

# The Bandera PROPHEET

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Growing Up In Bandera

By Glenn Clark  
The Bandera Prophet

The Last Picture Show is among my all time favorite movies. Set in the 1950s, it was an instant reminder of Bandera in those early times when I first saw it. It was more like embracing the feelings of those times rather than having any authentic resemblance to our town. Some of the characters in it did bring a few of my high school friends to mind as I watched the show.

Making road trips around south and central Texas, I drive through lots of places that could have been the town depicted. It was a dying town with young people trying to find a way out. For some, Bandera probably was that kind of place, but the town of Bandera has survived. When I dwell on it way too long, I begin to wonder if we did indeed survive. Maybe we simply transformed into something completely new and different as the old town died. There's not much left of the old town I grew up in as I look in the rearview mirror.

The gravel backstreets in town and all the county roads have been paved, much to the delight of housekeepers fighting the dust and drivers fighting to keep their cars and trucks looking nice. As with most things my mind recalls from back in the day, there is a bit of sadness associated with the loss of those gravel streets where we rode our bikes in town. I can still feel the freedom of riding in the back of my mom's old Chevy truck as she hauled us to Dripping Springs for a swim on countless hot summer afternoons. Sitting on the tail end of the bed of that truck with no tailgate, and our feet dangling down in the dust being kicked up on those gravel roads never grew old. If a dog gave chase that just added to

the adventure as we waved towels, kicked our feet and hollered to encourage the dog not to give up.

The Bantex Theater, The Cabaret and even the old artesian well played significant parts in our early lives. Mansfield Park still has rodeos and various events, but it isn't the social gathering spot for locals that it once was when I was a kid. The Tuesday night dances at The Mayan Dude Ranch with Adolph Hofner and The Pearl Wranglers providing the music was a weekly family social event. We often spent time on Saturday sitting outside The Cabaret, listening to the music pouring out of the open wooden shutters.

The Red Goose Pool Hall and The Best Yet Cafe are gone from the now-labeled historical part of Main Street in Bandera. The Corner Drugstore has had many face changes over the years. The OST is still going strong and will forever be my favorite place to eat in town.

When giving directions, I will still use Texaco Station as a reference point although it hasn't been around for many years. Same goes for Henry Lloyd Kalka's Sinclair station. Old habits are hard to break.

Maybe I'm just one of those who doesn't want to let go of the good times of the past. It's been a long journey Growing Up In Bandera, and I will embrace that glorious past until my final day.