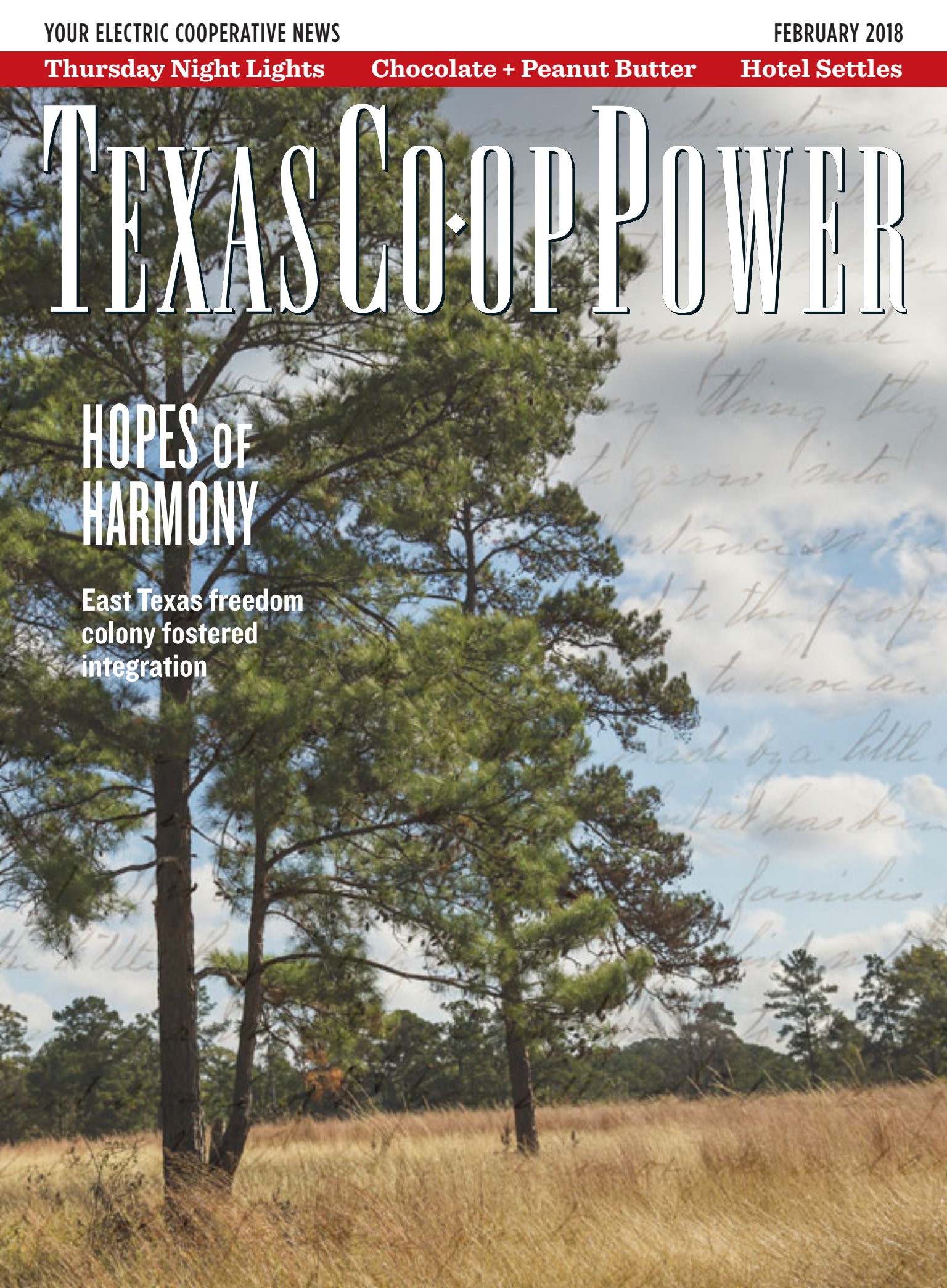


TEXAS CO-OP POWER

HOPES OF HARMONY

East Texas freedom colony fostered integration



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A new book shines a light on Prairie View Interscholastic League football stars.

FEATURES

8 A Vision of Harmony Grant's Colony outside Huntsville offered integrated community for former slaves.

Story by LaDawn Fletcher | Photos by Julia Robinson

12 Thursday Night Lights Book tells the largely unknown story of segregated African-American high school football.

By Michael Hurd

FAVORITES

5 Letters

6 Currents

18 Local Co-op News

Get the latest information plus energy and safety tips from your cooperative.

29 Texas History

The Rope Walker of Corsicana

By Gene Fowler

31 Recipes

Peanut Butter + Chocolate

35 Focus on Texas

Photo Contest: Jailhouses

36 Around Texas

List of Local Events

38 Hit the Road

Hotel Settles Standing Tall

By Sheryl Smith-Rodgers

ONLINE

TexasCoopPower.com

Find these stories online if they don't appear in your edition of the magazine.

Observations

Busted at Bee Cave

By Clay Coppedge

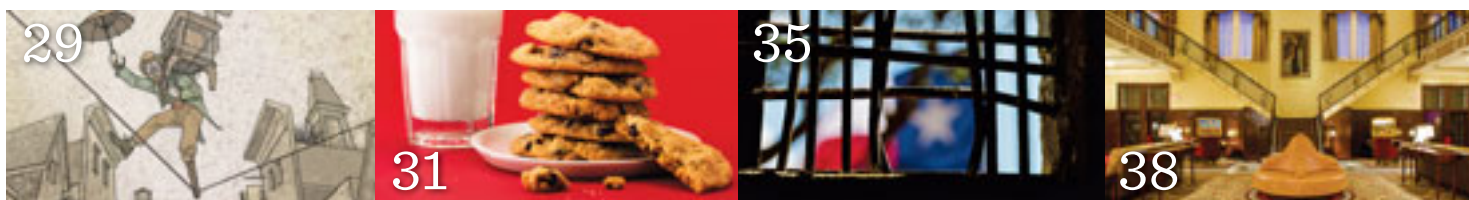
Texas USA

Dark Corner and High Hill

By Lonn Taylor

NEXT MONTH

What the Devil? Exploring Lucifer's pointed influence on naming Texas places, plants and critters.



PLAYERS: COURTESY UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS PRESS. HORNS: KOSTSOV | SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

ON THE COVER The settlement for former slaves founded by George Washington Grant in 1866 has all but disappeared. Photo by Julia Robinson

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Pop and Spike on Purpose

What a heartwarming story [*Pop and Spike*, December 2017]. It gives me hope that I, too, will find purpose in my retirement years. God bless Spike and Pop. I hope they have many happy, joyful and purposeful years together.

BARBARA STOHLER VIA FACEBOOK

We all need a purpose. I think it's a benefit of living. And Mama's probably looking on, being happy as well.

KATHLEEN DAVIS | NACOGDOCHES
DEEP EAST TEXAS EC

Head of the Table

The Cornsilk Pudding Pie [Recipes, November 2017] was the hands-down favorite on our Thanksgiving table!

JOY MILLER VIA FACEBOOK | CIBOLO
GUADALUPE VALLEY EC



Helping Veterans

We learned so much about the Gary Sinise Foundation [*Welcome Home*, November 2017] and its work with other charitable organizations and corporations in providing individualized, adapted, mortgage-free

Hanging With John

What a surprise to read your story

[*John the Baptist*, December 2017]

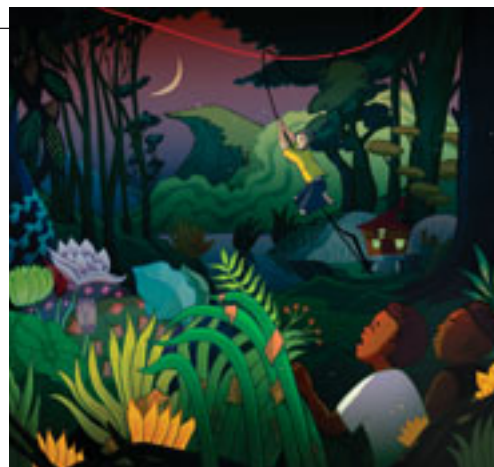
that sparked memories of a special time and place from my past.

As kids back in the late 1950s, my friends and I lived near and often visited the woods where John left his

notes with Bible scriptures. We always referred to him as Crazy John.

We met him only once and visited for about a half-hour. He seemed like a normal guy, although definitely a hermit. John had a small campfire going and was drinking coffee from a tin cup. I remember him being unshaven and with dark, piercing eyes.

JOHN SIMMONS | STREETMAN | NAVARRO COUNTY EC



homes for wounded veterans. It was an inspiring article.

SARAH METSCHAN | AUSTIN
PEDERNALES EC

OK With Us

Let me preface this by stating that I dislike all things Texas—geography, teams, towns, etc. About a year back, Southwest Rural Electric Cooperative [based in Tipton, Oklahoma, with some members in Texas] started sending us *Texas Co-op Power* in addition to *Oklahoma Living*. On accident, I opened it and read a couple of things and enjoyed them, so I ended up reading the entire magazine.

Well, I read *Texas Co-op Power* cover to cover the first day it arrives. It's very well-written and contains interesting topics. You folks produce a great magazine.

I wonder, though, could you maybe change the name to just *Co-op Power*?

LUKE D. JESSUP | SNYDER, OKLAHOMA
SOUTHWEST RURAL EC

Hearty Buffalo

After reading the plight of the American bison in *Buffalo Billed* [November 2017], I was immediately struck with how long it must have taken to sail from Texas to Spain in the late 1700s.

Using sea-distances.org, I was able to determine the distance by sea between Corpus Christi and Cadiz, Spain—approximately 4,800 miles. Sailing ships of that time could barely make 100 miles a day.

I'm astonished that the one wild female buffalo survived not only capture and the overland drive from La Bahia but

also the arduous sea voyage, suspended in a leather harness in the dark cargo hold of a Spanish ship for nearly 57 days.

MIKE HARDAWAY | MCKINNEY
COSERV

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Texas Co-op Power

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BY THE NUMBERS

Texas Co-op Power's circulation hit **1.54 million** in December. It has the highest circulation of any magazine in the state.



HAPPENINGS

Who Wrote the Book of Love?

The Round Top Festival Institute combines a love of books and a love of romance with its **VALENTINE'S CONCERT WITH DICK SMITH AND FRIENDS** on **FEBRUARY 10**.

After the performance, featuring popular songs celebrating sweet-hearts, guests may sponsor a book and bid on silent auction items to benefit the institute's library.

Concert pianist James Dick established the institute, a member of Fayette Electric Cooperative, in 1971 to nurture aspiring young musicians. It has grown to encompass a campus of more than 200 acres, featuring the 1,000-seat Festival Concert Hall.

WEB EXTRAS
► Find more happenings online.

INFO ► (979) 249-3129, festivalhill.org



CO-OP PEOPLE

RED HATS UPDATE

It's been two years since we first put the word out that Nancy Johnson, a member of Southwest Texas EC, has the dream of providing all babies born in Texas in February with red hats. Johnson volunteers as the Texas ringleader for the American Heart Association's Little Hats, Big Hearts project to raise awareness of congenital heart defects. February is American Heart Month.

Johnson's home in Sonora is the de facto headquarters for her efforts, and thousands of handmade hats—knitted, crocheted and loomed—have passed through it since that first Currents item in 2016 and a cover story in 2017 were published. Hundreds of volunteers have contacted Johnson after learning of her quest through *Texas Co-op Power*.

Johnson arranges for hospitals to participate in the program. She says she added 20 hospitals to the program in the past year. "I am covering many rural, small-town hospitals where most of the co-op people go for their health care," she says. She also added Cook Children's Medical Center in Fort Worth.

To learn more, donate or make hats, contact Nancy Johnson at (325) 226-3659 or 19nanjo41@gmail.com, or visit heart.org.



CO-OPS IN THE COMMUNITY

Hurricane Harvey

IN TRUE COOPERATIVE SPIRIT, folks in Virginia and Louisiana sent emergency supplies to Texas co-ops after Hurricane Harvey hit in August 2017.

Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative, based in Chase City, Virginia, sent an 18-wheeler packed with hundreds of items, including water, personal hygiene products, cleaning supplies and handwritten messages of faith and encouragement 1,300 miles to Victoria EC.

“Cooperation Among Cooperatives is the sixth founding cooperative principle on which we operate, and I cannot think of a finer example of seeing this principle put into action,” said Blaine Warzecha, general manager of Victoria EC.

Employees from Dixie Electric Membership Corporation in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, sent cleaning supplies, paper goods, diapers, water and \$100 gift cards to Sam Houston EC. Center of Hope, a charitable organization sponsored by churches in the Livingston area, distributed the relief supplies. Employees at Dixie Electric, who experienced major flooding in 2016, wanted to return the favor after they received financial help from Sam Houston EC employees during that crisis.

HURRICANE HARVEY created a rush on gas stations around Texas in the days after the storm pounded the state. The gas shortage, fueled in part by social media, created lines 10 cars deep, causing concern at CoServ, which needed to keep its fleet of vehicles rolling.

So the co-op set up a fuel tanker at its main office in Corinth and bought 3,600 gallons of diesel and 3,200 gallons of unleaded, which kept its vehicles on the road and out of lines.

“People may have panicked because of social media, but CoServ didn’t,” said Randy Hall, CoServ’s director of job training and safety.



SPORTS SECTION

Passing the Torch

When the Olympic torch passed through Dallas on December 12, 2001, on its way to Salt Lake City, Mayor Ron Kirk chose 89-year-old Dorothy Franey Langkop to carry the torch up the steps of City Hall. Who better than one of Texas’ greatest-ever ice skaters?

Langkop was born in Minnesota and won bronze in women’s speed skating at the 1932 Winter Olympics before setting 12 world records in the sport. But she’s best known for The Franey Ice Revue, her figure skating show that ran 14 years at the Adolphus Hotel in Dallas beginning in 1943. Langkop died in 2011.



Other former Winter Olympics greats, including Chad Hedrick, Brian Leetch and Tara Lipinski, also have called the Lone Star State home at points in their lives.

So while Texas isn’t known for its snow or ice, Texans still may be in the mix when the 2018 Winter Olympic Games kick off February 9 in Pyeongchang, South Korea.

WORTH REPEATING

“Education is the key to unlock the golden door of freedom.”

—**GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER**, a former slave turned botanist who revolutionized agriculture by inventing new uses for such crops as peanuts and soybeans, producing adhesives, bleach, buttermilk, ink, shoe polish, synthetic rubber, pavement and more. February 11 is National Inventors’ Day.



Thursday afternoon. There have been

“The creek is the worst one I ever saw. It rises very suddenly and its channel changes frequently. It is near our house, but out of sight. One day last week it was very rainy and toward evening, Harry Stratton went down on foot to cross the creek but it was too high, so he came in here, and while he was here the rain poured down. Father was over at the schoolhouse, and not before dark Mother felt anxious about him, and as it had started she went down to the creek and just as she got there he came up on the other side but although he was on horseback it was impossible for him to cross, so he turned back. It had stopped raining and the creek had fallen as fast as it had raised.”

—SARAH WILLIAMS, October 12, 1875, courtesy of the Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College

A VISION OF HARMONY

GRANT'S COLONY, AN EAST TEXAS FREEDOM COLONY, OFFERED INTEGRATION FOR FORMER SLAVES

The creek rose and fell, like the fortunes of the former slaves who lived in Grant's Colony near Huntsville during and after Reconstruction. In small settlements that sprang up after the Civil War, newly freed blacks made their homes and learned to navigate as free people in what we now call freedom colonies.

Zachary Doleshal of Sam Houston State University didn't intend to study freedom colonies. He first discovered Grant's Colony not as a history professor but as a newcomer to Huntsville. His wife was hired as a math professor at Sam Houston State first, and he set out to explore his new hometown. He traveled down Grant Colony Cemetery Road east of Huntsville and found himself on a gravel road surrounded by forest. At the end of the road, true to its name, he found a cemetery.

“When I saw it, I thought ‘What is this place?’” Doleshal says. His curiosity was piqued, and when he was assigned to teach public history, he knew discovering who Grant was and how he came to have a colony named after him would be a focus.

Freedom colonies developed in varying ways in Texas. Historian Thad Sitton, author of *Freedom Colonies*, says some communities sprang up organically as families looking to escape life on the plantation created homesteads in unincorporated parts of counties throughout the

South. Others were created when philanthropic whites donated, or sometimes opportunistic whites sold, land to the newly freed slaves. Those created by blacks on unincorporated parcels of land often had very little interaction with whites. Grant's Colony was different, however.

It was founded by George Washington Grant, a wealthy, white slaveholder and landowner who had a spiritual awakening after marrying his beloved wife, Mary Jane, a charter member of the First Christian Church in Huntsville, now known as Disciples of Christ. The religious conversion was swift and his conviction deep. He made a fortune in the 1850s ferrying passengers by stagecoach on the two-and-a-half-day journey from Austin to Houston, and he plowed the profits into purchasing more than 11,000 acres of land in Walker and Grimes counties.

The Civil War exposed tensions over the issue of slavery in religious denominations such as the Quakers and the Disciples of Christ. Many members and their churches were strict pacifists and often abolitionists. They believed that the church and nation should be unified under Christ. Through their church, the Grants had ties to a Quaker congregation, called “Friends,” in Ohio. This friendship would prove fortuitous for Grant's Colony.

George Grant had a vision for bringing his newly discovered religious ideals to life. In 1866, he dedicated 6,000 acres around

STORY BY LADAWN FLETCHER
PHOTOS BY JULIA ROBINSON

A logging and gas lease road winds through Sam Houston National Forest near the site of Grant's Colony. New growth has choked the once open site.

GEORGE GRANT HAD A VISION FOR BRINGING HIS NEWLY DISCOVERED RELIGIOUS IDEALS TO LIFE. IN 1866, HE DEDICATED 6,000 ACRES AROUND HARMON CREEK TO CREATE A COMMUNITY.



OVER THE YEARS, HE ADVERTISED PLOTS OF LAND FOR LEASE OR SALE TO ANYONE AND EVERYONE. HE ENVISIONED A COLONY IN WHICH BLACKS AND WHITES LIVED TOGETHER IN HARMONY.

Harmon Creek to create a community. Over the years, he advertised plots of land for lease or sale to anyone and everyone. He envisioned a colony in which blacks and whites lived together in harmony. He called his colony “Harmony Settlement,” and he worked with the Freedmen’s Bureau to make it happen. Freedmen’s agents were almost universally despised in the South, and partnering with them to help create an integrated colony in the 1870s was perceived by almost all as a ludicrous idea. But the newly freed slaves were very interested, even if white citizens were not.

The integration experiment Grant conducted is especially intriguing in light of what was happening in Texas at the time. The late 1870s were particularly treacherous for blacks in Texas. Gains made by blacks in the years immediately after the war were rolled back by Gov. Richard Coke and the Democratic Party, which aligned itself with white supremacist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan. Violence and intimidation were so pervasive that many black Texans joined freedmen from Louisiana and Mississippi or migrated to Kansas to seek equality and escape Jim Crow, voter disenfranchisement and the Klan.

Grant’s Colony, although certainly not immune to the inequality and terror beyond its borders, did enjoy some protection.

“In many cases, having a white benefactor was enormously helpful to the freedom colonies,” Sitton says. “It gave the community a spokesperson on their behalf to the white citizens.”

In his research, Doleshal found very little unrest in the colony. “Not to downplay the violence that did happen, but Grant’s Colony was a place of peace, more or less,” he says.

Grant donated land to build two churches and a school. The school attracted more than 100 students ranging from ages 6 to 20. With the school built, Grant turned his attention toward securing teachers using his connections with Quaker congregations in Ohio. After the war, Quakers were dispatched to the

HE CALLED HIS COLONY “HARMONY SETTLEMENT,”

South to run schools for newly freed slaves. The Williams family, Edward, Hannah and daughter Sarah, had met Grant before, and he persuaded them to manage the New Harmony School.

The school grew under their tutelage. Dozens of letters written primarily by young Sarah Williams to family still living in Ohio catalogued daily life in the colony over six years. At its peak, in the 1870s and 1880s, more than 400 people called Grant’s Colony home. They grew sorghum, cucumbers, tomatoes and peaches, which they canned or dried and sold. They built the school and all the furnishings for it. The town had a mill, cotton gin and post office.

Grant’s Colony also spawned leaders. It was run by an all-black, 12-person council. The community’s leadership extended beyond the boundaries of the settlement when Richard Williams, a former slave and member of the council, was elected to the Texas Legislature in 1870 and re-elected in 1872. He is mentioned with admiration in the letters Sarah Williams sent home.

For a few decades, the colony thrived. But by the 1900s, it began to falter. Grant died in 1889 with substantial debts. In his will, he asked for the colony to remain intact and only the remain-



ing land sold. The sale of the remaining land was not enough to satisfy his creditors, and, in 1900, all the property was sold. Homesteads remained, including the Grant family's, but by then the school and the post office were gone.

The decline of the colony is chronicled by the headstones in the cemetery. "The 1880s and 1890s tombstones were not elaborate by any stretch, but they were nice. Legible. Clearly professionally made," Doleshal says. "But in the 1910s and 1920s, you see gravestones that are poured with rough concrete and

property deeds from a Walker County Appraisal District map. The students pieced together where the old roads had been. Things took a positive turn when they received a 1936 aerial photograph from the Forest Service.

Walter Kingsborough, archaeologist for the Forest Service, joined the search. Armed with aerial photos and old maps, the students were able to determine where key structures, such as the school, existed. The

Opposite: Author LaDawn Fletcher, left, and Sam Houston State University professor Zachary Doleshal visit Grant's Colony Cemetery, which is still used. Above: The cemetery is the final resting place for residents of the freedmen's town.

AND HE WORKED WITH THE FREEDMEN'S BUREAU TO MAKE IT HAPPEN.

the name written with fingers."

Around 1910, the bridge over Harmon Creek that connected the two sides of the colony washed away. The school was moved from the property in the 1920s, signaling the end of the community. In the late 1930s, the land was sold to the U.S. Forest Service, and any remaining families left the area. The earth reclaimed what was left of the colony, and the area sat undisturbed for almost 80 years.

Forest Service provided metal detectors, and the group scoured the area for remnants of lives long forgotten. They found a few things but not much.

Artifacts lend context, but they rarely tell the stories—people do. Doleshal still is looking for descendants of the residents of Grant's Colony. His students have managed to find some using genealogical studies, but those who remember hearing about life in the colony have proved elusive.

In the meantime, Doleshal hopes the work he and his students are doing will provide a nuanced picture of Reconstruction in Texas. For blacks, it was an alternately heady and terrifying time to be an American citizen. But buried among those oft-recounted struggles in our nation's history, there are also stories of great courage and imagination.

For Doleshal, Grant stands out in Reconstruction-era Texas, even if he isn't well-known. He is proud to share with others the story of the man who dared to build a community reflective of his faith and the promise of a newly reconciled nation.

LaDawn Fletcher is a Houston-area writer who enjoys writing about Texas.

WEB EXTRAS

► Read this story on our website to see one of Sarah Williams' handwritten letters and text from others.

In 2016, Doleshal's students stood in the forest outside Huntsville, looking for anything left of Grant's Colony. "All we had to work with at the beginning was the cemetery. That was our starting point. I had students just walking around in the woods. I hate to say it; I told them, 'Just walk around and maybe you'll get lucky,' " he says. "They did not," he adds ruefully.

The class then found an old topographic map, which they matched with

THURSDAY NIGHT LIGHTS

—
Book tells the largely
unknown story of segregated
African-American high school
football programs in Texas
—

BY MICHAEL HURD



FROM 1920 TO 1970, the Prairie View Interscholastic League served as the governing body for athletic, academic and music competitions for segregated black high schools in Texas. Founded at Prairie View A&M University as the Texas Interscholastic League of Colored Schools, the PVIL mirrored the University Interscholastic League (founded at the University of Texas at Austin), which directed the same activities for the state's white high schools. From its inception in 1910, the UIL denied membership to African-American schools.

After integration, the two leagues merged in 1967, and the majority of the PVIL's 500 schools closed. Only eight remain as members of the UIL. White schools played their football games on Friday and Saturday nights; PVIL games were on Wednesday and Thursday nights. Yet the underpublicized PVIL produced a who's who of high school, college and pro football talent, including Otis Taylor (Houston Worthing High School), Bubba Smith (Beaumont Charlton-Pollard), Jerry LeVias (Beaumont Hebert), Dick "Night Train" Lane (Austin Anderson), "Mean Joe" Greene (Temple Dunbar), Abner Haynes (Dallas Lincoln) and Ken Hous-

ton (Lufkin Dunbar). In Houston, from the 1940s to 1960s, the Jack Yates Lions and Phillis Wheatley Wildcats met on Thanksgiving Day in the largest prep school game in the country, drawing standing-room-only crowds that reached 40,000.

In this excerpt from my book, *Thursday Night Lights* (University of Texas Press, 2017), I write about my motivation for telling the story of black high school football in Texas.

EXCERPT [Jeppesen Stadium in Houston] sat on a 60-acre tract bordered by Holman Street to the north, Cullen Boulevard to the east, Wheeler Avenue to the south, and Scott Street to the west. Scott was a major artery of asphalt potholes connecting the growing black communities from the Third Ward south to Sunnyside. The stadium and its field house were one block east of the all-black high school named after the minister, community leader and former slave, John Henry "Jack" Yates—who was also the first pastor of the first black Baptist church in Houston, Antioch Baptist Church, established in 1866. The crimson-and-gold Jack Yates High School Lions had a perfect home-field advantage



This is most likely the 1909 team from Dallas Colored High School, which played in one of the first games between black high schools in Texas.

and a walking commute to observe competing PVIL teams and even Friday night action.

Alphonse Dotson, a lineman for Yates, talked about those gatherings: “We would go over to Jeppesen and watch the [white] schools play on Friday nights. Hell, we could play with them and play well, hold our own. We would have done well against them, but that they kept us separate was for a different reason. We’d also have some camaraderie with guys from [PVIL schools] across town, might have a fight. But as long as you weren’t courting a girl from somebody else’s neighborhood, you were fine. You wanted to win when you played against them, but you wanted them to do well afterwards.”

The stadium stood as a buffer between the Houston College for Negroes, just getting its start by holding night classes at Yates, to the southwest on Wheeler, and segregated University of Houston, immediately to the northeast on Cullen. By 1947, the College for Negroes had begun developing its own campus, and Wheeler ran through the center of what would become Texas Southern University.

Besides the players and coaches, what I knew about high school football were the Wednesday and Thursday night games I saw at Jeppesen. So I was puzzled the first time I heard the phrase “Friday night lights.” And as I researched this book, I found that I was not alone in that reaction, since most of the former PVIL players and coaches I spoke with around the state agreed the term had little to no meaning for them. Most black high schools in Texas played on nights other than Fridays unless they had their own facility, as only a few did, such as Texarkana Dunbar. Its Buffalo Stadium was located behind Theron Jones Elementary School, and during lunchtime my classmates and I chased one another around the field.

On game nights, I would wander through the gravel-and-red-clay parking lot, look for my parents, and pass visiting players in dirty, sweaty togs kissing their cheerleader girlfriends before boarding buses for the trip home. (I thought that was pretty cool.) White schools had priority for the Friday night use of public stadiums shared with black schools. Asked about Jeppesen Stadium’s use, a stunned former PVIL football player responded as though

the place was the PVIL schools' private domain: "You mean they used that stadium on Friday nights?"

I remember a cold, drizzly December night in 1961 at Jeppesen. I was 12 and sat bundled up next to my dad in the stands as Orsby Crenshaw and the Austin L.C. Anderson Yellow Jackets won a 20-13 contest against Yates for the PVIL Class 4A state championship. Anderson was coached by Raymond Timmons, who that night bested the great Andrew "Pat" Patterson, whose

in his own world around the school track on a hot spring day to whatever groovy tunes were streaming through his transistor radio earplug, and Taylor, back in the 'hood, sitting at the wheel of his brand-new candy-apple-red Thunderbird convertible as the fellas in Reedwood took a break from playing basketball to crowd around and admire the vehicle, which he bought after he signed his rookie contract with the Kansas City Chiefs. Both guys would show up on the big stage. Lattin threw down a monster



1958 PVIL championship team from Livingston Dunbar High School

team had come into the game undefeated. It would be the last of four state titles for the Yellow Jackets, and the only state championship game I ever witnessed.

That was my high school football experience growing up, attending segregated schools in the 1960s.

It had nothing to do with Friday night lights.

More to the point, as one PVIL alum put it, "Friday night lights? That's white folks."

This book is about "black folks" who coached and played high school football behind the veil of segregation in Texas for half a century, 1920–1970, as members of the all-black Prairie View Interscholastic League, whose games were played primarily on Wednesday and Thursday nights in most towns, Tuesdays in others, some on Saturdays, but rarely on prime-time Friday nights, when games for white schools were played. The book's title, *Thursday Night Lights*, is not just a riff on "Friday night lights" but also identifies a defining reality of high school football games played in racially charged times when even the midweek scheduling of games for black teams carried a "less than" feel.

The PVIL's genesis was as the Texas Interscholastic League of Colored Schools, organized three years after white policemen and citizens' mistreatment of black soldiers from the 24th U.S. Infantry led to the horror—17 people shot and killed—of the Camp Logan mutiny and Houston riot of 1917. The league folded in 1970, one year after the University of Texas fielded its last all-white football team.

Emotionally, I have been writing this book since adolescence and the first time I saw PVIL greatness up close and personal in David Lattin and Otis Taylor, Worthing and Sunnyside heroes. I remember a profusely sweating "Big Daddy D" jogging coolly

dunk to set the tone for Texas Western's destruction of Adolph Rupp's Kentucky Wildcats in the 1966 NCAA championship game, an upset for the ages that is credited with ushering in the recruitment of more blacks by previously all-white programs. Taylor, a strong but graceful receiver, was among the cadre of players from historically black colleges who helped bring the American Football League to life. In Super Bowl IV, Taylor, a prototypical big, fast receiver, caught a short pass from Len Dawson, broke tackles by cornerback Earsell Mackbee and safety Karl Kassulke, and high-stepped down the right sideline to the end zone, securing the Chiefs' 23-7 upset win over Minnesota.

Lattin and Taylor were local heroes, and I followed their careers, but I had a vested interest in following other PVIL football players from the Houston area, too, as a fan and then as a sportswriter. I read team depth charts and player bios, noted high school affiliations, and had flashbacks of sitting in the stands at Jeppesen while watching some of those teams play. *Thursday Night Lights* reveals the PVIL quilt that was a patchwork of athletic, academic and social achievements pieced together for a black community striving to succeed, to take care of its own despite the era's racism. For me, its history became a simmering narrative bred in familiarity, born from segregation.

I had to tell this story.

Michael Hurd is director of the Texas Institute for the Preservation of History and Culture at Prairie View A&M University. He is a Houston native and former sportswriter for the *Austin American-Statesman*, *USA Today* and Yahoo Sports.

WEB EXTRAS

► Read this story on our website to find resources to learn more about the PVIL.

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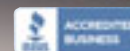
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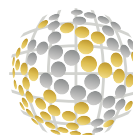
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Keep Kids and Sitter Safe

IMAGINE THIS: IT'S VALENTINE'S DAY, AND YOU'RE PLANNING A NIGHT OUT. YOU'VE reserved a table and booked a babysitter. You've gone over everything: instructions for the kids' routines, important contact information and where to find supplies.

But did you also prepare your home? With a little preparation, you can help ensure your children's safety, make your babysitter's life easier and secure a peaceful night out for yourself.

First, your home's electrical system should be in good working order. Looking for and repairing electrical problems well before your evening out is an important step in preventing electrical accidents.

Cracked outlet covers and discolored outlets and switches are indications of electrical problems. These problems can lead to fires and electric shocks. Contact a professional to have your home inspected and any problems repaired.

These additional tips can help increase safety awareness, eliminate electrical hazards and put your mind at ease:

- ▶ Repair or dispose of damaged electronics and cords.
- ▶ Keep cords out of sight so that children are not tempted to play with them.
- ▶ Use outlet covers or tamper-resistant receptacles. Small fingers can fit easily into sockets, and children may poke objects into outlets. Tamper-resistant outlets have a shutter system to keep them safe.
- ▶ Use ground-fault circuit interrupters to prevent shocks. GFCIs detect and prevent dangerous situations where an electric shock could occur. You should have GFCIs anywhere that water and electricity may meet, such as in bathrooms and kitchens.
- ▶ Have ready a fire extinguisher that is rated for electrical fires. Be sure your babysitter knows where it is and how to use it.
- ▶ Install smoke alarms, and be sure their batteries work.
- ▶ Be prepared for power outages. Have flashlights and spare batteries on hand, and let your babysitter know where they are.
- ▶ Post a list of emergency phone numbers that includes contact info for your electric cooperative.

With preparation, you can make sure that your children are in the safe comfort of home while you enjoy your night out.

Batteries Have Their Day

Keep them out of the way

FEBRUARY 18 IS NATIONAL BATTERY DAY —a day to appreciate the convenience that batteries provide our everyday lives.

Portable electricity isn't something we think about every day because it is so easily accessible.

To celebrate National Battery Day, take a moment to consider some safety measures around these useful little sources of portable energy, particularly the small, round button batteries.

Never leave batteries sitting out.

Store spare batteries, and batteries to be recycled or disposed of, out of sight and reach of young children.

Check all household devices to be certain the battery compartments are securely shut. Use strong tape to secure compartments that children could open or that might pop open if the device is dropped.

Never put batteries in your mouth to test, to hold or for any reason. They are slippery and easily swallowed.

Don't store batteries near pills or in pill bottles, leave them on bedside tables or place them loose in your pocket or purse.



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To Repair or Replace?

That is the appliance question

AS HOMEOWNERS WITH BILLS TO PAY, OUR TENDENCY IS TO BUY AN APPLIANCE AND keep it running as long as possible—but this may not be the greatest strategy for energy efficiency. Old, inefficient appliances bloat electric bills because they eat up more energy than they're worth.

To figure out how much energy your appliances use, check for an energy efficiency label. The amount of energy typically used per year is listed in kilowatt-hours. If a label is not available, a home inspector can estimate energy use by determining the age of the appliances in the house and assessing their operation by checking for signs of wear and damage.

To translate this energy use into electric expense, check your utility bill to find out the kilowatt-hour rate, then multiply the rate by the number of kilowatt-hours your appliance uses per year to figure out the annual cost it takes to operate the appliance. By adding this figure to the initial purchase and repair costs of the appliance, you then have a comparison level to decide whether your appliance would cost you more or less to run than a new one.

If your appliance is nearing the end of its life span, it's time to calculate whether repairing it or replacing it will cost more. **Here are some typical life spans of appliances:**

Dishwasher: 13 years
Air conditioner: 15 years
Microwave: 15 years
Refrigerator: 15 years

Washer/dryer: 16 years
Furnace: 17 years
Range: 18 years

Consider improvements to some of the biggest energy-using appliances in the household. A new refrigerator uses about 50 percent less energy than older models and can feature a CFC-free, sealed system, more storage and easier cleaning.

A new washer or dryer unit uses 30 percent less energy than older models and features greater capacity, better cleaning, quieter operation, preprogrammed cycle selections, reduced water usage and dryness sensors.

As a result of technological improvements made by appliance manufacturers, newer machines not only use less electricity, they also have more operational features and are made to last longer than counterparts produced within even the last decade.



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Did You Know?

February 12 is National Clean Out Your Computer Day. The second Monday in February is a perfect time to delete junk and duplicate files along with folders and programs you no longer need. Show your computer some love!



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Power Tip

Looking for an easy way to make your home cozier? Try using area rugs to increase the insulation levels of your floors. Area rugs are stylish and can help keep cool air from entering through your flooring. Your toes will thank you!

Busted at Bee Cave

The Texas legal system and its chilling effect on young innocence

BY CLAY COPPEDGE

IT WAS A SUPER BOWL SUNDAY IN THE last century, and Austin's January weather was nicer than we were used to in Lubbock. Since the Dallas Cowboys weren't playing, a couple of my buddies and I skipped the game and drove to Bee Cave because we'd heard it was pretty out there. We hadn't heard anything about it being private property, and we didn't know the intricacies of local trespassing laws. We learned a lot that day.

This was well before Bee Cave would be incorporated. It was still a small town surrounded by pristine Hill Country. Steve, a one-year veteran of the area, suggested we "discover" Bee Cave. I thought he was talking about a park.

"No, it's not a park," he explained. "It's better than that. It's like wilderness."

We drove out there only to find that a few dozen people had already "discovered" that wilderness and were busy roaming the countryside to a jumbled soundtrack of radios, tape players and beer-fueled conversation. This wasn't my idea of wilderness, but Steve was undeterred.

"There wouldn't be this many people out here if it was private property," he reasoned. "Even if it is, the owners obviously don't care if people enjoy it."

This was pretty country, but the chaotic scene made it difficult to enjoy the scenery. We joined the festivities, but I kept wishing I was either somewhere else or the only person at Bee Cave. At some point, we crested a hill and saw two men standing nearby, taking notes and snapping pictures. One was a middle-aged man dressed in slacks and a white dress shirt, like he'd just

dropped by on his way home from church. He carried a notebook. The other guy was younger and wearing a Texas Farm Bureau cap and carrying a camera.

Ernie got excited. "Hey, look. It's a couple of guys from the newspaper. I'll bet they're out here doing a story about people enjoying this great January weather!" The two men motioned us over. The well-dressed guy displayed what we supposed was a badge and informed us we were being cited for trespassing. The other guy told us to be still while he took our picture.

The party was over.

A few weeks later, we showed up in court on the assigned date, along with a couple dozen other people, mostly young men. My friends and I planned to plead guilty that day. None of us had been in a courtroom before, and here we were, guilty and scared. The bailiff announced the judge, we all rose, and then we sat back down. The judge called the first defendant and asked for his plea.

"Guilty, your honor."

The judge held up a hand. "Before we proceed, let me tell you folks about the law you're accused of breaking." He went on to spin a tale of how a wealthy lobbyist had manipulated the system to keep protestors away from his property, and, as a result, a landowner needed just one "No Trespassing" sign anywhere on the property for it to be legally posted. Also, the person who turned us in that day got \$50 for each trespasser. I immediately wondered if I might have turned my buddies in if I'd known how lucrative it would be. Surely I would've at least shared some of



the reward money with them.

Inspired by the judge's take on what had happened to us and why, all the defendants except for one embarrassed teenager pleaded not guilty. The teen's angry father spoke on his son's behalf. "He wasn't supposed to be out there," he told the judge. "He broke the law. He's guilty."

Now we had another court date, but we had no lawyer, no clue and no plan other than hoping for the best. And "the best" is just what happened, in the form of an ice storm that hit Central Texas the night before we were due in court. The entire region went into a one-day hibernation. But we had such respect for the law—fear, actually—that we piled into Ernie's Ford Maverick and made our way across a series of interconnected ice rinks called streets to our appointment with

the state of Texas, of which a representative failed to show. We waited an appropriate amount of time before braving the icy streets back home. It took a couple of weeks for us to get over feeling like fugitives, but we eventually forgot about the whole sorry episode and started acting like law-abiding citizens.

Months later, in the middle of a brutal Texas summer, we each received a letter notifying us that the state had dropped all its charges. Why? Divine providence, I suppose: a perfect combination of a weird law, a no-nonsense judge and a freak ice storm. But Steve insisted on his original defense. "I told you all along it was OK to go out there."

None of us ever went to Bee Cave again.

Clay Coppedge, a member of Bartlett EC, lives near Walburg.

Dark Corner and High Hill

Excerpt from *Texas, My Texas*: country cemeteries, where local history has its final say

BY LONN TAYLOR

I PROBABLY OWE MY AFFECTION FOR country cemeteries to my Grandmother Taylor, who could not pass one without stopping. When I was a small boy, she would take me on drives in her Studebaker Commander along the country roads around Fort Worth, and whenever a cemetery would come into view, she would say, “Let’s just stop and see who’s in there.” As near as I can remember, she never knew any of the occupants. She just liked to tut over the dead babies and admire the irises and roses on the graves.

I once knew a wealthy Houston lady who bought a country place near La Grange. Like my grandmother, she liked old cemeteries and thought her place should have one, but the previous owners had neglected to bury anyone there. She was an observant person and she noticed that many of the cemeteries in the area had a mixture of older marble and limestone tombstones and newer red granite markers, but that the death dates on the granite markers were often in the 19th century. She inquired around and learned that Sonny Stoltz, the stonecutter in La Grange, had gone around the countryside in the 1950s urging families to replace their old grave markers with modern granite ones, and that he had a big pile of old markers that he had replaced behind his shop. She bought a dozen of them and had Sonny set them up for her. She added some lengths of iron fence and—bingo!—her place had an old family cemetery on it. Someday it will drive a team of archaeologists crazy—the cult of the missing corpses.

I prefer my cemeteries to be real. Not

long ago, my wife and I were driving back to Fort Davis from Denton on a series of back roads. Somewhere between Jacksboro and Graham, we passed a sign pointing down a dirt road that read “Dark Corner Cemetery.” That’s my kind of graveyard. Over the years, I’ve encountered other cemeteries with memorable names. There is Lonesome Dove Cemetery in Tarrant County, inspired, I think, not by Larry McMurtry’s novel or the television series but by the dove that Noah sent out from the ark. Over in East Texas there is Little Hope Cemetery, possibly a comment on the heavenly aspirations of its residents. Near Austin there is a Nameless Cemetery, which serves a community also called Nameless, due to the inability of its first settlers to agree on a name.

Between 1880 and 1920, the sentimental rhymed epitaph was very much in fashion, and tombstone cutters had books of these verses in their workshops. The Lanham Mill Cemetery in Somervell County, southwest of Fort Worth and a favorite stopping place of my grandmother’s, is chock-full of these.

I once copied down a few in a notebook. One reads, “A loved one from us is gone / A voice we loved is stilled / A place is vacant in our home / Which never can be filled.” An infant’s marker bears the inscription, “Sleep on sweet babe / and take thy rest / God called thee home / He thought it best.”

Over in the next county, at Acton, the inscriptions are more laconic. I recorded one there that simply read, “Well, I must go home.” A finger pointing skyward over the words indicated where home was. The



lingering presence of a loved one who has died is nowhere more vividly captured than on a stone at the Macedonia Cemetery in Brazos County: “He is just around the corner a little out of sight.”

Austin raconteur Frank Oltorf used to tell about the Sunday afternoon walks his uncle Tom Bartlett would take his children and nieces and nephews on through Calvary Cemetery in their hometown of Marlin, stopping at each grave and commenting on the history of its occupant. One concrete headstone was cast in the shape of an electric light pole to commemorate a man who had met his death while replacing a faulty wire for the local utility company. Bartlett always said that this was a dangerous precedent, opening the way for a series of markers in the shape of whiskey bottles. I never encountered any electric poles in my cemetery explorations, but I have found tombstones that had references to the deceased’s occupation on them. At High Hill in Fayette

County, several stones are ornamented with carpenter’s planes, chisels, hammers, and, in one case, a blacksmith’s anvil.

There is an extreme example in the cemetery at Seymour, where a rancher named W.H. Portwood is commemorated in a large marble bas-relief that depicts him approaching the Pearly Gates on horseback, leading a pack mule, with St. Peter standing nearby extending a welcoming hand. Portwood was a wealthy man, and the inclusion of the pack mule is an indication that he intended to take at least some of it with him.

The last word, however, is in the Florida Chapel Cemetery at Round Top, where the headstone of a schoolteacher who was known for her loquacity bears the inscription: “She finally stopped talking.”

Lonn Taylor is a writer and historian who lives in Fort Davis. Excerpted from *Texas, My Texas: Musings of the Rambling Boy*, TCU Press [Original column: January 27, 2005].

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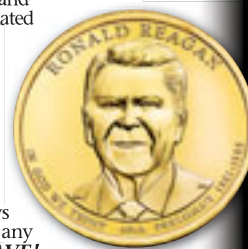
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The Rope Walker of Corsicana

Unraveling the mystery of a one-legged tightrope performer

BY GENE FOWLER

A CURIOUS GRAVE SITE IN THE CORSICANA Hebrew Cemetery has puzzled historians and fueled local lore for more than a century. A fragmented narrative and the words “Rope Walker 1884” chiseled on the headstone provide the only information about these mortal remains. However, the mystery at long last may have been unraveled.

The story tells that a traveling, one-legged tightrope walker came to town in 1884. One account has the rope walker hired by Meyers & Henning Dry Goods Emporium, which conducted business under the motto, “The Biggest Shovels to the Biggest Bodices, We Have It.”

However he came to Corsicana, the aerial ambulator wore a peg leg with a notch on the bottom to help him balance. Legend suggests that he had a heavy iron stove tied to his back when he ascended to the rope stretched across Beaton Street, the town’s main business thoroughfare.

“He had a long bar in his hand to help balance himself,” according to an account preserved in *The Perpetual Record Book of the Jewish Cemetery, Corsicana*. “When about halfway across he lost his balance and fell to the street from a 2-story height. He was badly crushed by the weight of the stove on his back.”

The injured performer was carried to a nearby hotel, where Dr. J.W. Gulick attended to him. When the man declared his Methodist faith, the evangelist Abe Mulkey was summoned. But when the rope walker sensed he was near death, he announced that he actually was Jewish. With no rabbi in town, a Jewish merchant was summoned and heard the funambulist’s recitation of a Hebrew prayer.

No one could persuade the dying man to state his name or whether he had any family. He remained an enigma even as he was lowered into his place of final rest. A 1936 article in the *Corsicana Daily*



Sun repeated these details, as related by Rachel Mae London, daughter of the late Max London, keeper of *The Perpetual Record Book*. Rachel Mae had witnessed the tragedy as a girl.

Frank X. Tolbert, author of the *Dallas Morning News*’ *Tolbert’s Texas* column, investigated the rope walker’s saga in 1958. Ten years later, Tolbert ran into artist and author Tom Lea in El Paso. Lea told the columnist that he had come across an account of a one-legged tightrope walker billed as “The Great Professor Berg” in a late 1870s Mesilla, New Mexico, newspaper story. Lea immortalized the professor in his 1952 novel *The Wonderful Country*.

A 1998 *Corsicana Daily Sun* report figured that Tolbert and Lea had cracked the case. Then came the internet. Massachusetts genealogist Jim Yarin ran across the rope walker story while researching a Corsicana family, and through digital diving in vintage newspaper databases, he unearthed two names for a one-legged funambulist who toured the U.S. from 1868 to 1883, Professor Daniel De Houne and Professor Moses Berg.

A 1969 Pittsburgh paper Yarin found confirmed that Berg was the funambulist’s

real name and that De Houne was a showbiz alias. An 1873 article in the *New York Evening Telegram* stated that, just before the Civil War, De Houne immigrated to Texas from Berlin, where he had performed for 13 years with a circus. Fighting for the Kansas 7th Cavalry in the Civil War, he lost his leg at the Battle of Middleburg in 1862. To support his wife and six children back in Texas, he took his showbiz stunts on the road, swallowing swords, swinging on a trapeze and dancing with a table balanced on his teeth.

Appearing in Fort Worth a month before his fatal fall in Corsicana, Professor De Houne ballyhooed that he would even cook pancakes on the stove while walking on the rope.

Not all Corsicanans accept Yarin’s evidence. Babbette Samuels, who took on the responsibility of caretaking the Jewish cemetery with her husband in the 1990s, says, “Logically, a Jewish husband and father’s dying words would mention his family, especially since he was risking his life to support his family. For 133 years, no family member has shown up to claim him.”

Gene Fowler is an Austin writer who specializes in Texas history and music.

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Peanut Butter + Chocolate: A Love Story

LONG BEFORE A SUCCESSFUL AD campaign launched a candy's fame with the line "two great tastes that taste great together," the perfect union of chocolate and peanut butter was a force to be reckoned with. Each flavor enhances the other's best qualities: salty, nutty peanuts anchor and elevate chocolate's silky texture and sweetness. So, for this month of valentine giving, we share your best peanut butter and chocolate recipes. In the following recipe, chunky peanut butter provides a great crunch, and brown sugar adds a delicious butterscotch flavor.

PAULA DISBROWE, FOOD EDITOR

Peanut Butter Chocolate Chunk Cookies

- 1¼ cups flour
- ¾ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened
- 1 cup chunky peanut butter, at room temperature
- ¾ cup sugar
- ½ cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- 1 egg, at room temperature
- 1 tablespoon whole milk
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- ½ cup peanut butter chips
- ½ cup bittersweet chocolate chunks
- 1 tablespoon sprinkling sugar

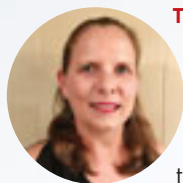
1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, baking soda, baking powder and salt.
3. In another large bowl, beat the butter and peanut butter together until fluffy. Add the white and brown sugars

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32

MELISSA BRISKO

Recipes

Peanut Butter + Chocolate: A Love Story



THIS MONTH'S RECIPE CONTEST WINNER

SANDRA NICHOLS | GUADALUPE VALLEY EC

This recipe hails from Nichols' 89-year-old Aunt Delta. "Growing up, she always had good sweets to eat at her house. I think of her when I make these," Nichols says. Topped with chocolate and peanut butter, the bar cookies are perfect for lunchboxes, potlucks and parties.

Aunt Delta's Peanut Butter Fingers

DOUGH

- ½ cup (1 stick) butter
- ½ cup sugar
- ½ cup dark brown sugar
- 1 egg
- ⅓ cup creamy peanut butter
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup flour
- 1 cup oatmeal
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup chocolate chips (dark or milk)

PEANUT BUTTER ICING

- ½ cup powdered sugar
- ¼ cup creamy peanut butter
- 2 tablespoons milk, or more for texture

1. DOUGH: Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease a 10-by-15-inch rimmed baking sheet (or 9-by-13-inch for thicker bars) with butter or nonstick spray.



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July's recipe contest topic is **How Do You Like Your Shrimp?** Nothing beats the sweet flavor of fresh Gulf shrimp. Share your best recipe (from tacos to pasta to spicy Creole). The deadline is **February 10**.

ENTER ONLINE at TexasCoopPower.com/contests; MAIL to 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701; FAX to (512) 763-3401. Include your name, address and phone number, plus your co-op and the name of the contest you are entering.

2. Cream together butter and sugars until light and fluffy. Add egg and beat until combined. Add peanut butter and vanilla, and beat another minute until smooth.

3. In a separate bowl, whisk together flour, oatmeal, baking soda and salt. Using a spoon or a rubber spatula, stir the dry ingredients into the wet ingredients. Spread the batter to the edge of the prepared baking sheet, and use a wet hand to smooth evenly.

4. Bake 20 minutes or until golden brown and a knife inserted in the center comes out fairly clean. Scatter chocolate chips over the top, allow them to melt 5 minutes and then spread the chocolate evenly.

5. ICING: Whisk together powdered sugar, peanut butter and enough milk to make a soft icing. (It should have the consistency of honey.) Use a whisk or fork to drizzle the icing over the chocolate topping. Allow to cool completely (or refrigerate), then slice into bars. ▶ Makes 36–60 bars, depending on baking sheet and bar size.

COOK'S TIP Old-fashioned oats or the thick-cut variety will give these bars the best texture. If you like your desserts with a salty edge, double the salt—or top the peanut butter drizzle with flaky Maldon sea salt.



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

and beat until smooth. Add the egg and mix well. Stir in the milk and vanilla.

4. Add the dry ingredients to the wet mixture and beat thoroughly. Stir in the peanut butter chips and chocolate chunks.

5. Place a tablespoon of sprinkling sugar in a small bowl. Drop the dough by rounded teaspoonfuls into the sugar then place on baking sheet, leaving several inches between for expansion.

6. Bake 10–12 minutes until lightly golden. To maintain a chewy texture in the middle, do not overbake. (Cookies may appear to be underdone, but they are not.)

7. Cool the cookies on the sheets 1 minute, then remove to a rack to cool completely. ▶ Makes about 24 cookies.

Adapted from *The Magnolia Bakery Cookbook: Old-Fashioned Recipes From New York's Sweetest Bakery* by Jennifer Appel and Allysa Torey (Simon & Schuster, 1999)

Peanut Butter Chocolate Cupcakes

RITA H. ADDICKS | FAYETTE EC

Addicks suggests refrigerating these cupcakes to help set the buttery frosting and create a fudgy texture.

FILLING

- 3 ounces cream cheese, softened
- ¼ cup creamy peanut butter
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 tablespoon 2% milk

BATTER

- 2 cups sugar
- 1¾ cups flour
- ½ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1½ teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon baking soda
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup water
- 1 cup 2% milk
- ½ cup canola oil
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract

FROSTING

- ⅓ cup butter, softened
- 2 cups powdered sugar
- 6 tablespoons cocoa
- 3 tablespoons 2% milk, or more for texture

1. FILLING: In a small bowl, beat cream cheese, peanut butter, sugar and milk until smooth, then refrigerate while you make the batter.

2. BATTER: In a large bowl, combine sugar, flour, cocoa, baking powder, salt and baking soda. In another bowl, whisk the eggs, water, milk, oil and vanilla. Stir the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients until just moistened. (Batter will be thin.)

3. Fill paper-lined cupcake tins with half the batter. Drop a generous teaspoon (or a scant tablespoon for jumbo tins) of peanut butter filling into the center of each, then cover with remaining batter.

4. Bake 25–30 minutes, until a toothpick inserted into the center of cake comes out clean. Cool in pan 10 minutes on a wire rack, then remove from pan and cool completely on wire rack.

5. FROSTING: In a large bowl, whisk together butter, powdered sugar, cocoa and milk until smooth. Frost cupcakes and serve immediately or store in the refrigerator

until you're ready to serve. ▶ Makes 24 regular cupcakes (or 12 jumbo cupcakes).

COOK'S TIP The peanut butter filling is easier to work with if it chills for at least 30 minutes beforehand. For a deeper flavor, consider substituting strong, room-temperature coffee for the water.

Chocolate Peanut Butter Cheesecake Bars

MARJORIE GRUNEWALD | FAYETTE EC

These bars are a snap to assemble and deliver a perfect blend of creamy filling, chocolate-and-peanut butter goodness and graham cracker crust. They're best enjoyed cold.

2½ cups graham cracker crumbs
¾ cup (1½ sticks) butter, melted
¾ cup sugar, divided use
5 ounces milk chocolate morsels, divided use
5 ounces peanut butter morsels, divided use
2 packages (8 ounces each) cream cheese, softened

¼ cup flour
1 tablespoon vanilla extract
4 eggs

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Combine graham cracker crumbs, melted butter and ¼ cup sugar in a medium bowl. Reserve 1 cup of crumb mixture for topping, and press the remaining mixture evenly into the bottom of a 9-by-13-inch baking dish. Combine chocolate and peanut butter morsels then sprinkle ¾ cup over crust.

2. Beat together remaining sugar, cream cheese, flour and vanilla in large mixing bowl until smooth. Add eggs, one at a time, beating until smooth.

3. Pour the batter over the crust and morsels. Sprinkle with reserved crumb topping and remaining morsels, and bake 25–30 minutes or until set. Cool completely on wire rack, then refrigerate until well-chilled. ▶ Makes about 24 bars.

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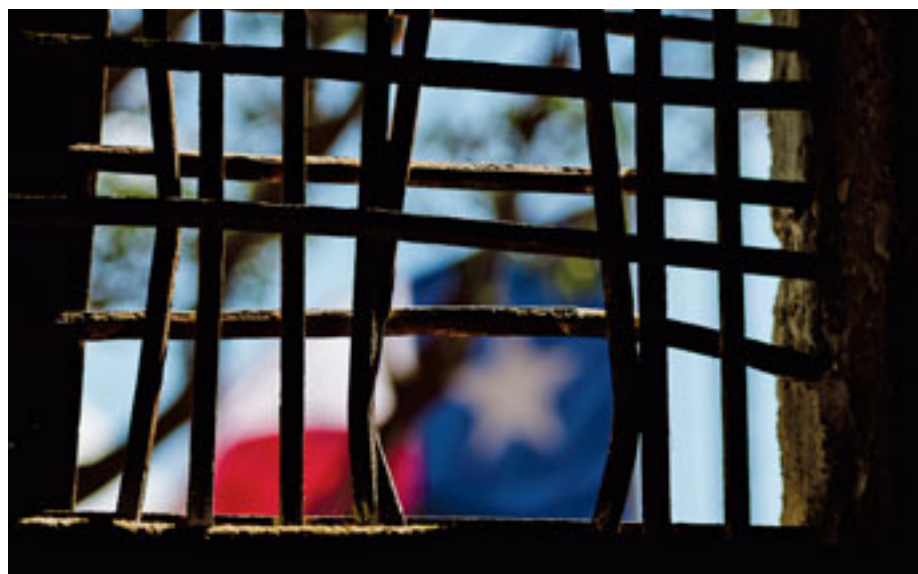
HOLE, SLAMMER, CLINK, pen, joint, lockup, calaboose . . . whatever you call it, it's no place you'd want to be, especially in the old days. Check out these arresting photos of old jails around the state.

GRACE ARSIAGA

WEB EXTRAS ▶ See Focus on Texas on our website for more photos from readers.

▲ **BUDDY PARK**, Pedernales EC: The original jailhouse of Flatonia, dating to 1890

▼ **HELDEN HOIERMAN**, Trinity Valley EC: "The Texas flag in the background is to be a metaphor for the vast, open and free land of Texas that is just out of reach" of the jail in Royse City.



▲ **CHARLIE PRESLAR**, Comanche EC: The Old Jail Museum was Gonzales' jailhouse, which had gallows in full view of the prisoners.

▶ **LISA GRIFFIS**, Mid-South Synergy: An old jail in Leon County, now in restoration



UPCOMING CONTESTS

JUNE TRACTORS	DUE FEBRUARY 10
JULY OPPOSITES	DUE MARCH 10
AUGUST SCHOOL'S OUT	DUE APRIL 10

All entries must include name, address, daytime phone and co-op affiliation, plus the contest topic and a brief description of your photo.

ONLINE: Submit highest-resolution digital images at TexasCoopPower.com/contests. **MAIL:** Focus on Texas, 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701. A stamped, self-addressed envelope must be included if you want your entry returned (approximately six weeks). Please do not submit irreplaceable photographs—send a copy or duplicate. We do not accept entries via email. We regret that *Texas Co-op Power* cannot be responsible for photos that are lost in the mail or not received by the deadline.

▲ **RAMON SAN LUIS**, Pedernales EC: Abandoned Kent County Jail in Clairemont, built in 1895

Pick of the Month Hug-In and Valentine's Ball

Luckenbach February 9-10
(830) 997-3224, luckenbachtexas.com

Two nights of country music at the Gillespie County dance hall kick off with the 43rd annual Hug-In dance, featuring Jesse Dayton. Gary P. Nunn takes the stage for the Valentine's Ball, which draws 400-500 people, including a group from Pennsylvania that shows up every year.



February

8

Port Arthur [8-11] Mardi Gras Southeast Texas, (409) 721-8717, mardigrasportarthur.com

9

Burnet [9-10] Highland Lakes Quilt Festival, (830) 693-2173, hlqguild.blogspot.com

10

Beaumont Symphony of Southeast Texas: *The Elegance of Elgar*, (409) 892-2257, sost.org

Big Spring Symphony: Winter Wonderland Concert, (432) 263-8235, visitbigspring.com

Henderson Mardi Gras Gumbo Cook-Off, (903) 657-6551, visithendersontx.com

La Grange Valentine's Dinner & Concert, 1-888-785-4500, czechtexas.org

Spring PuppyUp, (281) 636-1436, puppyupwalk.org/spring

Fredericksburg [10-11] Texas Hill Country Home & Design Show, (830) 469-2381, hillcountryhomeshow.net

February 10
Spring
PuppyUp



12

Tyler Million Dollar Quartet, (903) 566-7424, www.cowancenter.org

13

Beaumont Taste of the Triangle, 1-800-782-3081, beaumontcvb.com

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15

The Woodlands [15-19] Inspire Film Festival, (281) 705-1623, inspirefilmfest.com

17

Denison Celebrate With the Presidents, (903) 465-8908, visiteisenhowerbirthplace.com

Pine Springs Pioneer Prosperity, (915) 828-3251, nps.gov/gumo

22

Kerrville *Old, New, Borrowed and Blue*, (830) 792-7469, symphonyofthehills.org

Lufkin Dailey & Vincent, (936) 633-0349, thepines.visitlufkin.com

23

Beaumont Travis Tritt, (409) 838-3435, beaumontcvb.com

24

Arlington Iron Cowboy, (817) 332-2972, pbr.com

Corpus Christi South Texas Polkafest, (361) 215-9163, chssouthtexas.org

Crockett The Guess Who, (936) 544-4276, pwfaa.org

26

San Angelo Yamato: The Drummers of Japan, (325) 284-3825, sanangelopac.org

March

1

Waco Stars Over Texas Jamboree, (254) 755-7257

2

Lake Jackson Turtle Island Quartet, (979) 230-3156, brazosport.edu/clarion



February 24
Corpus Christi
South Texas Polkafest

Austin [2-3] BBQ Austin, (512) 919-3000, rodeoaustin.com

Dallas [2-4] North Texas Irish Festival, (214) 821-4173, ntif.org

3

Clifton Bosque Animal Rescue Kennels Gala 2018, (254) 675-7712, barkrescue.org

Round Top Quaternaglia Guitar Quartet with James Dick, (979) 249-3129, festivalhill.org

San Saba A Night at the Museum, (325) 372-8807, sansabamuseum.org

Lago Vista [3-4] 27th Annual La Primavera Race, (512) 267-7952, lagovista.org

Washington [3-4] Texas Independence Day Celebration, (936) 878-2214, wheretexasbecametexas.com

6

Crockett *The Great Gatsby*, (936) 544-4276, pwfaa.org

Submit Your Event!

We pick events for the magazine directly from TexasCoopPower.com. Submit your event for April by February 10, and it just might be featured in this calendar.

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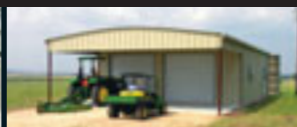
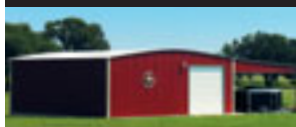
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Standing Tall Once Again

Hotel Settles, revived and modernized, casts glow upon downtown Big Spring

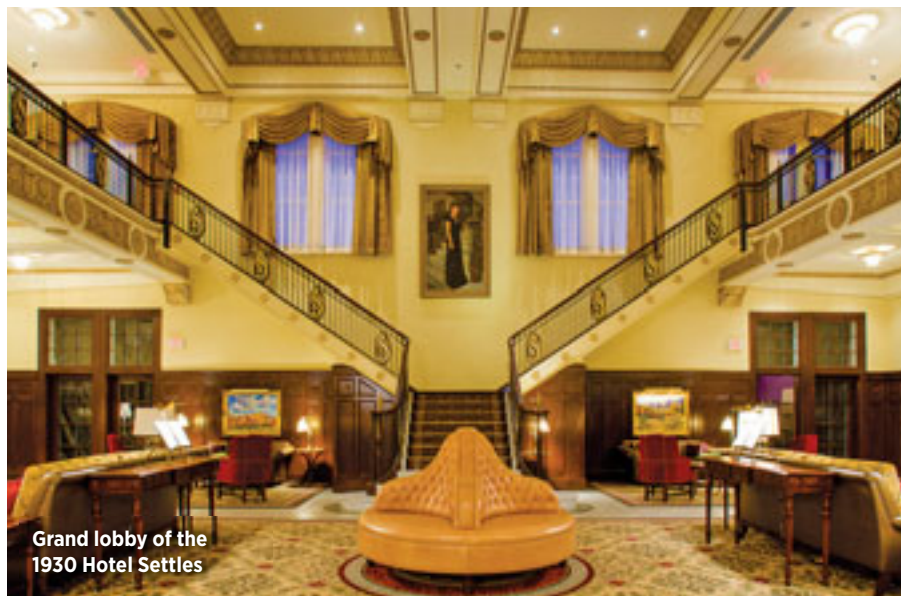
BY SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS

HOTEL SETTLES RISES 15 STORIES ABOVE downtown Big Spring. Step through the glass doors, and the years fall away. Antique reproduction furnishings, dark paneling, floral tapestry rugs and crystal chandeliers adorn the open lobby. From the terrazzo floor, a double marble staircase topped with carpet runners splits and rises to the iron-railed mezzanine, embellished with golden “S” motifs. Big-band music in the background completes the 1930s ambiance.

Stories galore permeate the tan brick high-rise, once billed as the tallest building between Abilene and El Paso. Ranchers W.R. and Lillian Settles used their oil money to build the art deco hotel in 1930. For two years, the couple operated the ritzy hotel until oil prices plummeted, forcing them into bankruptcy. Subsequent owners managed the 150-room hotel, which housed a ballroom, men’s club, coffee shop and drug store. Such notables as President Herbert Hoover and Elliott Roosevelt, a son of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, stayed there.

The hotel’s boom years continued through the 1950s. Then passenger rail service ceased, a nearby Air Force base closed and Interstate 20 bypassed downtown. **Hotel Settles** closed in 1980. Owners sold everything they could. Vandals, weather and pigeons damaged the remains.

Enter Dallas businessman G. Brint Ryan, a Big Spring native who bought the run-down property in 2007 and spent \$30 million on renovations. Drawing from original blueprints and vintage photos, Ryan’s restoration team incorporated upgrades including a swimming pool, spa, meeting rooms and fitness center. Two wooden phone booths in the lobby are original. At the hotel’s relaunch in December 2013, its iconic rooftop sign flickered



back on, once again proclaiming “HOTEL SETTLES” in red neon letters.

Like many locals, Tiffany King grew up knowing Hotel Settles as an abandoned building with broken windows. Homeless people slept inside, she says. Now, King runs the immaculate front desk and escorts visitors on hotel tours. “We have older people who come and remember the hotel as it was when it was originally open,” she says. “They talk about weddings and high school proms that were held here.”

Thirteen Heritage Rooms on the third level reflect the 1930s floor plan, complete with original tile floors in the compact bathrooms. Modestly sized, the rooms come with traditional furnishings and lavish bedding.

Floors 4–13 were configured to accommodate five spacious suites each. For the night, my husband and I are staying in a Tower Room on the 13th floor. Our lofty corner windows overlook Big Spring to the south and eastward to Signal Peak, a distant mesa used as a landmark by early cattlemen.

For a few hours, we slip away to drive through the city’s **Comanche Trail Park** to see the namesake “big spring” that provided water for Native Americans and early set-

tlers. Today the spring flows artificially. Next, we explore nearby **Big Spring State Park**, a day-use getaway. From a limestone bluff, we take in panoramic views of Big Spring and surrounding landscape.

Before supper, we order drinks in the Pharmacy Bar and Parlor, named after the hotel’s original drugstore. At a cozy booth in Settles Grill, we relish our artfully grilled salmon and herb-roasted chicken. Later, we peek into the Grand Ballroom, opulently detailed with ornate gold molding, crystal chandeliers and replica 1930s wall fans. Such attention to detail earned the Settles listings on the National Register of Historic Places and Historic Hotels of America list.

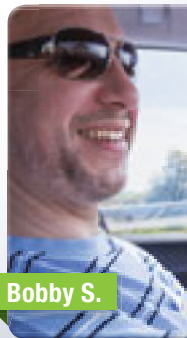
Buoyed by the hotel’s rebirth, empty downtown storefronts have begun to fill. “We now have two new boutiques, a restaurant, furniture store and cigar bar,” says Hayley Lewis, a native who works as tourism coordinator at the Big Spring Visitors Bureau. “It’s going to take time, but, thanks to Hotel Settles, downtown will come back.”

Sheryl Smith-Rodgers, a member of Peder-nales EC, lives in Blanco.

 **WEB EXTRAS** ▶ Read this story on our website to learn more about the **Hotel Settles**.

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