DOCUMENT RESUME

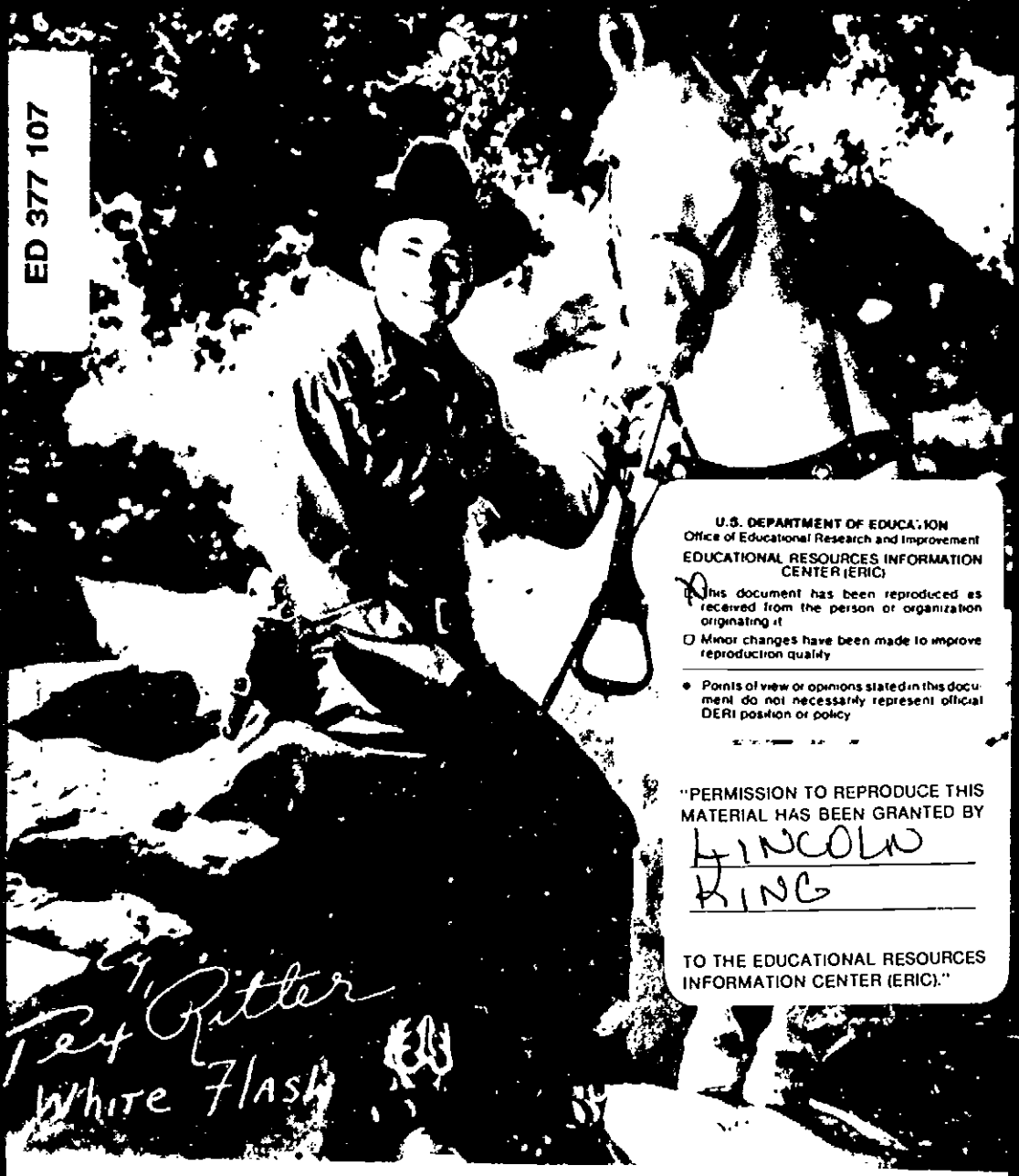
ED 377 107 SO 024 392

AUTHOR Singleton, Amy; And Others
TITLE Famous Citizens of Panola County Texas.
PUB DATE 90
NOTE 65p.; Published by Loblolly Inc., students at Gary High School, Texas.
AVAILABLE FROM Gary High School, Box 189, Gary, TX 75643 ($3).
PUB TYPE Collected Works - Serials (022)
JOURNAL CIT Loblolly; v17 n1 Win 1990

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Biographies; High Schools; *High School Students; *Interviews; Journalism Education; Life Events; *Local History; Oral History; Personal Narratives; Social History; *Student Publications
IDENTIFIERS Ritter (Tex); *Texas

ABSTRACT

Created by Gary (Texas) High School students, this publication presents articles about Tex Ritter and Audie Hestilow. The first article, "Tex Ritter's Early Days," provides information on the early life of Tex Ritter gathered through an interview with Earl Cariker, a biographer of Tex Ritter, and through newspaper articles. Earl Cariker describes the Murvaul (Texas) and Gary (Texas) communities in which Tex Ritter grew up. The second article, "Audie Hestilow," presents an interview with Audie Hestilow that was conducted by Lynn Burlbow. Hestilow, a barber, met Bonnie and Clyde one night while they were escaping from the police. While Audie Hestilow was a barber with the army in California, he became friends with Norma Jean Baker who would later be known as Marilyn Monroe. After the army, Hestilow established a barber shop in Austin (Texas) where he continues to work. (CK)



WINTER
1990
$3.00

Lobolly

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Volume XVII No. 1 Winter 1990

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Tex Ritter

Tex Ritter is Gary's most famou
native son. He was born in Gary o
January 12, 1907, and died January 2
1973. He attended schools in Murvau
and Gary before the family moved t
Nederland. And the rest, as it saic
is history. Tex's plaque in the Countr
Music Hall of Fame reads as follows:

"Born Panola County, Texas..
Alumnus University of Texas. One o
America's most illustrious and versati
stars of radio, television, records
motion pictures, and Broadway stage
Untiring pioneer of the country a
western music industry. His devotion
his God, his family, and his country
a continuing inspiration to h
countless friends throughout the world

To present a more complete picture of Tex Ritter, we wanted to collect information on the Murvaul Community and the people there at the time Tex was born and growing into early youth. We talked with friends, neighbors, and relatives who remembered Tex and his family and the Murvaul Community at that time. We especially want to thank Earl Cari[illegible] for his help in interviewing some of these people and for preparing the map of the simpler world of Panola County as it moved into the 20th century.

Earl Cariker graduated from school in Gary and has been a long time resident of the Murvaul Community. To help better understand Murvaul when Tex Ritter was growing up there, Mr. Cariker, conducted the following interview for which we are most appreciative.

I am Earl Cariker. Fifty years ago in 1938 I came to Murvaul Community to teach school. I met the two people I am going to interview during my first year at Murvaul. They are sisters - Essie Saule Bayes and Grace Saule Gray. They will share their remembrances of some interesting times in the Murvaul Community.

Q - Was the school the first one you remember? Miss Essie, do you remember your age when you started to school?
A - I imagine I was about seven years old. It was about 1908.

Q - Miss Grace, you started about four years later?

A - I went to Old Murvaul School.

Q - Do you remember what grades you attended before the old school burned ?

A - I just know I learned to read and write because I wanted to.

Q - Who was your teacher, do you remember that ?

A - Well, there was a Mr. Robert Scoggins and Mr. Bob Carswell and a young man by the name of Johnston. Later I went to a young woman, and right at this time I can't remember her name. One woman there was Mary Donovan.

Q - Tex Ritter was born in Murvaul, is that right ?

A - Yes his homeplace was near the school. It was between the school and the railroad track. And all the teachers bordered with his family, the Jim Ritters. That was his father, and Lizzie was his mother. She had been Lizzie Matthews. There were no cars and the men bordered with them and they walked down to the school.

Q - Could you describe what that first school was like?

A - It was not bad. It was built well. It was a frame building. It turned into a two story because the Woodmen of the World used the upstairs.

Tex Ritter at the Gary School on porch at far left.

Q - What was life like in the Murvaul Community?
A - Well, just everyday life, we were not rich, we were not poor, we were just average families. We worked in the fields and we had a social activities. We went to church. Our fun things was fishing mostly.

Q - What was school like in the Murvaul Community? Where was it located?
A - It was right in the middle of the Murvaul Community. It was all still Murvaul but there were some stores and a railroad depot and a cotton gin. This is what we refer to as Old Murvaul down by the railroad tracks.

Q - Do you remember what was there? Was there a post office?
A - There were the stores, and the post office, and a planer mill, and a railroad depot. The passenger train went back and forth. One went down in the morning from Longview to Beaumont and back in the afternoon.

Q - Do you remember about the school?
A - I remember that the school faced the west. And it was about a quarter of a mile to the railroad track. And the depot and the stores were west of the track. You went across a dirt road to the stores. And we bought many of our food items that we didn't grow on the farm at the stores.

Q - Do you remember who ran the stores?
A - Well there was a Mr. Beard and I don't know if his name was Walter, but they had one son named Walter. There was a Mr. Lamar Gholston and a Mr. Jim Ritter and a Mr. Neal Morris.

They had their meetings upstairs. Then they said a schoolroom could be made out of it.

Q - Were there any events at the school you recall?

A - We played at school. It was woodsy around and us girls made play houses. We carried pieces of broken glass to put on the play houses. And the boys played ball and played flying jinnies. A flying jinny was built on a stump or a post and a long pole was put across that and they tried to see how fast that they could make it go around and around and around. They would sit on the ends of the pole and sometimes would fall off when it went around.

Q - At the school, did you have to go to a recitation bench to recite?

A - We went up on a stage. And we faced the audience and recited your piece. And we read our lessons out loud.

Q - Do you remember anything particular about Tex Ritter?

A - I remember one of our school plays was going to be at night. And Tex memorized his recitation and it was about a man on a train selling his wares. And in reciting this he forgot part of the words and in the recitation the man was selling razors. Tex began to recite, "Razors, razors, razors," trying to remember the next words. And his brother, Bootie, who was down in the

audience spoke up loudly and said, "Sit down up there, you forgot it." But about that time Tex remembered and continued the recital. And the parents all thought Bootie's role was supposed to be in it. And they laughed and were amused.

Q - Did he ever sing any?
A - No, not that I recall. But we heard the family tell, his brothers and sisters, when they worked in the field chopping cotton and picking cotton - Tex would find an excuse to get up on a stump that was sawed off and he would recite things and make a great speech. And he told all the family that he was going to be a lawyer when he grew up. And he said he was practicing. Then they moved away and the next we knew of Tex, he was singing. They had moved to Nederland, Texas when he was pretty close to being a teen - ager. But he lived all his early years in the Murvaul Community. They moved away after the school house burned in 1917. For awhile they moved, first, close to Carthage because his sisters Lucille finished school there.

Q - Did you have homework?
A - Oh yes. The teachers believed in that. We had to write, and especially arithmetic. We had to practice our spelling, call it out to each other.

Q - Did you have spelling matches at school?
A - Yes, many of them, and we also had community spelling matches. That's a spelling bee where the adults would come. I remember that very well. Miss Liza Todd was with me once - from this I

still remember how to spell prairie. We didn't have to sit down.

Q - Miss Grace, do you remember anything else of the school?

A - It was fun in a way. I enjoyed it thoroughly because I loved going to school. To get there we walked over a dirt road. We left pretty early, rain or shine. Sometimes it was dark when we left or returned. We had to get up early because we all had long hair. Mama braided our hair until we were old enough to braid each others So we had to get up early to do that. And they rang school bells, first and second. If we heard the first one we could hurry before the second bell sounded. And a little incident there - Bootie, Tex's brother, he would leave home, they lived close enough, when the second bell rang. He would run and get on the tail end of the line - up and not be tardy.

Q - Did you have hot lunches at school?

A - We carried our lunches in a brown bag. We had good food. We would have homemade sausage and biscuits, boiled eggs, baked sweet potatos, and cookies. Or we carried lunch in a cane syrup bucket. After we moved from Farm Road 5 to where my family later lived we still walked to school. Our winters were colder then because we had snow. I've gone to school over the road with snow on the ground. And what they called "slick - over" would be a little sleet over the anow and would get hard. And we walked it. And our father was a fine father. When we would go to school in the fall without our coats and the weather would get bad our father would

Tex Ritter at the Murvaul School above arrow.

put the mules to the wagon and come and get us. And he brought our wraps. Sometimes he would just walk and bring them if it wasn't raining, if the wind was blowing real, real cold. There were three of us girls in the family going to school at that time. And our parents bought each of us a parasol for rainy weather. And we loved those parasols because none of the other students that walked our road had one.

Q - Wasn't there a school at Murvual before the one that burned down?

A - Yes, it was the Todd School House. It was built before the one we went to on the old Ritter place. Neither one of us went to the Todd School House. At school we got our water from an open spring. It was not walled up or anything. It was a brown colored. We kids loved it even when others said it tasted awful. We all drank the water in a bucket with one dipper and nobody died. There was no indoor plumbing at the school. The girls had a little outhouse, but the boys just went off in the woods. And above our spring, Mr. Ritter had a horse and cow lot. So, I don't know how sanitary the water was, but it was good. We were all healthy even though we did have the seven year itch and whooping cough and stuff like that, just like they have in the schools now. But, I don't remember anybody in the school dying.

Q - Did you all go to the doctor like they do now?

A - No, we didn't go often. We had home remedies. We used Quinine and maybe cough syrup.

Q - After the school burned where did you go?

A - They built the new one about two miles away from the center of the district and that was where it was until consolidation. The new one had two rooms, they later added a third room. It was built in 1918. My daughter was a student there too. I remember taking algebra because that was hard.

Q - What was discipline like at school?

A - For some strange reason the students were pretty well controlled. Their parents had told them at home they were sending them to school to learn to read and write, and not to take other children's things, and too leave other people alone, and never tell stories. They were to behave, and if they did not and the teacher punished them they would probably get punished in some way at home too. And most of the children behaved very well.

Q - Do you think the parents in the Murvaul community were interested in their children getting an education?

A - Yes I do. They supported the teachers. My father took a paper called the Atlanta Journal from Atlanta,Georgia, why I don't know. But it had comic strips in it and it was "Maggie and Jiggs." And they at first would read them to me. I wanted to learn to read so I could read everything. And the comic strips were interesting to me and very amusing. I found them all very good "Maggie and

Jiggs" and "Mutt and Jeff" I remember.

Q - What was life like on the farm? Do you remember it as hardtimes?

A - I don't remember it as hard. We had to work, but everyone was about in the same category of working. Cotton was our money making product and we raised practically all of our food. We had chickens for fried chicken and chicken pie, and we had eggs. We milked cows and we had good milk and butter. Our parents fattened hogs and we butchered them and made sausage. We cleaned the casings and made stuffed sausage and we smoked it and it was just wonderful. We had a little log house we called a smoke house. There we smoked and cured our meat. We didn't have much money. In the Fall when we had our cotton picked we'd sell it. We grew cane an made good ribbon cane syrup.

Q - Where did you go to church?

A - We went to church way down in the Pleasant Bridge community. There was no church in Murvaul then. we went in a wagon. Pappa never owned a car. We went to church every Sunday if the weather permitted. And the pastors of our church would come to our house for Sunday lunch. And we would have the best lunches because our mother prepared the best food. He knew he was going to get a good meal.

Q - Did you go to parties as a teenager?

A - We called them play parties. Our games were "Ring Around the Rosie", "All Hands Up," and "Snap," and "Irish Trot." We didn't have dances. We had ring games. We also had protracted meetings - revivals that lasted a week

Earl Cariker with his map of Murvaul Community.

at a time. Everybody would go - all denominations. If the Baptists had a revival everybody went. The same was true if the Methodists had one.

Q - Is there anything else you remember of the Murvaul Community?

A - One big change is I can remember the first car I saw. It belonged to Dr. Z.L. Daniel of Gary,Texas. And we were working in the field by side of the road that went from Gary to Carthage. And we heard the car coming from Gary. We all stood and watched in amazement as this car went by. The top was down, and Mrs. Daniel was sitting in the back seat and had her two sons, holding them with her hands on them while Dr. Daniel drove the car. It was amazing to us.

Q - Do you remember World War I?

A - Our brother went to World War I and our first cousin went with him. And it was drastic times because I remember very well the sheriff, Jim Smiley who was married to an aunt of ours, and he brought these telegrams out to us. It told about the cousin having died, and then later telling us our brother had been wounded and was in a hospital. But our brother is still living at 94 in Louisville, Kentucky. I remember the celebration when the war was over.

Q - What is your remembrance of the Depression days?

A - Life was much different than it is now. There was enough to eat and we were still working in the field. I can't tell much difference. But the Depression hurt. There were no jobs or money. People chopped cotton all day for fifty cents. It was hard to buy

things. It was hard times. People couldn't make money off cotton. Growing tomatoes helped for a few years.

Q - What good changes have you seen in the Murvaul Community?

A - There are two nice churches there now, plus a cemetary. There are hard surface roads. We now have electricity. That meant a lot. Getting gas like propane made life easier. We didn't have to go to the woods to saw down trees to burn. Water in the home also made life more comfortable. We used to have to take baths in wash tubs and heat the water in old wood stoves in the winter time. Sometimes you took a pan bath which was quicker. Going bare footed we washed our feet every night. When we were in school, we'd come home and change into our everyday clothes. And sometimes we'd have to go to the field and pick cotton until it got dark. And then we would come to the house and study our lessons by a kerosene lamp.

Q - What kind of fun was there?

A - We had quite a bit of fun. In our old house our father had to chop all the wood and things. And he left bark and things on the ground. Our parents would say, "You must clean up the wood pile." And we would get out there and rake all the trash up into piles. And we were permitted to burn it. And we had read and heard of lots of money. And we knew all about fruit. Our parents bought apples by the sackful, and bananas by the bunch when the wagon would come through the community peddling. So we would take a broom and hit in the fire after it burned down

low. The sparks would fly up, and we'd say, "I wish I had this much money and more apples and more fruit. And I remember the Beards moved away, and later their son, Sam, came back peddling fruit from a wagon. The road went right by the school house. Sam would come along at recess. You know how proud we were to see Dam coming back peddling bananas from a wagon. We've come a long way. We still love the Murvaul Community.

We borrowed a copy of Tex Ritter's biography by Johnny Bond from Evalyn Ritter Griffith. It included selections on Tex's growing up days in the Murvaul Community near Gary by a cousin(J. Rex Ritter), Tex himself, and his sister, Ola Mac McCauley.

J. Rex Ritter: "Woodward Maurice Ritter was born a farm in Murvaul, Texas, a village situated on a branch of the Santa Fe Railroad that traversed the Piney Woods section of East Texas between Longview and Beaumont. Since I was two years older than he, I remember him as a toulse - headed blonde kid just across the dirt road from us. Because he was the baby he naturally became a tag - along nuisance to his brother, Booty, and me, who were about the same age. We fell heir to looking after him so I thought of him as my kid brother. We hunted and fished together and shared work on our adjoining farms. He never showed any great enthusiasm in becoming

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Amy Singleton and Crystal Strain of Lobolly with Earl Cariker.

a farmer and got away with being lazy since he was the baby.

"The hound dogs were always under the house at Murvaul and no matter when someone threw a biscuit out the back door of the kitchen, it never hit the ground. One of the dogs sensed it coming, tore out from under the kitchen floor and grabbed the biscuit on the fly."

"We all attended a two - teacher school located some 200 yards away. The Principal usually took and board with Uncle Jim (Tex's Father). On cold mornings one of the three boys had the job of starting a fire in the wood stove at the schoolhouse. One such morning, Woodward had the job. He must have loaded the stove pretty good and the extra firewood must have been too close because on our way to school we were astounded to see the schoolhouse go up in flames. Since the only fire protection was the 'bucket brigade', there was no hope of saving the building so we just let it burn to the ground. Several of the neighbors were unkind to suggest that the only way Woodward got out of school was to burn it down.

Anyway, we all tranferred to Gary, About two and a half miles down the south road, to attend we would usually walk along the railroad track. However, on bad days we would either ride horse back or hitch up the buggy. The burned school house was never rebuilt, but many years later a new facility for Murvaul was located about a mile north on the road to Carthage, County Seat of Panola County."

Tex Ritter: When I was a boy it

was a rather Victorian society, but when my father was a boy every young man would ride horseback for thirty or forty miles and dance all night on into Sunday. By the time I came along it was taboo - the Baptists and Methodists stopped it. The later, after I was in my teens, round dancing came back - but square dancing was still taboo.

" We had the old time singing school that was prevalent in that part of Texas. For three weeks we had this singing and there were itinerant singing teachers. V.O. Stamps was one of them who taught in east Texas. He later went to Dallas and formed the Stamps Quartet. The citizens of the community would pay him to conduct the school. I suppose it was the forerunner of public school music.

" My family sang a lot. Out of the three boys I was the youngest. My two older brothers were very good singers. There again it was mostly church music, but usually they wouldn't let me sing with them because I couldn't sing very good. I remember once my mother said it would be nice if her boys would sing so we got up in front of the fireplace and sang about half a song and others stopped and said, Mama would you make him sit down?' About the time we left east Texas my voice started changing. I started really singing old cowboy songs as I grew older.

"The worst thing I would do was when my folks would go and visit some relatives and leave us at home alone. They would always, "Don't go swimming." But if we did something like that, and we did, my father would always say, 'I owe you a whipping.' So we would go

with that over our heads. Then when he would get his razor strap out he whipped us all and you know you'd been whipped."

Ola McCauley: "We owned the only general store. Our grandfather had owned it before us so we always had it and that gave the children an opportunity to make contact with many different kinds of people as we were growing up.

"We were reared with a very religious background. Mother was very ambitious for us and father was very strict. Our mother's family were all in politics and held County and State offices. It was said that no one could get elected in Panola County unless our father was for them and helped. So, one of our happy pastimes as children was going to all - day political meetings during election years to hear different speakers.

"The other good times were the singing schools during the summer. My brothers all sang well but the girls were more interested in trying to catch boy friends. Since we had no television or radio, singing and speeches were the thing and they both rubbed off on Tex. We always had crowds at our home on Sundays for song festivals. Our mother played the organ."

"I went to the field one day where the boys had gone to work and the two older brothers were throwing clods of dirt at Tex, trying to get him out of the fence corner to work. But Tex would just sit in the fence corner and poke weeds and sticks in the ground (for people) and get up on the fence and make political speeches to them.

"Once my boy friend, Cura Pate, was driving along the road in his buggy and heard this loud speech. It was Tex standing on a stump in the sugar cane patch. When Tex, finished, the boy friend clapped his hands real loud and Tex was embarressed. The friend put him in the buggy and brought him home.

"My husband was from Ohio, s nt down to Panola County by Gulf Oil. When Tex realized that I was going to marry, he became very upset and would hide behind the bushes and throw clods of dirt at him when he came to see me and try to discourage him. He told our mother that they just couldn't allow me to marry a Blue Belly Yankee."

In his Capital Long Playing Album, SKC - 11?41, Tex Ritter - An American Legend, conceived and produced by his long - time friend and co - worker, Joe Allison, Tex relates the stories behind many of his famous songs. Concerning the origin of one of his most outstanding numbers, THE BOLL WEEVIL, he states that he first heard and learned the song from a black man, Robert Williams, (on the Ralph Emery Show, Tex refered to the same Williams as Charlie) who worked for the Ritters on their farm,and who was a lay preacher on Sundays even though he had never learned to read. He would have others read the scriptures to him after which his sermon was delivered from the memory of that reading.

It can easily be imagined what might have taken place between the young Woodward Ritter and Robert Williams:

TIME: Late in the afternoon of long ago.

PLACE: The east Texas cottonfields.

ACTION: Robert Williams stands, rubbing his back after long hours of dragging a heavy cotton sack behind him. While he is wiping his brow he is not too surprised to learn that a young hitchhiker has once again climbed aboard the long canvas sack making the load about twice as heavy as it was supposed to have been.

"Little Wood'ard! What are you doin' jumpin' on top of my cotton sack again?"

"Bummin' a ride! What else?" The young Woodward runs to the black man displaying a new discovery. "Hey! Look what I found."

"Let me see that," says Robert Williams, taking the article from the boy's hand. "Why that ain't nothin'. That's just an old cotton boll fulla weevils. Plenty of them things around here."

"I know," says little Woodward, falling back upon the cotton sack. "Hey, Robert! How 'bout singin' me that song again."

"Son, you know this ain't no time for singin'. This is cotton pickin' time and if we don't get goin', you know what your Pa is a - gonna do to us both."

"Then will you sing it in church this Sunday if me'n Uncle Tom comes again?"

"Now you know better'n that. There ain't gonna be no in - church singin' about no boll weevils. In church we only sing about the Lord and you know

Tex Ritter at the Murvaul School
above arrow.

it. Get your sack strapped over your shoulder. Follow 'long with me and I'll sing it to you now."

The young lad does as he is told. He pulls up alongside of his father's hired hand and listens once more to the story of the boll weevil.

Now, de Bo' Weevil am a little
black bug
Kum from Mexico, they say, ah ha!
Kum all the way to Texas, jes
lookin' fer a place to stay,
Ain't got no home. Jes lookin' fer
a home.

Tex Ritter never forgot his birthplace and often returned to visit. But one of his trips to Panola County he was stopped by the highway patrol because law officers thought he was driving a stolen car.

He related that he and several members of his troops were driving through but decided to go to Gary, his old stomping grounds. The headlights of a car sparkled through the rear view mirror and inches near to them. It finally brought Ritter's car to a halt. After convincing the highway patrol that he was Tex Ritter, the patrolman said: " I thought the car was stolen with it's California license plate, and also for driving to Gary. Because no one ever goes to Gary this time of the morning."

In seeking out people in Panola County to interview for an article several years ago on Tex we came across several of his cousin's. One was Mrs. H.M. Dry and she assisted us with some valuable information.

Well, Tex's grandmother was my daddy's sister and my daddy was J.D.

Ball, better known as Uncle Jeff and the families were very close. Tex was born Woodard Maurice Ritter in the Murvaul Community Panola County, January 12, 1907. He first went to a little school in Murvaul Community, then to Gary; and later to Carthage. Uncle Jim and Aunt Lizzie moved to Nederland, Texas and Tex finished high school there. But when we were growing up the families were real close. Very often we would go spend the weekend with the Ritter's or they would come spend the weekend with us. Tex was always a cowboy, he liked to ride stick horses, and he always liked the dogs, and cats, in other words he liked animals. Uncle Jim had an old gray horse called Marvin that Tex and his brother used to ride. Tex always liked to debate, everyone thought that he would be a lawyer. One of the neighbors told that he was out hunting a cow and as he looked out across the field he saw Tex standing on a stump, at the edge of a little pond and he was practicing on a debate that he planned to do. Mr Pate thought it was so good that he began to clap his hands. This frightened Tex, and he fell over backwards in the pond.

He loved Panola County and Murvaul. His dad ran a little country store in the Murvaul Community. This is where Tex lived until he was good sized boy. After moving to Nederland and finishing school there, he went on to the State University as a law major. He stayed there for a matter of time, though having it rough at the start. He joined the Glee Club and played in several little stage shows they had. Two of these were "The Long Ranger", and "Death

Valley Days." Then after moving to Hollywood he became famous in western movies, during the 1930's. Some writer said that he made at least 78 western's. He was married to Dorothy Faye and they had two son's named Thomas and Johnathan. He won an Academy Award for singing "High Noon", in the Gary Cooper movie by the same name. Some more of his more famous songs were "Te..aha, Timpson, Bobo, and Blair", "The Bolweevle" and "Hillbilly Heaven." I may be a little prejudice, but I think he sang the song's better than anyone else. At the last of the song "Hillbilly Heaven," where he calls out several names of his friends who had gone on before him, and then his name was called and he woke up from his dreaming. He was more sad than if, he were dead, because he was so happy being up there with friends. Also he made famous the movies "Green Grows the Lilac," "You are my sunshine," and "Wayward Wind." He was really famous for his movies but I honestly think that the height of his ambition was to sing country music. Even after being voted in the "Country Music Hall of Fame," and President of the oraganization and all the great thing's he achieved, he was still just the same old Texas cowboy that he was when he left here. Fame just didn't go to his head.

He liked to come back to Gary and Murvaul. I believe it was in 1938 he visited my dad. He brought along three member's of the band when he came. One of the boy's in the band told my daddy that Tex had told all over Hollywood that his uncle in east Texas had fought

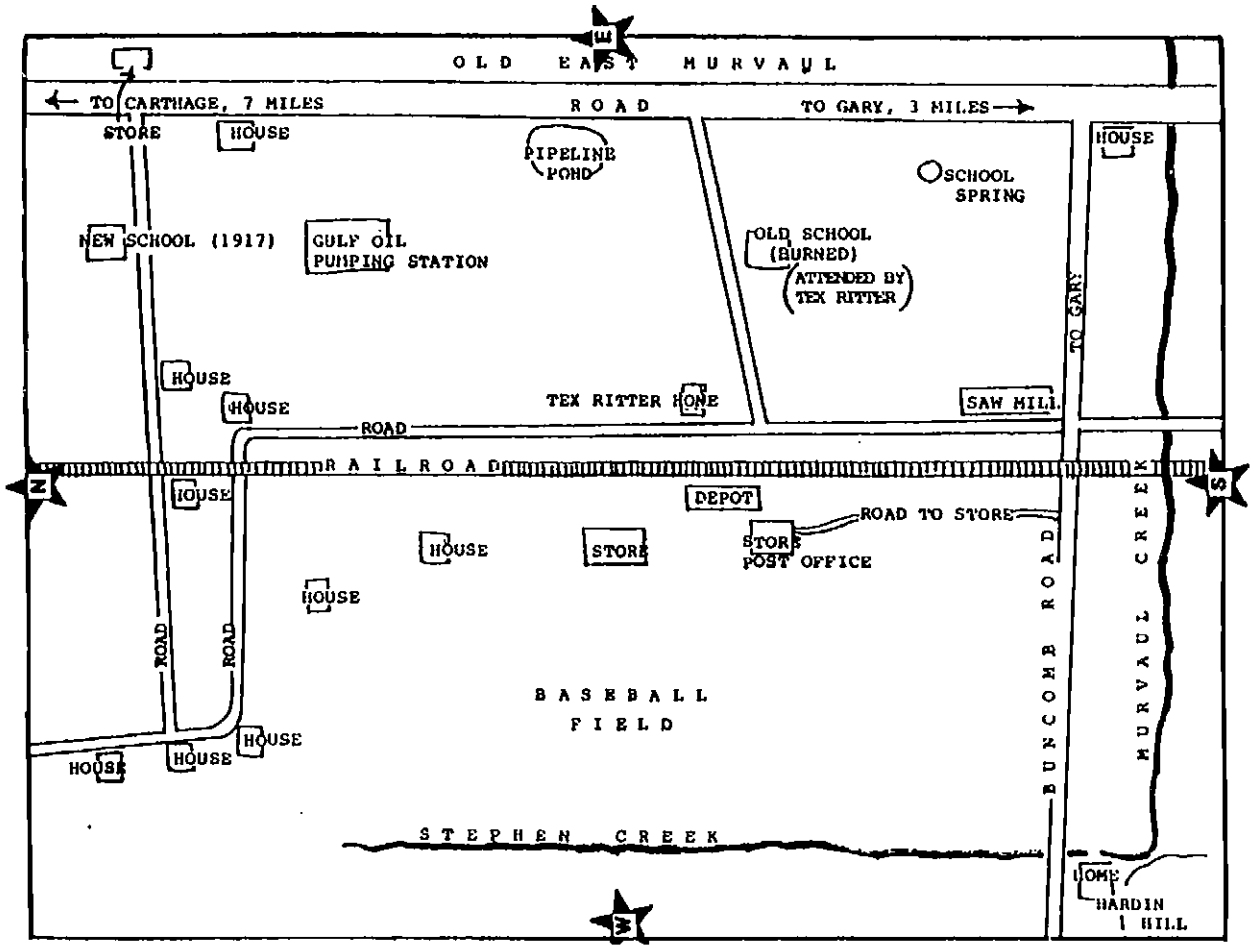
a wild cat. Tex even made him show the scars on his chest. He was a teller of tale tells from East Texas. He loved it so much here, even though Nederland claims as their very own, but Tex really belong's to Panola County.

When Tex came back he would ask about all of his friends. He didn't even think about being a big star just that he loved his friends. When he went to New York he talked with such a long Texas drawl that his friends started calling him Tex, and this is where he got the name. The folks around here alway's just called him Woodward. There was an old song that Tex used to sing about good cold buttermilk in the bottom of a well. Of course that was before we had electricity and we put the buttermilk in the bottom of the well to keep it cool. I'd like to quote Ted Deford from an article written about Tex's death. He say's that one of his last recordings "The Years Just Fall Away" was done in a relaxed almost resigned style. This writer said that it might have been that he was thinking of his life with his beloved wife Dorothy. He says in the song, that when your happy the years just fall away.

He had one brother B.A. Ritter that lives in Nederland, two sisters Mrs. Ola McCauly and Mrs. Bruce Powell that lived in Houston.

Just before Tex died he visited the White House where he presented the President with a tribute album on behalf of the Country Music Association. So he was at home anywhere. He just loved people.

Mrs Estelle Mullins


E
OLD EAST MURVAUL ROAD
← TO CARTHAGE, 7 MILES
TO GARY, 3 MILES →
STORE
HOUSE
PIPELINE POND
SCHOOL SPRING
HOUSE
NEW SCHOOL (1917)
GULF OIL PUMPING STATION
OLD SCHOOL (BURNED)
ATTENDED BY TEX RITTER
TO GARY
HOUSE
HOUSE
TEX RITTER HOME
SAW MILL
ROAD
N
RAILROAD
S
HOUSE
DEPOT
ROAD TO STORE
HOUSE
STORE
STORE
POST OFFICE
HOUSE
ROAD
ROAD
BASEBALL FIELD
BUNCOMB ROAD
MURVAUL CREEK
HOUSE
HOUSE
HOUSE
STEPHEN CREEK
HOME
HARDIN HILL
W

Mrs. Mullins, a first cousin of Tex Ritter, gave us some information of the late Tex Ritter.

Mrs. Mullins said "There was quite a difference in our age span and I didn't see to much of him because he went to Austin to study law. He got interested in country music.

After, he got to traveling and coming back to Panola County we saw more of him than when he was a younger man. He never failed to come or if he was in an area as close as Dallas he would call. He kept his relationship with his family as close as he could. One time he called me from Shreveport and said, "Estelle I'm coming over this afternoon, and I want to drive around I said, well come on I've got a big ole chicken stew. Well he ate and talked and he would eat a little more and he would talk. We went to the lake out here and on out here and on out Buncomb and there wasn't a by name I guess that he didn't stop and see. Green Ritter had a barber chair in what we call the front room or

the living room on a Sunday afternoon.

He had two brothers and three sisters: David, Booty, Lucille, Dominer, Ola. He has only one brother and two sisters living now. Since he has died the governor of Tennessee has created a job for Dorothy Fay (his wife). It was one that he said that the state had needed for a long time but never had done anything about it. It is something about entertainment.

Hello, I am Earl Cariker visiting in the area of Old Murvaul. I have with me Howard Hardin and Mrs. Troy Lake, who now lives on this property. We are looking around trying to find some of the Historical places of old Murvaul. We are now at the spring area where the first school got water. Is this right?
A - this is the only place we could go to get a drink of water. It was about 50 yards from the school building.

Q - How long did you go to school in this location?
A - I started to school here. And then the school burned, when I was in the third grade. Then I finished school in Gary.

Q - Was Tex born in this area?
A - Yes, he was born and went to school at Gary. He lived west of the school about 50 yards.

Q - Was Tex an entertainer when he was younger?
A - No, not much then.

Q - What was his real name?
A - Woodward Ritter. He became known as Tex after he got into show business, when they moved to Nederland, Texas.

Q - When did they move to Nederland, Texas?
A - It must have been back in the very early 1920s.

Q - What year were you born?
A - 1907.

Q - Were you and Tex the same age?
A - I believe he was a little younger than me.

Q - Was there a big family?
A - Yes, a big family,some of them married.

Q - Was Tex the younger child?
A - Tex was the youngest child.
Q - Were their six children?
A - Right 6 of them.
Q - Do you remember his dad's name?
A - Jim Ritter and his mother's name was Lizzie Ritter.
Q - Were you neighbors with Tex?
A - We lived 400 yards south of his place.

We're interested in finding out more about old Murvaul, so we're going to move to where the old sawmill and store and post office (est. in 1859) was before the civil war.

Q - We are approaching where Tex lived. Right?
A - Yes, we are.
Q - What type of house did the Ritter's have?
A - Just an old box house.
Q - How many rooms were in the house?
A - Four bedrooms, just four. When the Ritters moved they left on a old gray horse, with us.
Q - Did Tex ride a white horse in the old movies?
A - No, I don't believe he rode a white horse in the movies.
Q - Can we see where the other buildings were from here?
A - No. They were all on the west side of the tracks.
Q - Were the buildings there when the railroad came through?
A - Yes, they were here.
Q - Where was the Post Office at?
A - On the tracks. So the mail was picked up by hanging it on a bracket.

Then a person would grab it and pull it in.

Q - Do you remember when the last post office was here and who the post master was?
A - Back in 1919 or 1920. Mule Morris was the postmaster.

Q - Who ran the sawmill?
A - I don't know it was before my time. But I heard my dad speak if it, called it the Tribune Mill.

Q - We are now at the mill. How did they move the logs to the mill?
A - Mules and log wagons. Generally 2 to 4 mules per wagon.

Q - What was the main way of making living around here?
A - Farming was about the only way.

Q - Did the farmers grow cotton?
A - Cotton and corn were mostly grown. But tenate farmers grew only cotton. Our families were tenate farmers and we raised feed for the Reams, and we got half.

Q - What does working on the half mean?
A - You supplied everything and they supplied the labor. When it come time to sell the cotton you got half and they got half.

Q - What was the main amusement in the area?
A - We made most of our entertainment. Like go - karts and wagons. Then we would ride them down the hillsides.

Q - Was there any baseball in the old Murvaul Community?
A - Yes, it was one of the best things to do as a young boy.

Q - Were these stores all general

merchandise?
A - Yes. They carried men and women clothes. They also had a candy counter.

Q - Did they have any soda pop in those days?
A - Yes, they did.

Q - What type of soda pop?
A - They might have had a grape or orange drink. That was when you had to knock the cork in the bottle to drink one.

Q - What about law and order in this area?
A - My father, for the longest, was deputy sherriff.

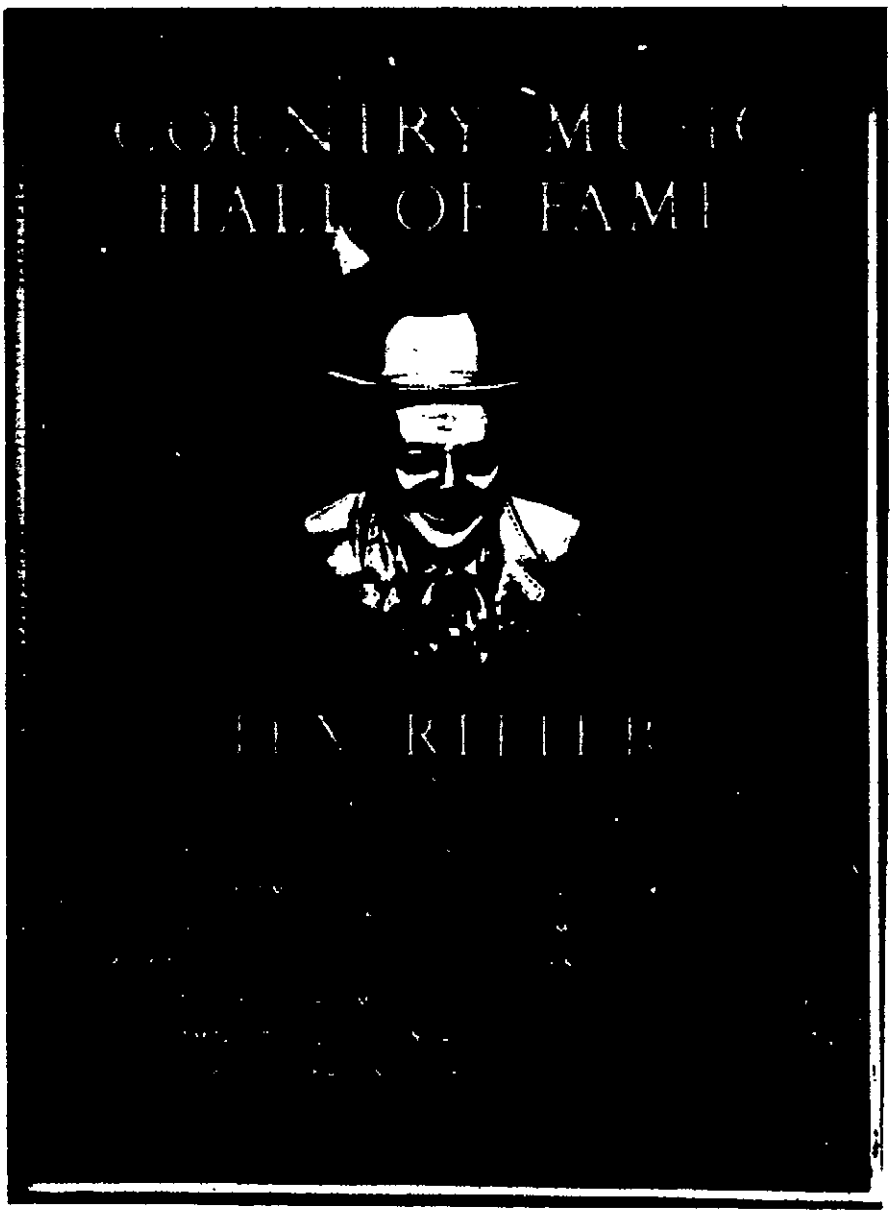
Q - Mrs. Lake, what year did you aquire this land?
A - About 1970.

Q - Where to the west side of the tracks did they move?
A - It was about 2 miles from the new churches and houses.

Q - Would you like to go back to those days in old Murvaul?
A - No, I don't think I would enjoy that. When I grew up I had to take advantage of what we had.

I thank you for coming out and talking with us. If you would like to visit this area, you can get here from Carthage, by taking highway 10 to Gary. 7 miles out of Carthage you will find the Murvaul Bottom. Old Murvaul is on the crest of the hill going toward Gary.

The following is an obituary for Tex Ritter which appeared in the Panola Watchman:



Tex Ritter, a native of Panola County and a towering figure in Country and Western music, is dead of a heart attack at age 67.

Ritter, who ranked with such greats as Roy Acuff, Ernest Tubb, and the late Hank Williams, collasped while visiting a member of his band at the Nashville jail Wednesday night.

He was rushed to Baptist Hosiptal where his doctor said he died of a "massive sudden heart attack."

Ritter had gone to the jail to visit Jack Watkins, who was locked up Tuesday night on a charge of failure to pay alimony.

The biggest hits for the softspoken Ritter were the movie theme " High Noon," "Wayward Wind," "You are my sunshine," "Boll Weevil," and "Hillbilly Heaven."

Among Ritter's 78 film credits were starring roles in such movies as "Sing, Cowboy, Sing," "Marshal of Gunsmoke," "The Old Chisom Trail," and "Song of the Gringo," his first film. He also had television roles in Westerns such as "The Rebel and "Zaine Grey Theater."

Although Ritter did not appear as an actor in the film "High Noon," a Western suspense thriller starring Gary Cooper, he sang the haunting balled that played throughout the movie. Cooper won the 1952 Oscar as best actor for his role in the production.

Ritter's interest in politics led him into the Republican primary for the U.S. Senate in Tennessee in 1970. He was defeated by Rep. William E. Brock III, who went on to unseat Democrat Albert Gore.

Ritter's singing career began 40 years ago when he was paid $100 to record four songs, including the country standard "Rye Whiskey."

In 1964, he was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame, only the second living person to be so honored.

Born Maurice Woodward Ritter at Murvaul in Panola County. Ritter never gave up his love for cowboy clothes. His standard attire was a Western outfit and a 10 - gallon cowboy hat.

He made his debut as a singing cowboy in Western films in 1936, following the trend set by Gene Autry. During the 1940s, he was recognized as one of the top 10 Western box office stars.

In 1938, while acting, he met and married Dorothy Fay. They later acted together in five movies and they had two sons.

Only three weeks ago today, Ritter presented one of two copies of a narrative album to President Nixon for his help in promoting country music.

The other copy of the album which is composed of speeches by Nixon and narration by Ritter is in the Country Music Hall of Fame.

On learning of Ritter's death. Autry portrayed him as a "fine man, a fine artist and a great American...He was a real leader."

In addition to his widow, Dorothy Ritter is survived by his two sons, Thomas and Johnathan, and a number of relatives here in Panola County.

Funeral services were held in Nashville with burial in Nederland.

Audie Hestilow

This interview by our friend Lynn Burlbow of Austin is a follow-up of our project on Bonnie and Clyde several years ago. Lynn visited with Audie Hestilow, a barber for 67 years, who is still working at his shop on the campus of the University of Texas.

I was born in Hico, Texas in 1909. Hico is about 75 miles northwest of Waco. It was a little country town. That's where my mother was raised and where I was born. Later they moved to Hamilton and lived on a big ranch. My daddy was the ranch foreman. And I grew up there and loved the ranch life pretty well. And so I guess we lived there four-five-six years and we moved to Gatesville. And that's where my life really started as I began school there. I was about six years old.

Some things I really remember there as I was about six years old. We rode an old train down there to Gatesville and got off at the depot. I remember sitting down on a post at the depot. Then we walked down the track to a house our dad bought for us. Today that old depot is still standing there. They've kept it up really good. I was over there three or four weeks ago and that old post was still standing there. And I thought, my the years have really gone by. And I sat there where I had before on that post. And I could just hear that old freight train and the passengers and the old inter - urban that went from Hamilton to Waco. That's where I went to school in Gatesville there. I was the second on in the family, there were four of us. I lost my daddy when I was six or seven years old. I never did see him anymore. He and my mother seperated. I didn't see him again until I was 22 years old. I was barbering there in gatesville at the time. I'm jumping ahead of myself on going off to barbering college and all that but, we'll go back to all that. A man came into my shop and got a haircut and a shave. After he got done, he said,"I believe you know me." I replied,"No. your face does look familiar though but maybe you've been in here before." He said,"Do you remember a little boy who was so unhappy one Christmas before his mother and daddy separated?" And I said, "Do you mean you're my daddy?" He said, "Yes." Well back then before they separated I remember they bought my brother a really nice little watch, a little railroad

watch. It was an Elgin, a proper watch on a chain. He bought me a little phonograph, the type you wind-up. I was the most unhappy little boy you ever saw. Each time you wound it up it would play the same old tune again. I was really put out over that thing. He said, "I tell you what son, I'll buy you a watch when you're a little older. I thought you were a little young to have a watch." Then when we met again he said, "I bought your watch to you boy." That was after he'd paid for his haircut and shave. It was one of the most beautiful watches I ever saw. It had all red ruby jewels in it. I still have it today. Well, I gave it to my daughter to keep for her keepsake. Well, anyway that's just about the story on my daddy. He did die. He got bit by a rattlesnake later on. He spent that night with my wife and I. He died soon after that, it wasn't too awful long. That's all I know about my daddy. I never was around him much at all.

Coming from a poor family my mother was trying to make a living for her family and herself. My brother and I got to be pretty strong boys. So we worked, and we did hard work for kids. We worked in elevators stacking. We'd drag the bags back and stack them, seven sacks high. There was no air. That grain dust would kill anybody. We'd do that all day long for a dollar a day. I was about thirteen or so at the time. We got to be pretty strong kids from doing that type of work.

I'll never forget the time-well work was hard to get and you didn't get paid much if you did. So many people, young people today get tired of hearing that. And they don't really believe. They get tired of hearing about the hard time we went through. It's hard to believe - a dollar a day if you could get a job. Some worked for seventy-five cents a day. It wasn't by the hour, it

was by the day, sun-up to sun-down. We'd just take on any kind of work we could get.

My mother married again, and she couldn't have found a better man than she did. He just loved all us kids. He did everything in the world for us. They were in the grocery business and did really well. We worked in the grocery store. One day Cooper Grocery called and asked if I was there. My mother said, "Yes, he's here." They said, "Ask him if he'd like to have a little job?" She replied, "I'm pretty sure he would,, I'll send him up there." So I went up there. Cooper Grocery Co. was a wholesaler which sold to all the stores. They asked me if I like to go unload a car load of cement. There was 98 pounds to a sack,, little short sacks. They weren't i paper bags then, old blue bags. I said, "O yeah." They said, "Get out there in that old truck." They had an old dark truck. I'd never driven a shift gear car before. A t-model was what we had. I said, "I can't drive that, that's a shift gear,

all I drive is T-models." He said, "You'll learn, get out there and practice a little bit and go to work." They went down and opened up the car for me and all that. I'll tell you I enjoyed that old Dodge truck so much I believe I would have done the job for nothing. I got to drive that old Dodge.. I didn't have a dolly or nothing. I work those bags loose they were packed down tight. I had a hard time getting them loose from one another. But I unloaded that thing by myself. And I was just a young boy. I worked my arm raw you know with the cement. It was hot, really hot. And that took me about three days to do it. But I'll never forget the pleasure of driving that old Dodge.

I got through high school in Gatesville. And the only college I could get to in those days was barber college. So I picked cotton to go. It cost $60 with a lifetime license. I had been cutting hair before I went to college. My mother's sister was a really good hair cutter. She cut everybody's hair in the country nearly.

I always watched her. I was really interested in it. Everytime she'd cut somebody's hair I'd be there watching instead of out playing like the rest of the kids. So one day Aunt Lottie said, "Would you like to be a barber?" And I said, "I sure would, would you teach me how?" She replied, "You ought to know pretty well. But if I do you'll have to do what I tell you. There won't be any playing around. You have to be serious about it or I won't teach you." I said,

"I'll do everything you tell me to do."

So she got a bunch of little girls. I started off with girls haircuts. I just enjoyed that. I kept seeing where I could improve and do better next time. I just got to cutting hair, and the more I did it the better I liked it. I was nine years old at the time.

During the summer I go down and spend it with my granddaddy at Hico. They'd have a big baseball games on Saturday afternoon. It was between different communities. They'd use string balls they made themselves. And they made their own gloves then too. They'd use cotton for padding like they used in quilts. They made some pretty good old gloves. They'd get together in a big old pasture, surrounded by a bunch of trees. It was a beautiful place, a good place for a ballgame. They'd all carry their lunch together. They were all friends, close friends. But when the ball game started they were public enemy number one. They didn't stay together. One group got on one side, and the others on the other side. I didn't watch the game. I was off on one side cutting hair on a stump. I still had the okd tools I used for cutting hair. I got a kick out of cutting everybody's hair. It was free. Ididn't charge anything. I kept customers on that stump all evening while the game was going. So that's about the story on that part of it. In the summer we went to the swimming hole, and got busted pretty good for going into the watermelon patch. That was especially after my grandmother sadi not to. I remember one time

she said, "Boys the peaches are not ripe yet, they've just begun to turn red. Don't let me catch you boys in the peach orchard." There were grass burrs in that whole peach orchard. There were trails going around without too many grass burrs in them. We didn't have shoes on. As long as we stayed in the trial we didn't get the grass burrs in our feet except once in awhile. If you did, you'd pull out the grass burr and go on. Grandma caught us out there. She lined us all up with the razor strap in her hand and took us one at a time. My grandmother really did love me. I was her pet. But she laid it on them. She didn't know when to quit. I was the lost one. I thought she given out when she got to me. I must have looked like I was scared to death when she got ready for me. Boy she started in, and you never heard such a loud pop as that razor strap made. But she never hit me one lick for she was hitting her own leg. She loved me to pieces and would do anything for me.

But anyway we got a little older, and they had champion wrestlers come in. My granddaddy'd place, it seemed everyone liked to go there on Sunday. They'd do all kinds of things. They'd pitch washers. I was the champion wrestler every weekend. It was just a throw. If you did that to the other fellow - where he'd hit the ground - you won. I only had one who ever put me down. I was strong. I had done all type of work. I was really fast too. My grandma told me, "You put everyone down but there's one person you haven't tried and that's me." I said, "Now

Grandma you know better than that. I'l
put you on the ground before you kno
it. She said, "I'll tell you what I'l
do. We are going to get this over with
and I'm going to prove what I'm talkin
about. We have plenty of witnesses
I'm going to put you on the ground boy
I'll do more than that, when you hit th
ground you won't have any clothes o
you. And I'll kick you in the rea
end." Of course that really tickled m
for my grandma couldn't do that. Som
bet on her and some bet on me. When i

was over I didn't have any clothes o
me. That little old woman was in he
60's. That was the most embarrassin
thing to happen to me in my whole life
And she kicked me in the rear end lik
she told me she was going to. She did
good job of it. I was bloody all over
She had long fingernails and when sh
was ripping my clothes off she didn't
take it easy on me. They had to go i
the house and get me some clothes whic
didn't fit. She'd torn mine all t
pieces.

That's about the end of the stor
on my grandma. She really did love me
She lived to be 98. She also love
horses. I don't mean stable horses
She liked horses you could ride an
she'd run them. She ran races up t
close to being 90. At family reunion
she'd always be there. And I coul
never get away from grandma. She just
hung on me all the time. The last time
I remember her was at a reunion. I saw
her when I got there. I went up behind
her, put my hands over her eyes, and
asked her who it was. And she didn't

know. Her daughter came up and said, "She doesn't know you, she doesn't know anybody. Her mind is gone." They just kept an eye on her. That's the last time I saw my grandma alive.

I was 16 when I went to barber school. I told them I'd already had some experience. Back in those days shaving was a big business. You'd do four or five shaves to one haircut. I was a barber before I went to school but couldn't shave people. I was only busy on Saturday cutting kids' hair. I worked on a commission deal, 60-40. I got 60% of the fee. So it was suggested I go to barber school to learn it all. But the $60 was a whole lot of money to me. So I picked cotton for it with the help of my family and I went off to barber college. I went there and they put me in the "free department" in the back. As one got better you moved toward the front and there was a charge/ You got 15 cents per haircut and you'd keep half of that. That was better than nothing. The year was 1925.

I didn't stay in the "free department" very long. They put me in the "paying department" there were 16 chairs there. So you kept working those chairs. Then the instructor would get you out in a regular shop to work on Saturdays when you got better. Then he would check with them on Monday. So they put me out and I worked on Saturday. They said, "He (me) did fine. He might not be too good on shaving, but he had never done that. He's just a kid you know. They said, "He doesn't need to be in your school. He can hone razors." I'd really learned to sharpen

razors. I got good on that. I also became a good shaver. A good shaver has to be just a little bit light handed. And you will hardly ever cut anybody. The heavier hands will cut people. So I learned to sharpen razors really well and would even do it for other barbers. I understood razors. So they sent me back home.

The first thing I did was buy me a little two chair barber shop. I had only stayed at the barber school about a week and a half. I didn't need any official certificate from the school. Anyone could be a barber who could cut hair. It's different now. I had that little shop next to a grocery store and a filling station that my folks had. My brother ran the filling station. My brother ran the filling station and I ran the barber shop. Later the filling station burned down and I moved on. I didn't stay long in one place. I was too young. During the week was slow. You had to wait until Saturday to make any money. So I'd do other work too during the week. But I'd barber on Saturday.

In 1928 I got a job working on a railroad (Cotton Belt). We lived in boxcars. That was hard work, really hard work. They got $1.84 a day for eight hours of hard work. But we had Saturday afternoon off. So I'd go to town and get a job. They always needed an extra barber on Saturday. I'd make more money in that afternoon than I'd make all week for the railroad. So I bought me a little whippet for $610, brand new. I kept it about a year, as

long as I stayed with the bridge gang on the railroad. I quit that job and traded the car for a two chair barber shop. We traded even. Stephen and I stayed there ten years (Coryell City).

That's where I met Bonnie and Clyde. We'd heard a lot about them, that they were killers and were in our vicinity. They had a machine gun mounted in the hood of the car and could move it to shoot where they wanted, rat-tat-tat. Everybody had a fear of Bonnie and Clyde, and Raymond Hamilton, and all that gang.

So I had been playing in a string band. We'd play on Saturday night after I got off work. It would last until two or three in the morning. After I worked all day Saturday I'd go make music at night. I played guitar and had a banjo and a mandolin. I did pretty well on the guitar. I'm learning to play the piano now. So we'd been practicing one night. I was living on the back of the little barber shop as I was still single. That night I came back in to where I was living. It was a nice, warm night. I came in the front door and was combing my hair like any young boy would. A car pulled up front. It was two in the morning and I wondered who it could be. A fellow came running in really fast. He wasn't too big a guy, small framed and nice looking. He said, "We're lost, we don't know where we are. Would you tell me where we are, and how to get out of here, and where the roads lead to?" I said, "Sure, I can tell you that." About that time a girl came running in there. A sandy headed girl come and asked, "Do you have a comb I can

borrow? I need a comb. I haven't combed my hair since I don't know when." I replied, "I just bought a new comb this week and you can be the first one to use it." He said, "Do you have an extra one so I can comb my hair too?" I said, "Yes I do, we'll all have a good hair combing time here." She said, "I'm so proud to get to comb my hair." I told them, "You leave here and go on down the road and you go up the hill, really just an incline. Then there's a fork in the road, there's a Lutheran Church there. You take the right and it will take to Moody and on. You take the left it will take you to Fort Worth area." They were as nice to me as could be. We talked awhile and I can't even remember what we talked about. I looked out the door and it was Raymond Hamilton. But then I didn't know any of them. I guess it would have scared me to death if I knew who I was talking to. He was out there leaning against the car. I guess he had gotten out to stretch his legs. He did come in. He stayed by the car which was still running. So they were really nice. She patted me on the back while telling me she enjoyed combing her hair. And then they left. Raymond drove. He hopped in the car when he saw them leaving the shop. I went to bed.

The next morning I got up. I'd been up late, after two o'clock. There wasn't any business during the day. All my work was at night. So I didn't have to get up early. I got up about nine. The town was all electrified about something. I didn't know what it was. Everybody was talking and going on.

They said, "Didn't you hear what happened last night?" I replied, "No, I didn't get to bed until two and didn't know of anything unusual happening." They said, "It was last night, pretty late. Bonnie and Clyde and Raymond Hamilton were chased into Coryell City. They lost them before they got to Corral City. It was down in Corral Creek, there were acres and acres of cedar break. They cut and sold cedar poles from down there. There were hundreds of little side roads which went through there. And they chased them into the cedar breaks and couldn't find them. They said, "The next time they heard of them was in Waxahachie."

I didn't know until then who they had been. I said, "They were in my barber shop last night." They said, "Turn your radio on, they're telling all about it right now." Papers were all over the place with their pictures in them. They were nice to me that night. Nobody could have been any nicer than those two. I'll never forget them. I can remember voices really well. I can remember Clyde's voice, and I remember her voice.

I also met Norma Jean Baker (later Marilyn Monroe) before she became a celebrity. With World War II I shipped out of Corpus Christi. I had gone through Marine Corps boot camp. I shipped out with Tyrone Power the movie star. They had drafted me to be a barber for they were so short of barbers. Even after I went in I had to call and have my wife send my barber tools to me. They weren't making any more with the war.

I stayed two years and then Tyrone Power and I shipped out together. I had been cutting his hair all the time. I worked on officers. I was cutting his hair one day. He never did talk much. My chair was in the corner which was just for officers. The radio came on and said there was a hero in town, Tyrone Power. He had been driving to the base that morning and passed a house on fire. He stopped and saved the whole family which had been asleep. This was real, not any Hollywood stuff. After that we shipped out and rode all the way to California together. He was just an average old boy to me. You'd never know he was a movie star.

That put me in a barber shop in Alamaida, California working on officers. My shop was at a big BOQ (Bachelors Officers Quarters). I was in charge. They'd made me a first class petty officer. There were some civilian barbers working for me too. I had a lot of freedom. I had time to relax in the coffee shop. That's where I saw a waitress with molasses colored hair. It was between blondes and light brown. I thought she was cute young girl. The other waitresses were heavier. She never said much. I got to asking about her, and they said, "Aw, she's a screwball. She's just not normal. They said she just wouldn't talk. I said, "I thin' I'll try to make friends with her. And they said, "You'll never do it." But I decided to try anyway.

So they had her wait on me. I several cups of coffee. But I couldn't get a word out of her. So one day I

grabbed her by the hand. She didn't resist at all. She said," What do you want?" I replied," I just want to talk to you." And I began to ask her about different things and she'd just shake her head. She finally got to be friendly. Then after three months she began to tell me her life story. She told how her Daddy abandoned her and her mother, and how her mother was placed in a state home, and how she was put in foster homes. She'd run off and they'd catch her and put her another home. She just didn't know what to think about herself. Then she was on her own. I told her that, " I just wanted to be friends to you, that's all." I said, " I'm a married man, my wife's coming out here. I would like for you to meet her. She's coming to work at the base as a beauty operator. She said, "Good, I'll be glad to meet her." And when my wife came they got to meet. We were all close friends. Then when I got my discharge in 1947 we stopped in Oakland to say good-bye. That's the last time I saw her. She later became famous as a movie star. We kept up with her through her films. She looked the same to us except she had bleached her hair so white. To us she was still Norma Jean.

They wanted me to stay in California. My furniture was stored in Austin when I went to the Navy. This is where I had been barbering at the University. My mother wrote that my stepfather was about to die. We saw we were going to have to come on home. I had my job waiting for me. They were all glad to see me back. We just stayed here after the war. We first came to

Austin because of my brother who started at the University in 1936. My brother had told me they needed barbers here. I took the job and have been here ever since. I've been at several locations and the University has been very good to me. I've cut hair for lots of people from the University, students and teachers, athletes and coaches. It's been a rewarding career.

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Lobolly Magazine published by Lobolly Inc., students at Gary High School, Box 189, Gary, Texas 75643. Circulation is by subscription and newstand. Subscriptions are $6.00 a year, single copies, $3.00. Some back issues are available.

We want to thank the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum for the use of the picture on page 35.

Tenaha, Timpson, Bobo, and Blair
Written by Tex Ritter

On that H and a TC line
Old East Texas sure is fine
Drop me off just anywhere
Tenaha, Timpson, Bobo and Blair
Hear the drivers pound the rail
Taking me back to Texas Trail
Bought my ticket, paid my fair
Tenaha, Timpson, Bobo and Blair
Whoo-whoo, listen to the whistle
Whoo-whoo, longing for the whistle
Thats means the station not so far
From where we are
Little highball engineer
Pull the throttle track is clear
There's a girl a-waiting there
Tenaha, Timpson, Bobo and Blair

Boyhood home of Tex Ritter in Maroni Community near Carthage.

PRINTED BY BUSINESS OFFICE SERVICES CLASSES
SAN AUGUSTINE HIGH SCHOOL-MIKE MALONE, INST.