

# AS TIME GOES BY



By Bill Renfro

# AS TIME GOES BY

DECEMBER 13, 2019





THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO  
THE  
LOVE OF MY LIFE  
WILMA L. ( POOL ) RENFRO





# THIS BOOK

As I am now headed towards the 90th year of my life, I am finding more and more time to go through the pages of my mind. This will be the 7th book that I will have written, and thinking back, I realize that I had opened only the pages that I knew contained the memory of the things I was writing about, telling the story of the life and passing of the love of my life. I now realize that all the pages of this book contain things that also were part of her life, that were intertwined with mine for the 70 years plus of our marriage. Actually, I found out that she was only 15 when we had our first date.

This book is my effort to show pictures of the areas and places that were described in my other books, where they still exist and maybe even only the areas where they once existed.

It is important to remember that this story began in the 1930's, when times and lives were much different and people and their lives were different. This was a time when we knew all our neighbors, their families and the things of their lives, and were involved in them.

This was a day when a friend was a real friend, not just someone you knew. This was the day when no one locked their doors, some had never actually seen the lock key.

These were the people who not only made America great, but who actually made America. If we could only go back to this time.

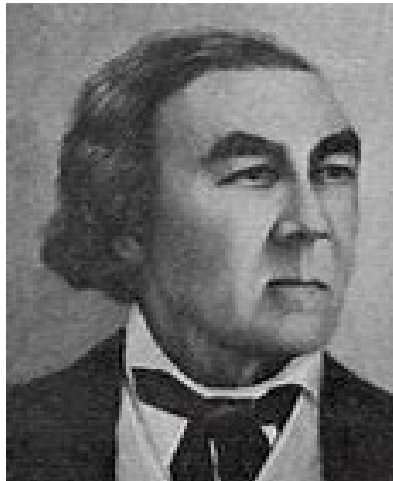
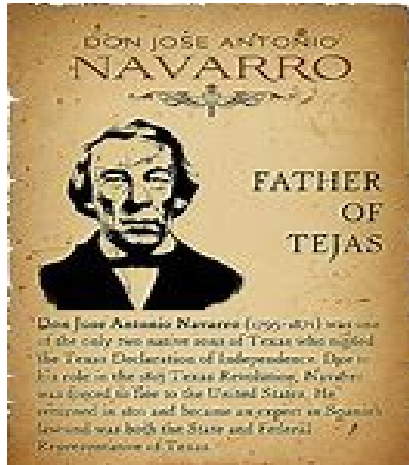
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DAWSON IS LOCATED IN NAVARRO COUNTY, WHICH WAS NAMED FOR DON JOSE ANTONIO NAVARRO



WHERE IS DAWSON, TEXAS ?



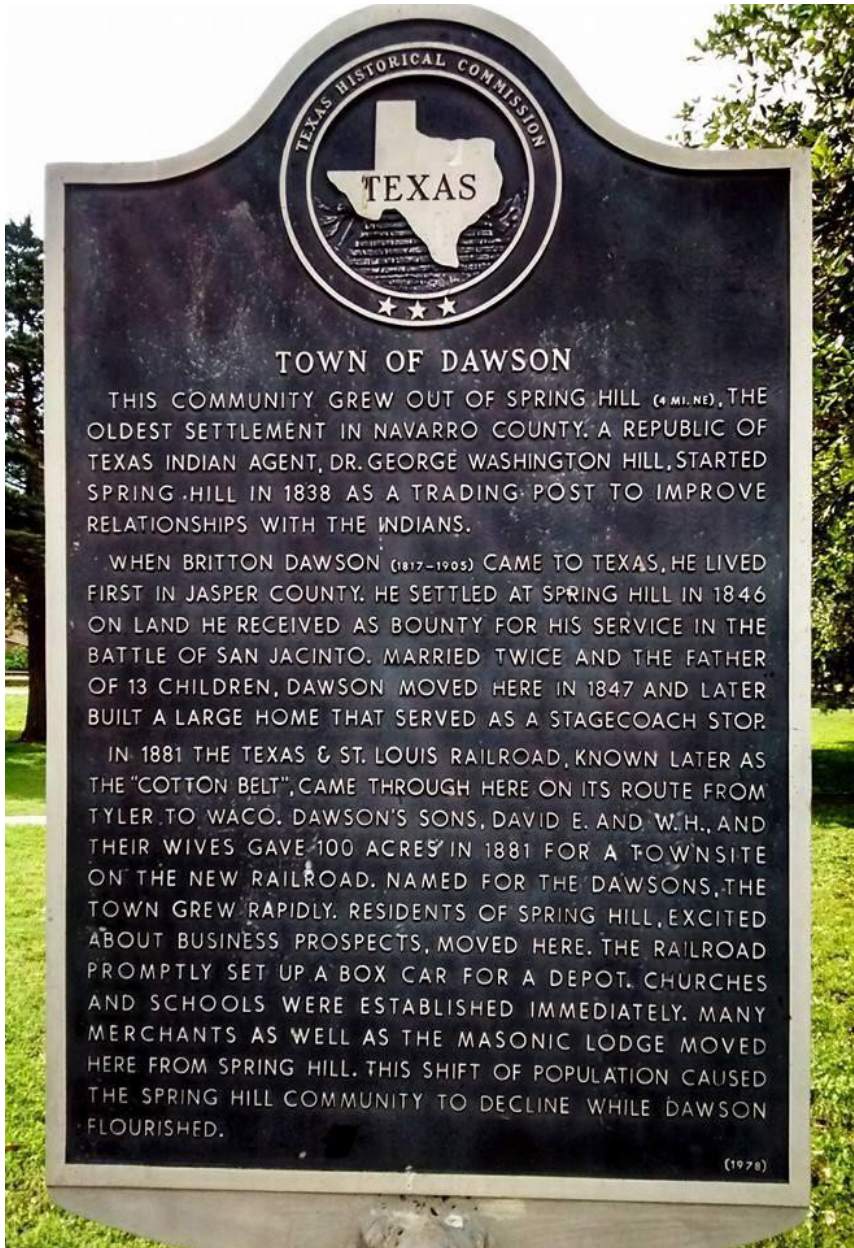
DAWSON CITY LIMIT SIGN

## TOWN OF DAWSON

THIS COMMUNITY GREW OUT OF SPRING HILL, THE OLDEST SETTLEMENT IN NAVARO COUNTY. A REPUBLIC OF TEXAS INDIAN AGENT, DR GEORGE WASHINGTON HILL, STARTED SPRING HILL IN 1838 AS A TRADING POST TO IMPROVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE INDIANS.

WHEN BRITTON DAWSON CAME TO TEXAS, HE LIVED FIRST IN JASPER COUNTY. HE SETTLED AT SPRING HILL IN 1846, ON LAND HE RECEIVED AS BOUNTY FOR HIS SERVICE IN THE BATTLE OF SAN JACINTO. MARRIED TWICE, AND THE FATHER OF 13 CHILDREN, MOVED HERE TO DAWSON IN 1847 AND LATER BUILT A LARGE HOME THAT SERVED AS A STAGECOACH STOP.

IN 1881 THE TEXAS & ST. LOUIS RAILROAD, KNOWN LATER AS "THE COTTON BELT", CAME THROUGH HERE ON ITS ROUTE FROM TYLER TO WACO. DAWSON'S SONS, DAVID E, AND W.H., AND THEIR WIVES GAVE 100 ACRES IN 1881 FOR A TOWNSITE ON THE NEW RAILROAD, NAMED FOR THE DAWSONS. THE TOWN GREW RAPIDLY, RESIDENTS OF SPRING HILL, EXCITED ABOUT BUSINESS PROSPECTS, MOVED HERE. THE RAILROAD PROMPTLY SET UP A BOX CAR FOR A DEPOT. CHURCHES AND SCHOOLS WERE ESTABLISHED IMMEDIATELY. MANY MERCHANTS AS WELL AS THE MASONIC LODGE MOVED HERE FROM SPRING HILL. THIS SHIFT OF POPULATION CAUSED THE SPRING HILL COMMUNITY TO DECLINE WHILE DAWSON FLOURISHED.



DAWSON HISTORICAL MARKER  
REFER TO THE ENLARGED PAGE TO READ

## THE OLD DAWSON HOUSE

THE HOUSE SHOWN IN THE PICTURE AND DESCRIBED IN THE HISTORIC PLAQUE, WAS BUILT BY BRITTON DAWSON IN THE YEAR OF 1847 AS A HOME FOR HIMSELF, HIS WIFE AND THEIR 13 CHILDREN. THE HOUSE WAS ALSO BUILT AS A STOP FOR THE STAGECOACH LINES TO LAYOVER FOR THE NIGHT WITH SPACES FOR THE DRIVER AND THE PASSENGERS. THE HOUSE WAS TURNED AT AN ANGLE TO THE ROAD THAT PASSED BY, SO THAT THE MANY WINDOWS FACED THE PREVAILING WINDS THAT COOLED THE HOUSE.

THE AREA IN FRONT OF THE HOUSE WAS LARGE ENOUGH FOR THE STAGECOACHES TO MAKE A TURNAROUND, AND TO STAY FOR THE NIGHT. ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE YARD SPACE WAS THE LARGE BARN WITH WHICH TO FEED AND REST THE HORSES OVERNIGHT.

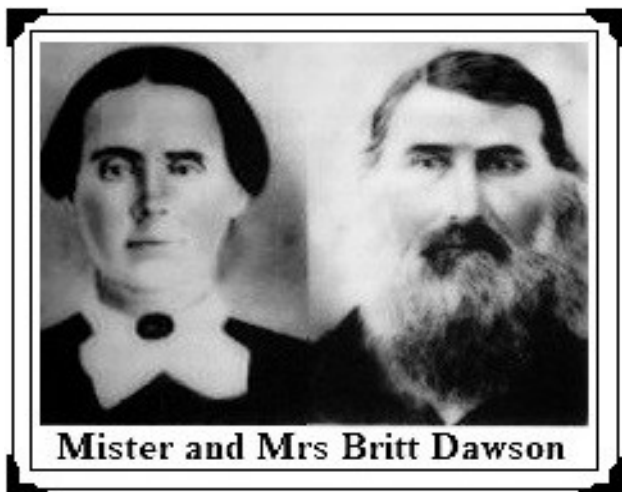
THE OLD HOUSE AND BARN STOOD FOR MANY YEARS WHERE THEY WERE ORIGINALLY PLACED, BUT FINALLY BURNED DOWN MANY YEARS AGO. I HAVE NO RECOLLECTION WHAT YEAR THE HOUSE BURNED, OR HOW OLD IT WAS WHEN IT DID BURN.

AT ONE TIME THERE WAS A TOUR THAT COULD BE TAKEN THROUGH THE HOUSE AND IT WAS IN ONE OF THESE TOURS THAT I GOT TO SEE THE INSIDE .  
TO ME IT WAS LIKE GOING TO "MOUNT VERNON" OR WATCHING AN EPISODE OF "GUNSMOKE". THERE WERE STILL MANY DESCENDANTS OF BRITT DAWSON LIVING IN THE AREA.



THE OLD DAWSON HOUSE  
BUILT IN 1881

BRITT DAWSON LIVED HERE UNTIL HIS  
DEATH IN 1905  
REFER TO THE WRITTEN COPY ON  
THE HISTORICAL MARKER SHOWN  
ON ANOTHER PAGE.



Mister and Mrs Britt Dawson



A PAINTING OF THE OLD DAWSON  
HOUSE. PAINTING BY JOYCE SHAW

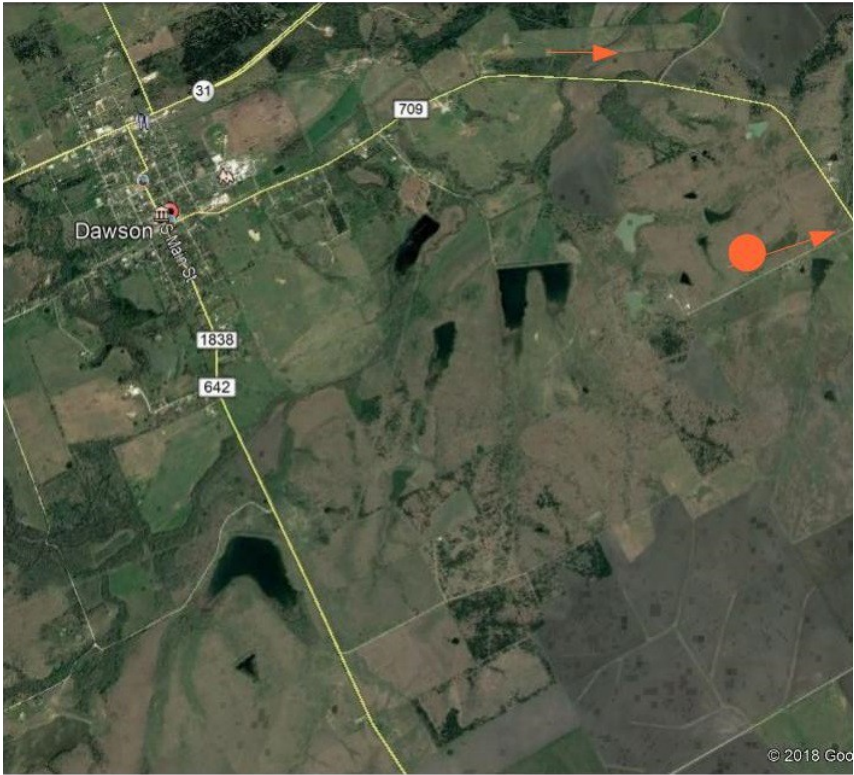






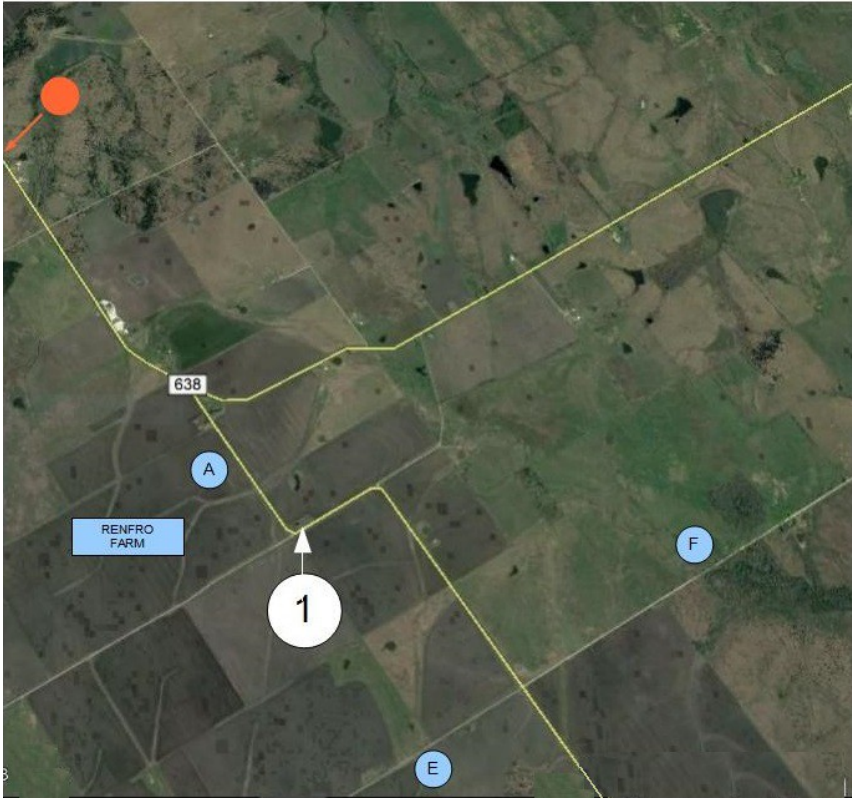
## DAWSON AREA HISTORICAL MARKERS





MAP FROM DAWSON, ON LEFT, TOWARD  
WHERE WE LIVED AND FARMED





THIS MAP IS A CONTINUATION FROM FR 708 TO WHERE IT JOINS FR 638 FROM DAWSON TOWARDS WHERE BABE AND I GREW UP AND WHERE WE LIVED AND FARMED FOR THE FIRST YEARS THAT WE WERE MARRIED.



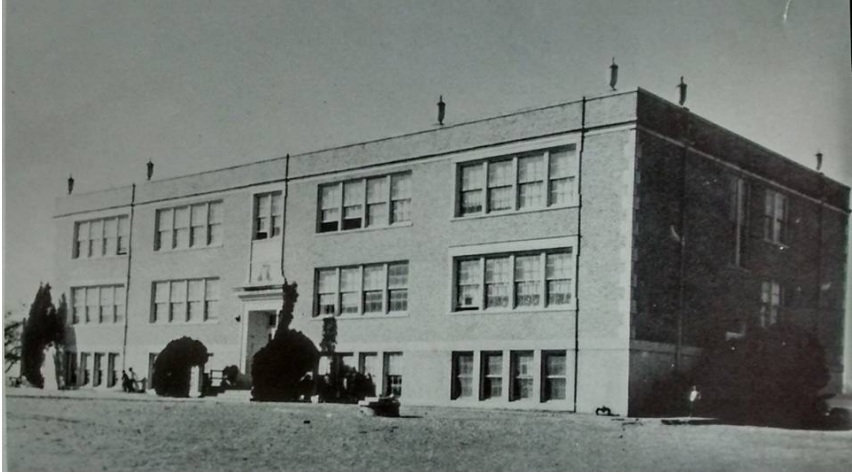




## LEGEND AREA NO. 1

- A OLD RED HOUSE
- B SHILOH BAPTIST CHURCH WHERE  
BABE AND FAMILY WENT
- C HARMONY METHODIST CHURCH  
WHERE RENFRO FAMILY WENT
- D RENFRO FARM
- E AREA HERE I GREW UP
- F AREA WHERE BABE GREW UP





THE OLD DAWSON SCHOOL BUILDING



BILL RENFRO AND WILMA ( BABE ) POOL  
WHERE THEY WENT TO SCHOOL







THE DAWSON FOOTBALL TEAM----I AM  
NO. 53



PEPSQUAD --- BABE IS ON  
THE FIRST ROW, RIGHT





WILMA L. ( B A B E ) AND BILL RENFRO

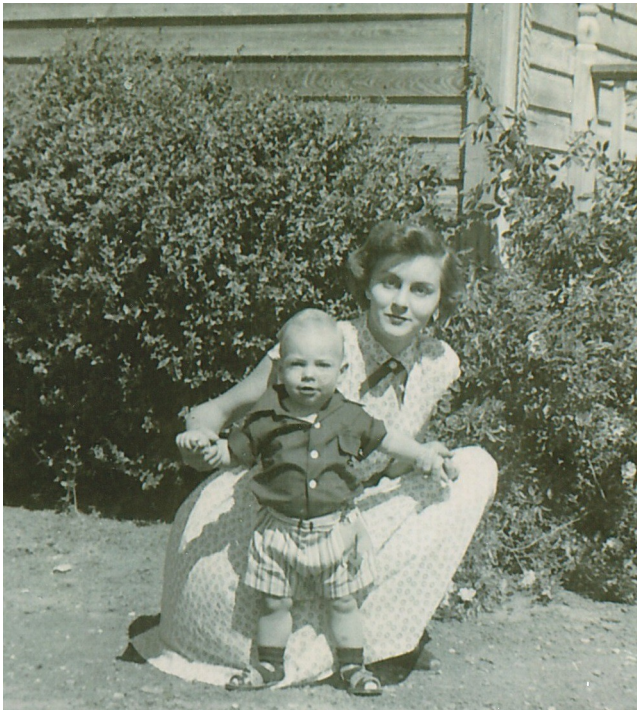
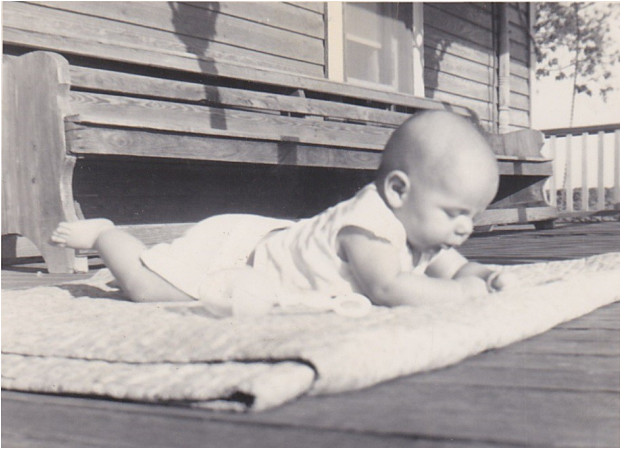
AT HOME IN THE OLD RED HOUSE AFTER  
BEING MARRIED IN 1949





**THE DAWSON METHODIST CHURCH  
THAT WE ATTENDED AFTER WE  
WERE MARRIED**





**BABE WITH OUR FIRST BORN SON  
WHEN WE LIVED IN THE OLD RED HOUSE**







DARRYL WITH THE FAMILY TRACTOR



DARRYL WAS NOT ONLY A FARMER  
BUT ALSO THE FOOTBALL MASCOT

AT THE TIME THAT BABE AND I WERE FARMING, THE COUNTRY WAS PRIMARILY AGRICULTURAL, AND AT THE FALL OF EACH YEAR, THERE WAS A LOT OF ACTIVITY GOING ON.

MOST OF THE FARMERS HAD COTTON AS THEIR CASH CROP. HARVEST WAS THEREFORE THE MOST IMPORTANT TIME OF THE YEAR. AT THE TIME WE WERE FARMING, AND THE TIME THAT WE HAD GROWN UP, THE TOWN HAD THREE COTTON GINS. AT ONE TIME THERE HAD BEEN FOUR, BUT ONE HAD CLOSED. WORKING AT THE GINS WAS ONE OF THE WAYS THAT THE TOWN FOLKS, AND SOME OF THE FARMERS, PICKED UP SOME EXTRA MONEY TO MAKE ENDS MEET. I REMEMBER ONE OF THESE PEOPLE HAD SAID TO ME THAT THIS EXTRA WORK DID NOT

MAKE HIS ENDS MEET, BUT IT GOT THEM CLOSER TOGETHER. I HAD ALSO WORKED ONE FALL AT ONE OF THE GINS. THE GINS RAN FROM 7 IN THE MORNING UNTILL 10 AT NIGHT. IT JUST SO HAPPENED, THAT THE OWNER OF THE GINS WAS A DISTANT RELATIVE OF MY DADS FAMILY, AND ALSO ATTENDED THE SAME CHURCH AS MY FAMILY DID, SO I GOT A GOOD EASY JOB IN THE OFFICE. I REMEMBER THE SOUNDS OF THREE GINS ALL RUNNING AT THE SAME TIME. I THINK THAT THIS WAS THE REASON THAT THEY STOPPED AT 10 PM. I CAN ALSO SEE THE CO-OP GIN RUNNING 24 HOUR DAYS BECAUSE THEY WERE SO BUSY.

I LIKED TO GO TO THE GIN WITH MY DAD WHEN I WAS A BOY, BECAUSE THE GINNER HAD A FREE DOCTOR PEPPER MACHINE AND FREE PEANUTS. IF YOU HAVE NEVER HAD A DR. PEPPER FILLED WITH PEANUTS, YOU HAVE NEVER LIVED.

THE YARDS WERE FULL OF FARMERS WITH THEIR TRAILERS LOADED WITH COTTON, JUST WAITING TO HAVE THEIR TURN AT THE GIN. THEY HAD TO COME IN AND GO TO THE SCALES, WHERE BOTH THEIR TRUCK AND THE TRAILER HAD TO BE WEIGHTED IN AND THEN GET THEIR NUMBER IN LINE. ONCE THE COTTON HAD BEN VACUUMED INTO THE GIN, THEY WOULD HAVE TO GO THROUGH THE SCALES TO GET A WEIGHT OF THEIR COTTON. IF THEY WISHED TO SELL, THEIR COTTON WAS SAMPLED AND A CHECK WAS CUT FOR THAT AMOUNT, AT THE THEN GOING RATE AT THE COTTON MARKET. IF THEY DID NOT WISH TO SELL AT THAT TIME, THE BALE WAS SAMPLED, GIVEN A NUMBER AND PUT IN THE LARGE STORAGE BUILDING, TO AWAIT FURTHER ORDERS.

AT THE TIME THAT I WORKED AT THE GIN, I HAD A FIELD OF 188 ACRES OF COTTON WAITING TO PICK.

MY WIFE DROVE SEVERAL MILES TO A TOWN BETWEEN WACO AND COLLEGE STATION, KNOWN TO BE ON THE ROUTE OF THE MEXICAN MIGRANT WORKERS. IN ABOUT TWO DAYS, A LARGE TRUCK WITH ABOUT 20 COTTON PICKERS PULLED UP, READY TO GO TO WORK. THIS WAS GREAT, BECAUSE NOT ONLY DID THEY CONTROL THEIR OWN PEOPLE, THEY USED THE TRUCK TO GATHER THE COTTON, AND TAKE IT TO THE GIN. THEY ALSO SLEPT IN THE TRUCK AND DID NOT CAUSE ANY TROUBLE.

THIS TURNED OUT THE BEST YEAR FOR US SINCE WE STARTED FARMING. WE MADE 88 BALES OF COTTON THAT YEAR. THIS WAS A LOT FOR A DRY SUMMER AND A FARMER 20 YEARS OF AGE.

I CAN STILL, NOW AT ALMOST 90 YEARS OLD, HEAR THE SOUNDS, REMEMBER THE SMELLS AND STILL SEE THE FACES OF THE PEOPLE I THEN KNEW, BUT ALSO THE ONES THAT I DID NOT KNOW.





OLD COTTON GINS





THE OLD NOAH HALE GAS STATION



GENE AUTRY OFTEN SHOWED UP HERE.

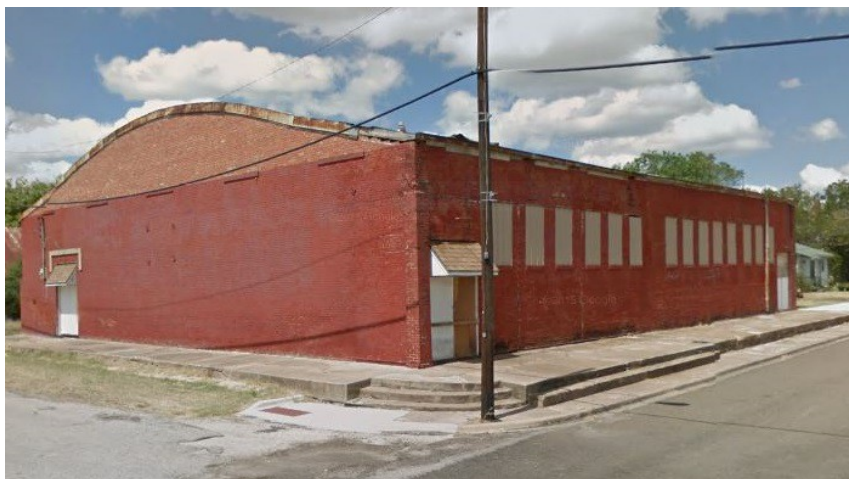


THE OLD DAWSON RITZ PICTURE SHOW





OLD "SANDWICH SHOP" ON LEFT  
OLD MORTUARY ON RIGHT



OLD DAWSON GYM. THIS WAS THE  
FIRST GYMNASIUM THE SCHOOL  
EVER HAD.



THIS IS THE END WALL OF THE LAST BUILDING ON THE LEFT SIDE OF THE MAIN STREET. AS A BOY I REMEMBER ALL THE ADS THAT HAD LOGOS ON THIS WALL, NOW PAINTED OVER.



ONE OF THE FIRST GAS STATIONS IN DAWSON. MADE TO SERVICE THE OLD MODEL A, NO DOUBT.



WHAT A TYPICAL GROCERY STORE OF  
IT'S DAY WOULD LOOK LIKE.



THE STORE ON THE LEFT IS THE OLD  
CLOTHING STORE.  
THE STORE ON THE RIGHT WAS THE  
GROCERY STORE WHERE WE TRADED.



A TYPICAL GAS STATION OF THE DAY



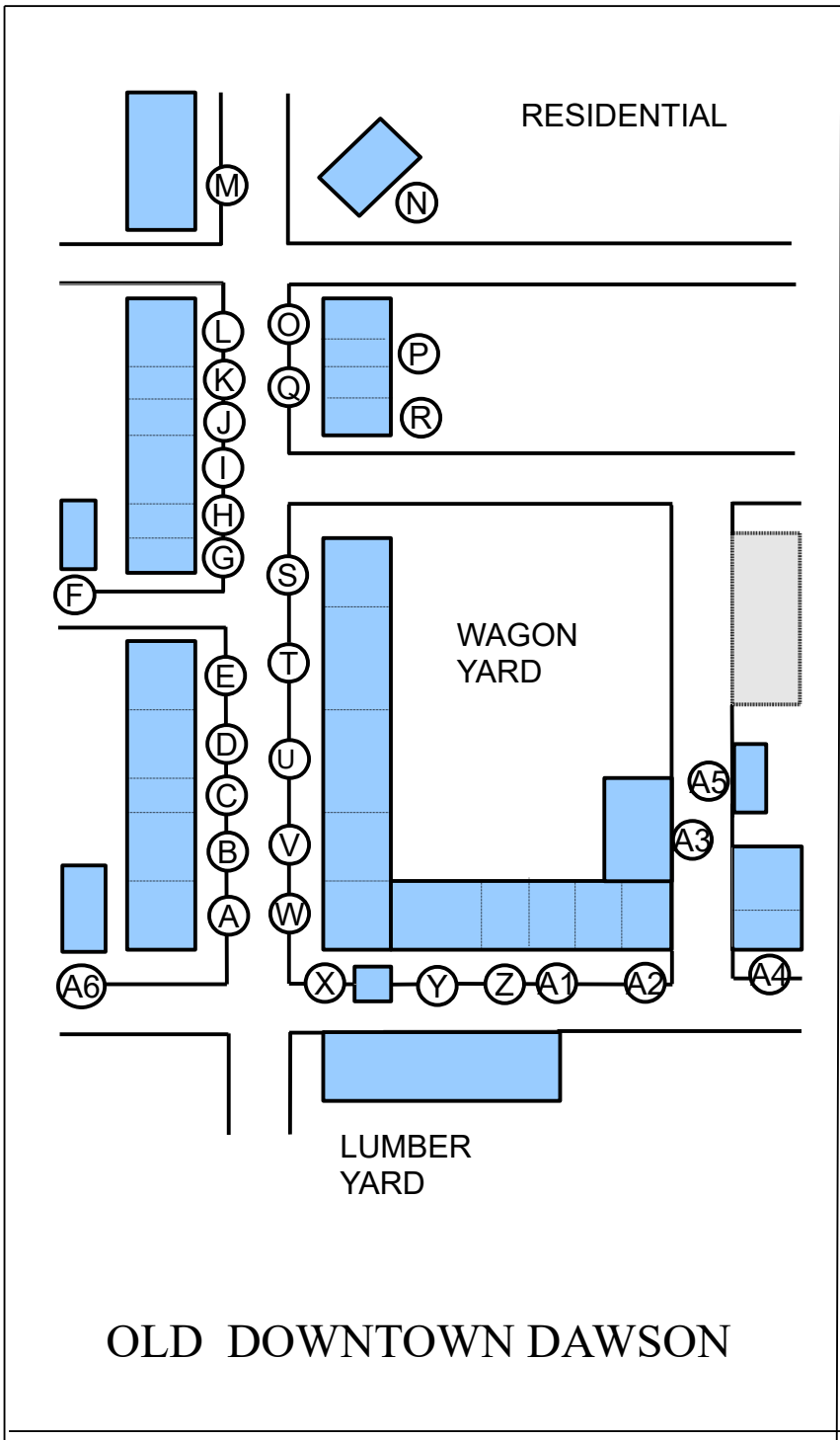
ANOTHER 100 YEAR OLD HOME



THE EAST SIDE OF DAWSON TODAY  
FACING NORTH

## OLD DOWNTOWN DAWSON LEGEND

- A " BEASLEYS " CLOTHING STORE
- B " GARNER & SIMS " GROCERIES.
- C " FRANK TICKEL " BARBER SHOP
- D "MATHEWS" DRUG STORE
- E U S POST OFFICE
- F CITY JAIL HOUSE
- G "LANCASTER'S BARBER SHOP
- H "HORACE BERRY" HARNESS & SHOES
- I THE "RITZ" PICTURE SHOW
- J "SERVICE CLEANERS" DRY CLEANING
- K "THE SANDWICH SHOP"
- L "DOBBS" FUNERAL HOME
- M OLD GYMNASIUM
- N GAS STATION
- O " E. H. HAGLE " HARDWARE STORE
- P VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT
- Q GROCERY STORE
- R EMPTY BUILDING
- S THE FIRST NATIONAL BANK
- T " HAMPTONS " CLOTHING STORE
- U "LAWLERS" GROCERY STORE
- V GENERAL STORE
- W " IVY " GROCERY STORE
- X " PONDER'S " HAMBURGER PLACE
- Y DOCTOR'S OFFICE
- Z VACANT STORE
- A1 " THE WHITE FRONT " GROCERY STORE
- A2 "THE DAWSON HERALD" NEWSPAPER
- A3 "ROGERS AND ETTER" MECHANICS
- A4 "PRATER AND DAVIS" GAS STATION
- A5 POOL HALL
- A6 "C.M. LOWRIMORE" GAS STATION





## OLD DOWNTOWN DAWSON TODAY







**OLD 100 YEAR PLUS HOUSE  
WHERE OUR MAIL CARRIER,  
CARLOS BERRY LIVED. HE WAS  
THE ONE WE LOOKED FORWARD  
TO COMING DOWN THE ROAD  
EACH DAY.**





MY GRANDMOTHER DILLAHEY AND  
HER HUSBAND



BABE AT HOME WITH MY GRANDMOTHER





Dewey Renfro



Jennie Renfro

## MY MOM AND DAD



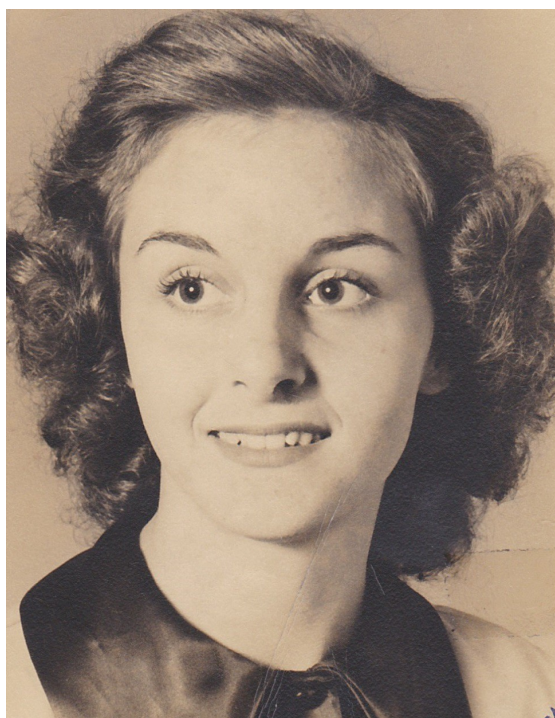
## BABE RENFRO

AT THE HOME OF DEWEY AND  
JENNIE RENFRO IN DAWSON





THELMA AND WILMER POOL  
BABE'S MOM AND DAD



WILMA ( BABE ) POOL, AGE 16



RONDA ON HER HORSE "STARLITE"



DARRYL AT HOME IN OLD RED HOUSE



## THE STORY

I WAS BORN AT A VERY EARLY AGE, TO A FAMILY OF SHARE CROPPERS, IN THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE LITTLE COUNTRY TOWN OF DAWSON, TEXAS. I HAVE TOLD THIS STORY SEVERAL TIMES IN MY PREVIOUS BOOKS, SO I WON'T REPEAT ALL OF THOSE DETAILS AGAIN. WE WERE HOWEVER IN LOWER INCOME BRACKET. BUT WE GOT BY O K. BECAUSE WE DID RAISE OUR OWN MILK, EGGS, AND VEGETABLES. I GUESS THAT WE WERE POOR, BUT AT LEAST I WAS SMALL ENOUGH NOT TO KNOW IT. BESIDES, ALL OF THE OTHER PEOPLE THAT WE KNEW WERE IN THE SAME FIX. IF YOU REMEMBER, THIS STORY STARTS IN 1930, WHEN THE COUNTRY WAS IN THE GREAT DEPRESSION.

WE DID HAVE ONE ADVANTAGE THOUGH, MY DAD AND ONE OF HIS BROTHERS HAD GONE TO ONE OF THE SMALL COUNTRY SCHOOLS WITH THE SONS OF THE LAND OWNER. THIS GAVE DAD A SMALL ADVANTAGE. ALTHOUGH DAD WAS ON ONE OF THE OWNERS FARMS, HE WAS A HARD WORKER, AND WAS SOON MOVED UP TO ONE OF THE LEGGOT FAMILY OWNED FARMS . MY DAD AND HIS BROTHER WERE GIVEN FARMS WITH BETTER LAND, SO WE WERE ABLE TO MAKE BETTER AND LARGER CROPS. IF YOU REMEMBER, ALL THE FARMS IN THE AREA WERE 120 TO 150 ACRES IN SIZE BECAUSE THEY WERE SUB-DIVIDED FROM WHAT HAD BEEN THE LARGER "ELDORADO" RANCH. THE SIZE OF THE FARMS VARIED BECAUSE OF THE LAYOUT OF THE LAND

AND WERE MADE NO LARGER THAN ONE MAN WITH TWO MULES COULD WORK.

WE DID MUCH BETTER IN THIS BETTER FARM, AND SOON DAD WAS GIVEN OTHER FARMS TO WORK, BY THE SAME FAMILY WHO OWNED A BIG NUMBER OF THESE FARMS. IN FACT, THE ONE THAT I REMEMBER BEING THE SECOND FARM I HAD LIVED ON, WAS THE ORIGINAL HOMEPLACE OF THE "LEGGOT" FAMILY. I HAVE MANY TIMES WONDERED HOW MR. LEGGOT MANAGED TO GET ALL OF THESE FARMS. MAYBE THIS WILL BE A STORY OF ANOTHER BOOK.

IF YOU HAVE HAD THE NERVE TO READ SOME OF MY OTHER BOOKS, I TELL THE HARDSHIPS AND THE JOY THAT ONE CAN FIND IN LIVING A SIMPLE LIFE IN THE RURAL AREAS OF THIS GREAT COUNTRY OF OURS. THANK GOD THAT I AM A COUNTRY BOY!

IF YOU REMEMBER THE STORIES THAT I WROTE IN THE OTHER BOOKS THAT I HAVE WRITTEN, AND WHICH YOU DIDN'T READ, THAT MY WIFE AND I GREW UP DOWN A LONG AND DUSTY DIRT ROAD, ABOUT 4 MILES FROM EACH OTHER BUT REALLY DID NOT KNOW EACH OTHER, BECAUSE WE EACH WENT TO A COUNTRY SCHOOL IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION FROM EACH OTHER. BUT IN MOST WAYS OUR LIVES WERE THE SAME GROWING UP. ALTHOUGH OUR FAMILYS KNEW EACH OTHER BECAUSE WE ATTENDED CHURCHES ON THE SAME CORNER OF THE ROAD.

MY FUTURE WIFE, "BABE POOL" AND I WERE IN THE SAME GRADE AND BECAME CLASSMATES WHEN ALL THE COUNTRY SCHOOLS IN THE AREA WERE CLOSED AND ALL WERE MOVED TO THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF DAWSON AT THE TIME WE ENTERED THE 6 TH GRADE. I NEVER HAD EVEN NOTICED HER UNTIL WE WERE IN OUR JUNIOR YEAR OF HIGH SCHOOL, WHEN ONE DAY IN THE ENGLISH CLASS ( SHE ALWAYS SAT IN THE FRONT ROW TO BE CLOSE TO THE TEACHER, WHILE I SAT AT THE BACK WITH THE OTHER BOYS, SO THE TEACHER WOULD NOT CALL ON US AT ALL.

FOR SOME REASON SHE TURNED AND LOOKED DIRECTLY AT ME. NOT KNOWING JUST WHAT TO DO, I WINKED AT HER, AND TO MY SURPRISE SHE WINKED BACK. I MUST HAVE THOUGHT TO MYSELF, "NOW YOU HAVE DONE IT", SO I SENT A NOTE UP THE STUDENT LINE ASKING HER TO GO TO THE PICTURE SHOW THAT SATURDAY NIGHT, AND SHE TURNED BACK AND SHOOK HER HEAD "YES".

WE BOTH FELL IN LOVE ON OUR FIRST DATE, WERE MARRIED ON GRADUATION , HAD THREE CHILDREN, FARMED FOR FIVE YEARS BEFORE WE MOVED TO HOUSTON. WE HAD A MARRIAGE THAT LASTED FOR 70 YEARS, UNTIL HER PASSING IN DECEMBER OF 2018. SHE WAS THE BEST THING TO EVER HAPPEN TO ME, SHE WAS THE LOVE OF MY LIFE. GOD SENT ME THE RIGHT WOMAN AND SHE WILL BE FOR AS LONG AS I LIVE.





WILMA L. ( BABE ) RENFRO

MY WIFE AND I BOTH AGREED THAT THE TIME WE SPENT GROWING UP ON THE FARM AND IN THE SCHOOL DAYS AND OUR REMEMBRANCE OF THOSE LONG GONE DAYS, WERE THE BEST AND HAPPIEST DAYS OF OUR LIVES.

WE WOULD SIT AND TALK ABOUT BEING KIDS LOOKING FORWARD TO GOING TO DAWSON ON A SATURDAY NIGHT TO A TOWN OVERFLOWING WITH OTHERS, LIKE OURSELVES, WHO HAD NOT BEEN THERE SINCE THE LAST SATURDAY. THE FUN OF SEEING FRIENDS THAT YOU HAD KNOWN ALWAYS AND WHO HAD GROWN UP IN THE SAME MANNER AS YOU, OF BEING ABLE TO BUY A COKE OR DR. PEPPER FOR A NICKEL, AND A BURGER FOR A QUARTER. I CAN STILL HEAR ALL THE SOUNDS AS IF IT ALL HAPPENED YESTERDAY.

I REMEMBER THAT YOU COULD GO TO THE FIRST SHOW AND SEE A WESTERN, THEN THE ONE CARTOON, A SERIAL STORY THAT RAN BOOK STYLE, FROM WEEK TO WEEK, THEN THE MAIN SHOW. YOU COULD TAKE A DATE, BOTH HAVE A BAG OF POPCORN, STAY THERE MOST OF THE NIGHT AND ALL FOR LESS THAN A DOLLAR. THOSE WERE THE DAYS !!

I HAD RATHER BEEN THERE IN THOSE DAYS THAN HAVE BEEN IN NEW YORK CITY.

I REMEMBER THE STORES WHERE OUR FAMILIES DID THEIR SHOPPING. IT SEEMS THAT EACH FAMILY HAD THEIR OWN FAVORITE PLACE

TO SHOP. OURS SHOPPED AT THE "BEASLY'  
DRYGOODS

STORE, WHICH HAD MEN AND WOMEN CLOTHING. THE STORE WAS'NT FANCY, BUT ALWAYS CLEAN AND THE OWNERS WERE ALWAYS THERE TO HELP AND HOPE THAT YOU WOULD BUY SOMETHING. BESIDES THAT THE STORE HAD ONE OF THE ONLY INDOOR TOILETS IN TOWN THAT WOULD LET THE LADIES USE EVEN IF THEY WERE NOT THEIR CUSTOMERS. ( THE TOWN HAD NO PUBLIC TOILET AT THIS TIME ). OUR FAMILY ALSO SHOPPED AT THE GROCERY STORE NEXT DOOR, WHICH WAS "GARNER AND SIMS'. THE OWNERS OF THIS WERE CHARACTERS. ONE WAS SMALL AND A LITTLE CHUBBY, AND WHOSE NAME WAS "JIM", THE OTHER WAS TALL AND THIN, AND ALL THE KIDS CALLED THEM "JIM AND SKINNY". THEY HAD THE MOST FUN PLACE FOR ME AND MY BROTHER BECAUSE THEY BOTH LIKED KIDS AND AFTER MUCH TEASING AND SUCH, YOU COULD SOMETIMES FIND YOURSELF THE OWNER OF A SPECIAL PIECE OF PENNY CANDY. THEY ALWAYS KNEW THE KIND WE LIKED BECAUSE WE ALWAYS SHOPPED THERE.

I LOVED THIS STORE MORE THAN THE REST. I WAS ALWAYS ENTRIGUED AT THE WAY EACH TYPE OF FOOD WAS BROUGHT TO THE STORE IN ONE TYPE OF WOODEN BOX OF THE REQUIRED SIZE FOR THE GOODS THEY BROUGHT. I GUESS THAT I LIKED THE APPLE BOXES BEST BECAUSE THEY WOULD SAVE THEM FOR ME SO WHEN I GOT HOME I COULD TAKE THEM APART AND BUILD A WONDERFUL KID TOY OR SOMETHING AS GOOD WITH THEM. I GUESS THAT IS WHERE I GOT MY

LOVE FOR WOODWORKING, WHICH LASTED FOR ALL OF MY LIFE.

THE STORE HAD OPEN SHOW CASES DOWN THE LEFT SIDE OF THE STORE WHERE THERE WERE TWO OR THREE LONG CASES, THE FIRST TWO I HAVE FORGOTTEN WHAT THEY HELD, BUT BOY I REMEMBER THE LAST ONE BECAUSE IT HELD ALL THE CANDY !!. WHEN I WAS THERE I FELT LIKE A LADY IN A DRESS SHOP, I HAD TO LOOK AT EACH AND EVERY ITEM BEFORE I MADE A CHOICE TO BUY. MY CHOICE HAD ALREADY BEEN MADE BEFORE I EVER GOT TO THE STORE, BUT I JUST HAD TO LOOK ANYWAY.

THEN THERE WAS THE BACK WALL WHICH WAS LINED WITH CASES THAT HAD SEE-THROUGH LIDS THAT LIFTED UP TO ALLOW YOU TO GET THE COOKIES OF YOUR CHOICE. OF COURSE THESE CASES WITH LIDS SLANTED DOWN AT AN ANGLE THAT ALLOWED YOU TO SEE ALL THE COOKIES AND OTHER GOODIES WHEN YOU ENTERED THE FRONT DOOR. I AM SURE THAT THIS WAS NOT PLANNED THIS WAY ! ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE STORE WAS THE REFRIGERATED CASE WITH THE MEATS AND OTHER PERISHABLES WHERE YOU COULD FIND A GOOD AND COLD "RC COLA", OR A "COKE A COLA", AN "ORANGE SODA" A "BIG RED" OR THE ONE OF MANY, ALL FOR A DIME. JUST WRITING ABOUT IT MAKES ME WANT TO BE A KID AGAIN.

NEXT DOOR TO THE GROCERY STORE WAS THE BARBER SHOP WHERE I GOT MY HAIR CUT EVERY TWO WEEKS WHETHER I NEEDED IT OR NOT. I REMEMBER MR. TICKEL ALWAYS ASKING " DO

YOU WANT A ONE WEEK OR TWO WEEK CUT ?.

I REMEMBER WHEN THE FLAT TOP CAME INTO STYLE. I TRIED IT ONCE, BUT IT DIDN'T WORK WELL WHEN YOU HAD TO PUT ON A HAT TO GO TO THE FIELDS, SO I WENT BACK TO WHAT WE ALL CALLED THE "WHITE SIDEWALL" CUT.

NEXT DOOR TO THE BARBER SHOP WAS THE DRUGSTORE. THE LEFT SIDE OF THE STORE WAS FILLED WITH SHOW CASES FILLED WITH ALL THE THINGS YOU WOULD NEVER USE. BUT BEFORE THE FIRST CASE, WERE TWO PINBALL MACHINES WHICH ONLY THE BIGER BOYS WERE ALLOWED TO PLAY. I WAS TOO SHORT TO SEE OVER THE TOP ANYWAY. BESIDES I HAD RATHER SPEND MY 5 ct ON CANDY AND SODA WATER. AT ONE TIME THE STORE HAD AN AREA IN THE BACK END WHERE THERE WAS A ROOM WITH TABLES AND A MUSIC MACHINE THAT WAS FOR THE LARGER KIDS TO HANG OUT. THIS ROOM CLOSED OFF BEFORE I WAS BIG ENOUGH TO GO THERE. MAYBE IT HAD BEEN CLOSED BECAUSE THERE HAD BEEN TOO MUCH HANGING OUT THERE.

ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE ROOM WAS THE SODA FOUNTIAN WHICH HAD A SERIES OF STOOLS FOR YOU TO SIT WHILE YOU HAD YOUR DRINK OR ICE CREAM. I MUST SAY THAT THE OWNER HAD COME UP WITH A VERY POPULAR ICED DRINK HE CALLED A "WALKING MALT". A DRINK IN WHICH HE PUT A THICK MALT, OF YOUR CHOICE, INTO A LARGE ICE CREAM CUP THAT YOU COULD BUY AND EAT ON YOUR WAY TO WHERE YOU WERE GOING. WE KIDS ALL



THOUGHT THIS WAS NEAT.

NEXT DOOR TO THE DRUG STORE WAS THE U S POST OFFICE. THIS BUILDING HAD BEEN BUILT AS THE FIRST BANK IN TOWN, BUT HAD BEEN REMODELED AS THE POST OFFICE WHEN THE OLD BANK CLOSED. THE OLD BUILDING HAD BEEN WELL CONSTRUCTED WITH A METAL WALL FOR SUPPORT OF THE GLASS FRONT WALL. THIS METAL SUPPORT EXTENDED ABOUT A FOOT FROM THE WINDOW WALL JUST FAR ENOUGH FOR THE KIDS TO SIT ,TALK, OR EAT THEIR WALKING MALTS. ONE OF THE JOKES AROUND A SMALL TOWN WITH NOT MUCH FOR KIDS TO DO, WAS THAT WE WERE GOING DOWN TO THE POST OFFICE AND WATCH THEM PUT UP THE MAIL.

ONE OF MY FRIENDS DAD WORKED AT THE POST OFFICE AND IN THOSE DAYS YOU COULD BUY A PENNY POST CARD. WE WERE AMAZED AS KIDS TO WATCH HIM SORT OUT THESE FOR PEOPLE BECAUSED NO MATTER HOW MANY CARDS HAD BEEN ORDERED, HE NEVER COUNTED THEM OUT. HE WOULD PICK UP A BUNCH OF MAYBE 50 OR SO AND HE WOULD PUT THEM CLOSER TO HIS EAR AND JUST FLIP FOR A SECOND AND HAND THE CUSTOMER THE GROUP, WHICH ALWAYS HELD THE CORRECT NUMBER OF CARDS. TO A SMALL TOWN BOY, THIS WAS LIKE MAGIC.

NEXT TO THE POST OFFICE, THERE WAS A SMALL ALLEY THAT LED TO THE BACK OF THE STORES, BUT ALSO TO THE TOWN JAIL. AS TOLD IN ANOTHER OF MY BOOKS, YOU KNOW, THE ONE THAT WAS ALWAYS UNLOCKED BECAUSE NO ONE

KNEW WHERE THE KEY WAS, OR IF THERE HAD EVER BEEN ONE. BUT I GUESS THAT IT DIDN'T REALLY MATTER, BECAUSE I HAD NEVER SEEN ANYONE THERE.

THE FIRST STORE ACROSS THE ALLEY WAS THE ONE THAT I THINK I LIKED MOST, NEXT TO THE GROCERY STORE, WAS THE HARNESS AND SHOE REPAIR SHOP. AS YOU ENTERED THE FRONT DOOR, THE TALL WALL ON THE LEFT WAS ALL COVERED WITH UNSOLD MULE HARNESS AND OTHER THINGS THAT WERE USED IN THOSE DAYS TO FOR YOUR FARM ANIMALS. THESE ITEMS COVERED THIS WALL FROM FRONT TO BACK. ALL WERE NOT FILLED, BUT THEY SPOKE TO YOU IN A BYGONE LANGUAGE. MOST OF THE REAR AREA WAS WHERE ALL OF THE UNUSED LEATHER WAS KEPT, AND WHERE THE LARGE WOODEN BOARD LAY WAITING FOR SOMEONE TO NEED A SADDLE, OR SOME HARNESS FIXED. BUT THOSE DAYS WERE FEW AND GETTING FEWER. ON THE RIGHT SIDE WAS A LONG ROW OF LEATHER TYPE REPAIR MACHINES USED FOR REPAIR. AT THE FRONT OF THE RIGHT SIDE, JUST AS YOU CAME IN THE FRONT DOOR, WAS A SMALL AREA WHERE YOU COULD SIT WHILE YOU PULLED OFF YOUR SHOES AND WAITED WHILE THEY WERE FIXED ON THE SPOT.

I LOVED TO GO INTO THIS PLACE, WITH ALL OF THE GREAT LEATHER SMELLS, THE SOUND AND SMELL OF THE DYE AND OTHER THINGS USED TO REPLACE A WORN SHOE SOLE, THE SOUNDS AND ODORS THAT I CAN SMELL TO THIS DAY. THESE

MEMORIES ARE FOREVER STORED IN MY MIND.

NEXT TO THE LEATHER SHOP WAS THE SECOND OF THE TOWN'S TWO BARBER SHOPS. THE OWNER WAS A FRIENDLY ENOUGH MAN, WHO HAD BEEN THERE FOR YEARS, BUT I DIDN'T REALLY KNOW HIM BECAUSE WE TRADED WITH THE OTHER ONE DOWN THE STREET.

NEXT TO THE BARBER SHOP WAS THE RITZ PICTURE SHOW. THIS WAS THE PLACE WHERE YOU AND ALL YOUR FRIENDS MET, OR IF YOU HAD A GIRLFRIEND, SHE WAS THERE TOO. IT WAS THE PLACE WHERE YOU GOT TO SPEND ALL OF SATURDAY NIGHT, IF YOU WISHED. THE ONLY PROBLEM WAS THAT THE LAST PICTURE SHOW WAS NOT OVER UNTILL 12 PM. THEN YOU HAD TO GET HOME AND GET ENOUGH SLEEP TO GET UP IN TIME TO GET DRESSED AND MAKE IT TO THE CHURCH ON TIME. THAT WAS IF YOU WENT TO CHURCH AT ALL. BUT THE PICTURE SHOW WAS THE PLACE TO BE ON A SATURDAY NIGHT. NOT ONLY DID YOU GET ALL THE MOVIES YOU COULD STAND, BUT GOT CHEAP POPCORN, VISITED WITH ALL YOUR FRIENDS, AND IF YOU WERE LUCKY, YOU MIGHT GET TO STEAL A KISS OR TWO.

NEXT TO THE RITZ PICTURE SHOW WAS THE DRY CLEANERS. I NEVER PERSONALLY KNEW THE PEOPLE, BECAUSE THEY HAD MOVED THERE FROM ANOTHER STATE, AND BESIDES MY MOM TOOK CARE OF SEEING THAT WE ALL HAD CLEAN CLOTHES FOR CHURCH. FARMERS DO NOT HAVE MANY THINGS THAT NEED TO GO THERE ANYWAY.

NEXT TO THE DRY CLEANERS WAS " THE SANDWICH SHOP ". THIS WAS THE PLACE TO EAT FOR THE HIGH SCHOOL CROWD, AND WAS OWNED AND RUN BY A COUPLE WHO WERE RELATIVES OF THE PEOPLE NEXT DOOR WHO RAN THE CLEANERS. THEY HAD ALSO MOVED FROM ANOTHER STATE, WHICH I REMEMBER WAS OKLAHOMA. I GUESS THAT THEIR RELATIVES HAD TOLD THEM WHAT A GREAT PLACE DAWSON WAS TO LIVE. THE PLACE WASN'T LARGE, BUT HAD ALL THE THINGS NEEDED TO RUN A PLACE FOR KIDS TO GO FOR LUNCH OR TO JUST MEET WITH YOUR FRIENDS, TAKE YOUR GIRLFRIEND OR JUST HANG OUT.

THE LOUD MUSIC CAME FROM AN OLD JUKE BOX THAT PLAYED ALL THE NEWEST BIG BAND SONGS ALONG WITH A FEW COUNTRY WESTERN SONGS ( REMEMBER THIS WAS A SMALL TOWN THAT HAD THE DUMB COUNTRY FOLKS, AND A GROUP OF SOPHISTICATED CITY FOLKS.) IT WAS ACTUALLY THE ONLY PLACE THAT HAD BOOTHS WHERE MORE THAN A FEW PEOPLE COULD SIT TO EAT OR DRINK. THIS WAS THE FIRST PLACE AROUND TO SERVE THE NEWEST THING TO EAT, CALLED A "CORN DOG ". BOY, YOU JUST HAD TO HAVE ONE OF THESE, THEY WERE GREAT !

THE OLD BUILDING THAT THIS PLACE WAS IN WAS TOO LARGE FOR THE SMALL SANDWICH SHOP, SO THE OWNER HAD BUILT A PARTITION WALL AT THE BACK OF THE SHOP AND BUILT A PLACE FOR HIM AND HIS WIFE AND SMALL SON TO LIVE.

NEXT TO THE SANDWICH SHOP WAS THE OLD FUNERAL HOME. THIS BUILDING STILL STANDS TODAY, AS DOES THE HOME WHERE THE FAMILY LIVED. IT HAS BEEN WELL MAINTAINED AS WELL AS THE GARAGE THAT HOUSED THE FUNERAL LIMOSINE AND WAS LOCATED ON THE REAR OF THE LARGE LOT AND WHICH HAD AN ENTRY TO THE STREET BEHIND THE HOUSE.

NEXT TO THE FUNERAL HOME, RAN A STREET BETWEEN IT AND WHAT A TIME LONG AGO WAS TWO OLD, FALLEN DOWN BUILDINGS WHICH I CAN REMEMBER AS LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER DAWSON. THESE OLD BUILDINGS WERE ONLY WALLS. THE ROOFS HAD FALLEN DOWN YEARS AGO, AND COVERED THE FLOOR AREA. THESE BUILDINGS HAD BEEN IN THIS CONDITION ALL THROUGH MINE AND BABES HIGH SCHOOL DAYS, I KNOW THIS BECAUSE WE PASSED THEM EVERY DAY GOING DOWNTOWN FOR LUNCH. ( ONLY SENIORS AND JUNIORS WERE ALLOWED TO LEAVE SCHOOL AT LUNCH TIME.) THESE OLD BUILDINGS WERE TORN DOWN WHILE WE WERE IN HIGH SCHOOL, AND WERE REPLACED WITH THE FIRST GYMNASIUM THAT THE DAWSON SCHOOLS EVER HAD. I KNOW THIS BECAUSE THE AGRICULTURE CLASS HELPED BUILD IT.

THE TIME WAS JUST AFTER WORLD WAR 2, AND THE GOVERNMENT HAD JUST CLOSED THE AIR TRAINING BASE THAT WAS LOCATED IN WACO AND WERE DONATING THINGS THAT SMALLER SCHOOL DISTRICTS COULD USE, SO DAWSON CHOSE SOME OF THE BARRACKS BUILDINGS.

AND GUESS WHAT? THE AGG CLASS GOT TO SKIP SOME SCHOOL DAYS AND GO TO WACO FOR THE FUN OF TEARING DOWN THESE BUILDINGS AND BRINGING THEM BACK TO BUILD THE NEW GYMNASIUM. I DON'T REMEMBER WHO BUILT THE ACTURAL STRUCTURE, BUT IT WASN'T US. BOBBY LAWRENCE AND HIS OLDER BROTHER INSTALLED THE WOODEN FLOOR ONE SUMMER TO FINISH THE BUILDING, EXCEPT IT NEVER WAS PAINTED FOR MANY YEARS.

THE GYM WAS THE LAST BUILDING ON THAT SIDE OF THE STREET. THE FIRST BUILDING WAS ACROSS THE STREET, AND WAS PROBABLY THE FIRST GAS STATION IN TOWN AND IT IS STILL STANDING AND IS SHOWN IN THE BOOK'S PICTURES. IF ONLY THINGS WERE MADE TO LAST AS THEY WERE THEN.

THE NEXT BUILDING ACROSS FROM THE GAS STATION AND ACROSS THE STREET, WAS THE OLD HARDWARE STORE. I DON'T THINK THE BUILDING WAS USED THIS WAY WHEN IT WAS BUILT, BUT I CAN'T REMEMBER THAT FAR BACK. THIS WAS A LARGE PLACE WITH EVERYTHING THAT WAS TO BE NEEDED IN THOSE DAYS. NOT ONLY WERE THERE TOOLS, PARTS FOR ALL THINGS, PIPE, AND AN AREA WHERE YOU COULD GET ROPE, PAINT, PIPE OF ALL SIZES, AND DOWN THE RIGHT SIDE THE STORE WAS FILLED WITH FURNITURE AND APPLIANCES. BABE AND I REMEMBER BUYING OUR FIRST REFRIGERATOR THERE AFTER WE MARRIED. THIS WAS ANOTHER OF MY FAVORITE PLACES.

NEXT TO THE HARDWARE STORE WAS A TORN DOWN BUILDING AND I CAN'T RECALL WHAT REPLACED IT. NEXT TO THAT WAS A ONE TIME OLD GROCERY STORE THAT WAS LATER REPLACED.

ACROSS AN ALLEYWAY WAS "THE FIRST NATIONAL BANK". THIS WAS THE ONLY BANK IN TOWN, AND WHERE I KEPT OUR MONEY. I COULD BE SEEN THERE AROUND THE FIRST OF EVERY MONTH. I REALLY LIKED THEIR PRODUCT VERY MUCH AND COULD NEVER SEEM TO GET ENOUGH OF IT. THE PEOPLE WERE ALL NICE AND SOME ATTENDED THE SAME CHURCH AS WE DID.

NEXT TO THE BANK WAS ANOTHER CLOTHING STORE. THE STORE WAS LARGE AND CARRIED THE SAME THINGS AS THE ONE WHERE WE TRADED. I REMEMBER THAT ALL THE STORES OF THAT TIME HUNG ALL THE LONG WOMEN ITEMS ALONG THE WALLS, AND THE SHORTER THINGS WERE DISPLAYED ON TABLES LOCATED IN ALL AREAS IN THE CENTER OF THE STORE. I WOULD THINK THAT THIS WAS DONE SO THE CLERKS COULD SEE ACROSS ALL OF THE STORE AND SEE ANYONE WHO MIGHT NEED HELP, OR EVEN TO WATCH FOR SOMEONE WHO MIGHT NOT WANT TO PAY FOR THE ITEMS THEY NEEDED. THE STORE WAS NICE BUT WE SELDEM SHOPPED THERE SINCE WE TRADED ACROSS THE STREET.

NEXT TO THE CLOTHING STORE WAS ANOTHER GROCERY STORE WHICH HAD ALL THE SAME THINGS WE COULD GET AT OUR STORE ACROSS THE STREET. THE ONLY DIFERENCE WAS THAT

THIS STORE HAD A DINING AREA WHERE YOU COULD GET SANDWICHES AND OTHER SMALL EATS AND THEY HAD SIT DOWN STOOLS. ALSO THE LADY THAT RAN THE STORE MADE FRESH COOKED PIES OF ALL SORTS. THEY WERE GREAT. THERE WERE TWO FAMILY MEMBERS, BROTHERS WHO I PLAYED FOOTBALL WITH AND WHO WERE MUCH BETTER THAN I WAS.

NEXT DOOR TO THIS GROCERY STORE WAS AN OLD VACANT STORE THAT REMAINED THAT WAY FOR MANY YEARS UNTIL THE OWNERS OF THE PONDER'S HAMBURGER SHOP HAD TO CLOSE THE STORE WHEN THE STATE PAVED THE STREETS AND REMOVED THE SHOP BECAUSE IT WAS IN THE STREET RIGHT-OF-WAY. THE STORE AS I REMEMBER IT, SEEMED TO SELL SMALL GOODS AND TOYS. I DON'T REMEMBER IF THEY WERE STILL IN BUSINESS OR NOT AT THE TIME WE MOVED.

NEXT TO THIS STORE WAS THE "IVY" GROCERY STORE. MY WIFE AND I TRADED THERE MAYBE BECAUSE THEY HAD GIVEN US OUR FIRST BILL OF GOODS WHEN WE GOT MARRIED, OR IT COULD BE THAT I HAD ATTENDED THE OLD COUNTRY SCHOOL AS DID THEIR CHILDREN. THESE WERE THE DAYS WHEN FROZEN FOODS WERE JUST COMING INTO THE MARKET, BUT IT DIDN'T MEAN MUCH AT THAT TIME BECAUSE MOST OF US DIDN'T HAVE A FREEZER . BUT ONE THING DID CATCH OUR ATTENTION, AND THAT WAS A NEW VANILLA ICE CREAM COVERED WITH A THICK LAYER OF STRAWBERRY FRUIT AND JUICE.



JUST AROUND THE CORNER FROM THIS STORE WAS THE NOW FAMOUS "PONDER'S" HAMBURGER STORE THAT HAD TO BE REMOVED. THIS WAS A SMALL WOODEN STORE THAT FRONTED THE SIDEWALK AND SET IN THE EDGE OF THE STREET. IT WASN'T REALLY IN THE WAY BECAUSE CARS PARKED ALONG THE SIDEWALK THE SAME AS THE STORE AND PROTECTED IT FROM ALL OF THE STREET TRAFFIC. IT WAS JUST TO SEAT ABOUT 4 OR 5 PEOPLE AT A TIME. THE REST OF THE SPACE WAS USED FOR COOKING AND PREP. IT ALSO HAD A WALK-UP WINDOW WITH A ROOF OVER THE SHOP TO THE BUILDING. THEY MADE THE BEST BURGERS I HAVE EVER EATEN, AND THAT HAS BEEN A LOT. THIS WAS ONE OF THE CHOICE EATING PLACES FOR THE SCHOOL STUDENTS OF ANY OF THE PLACES IN TOWN.

THE FIRST ROOM AFTER THE MAIN BUILDING TO THE RIGHT WAS AT ONE TIME A DOCTOR'S OFFICE. THERE WAS A STAIRWAY THAT WENT TO THE SECOND FLOOR JUST TO THE LEFT OF THE DOCTOR AND TO THE RIGHT WAS WHAT WAS MOST OF THE TIME NOT OCCUPIED BUT WAS TAKEN WHEN THE OWNER OF THE BURGER SHOP CLOSED. HE OCCUPIED IT UNTIL HE MOVED HIS NEW BUSINESS TO THE ONE ON MAIN STREET.

NEXT WAS ANOTHER GROCERY STORE. THIS WAS WHERE THE FAMOUS BILLY LAWRENCE WORKED. IT WAS PRETTY MUCH A MAKEOVER OF ALL THE GROCERY STORES EXCEPT THEY DID HAVE A GOOD MEAT MARKET AND MADE GOOD BARBEQUE.

NEXT TO THE GROCERY STORE WAS THE OLD DAWSON HERALD NEWS PAPER. THE BUILDING HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN SOMETHING ELSE, BUT THAT WAS BEFORE MY TIME. THE NEWSPAPER HAD BEEN RUN BY SEVERAL PEOPLE, BUT IT FINALLY CLOSED FOR GOOD AFTER WE MOVED TO HOUSTON, NOT THAT I HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE CLOSING, BUT YOU KNOW HOW THAT SORT OF STUFF STARTS.

ON THE BACK SIDE OF THE NEWSPAPER WAS A LARGER BUILDING THAT HOUSED THE TOWN MECHANICS. THEY WERE GOOD AT THEIR WORK AND BOTH MY DAD AND I USED THEM AT ONE TIME OR OTHER. THEY WERE LIKE THE DOCTORS OF THE DAY AND WOULD GO TO YOUR FARM IF YOU HAD DOWNED EQUIPMENT. THEIR SHOP BURNED TO THE GROUND ONE NIGHT WHILE MY DAD HAD LEFT A JEEP THERE FOR WORK. DAD GAVE ME THE JEEP TO WORK ON FOR SOMTHING TO DO, AS IF I DID'NT HAVE ENOUGH ALREADY. THEY MOVED THEIR SHOP TO ANOTHER SPOT AND CONTINUED TO DO BUSINESS.

ACROSS FROM THE NEWSPAPER WAS A LONG TIME GAS STATION WHICH AT THAT TIME GAVE FULL CAR SERVICE, YOU REMEMBER, WHEN THEY WOULD GAS YOUR CAR BUT ALSO WASH YOUR WINDSHIELD, CHECK YOUR TIRES AND EVEN CLEAN YOUR FLOOR MATS, AND CHECK EVERY THING UNDER YOUR HOOD. THOSE WERE THE THINGS WE ALL HAVE TO NOW DO OURSELVES.

BEHIND THIS GAS STATION WAS, ( DARE I SAY IT? ) THE TOWN POOL HALL. THIS WAS WHERE THE LOWER CLASS OF OUR COSMOPOLITAN TOWN GATHERED.

I ALSO HEARD THAT ONE COULD PLAY DOMINOES THERE AT THIS WRECHED PLACE.

ALMOST DIRECTLY BEHIND THAT LAST MENTIONED PLACE, WAS THE REMAINS OF AN OLD OUTDOOR CHRISTIAN REVIVAL MEETING STRUCTURE. IT HAD WOODEN SIDE WALLS THAT HELD AN OLD ROTTING WOODEN ROOF. I NEVER KNEW WHEN THIS WAS BUILT OR WHO OWNED OR EVER USED THE OLD STUCTURE THAT HAD MANY GOOD PREACHERS OF THE TIME, PREACH THEIR HEARTS OUT TO AN UNCHURCHED PEOPLE. ANOTHER GREAT TRADITION GONE WITH TIME.

JUST ACROSS THE STREET WHICH WAS OLD HIGHWAY 31 AT ONE TIME , AND ACROSS FROM THE HAMBURGER SHOP, WAS THE LUMBER YARD. THIS WAS A VERY LARGE BUILDING, WITH THE FRONT OFFICE ,WHERE YOU ENTERED, FACING THE MAIN STREET. YOU ENTERED THE FRONT, TOLD THE CLERK WHAT YOU NEEDED, HE THEN TOLD YOU WHERE TO DRIVE INSIDE THE YARD TO BE NEAR THE ITEM THAT YOU NEEDED. I CAN REMEMBER THE SOUNDS AND THE SMELL OF THE FRESH LUMBER. TO ME THIS WAS A WONDERFUL PLACE. THE LUMBER YARD FACED THE TOWN STORES ON ONE SIDE, BUT ON THE OTHER SIDE IT WAS NEXT TO THE " COTTON BELT " RAILROAD. THEY HAD A RAMP AND A DECK SO THEY COULD

UNLOAD NEW MERCHANDISE WHEN IT ARRIVED. TO THIS DAY, I STILL LOVE TO GO TO A PLACE WHERE THEY SELL THESE SORT OF THINGS TO BRING BACK ALL THE OLD MEMORIES.

THIS IS THE TOWN THAT MY WIFE "BABE" AND I ALWAYS REMEMBERED AND CHERISHED.

AFTER OUR FIRST DATE IN OUR JUNIOR YEAR OF HIGHSCHOOL, WE WERE IN LOVE AND SHE GAVE IN TO OUR MARRYING AFTER GRADUATION. WE LIVED ON MY DADS FARM, IN THE OLD RED HOUSE ( WHICH WAS PREVIOUSLY OWNED BY THE SMITH FAMILY ). WE SETTLED DOWN TO WORKING ONE OF THE " LEGGOT FAMILY " FARMS, GROWING UP AND RAISING A FAMILY. OUR FIRST CHILD WAS A SON THAT WE NAMED "DARRYL", OUR SECOND CHILD, WAS A GIRL WE NAMED "RONDA". OUR THIRD CHILD WAS A SON WE JOKINGLY CALLED "JIMMY JOHN" BEFORE HE ARRIVED. HE WAS NOT BORN IN DAWSON, BUT AFTER WE HAD MOVED TO THE BIG CITY OF HOUSTON.

WE LIVED AND FARMED IN THE DAWSON AREA FOR THE FIRST 5 YEARS OF OUR MARRIGE. BOTH OF OUR FAMILIES LIVED THERE, SO WE HAD A LARGE SUPPORT GROUP, WHICH WE WERE WITH OFTEN. ALSO MY GRANDMOTHER LIVED THERE AND WAS ALWAYS A PART OF THE FAMILY GET TOGETHERS. I COULD WRITE A BOOK ABOUT THE LOVE AND INFLUENCE THAT SHE HAD ON MY LIFE AND THAT OF OTHERS.

THROUGH THE MAPS AND WRITINGS IN THE BOOK, I HAVE TRIED TO SHOW THOSE WHO DID NOT KNOW US OR OUR FAMILY, JUST WHERE WE BEGAN OUR EFFECT ON THE WORLD. I WILL SAY THERE WERE TIMES WHEN IN THE WORDS OF MY COUNTRY PHILOSOPHER DAD, THAT I WAS "TAKING UP SPACE". BUT WITH THE HELP OF A GREAT WIFE, I MADE IT THROUGH ALMOST 90 YEARS, (AT THE TIME OF THIS WRITING).

WE BOUGHT OUR OWN TRACTOR, TRAILER AND MY BROTHER AND I BUILT A NEW, TWO COTTON BALE TRAILER. BOUGHT SOME COWS TO OWN, AND RAISED SOME CHICKENS WHO SUPPLIED US WITH ENOUGH EGGS FOR OUR FAMILY, AND ENOUGH EXTRA, TO TAKE EACH SATURDAY TO A GROCERY STORE IN CORSICANA AND SOLD THEM FOR ENOUGH TO PAY FOR OUR WEEKLY GROCERIES.

WE BOTH WORKED HARD AT TRYING TO SHOW THOSE THAT SAID WE WOULD NEVER MAKE IT IN AN ADULT WORLD, IN WHICH A LOT HADN'T MADE IT.

WE, LIKE MOST COUNTRY FARMERS, WORKED ALL WEEK, BUT WE CLEANED UP TO GO TO TOWN ON SATURDAY TO DO SOME MORE SHOPPING, VISIT WITH FRIENDS AND OF COURSE GO TO THE PICTURE SHOW.





## IT MUST BE SATURDAY !

WE ALL GOT OUR TURN AT THE FAMILY BATH TUB, WHICH SERVED AS THE WASHER AND THE DRYER DURING THE WEEKLY WASH DAY. THE TUB WAS USUALLY PUT INTO THE KITCHEN, OR CLOSE BY, BECAUSE WE DID NOT HAVE ANY WAY TO HEAT THE WATER EXCEPT ON THE ONE STOVE IN THE KITCHEN. YOU GUESSED IT, WE DID NOT HAVE A WASHER, DRYER, WATER HEATER OR RUNNING WATER IN THE HOUSE. WE ONLY HAD RUNNING WATER IF YOU RAN AND GOT IT. OUR SOURCE OF DRINKING WATER WAS THE CISTERN AT THE END OF THE BACK PORCH WHICH WAS FILLED WITH FRESH WATER ONLY WHEN IT WOULD RAIN. WATER FILLED THE CISTERN BY DOWNSPOUTS WHICH CAUGHT THE RAIN WATER FROM THE ROOF.

DAWSON WAS A LIVELY TOWN AT THIS TIME WITH ALL THE STREETS CROWDED WITH EVERY ONE MOVING UP AND DOWN THE STREETS, EACH DOING THEIR OWN THING, EVERYONE LAUGHING AND TALKING. YOU HAD TO WATCH WHERE YOU WERE AT ALL TIMES, OR YOU WOULD GET RUN OVER. THE STORES WERE ALL FULL OF SHOPPERS AND THE SIDEWALKS WERE ALL FULL OF PEOPLE.

THIS WAS GREAT FUN FOR THOSE WHO HAD BEEN ON THE FARM ALL WEEK LONG.

ALL THE FUN DID NOT HAPPEN IN TOWN. MY WIFE AND I HAD THOUGHT FOR SOME TIME OUR NUMBER OF CHICKENS WERE GETTING SMALLER AND SMALLER, SO ONE SATURDAY NIGHT WE STAYED HOME, TURNED OFF ALL THE HOUSE LIGHTS AND WAITED INSIDE THE DARK HOUSE. SOON, A CAR CAME SLOWLY DOWN THE ROAD AND STOPPED JUST PAST OUR HOUSE AND TURNED OFF THE LIGHTS. THE CAR DOOR OPENED AND A MAN STARTED WALKING BACK TOWARDS OUR HOUSE. HE CAME AROUND THE HOUSE, DOWN THE DRIVE WAY TOWARDS THE BACK DOOR, AND TOWARDS THE CHICKEN HOUSE. THIS WAS WHAT WE THOUGHT HAD BEEN HAPPENING TO OUR CHICKENS. BUT, THIS TIME WE WERE READY. I HAD BEEN STANDING ON THE BACK PORCH, IN THE DARK, WITH MY RIFLE. THE VISITOR HAD A SHOCK WHEN I TURNED ON THE BACK YARD LIGHTS AND ASKED HIM IF THERE WAS SOMTHING THAT I COULD DO FOR HIM ? HE SAID THAT HIS CAR HAD STOPPED RUNNING AND HE WANTED TO SEE IF ANYONE

WAS AT HOME. I TOLD HIM THAT I THOUGHT THAT I REMEMBERED THAT HE HAD HAD THE SAME PROBLEM, AT THE SAME LOCATION THE LAST SATURDAY. AT THIS POINT HE TURNED AND RAN BACK TOWARDS HIS OLD CAR, WHICH FOR SOME UNKNOWN REASON HAD SUDDENLY COME BACK TO LIFE, STARTED RUNNING GOOD AND THE LIGHTS AUTOMATICALLY CAME BACK ON EVEN BEFORE HE REACHED IT. HE SPED OFF INTO THE DARKNESS, NEVER TO BE SEEN AGAIN. IS'NT IT A MIRACLE WHAT A LITTLE LIGHT AND A GUN CAN DO TO ONE'S IDEAS? NEEDLESS TO SAY THIS WAS THE LAST TIME WE HAD THIS PROBLEM.

ONE OF THE THINGS I REMEMBER, WAS THAT I HAD ALWAYS HATED TO HELP MY MOTHER HOE AND DO THE GARDEN WORK, BUT IT DID NOT SEEM TO BE THE SAME BURDEN WORKING WITH MY OWN WIFE, IT ACTUALLY HAD BECOME FUN.

I'VE MENTIONED BEFORE, THERE IS A LOT OF DOWN TIME, OR TIMES THAT YOU ARE WAITING ON THE CROPS TO GROW OR SOMETHING ELSE, SO, AS A WAY TO FILL THIS LOST TIME, I WOULD TAKE A CORRESPONDENCE COURSE IN RADIO AND TV REPAIR, WHICH I DID. I ACTUALLY COMPLETED THE COURSE, AND BECAME THE ONE YOU CALLED WHEN YOUR RADIO DID'NT WORK. TV WAS JUST COMING INTO THE MARKET AT A PRICE FARMERS COULD AFFORD. I LOVED THIS TYPE OF WORK, AND LEARNED MANY THINGS I HAD NOT KNOWN, ABOUT ELECTRICITY AND SUCH, BUT IN A SMALL TOWN LIKE THAT IN WHICH WE LIVED, I SOON DISCOVERED THAT



WHEN YOU HAD FILLED EVERYONE'S RADIO AND TV NEEDS, THERE WAS STILL TIME WHEN YOU HAD NOTHING TO DO, SO I WAS BACK WHERE I HAD STARTED.

TO HELP FILL THIS TIME GAP, SOME OF MY FRIENDS SUGGESTED THAT WE TAKE ADVANTAGE OF AN UNUSED ROPING PEN, AND FORM OUR OWN ROPING CLUB. THIS SOUNDED GREAT BECAUSE I HAD GROWN UP ON HORSES AS HAD MOST OF THE OTHERS.

WE ALL WENT OUT AND GOT OUR OWN HORSES, SADDLES, AND ALL THE OTHER THINGS A REAL COWBOY NEEDED. AFTER ALL, WE HAD WATCHED OTHERS DO IT EVERY SATURDAY NIGHT. OUR CLUB ENDED WITH ABOUT 10 MEMBERS WHO ON A CHOSEN DAY EACH WEEKEND, WOULD MEET AND PLAY COWBOY. I HAD A GREAT HORSE THAT I PRACTICED ON EACH WEEK AND SHE BECAME THE BEST ROPING HORSE IN THE CLUB. THIS WAS GOOD CLEAN FUN THAT THE FAMILIES COULD COME AND WATCH. THE WIVES WOULD DRIVE TO A SPOT OUTSIDE THE ARENA WALLS AND SIT IN CARS WITH THE KIDS TO WATCH THEIR FAVORITE COWBOY SHOW OFF.

ONE OF THE CLUB MEMBERS RAN INTO A GUY WHO WAS A LITTLE OLDER THAN WE WERE AT MEXIA, TEXAS ONE DAY, AND INVITED HIM TO COME ROPE WITH US SOMETIME. HE DID SHOW UP ONE WEEKEND, AND TO OUR SURPRISE, HE HAD AT A TIME IN HIS YOUNGER YEARS, BEEN A WORLD CHAMPION CALF ROPER.

ALL WENT WELL WITH THE CLUB AND WE ALL HAD FUN, UNTIL THE DAY THAT I RODE MY HORSE DOWN TO THE PASTURE TO CHECK THE COWS, AND ON THE WAY BACK TO THE BARN, STOPPED AT THE TANK TO LET HER GET SOME WATER. IN HER RUSH TO DRINK, SHE HAD GONE TOO FAR INTO THE TANK AND GOTTEN HERSELF IN THE DEEP MUD THAT COVERED THE BOTTOM. SHE DID'NT REALIZE THIS UNTIL SHE HAD DRUNK AND TRIED TO BACK OUT TO THE SHORE. SHE WAS STUCK AND COULD NOT BACK OUT OF THE WATER. THERE WAS NOTHING I COULD DO BUT THROW THE REINS TO HER, KICK HER ON THE REAR AND WATCH HER JUMP INTO THE TANK AND GO UNDERWATER WITH MY BRAND NEW SADDLE. WELL, SHE SWAM TO THE OTHER SIDE TO A SPOT WHERE SHE COULD GET OUT OF THE WATER. SHE WAS FINE, BUT IT TOOK A WEEK FOR MY GREAT NEW SADDLE TO DRY OUT.

SHORTLY AFTER THAT SHE PULLED A HIP OUT OF SOCKET AND HAD TO BE PUT OUT TO PASTURE. AFTER BUYING ANOTHER HORSE WHICH DID NOT WORK OUT AS A ROPER, I LEFT THE CLUB, AND IT CLOSED SHORTLY AFTER. THOSE WERE MY LAST DAYS AS A COWBOY.

AFTER A WHILE, I BEGAN TO HAVE PAINS IN MY BACK, WHEN I DROVE A TRACTOR. THIS TIME MY TV TRAINING FINALLY PAID OFF. MY WIFE'S DAD HAD PASSED AWAY IN THE MEANTIME AND HER FAMILY, EXCEPT ONE SISTER, HAD MOVED TO HOUSTON. ON A VISIT THERE, I HAD FOUND A JOB IN THAT TYPE OF WORK, SO WE MOVED.

WHILE WE WERE STILL IN OUR HIGH SCHOOL YEARS, THE STATE HAD BEGUN A RE-ROUTE OF THE OLD HIGHWAY 31, WHICH HAD ALWAYS RUN THROUGH THE TOWN, AND RE-ROUTED IT AROUND MOST OF OUR TOWN. IT TOOK ABOUT 3 YEARS TO COMPLETE THIS PROJECT, BUT IT BEGAN TO HAVE NOTICEABLE EFFECTS ON THE BUSINESSES THAT WE HAD LEFT.

WITH THIS NEW HIGHWAY OPENED, THE ROAD TRAFFIC NO LONGER STOPPED IN OUR SMALL TOWN AND JUST KEPT ON GOING. THIS NEW ROAD RAN FROM CORSICANA TO WACO AND WAS THE DEATH KNEEL FOR ALL THE SMALL TOWNS ALONG THE ROUTE . PEOPLE NOW HAD A QUICK SHOT TO GO TO WORK IN THE BIGGER TOWNS, EVEN AS FAR AWAY AS DALLAS. THE STORES NOW BEGAN TO CLOSE AND SOON THERE WAS ONLY THE BANK, THE POST OFFICE AND A FEW OF THE HARD HEADS THAT TRIED TO HOLD ON AS LONG AS THEY COULD.

THEN THE RAILROAD, WHICH ONLY RAN FROM CORSICANA TO WACO, STOPPED HAVING ANY GOODS TO CARRY, CLOSED AND EVEN REMOVED THE TRACKS, THE DEPOT AND REMOVED ANY AND ALL SIGNS THAT THEY EVER EXISTED.

THE REMOVAL OF THE HIGHWAY THROUGH THE LITTLE TOWN WAS THE LAST NAIL IN THE COFFIN. THE RESIDENTIAL AREA IS STILL FILLED WITH NEW PEOPLE WHO MOVED FROM THE BIG CITIES IN THE HOPE OF LOWER COSTS OF LIVING, AND HAVE KEPT THE PLACE ALIVE.



WE HAD FIRST DATED WHEN SHE WAS ONLY 16 YEARS OLD, FELL IN LOVE, GOT MARRIED AND RAISED A FAMILY AND FARMED FOR 5 YEARS. IT WAS ONE OF THE HAPPIEST TIMES OF OUR LIVES.

WE MISSED THE TIMES WITH GOOD FRIENDS, WHO YOU COULD CALL ON FOR ANYTHING, THE SCHOOL DAY TOGETHER, OUR CHURCHES AND FAMILY. WE ALSO HAD GROWN UP TOGETHER, IN EACH A DIFFERENT WAY IN A DIFFERENT COUNTRY LOCATION WITHOUT REALLY KNOWING THAT EACH OTHER EXISTED, UNTIL GOD MADE THE TIME THAT WE WOULD SUDDENLY MEET AND FINISH GROWING UP TOGETHER, FOR 70 YEARS. IT LASTED SO LONG, BUT IT ENDED TOO SOON!



BILL AND BABE RENFRO



## **Should You Go First**

Should you go first and I remain  
to walk the road alone,  
I'll live in memory's garden dear,  
with happy days we've known.

In spring I'll wait for roses red,  
when faded, the lilacs blue.  
In early fall when brown leaves fall,  
I'll catch a glimpse of you.

Should you go first and I remain,  
for battle to be fought.  
Each thing you've touched along the way  
will be a hallowed spot.

I'll hear your voice, I'll see your smile,  
though blindly I may grope,  
The memory of your helping hand  
will buoy me on with hope.

Should you go first and I remain,  
one thing I'll have you do:  
Walk slowly down that long long path,  
for soon I'll follow you.

I want to know each step you take,  
so I may take the same.  
For someday down that lonely road  
you'll hear me call your name.

~by Albert Kennedy "Rosey" Rowswell~





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I WISH TO THANK THE FOLLOWING,  
WITHOUT WHOSE HELP I WOULD NOT  
HAVE COMPLETED THIS BOOK.

DARRYL RENFRO

JOYCE SHAW

MY PRINTER

THE LORD FOR REFRESHING MY MIND

TO THOSE WHO STILL TELL ME THAT  
THESE AMATEUR BOOKS THAT I HAVE  
CONTINUED TO WRITE, ARE GOOD,  
WHEN I KNOW BETTER, I THANK YOU  
ANYWAY.



