

Terrell County Memorial

February, 2011
Sanderson, Texas

Museum News

The Ransom of White Man

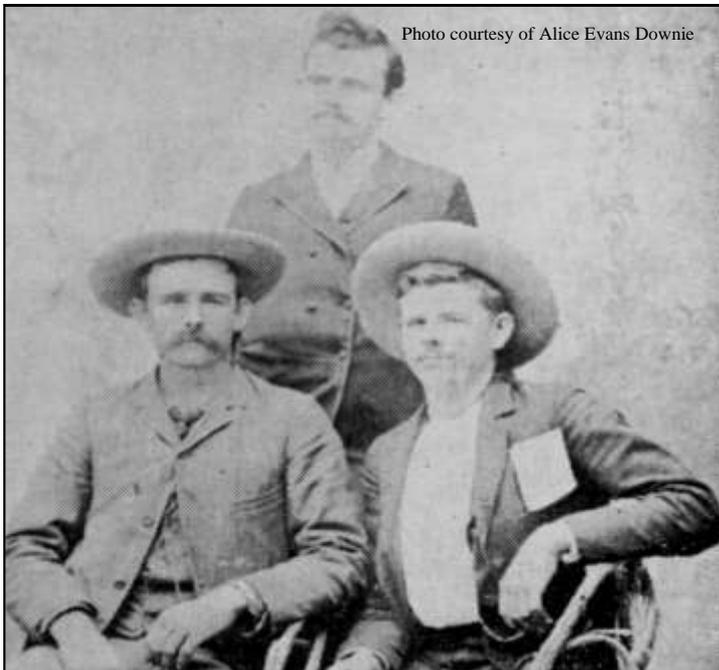


Photo courtesy of Alice Evans Downie

FENLEY BROTHERS - *George Finley, first sheriff of Terrell County and Jim Fenley, rancher and subject of our tale, seated, with brother G.B., later a county judge in Uvalde County, shown in a family portrait. Not pictured is the fourth and youngest, Guy, who was known as the "boy with x-ray eyes." Water witch deluxe, he claimed he could "see" the water under the ground. BTAT**

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Once the story of White Man and the brave defense of his master, Jim Fenley, got out, he became legendary all over

the Trans Pecos and northern Mexico. Everyone wished that they owned such a brave horse! But...that became a problem. Some men were not concerned that the horse belonged to Fenley, and they were determined that they would possess the horse brave enough to fight a bear, by any means.

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The June 23, 1923, *Sanderson Times* reported that a 2-week revival at the Methodist Church had come to a very successful end. The Reverend Vanderpool from El Paso was a very forceful and entertaining speaker. He had special sermons for the Masons and the Odd Fellows, local fraternal groups, and closed the week with an apparently not-too-complimentary sermon on the Ku Klux Klan. At the close of his stay he received an honorarium envelope containing \$25.00 in cash and a note wishing him well and Godspeed to his next destination...signed by the Ku Klux Klan!

Ransom

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Young Pancha, Fenley's shepherdess, became alarmed that someone might steal the boss's horse, so she took White Man and turned him loose with a

herd of wild horses for safe keeping. But the determined horse thieves knew just how to get to Pancha. Shortly before the bear attack, Pedro Fuentes, a young man working for Fenley on the ranch, became sweethearts with Pancha.

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He, Pancha and Fenley were the only ones that White Man would allow to touch him, and Pedro very often borrowed White Man to go courting with Pancha.

Pedro decided to go to work for Cruz Mancha's shearing crew at Dryden and left Fenley's employ, but the romance kept up.

After the bear attack Fenley took his family and went back to his parent's ranch at Uvalde to recuperate. When he was well they returned to their ranch on the banks of the Rio Grande, but to his dismay, not only White Man was missing but also a large group of horses. He sent word to the Rangers, and his brother, George, Terrell County sheriff, and a friend, Johnny Burris, manager of the D. Hart spread, came to investigate.

When they found Pancha she told them a disturbing story. One night at the shearing camp some Mexican riders came up, kidnapped Pedro and took him back across the river. And of course the ransom was White Man!

Pancha was at her wit's end, wanting to have her beloved back, but not willing to give White Man to the kidnapers.

However, the Fenley boys and the Texas Rangers knew just what to do. They had Pancha retrieve White Man from the wild horse band and arranged a meeting with the kidnapers. The end result was that Pancha got her man back, White Man got his master back,



References

Terrell County, Its Past, Its People, Alice Evans Downie, 1978. Terrell County Heritage Commission, PO Box 417, Sanderson, Texas 79848

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Photo courtesy of TC Museum

VERY ELEGANT - This photo represents the Sanderson High School Choral Club of 1937-38. Seated at the piano is Miss Taylor, the director and accompanist. In this time choral groups of both boys and girls were well attended and attained a high level of competence. And obviously they knew how to stage their performances. These same young women and men also participated in band, which not only played for football games and local concerts, it was also invited to area parades and public venues. The first organized music program in the schools began very early in the 20th Century, almost with the beginning of the school system. Local music teachers as well had vocal and instrumental concerts and recitals with dozens of participants. Music education with public performance was highly valued and very much a part of the social fabric of Sanderson, with concerts being very well attended by the public. All of the community, not just parents, were very



Photo courtesy of TC Museum

SANDERSON HIGH SCHOOL GLEE CLUB OF 1937-38 ~ Miss Sammy Johnson at piano. L. to R. Johnny Glenn, John Fisher Charlton, Troy Druse, Jimmy Goodykuntz, Allen Hardgrave, Hicks Canon, Wilburn Short, Bert Herbert, and Prince Dishman, Jr. ¡Muy suave!

Museum Report

Visitation in January slowed down to 14 from December's high of 24, but the first two weeks were extremely cold at the Lemons Homestead and I'm sure the weather scared people away. Also, Mrs. Hutto reports that travel on Hwy 90 is down, typical for January.

We had some nice donations of Cinco de Mayo posters and a railroad desk organizer and SP documents from Cliff McSparran and Jack Martin.

I have been busy adding web exhibits to our web site and moving delicate documents out of display cases and into acid-free folders for better protection and to make them more accessible.

We have also begun a Donna Smith Collection for photos her daughter,

Tomi Harrell is bringing in for scanning. The images are historic and very valuable to the museum for research purposes.

Also, Kenn Norris donated some items to the museum, including some interesting early Sanderson postcards and a pair of railroad detective hand-cuffs.

A hearty thanks to all our contributors and museum supporters!

Finally, the January News was well received, and as a result I will be placing future copies in local businesses. It seems people love horse tales and the story of White Man hit a resonant note with many of our local folks.



Ransom

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and the bandidos...? Well, let's just say they had a most unfortunate meeting with the Texas Rangers and Sheriff Fenley.

Pedro and Pancha soon became man and wife, celebrating their marriage with the traditional 3-day fiesta. For her trousseau, Pancha had a white silk wedding dress and veil for the first day, a blue silk dress for the second day and a pink silk dress for the final day of fiesta.

As for Pedro, he was decked out in a velvet suit, and his prospective father-in-law, Juan, killed four calves for the wedding *barbacoa*! And they were needed because a huge crowd from the surrounding area came '*a comer, beber y bailar,*' and to wish the new couple well.

A few years later, sadly, Jim's wife passed away and he sold out and moved back to Uvalde for his parents' help in raising his two, young girls. White Man went with them and lived a long and happy life on the Fenley Ranch.

But tragedy struck again in 1913 when Fenley was murdered in a shooting incident at the old Roberts Grocery Store in Uvalde.