spanish for "fearful," "horrid"). Many legends surround the place. Some center on wagonloads of gold and silver rumored to have been lost in the lake; others tell of apparitions of men said to have been murdered on its shores. One story says that the lake was once filled with alligators. In 1917 water from the Nueces River was diverted into


Agua Verde
Rio Bravo del Norte
Buena Vista
rancheria
Llano de Buena Vista
Tortuga
La Espantosa
Rio de las Nueces
Sena Arenal
arenal
Carrizo
Maremas
Traces de Yndiens
anciens hameaux
Encinal
Nava
Armadillo
ranch
Encinal
Rio Grande
Pacuaches
S. Ambrosio
S. Bernardo
S. Juan
S. Lucas
route de Bexar
La Hermanas
Alamo
la Pita

This 1834 map by Jean Louis Berlandier marks the location of Espantosa Lake along the Old San Antonio Road. Map redrawn by the Texas State Department of Highways and Public Transportation.

the lake, and a dam was built to contain the flow for irrigation purposes. In 1990 the dam, operated by the Zavala-Dimmit County Water Control and Improvement District, impounded a reservoir with a capacity of 1,745 acre-feet. The lake covered 364 acres and was used for boating and fishing as well as irrigation.


ESPANTOSA LAKE
MOST FAMOUS CAMPING GROUND
ON PRESIDIO ROAD • EARLIEST ROUTE
BETWEEN TEXAS AND COAHUILA •
MANY LEGENDS CENTER ABOUT THE
TEXAS RANGERS
KILLED A BAND OF DESPERAD

ESPANTOSA MARKER—This much defaced Texas centennial marker, slightly retouched in this photo to remove obscenities scrawled on it, stands just off FM 1433 near the old camp grounds on Espantosa Lake, Texas' historic "lake of terror."

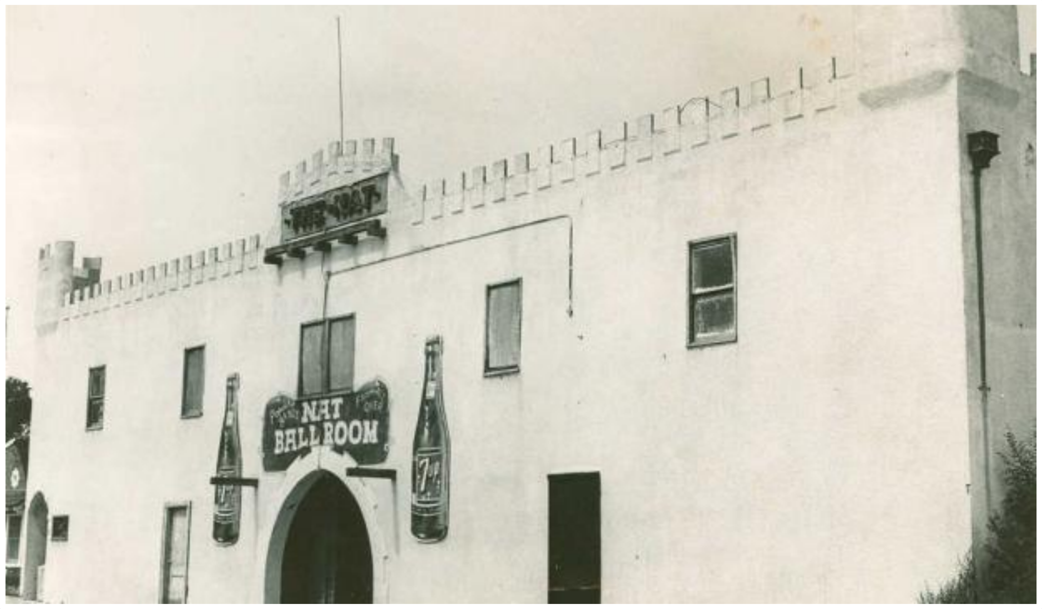
Espantosa Lake historical marker. Courtesy of the San Antonio *Express*, March 9,1969.

AMARILLO NATATORIUM

Laurie E. Jasinski

The Amarillo Natatorium, a celebrated club and landmark located at 2705 W. 6th Avenue in Amarillo, opened in July 1922. Originally designed by local architect Guy Carlander, the facility was constructed to surround an open-air community swimming pool that measured 36 feet by 101 feet. With the popularity of the pool, the facility was enclosed the following year to provide year-round use.

In 1926 J. D. Tucker purchased the Natatorium, which was commonly called “The Nat.” He covered the swimming pool with 10,000 square feet of maple flooring to create a dance floor and stage for his new dance palace, and the venue became a popular ballroom. A second story was added and possibly



The Amarillo Natatorium, ca. 1930. Courtesy of the Amarillo *Globe-News*.

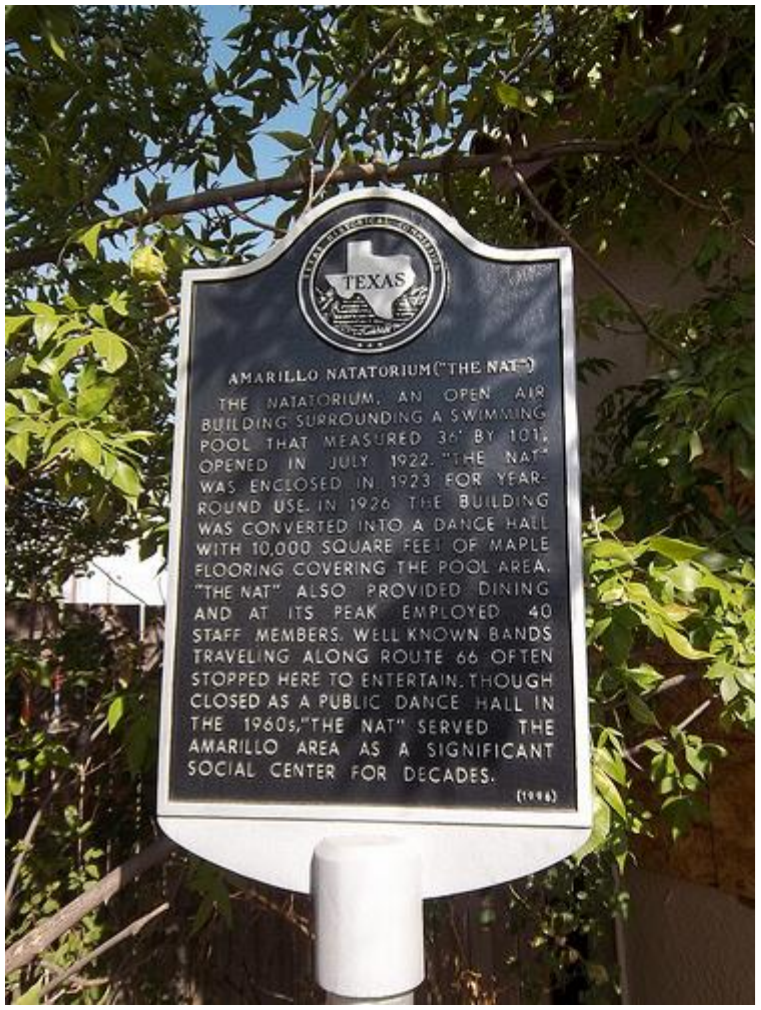
housed gambling rooms at some point. Amarillo businessman Harry Badger bought The Nat in the early 1930s and renamed it The Nat Dine and Dance Palace. He built the castle-like façade on the structure and added an entrance to the dance hall area to pull in patrons from Route 66, the major highway for a growing number of motorists. Badger also added a dining area—The Nat Café.

Heralded for its fine dance floor and other upscale amenities, The Nat was a notable venue during the big band era and hosted such luminaries as the orchestras of Benny Goodman, Guy Lombardo, Duke Ellington, the Dorsey Brothers, and **Harry James**. Reportedly, at its peak, more than forty employees worked at The Nat.

Dr. William Maddox purchased The Nat in the 1940s, and it remained a favored musical club along Route 66, as well as a hangout for servicemen stationed at **Amarillo Air Force Base**. During the 1950s the establishment evolved with changing musical tastes and offered performances by **Buddy Holly**, Little Richard, and **Roy Orbison**. The Nat closed as a public dance hall in the 1960s but was still occasionally used for concerts and community events.

Patrons enjoying the Nat's heated pool prior to its conversion into a dance hall in 1926. Courtesy of the Amarillo *Globe-News*.

It was listed as part of the U.S. Route 66-Sixth Street Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places in 1994. A historical marker honoring the Amarillo Natatorium was erected in 1996. The building was renovated for use as an antiques mall but closed again to the public in the early 2000s. The Nat has occasionally hosted concerts for such artists as Joe Ely, the Dixie Chicks, and Cooder Graw and remains a popular tourist attraction along Route 66. Legends of ghost stories and hauntings also surround its storied past, and The Nat has been the site of paranormal investigations. In the 2010s The Nat was a market place for vendors and was operated by Kasey Robinson.



AMARILLO NATATORIUM ("THE NAT")

THE NATATORIUM, AN OPEN AIR BUILDING SURROUNDING A SWIMMING POOL THAT MEASURED 36' BY 101', OPENED IN JULY 1922. "THE NAT" WAS ENCLOSED IN 1923 FOR YEAR-ROUND USE. IN 1926 THE BUILDING WAS CONVERTED INTO A DANCE HALL WITH 10,000 SQUARE FEET OF MAPLE FLOORING COVERING THE POOL AREA. "THE NAT" ALSO PROVIDED DINING AND AT ITS PEAK EMPLOYED 40 STAFF MEMBERS. WELL KNOWN BANDS TRAVELING ALONG ROUTE 66 OFTEN STOPPED HERE TO ENTERTAIN. THOUGH CLOSED AS A PUBLIC DANCE HALL IN THE 1960s, "THE NAT" SERVED THE AMARILLO AREA AS A SIGNIFICANT SOCIAL CENTER FOR DECADES.

Amarillo Natatorium historical marker in Potter County.