



Control Number: 38517



Item Number: 337

Addendum StartPage: 0

SOAH DOCKET NO. 473-10-5923
PUC DOCKET NO. 38517

APPLICATION OF ONCOR ELECTRIC § BEFORE THE STATE OFFICE
DELIVERY COMPANY, LLC TO AMEND §
ITS CERTIFICATE OF CONVENIENCE §
AND NECESSITY FOR THE CLEAR §
CROSSING TO WILLOW CREEK CREZ §
345-KV TRANSMISSION LINE IN § OF
HASKELL, JONES, THROCKMORTON, §
SHACKELFORD, YOUNG, STEPHENS, §
JACK, PALO PINTO, WISE AND §
PARKER COUNTIES § ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS

RECEIVED
OCT 15 AM 11:22
PUC
FILING CLERK

DIRECT TESTIMONY

OF

JAMES ROBERT GREEN, JR.

ON BEHALF OF

GREEN RANCHES LIMITED PARTNERSHIP

October 15, 2010

1 **Q. PLEASE STATE YOUR NAME AND BUSINESS ADDRESS.**

2 A. My name is James Robert Green, Jr. My business address is 500 W. Seventh, Unit
3 #27, Fort Worth, Texas 76430.

4 All of the information set forth in my testimony is true and correct and within my
5 personal knowledge. I was raised on the Green Ranch outside of Albany, Texas,
6 which would be impacted by Link A5 and potentially Link Z4. I now run the
7 Ranch, and I have been actively involved in its management and operations since I
8 was a young boy. I have personal knowledge of the community values applicable
9 to Shackelford and Stephens Counties, Texas, generally, in addition to my
10 personal knowledge specifically applicable to our property.

11 **Q. WHAT IS YOUR EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND?**

12 A. I graduated from Southern Methodist University and received a law degree from
13 the University of Texas in 1975.

14 **Q. WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT OCCUPATION?**

15 A. I am employed by a private oil and gas and real estate development company in
16 Fort Worth. I also run my family's ranching interests located in Shackelford and
17 Stephens Counties, Texas.

18 **Q. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN INVOLVED WITH YOUR FAMILY'S**
19 **RANCHING INTERESTS?**

20 A. I have been involved with my family's ranching interests since I was old enough
21 to work. I was raised on the Green Home Ranch northeast of Albany, Texas and

DIRECT TESTIMONY OF JAMES ROBERT GREEN, JR.
SOAH DOCKET NO. 473-10-5923
PUC DOCKET NO. 38517

1 attended Albany public schools. In my early years, my father, James R. "Bob"
2 Green, was in a ranching partnership with his older brother, my uncle, W.H. "Bill"
3 Green Jr. The Green brothers operated a number of ranches in the Albany area
4 and the Texas Panhandle, until they dissolved their partnership in 1976. After the
5 dissolution of the partnership in 1976, I assisted my father in running our ranch
6 properties until his death in December, 2009, at which time I assumed
7 management of our ranching operations.

8 **Q. ARE THE OWNERS OF GREEN RANCHES LIMITED PARTNERSHIP**
9 **ALL FAMILY MEMBERS?**

10 A. Yes, all of the partners of the limited partnership are direct descendants of James
11 R. "Bob" Green.

12 **Q. PLEASE DESCRIBE THE HISTORY AND BACKGROUND OF THE**
13 **GREEN FAMILY RANCHES.**

14 The Green Family Ranches, of which the Green Ranches Limited Partnership is a
15 part, were all started by William Henry Green in the late 19th Century. William
16 Henry Green was my grandfather.

17 William Henry Green was born in Hill County, Texas in 1868. His father,
18 Thomas Henry Green, raised and sold horses. William Henry Green graduated
19 from Trinity College (now Trinity University) in 1885. Shortly after he graduated,
20 in 1885, William Henry Green's father sent him to Shackelford County to round up
21 a semi-wild horse herd and sell them. William Henry Green was struck by the

DIRECT TESTIMONY OF JAMES ROBERT GREEN, JR.
SOAH DOCKET NO. 473-10-5923
PUC DOCKET NO. 38517

1 pastureland around Hubbard Creek in Shackelford County and decided to stay. He
2 lived in a wagon by the creek, and he built a set of pens himself. He used the pens
3 to break thirty head of young gelding horses, which he then sold. This was the
4 beginning of the Ranch.

5 William Henry Green lived in that wagon for several years, until he finally built a
6 house. The site of that wagon camp, and the original site of that house, is now
7 under Hubbard Creek Reservoir. However, the house was moved when the lake
8 was built, and it is now on the Green Home Ranch, which is the property affected
9 by this case. That original Green home now sits on the edge of Hubbard Creek
10 Reservoir, and in the family we call it the Green/Musselman Lake House.

11 William Henry Green built his ranch, by himself, until 1917, when at the age of
12 fifty he married my grandmother, Willie Weaver. My grandmother was at that
13 time the principal of the Breckenridge, Texas school system, having graduated
14 from college herself in 1906.

15 Willie Weaver Green moved into the house on the ranch by Hubbard Creek (the
16 Lake House), and she and my grandfather had four children, adding on to the
17 house continuously as they did. By the time he died in 1950, William Henry
18 Green, through hard work and personal sacrifice, had assembled a significant set
19 of cattle ranches, known collectively as the Green Family Ranches. The
20 descendants of their four children now each own and operate pieces of these
21 ranches, but the entire operation has been run in more or less the same fashion by

DIRECT TESTIMONY OF JAMES ROBERT GREEN, JR.
SOAH DOCKET NO. 473-10-5923
PUC DOCKET NO. 38517

1 the same family since 1885. The specific piece of property at issue in this case,
2 however, is the remnant of the original William Henry Green Home Ranch, where
3 he lived in the wagon, built his house, and raised his four children. I say remnant
4 because, again, a part of that original ranch is now underneath the Hubbard Creek
5 Reservoir.

6 The Green Ranches Limited Partnership, and its General Partner, J.R. Green
7 Ranch Company LLC, are wholly owned by the descendants of Bob Green, one of
8 William Henry Green's children, and it operates the ranches that Bob Green owned
9 and operated at the time of his death, in late 2009.

10 **Q. WHO WAS BOB GREEN?**

11 A. Bob Green was the fourth child of William H. and Willie W. Green. He was born
12 in 1924 on the Green Home Ranch northeast of Albany, in the Lake House that his
13 father had built. He died on December 22, 2009, on that same ranch, in the house
14 where he and his wife (my mother) moved shortly after World War II. He was a
15 lifelong rancher. He was also a cowboy, decorated war veteran, historian, author,
16 musician, and family man. He lived on the ranch his entire life and was a pillar of
17 the community of Albany, Texas. He served on the board of the First National
18 Bank of Albany for decades. He narrated the Albany Fandangle, a historical
19 outdoor production conducted annually by the citizens of Albany, for decades. He
20 was on the historical lecture circuit, and, along with Watt Matthews, conducted
21 innumerable tours for groups interested in the history of the area.

1 Bob Green wrote the book, Okinawa Odyssey, relating his experiences in WWII in
2 the Pacific Theater. The book also recites the history of the Green Family
3 Ranches. He was a dedicated protector of the land, and he received awards for
4 land stewardship and conservation too numerous to mention. Okinawa Odyssey is
5 the story of my father's experience as a Shackelford/Stephens County cowboy who
6 left home, really, for the first time, to travel to the Pacific Theatre and fight in the
7 battles of the Philippines and Okinawa. It is a book about World War II, but it is
8 also a book about the community values of Shackelford and Stephens Counties,
9 Texas.

10 **Q. DID BOB GREEN RECEIVE ANY RANCHING OR BUSINESS AWARDS,**
11 **IN ADDITION TO THE CONSERVATION AWARDS NOTED ABOVE?**

12 A. Yes. He received many ranching and business awards. In 2006, Bob Green
13 received the Foy Procter Memorial Cowman Award, selected by the board of the
14 Hailey Library and History Center in Midland. In 2007, he accepted the Charles
15 Goodnight Award on behalf of the Green Family Ranches. The Goodnight Award
16 recognizes individuals, families and ranches that have remained faithful to
17 ranching traditions and the Western way of life. In 1998, Bob Green received the
18 Spanish Gourd Award, sponsored by the Albany Chamber of Commerce. He also
19 received the Cornerstone Award from the Albany Chamber of Commerce. The
20 Spanish Gourd Award acknowledged his contributions to the community's
21 ranching heritage, while the Cornerstone award acknowledged his contributions to

DIRECT TESTIMONY OF JAMES ROBERT GREEN, JR.
SOAH DOCKET NO. 473-10-5923
PUC DOCKET NO. 38517

1 the community's business community. Clearly, Bob Green epitomized the overall
2 community values of the Albany, Texas area, and the statewide values of the
3 ranching and land conservation community.

4 **Q. HAS THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GREEN FAMILY**
5 **RANCHES AND BOB GREEN BEEN ACKNOWLEDGED PUBLICLY,**
6 **OTHER THAN BY THE AWARDS LISTED ABOVE?**

7 A. Yes. Attached to this testimony as Exhibit JRG-A is a true and correct copy of a
8 chapter from the book Historic Ranches of Texas by Lawrence Clayton which sets
9 out the Ranch history. Lawrence Clayton was Dean of the College of Arts and
10 Sciences of Hardin-Simmons University, in Abilene. He published Historic
11 Ranches of Texas in 1993, and the book discusses twelve historic Texas ranches,
12 one of which is the Green Family Ranches. Exhibit JRG-A is a true and accurate
13 depiction of the Green Family Ranches' reputation in the Texas ranching
14 community as to its place the community's history and its importance to the
15 community.

16 Attached as Exhibit JRG-B is a true and correct copy of a chapter from A.C.
17 Greene's book, Chance Encounters, which describes my father, Bob Green, and
18 his stewardship of the land. A.C. Greene was a well-known Texas author and
19 historian who met my father, Bob Green, when he owned a book store in Abilene,
20 back in 1955. A.C. Greene, who is not related to us, is buried out on the Ranch, in
21 the Green Family cemetery. Exhibit JRG-B is a true and accurate depiction of the

DIRECT TESTIMONY OF JAMES ROBERT GREEN, JR.
SOAH DOCKET NO. 473-10-5923
PUC DOCKET NO. 38517

1 Bob Green's reputation in the Texas ranching community as to his place the
2 community's history and his importance to the community.

3 Exhibit JRG-C is a true and correct copy of a December 23, 2009 article from the
4 *Abilene Reporter News* about Bob Green, written at the time of his death. Bob
5 Green was born on the Ranch, he lived on the Ranch his entire life (other than
6 WWII), he died on the Ranch, and he was buried on the Ranch, in the family
7 cemetery. Exhibit JRG-C is a true and accurate depiction of the Bob Green's
8 reputation in the Texas ranching community and the overall community of
9 Albany, Texas, as to his place the community's history and his importance to the
10 community.

11 **Q. WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT YOUR PROPERTY INVOLVED IN**
12 **THIS CASE?**

13 A. Our property, which is potentially affected by link A5, is the historic Green
14 Family Ranches Home Ranch, which was owned by Bob Green and is now owned
15 by Green Ranches Limited Partnership, which is a partnership comprised solely of
16 the heirs of Bob Green. My mother, Nancy Green, still lives on the Ranch, in the
17 historic cowboy home she and Bob moved into shortly after WWII, which was the
18 only home in which they ever lived.

19 The Green Ranch is operated as a cattle ranching and recreational property. The
20 property is pristine ranch wilderness, consisting of many breaks and canyons, as
21 compared to the flatter, rolling hills to our west, where the wind farms begin. It is

DIRECT TESTIMONY OF JAMES ROBERT GREEN, JR.
SOAH DOCKET NO. 473-10-5923
PUC DOCKET NO. 38517

1 on the banks of the Hubbard Creek Reservoir, and, before that, was Hubbard
2 Creek bottomland. Several tributaries to Hubbard Creek occasionally run through
3 the property. Bob Green spent his life improving the land, as his father did before
4 him, and as I will do.

5 The property is also a stellar recreational property. It is well watered, and has the
6 right mix of trees and smaller underbrush, and no cedar. The Green Ranch is also
7 home to a variety of indigenous non-game species, such as snakes and lizards,
8 including the threatened horned lizard or "horned-frogs", as well as a wide array
9 of varmints and predators.

10 **Q. PLEASE DESCRIBE THE VARIOUS STRUCTURES ON THE**
11 **PROPERTY.**

12 **A.** There are several habitable structures on the property:

- 13 1. Bob and Nancy Green home. This is an old rock home that my parents
14 moved into immediately after they married. The original part of the
15 house was an old cowboy's house, and it is more than 100 years old. My
16 mother, Nancy Green, currently lives in the house.
- 17 2. Green/Musselman Lake House. This is the original William Henry Green
18 home, which he built at the end of the 19th century. When Hubbard Creek
19 Reservoir was built, it was moved up on to a hill so it would not be lost to
20 the lake. My father, Bob Green, was born in this house.

1 3. "Buckhorn" house. This is an old cowboy's house that is now used for
2 family members to stay when they visit the ranch. It is frequently
3 occupied.

4 4. Cookshack/Ranch headquarters compound. At the center of the Ranch is a
5 cookshack, where meals are served and which also functions as a ranch
6 office. There is a set of pens there, several barns and shops, and two
7 habitable structures, one of which is permanently occupied by a ranch
8 employee. The Green Ranch airstrip is also located at this compound.

9 5. Hunters' camp. We lease some, but not all, of the Ranch out to hunters.
10 They have constructed a compound of several habitable structures near a
11 stock tank on the Ranch.

12 In addition to these structures, there are also two additional sets of cattle pens and
13 numerous other barns and structures on the Ranch.

14 **Q. OTHER THAN THE HISTORICAL RANCH STRUCTURES, ARE THERE**
15 **ANY OTHER HISTORIC STRUCTURES OR SITES ON THE RANCH?**

16 A. Yes. There are sites of several old dugouts and ruins on the Ranch, where
17 pioneers tried to live on the Ranch but did not make it, even before we arrived in
18 1885. There is a site of a Comanche raid on a pioneer structure and an associated
19 grave. There is also a site of an old one-room pioneer school. During his lifetime,
20 my father, Bob Green, found and collected hundreds of arrowheads on the Ranch,
21 along with other artifacts.

DIRECT TESTIMONY OF JAMES ROBERT GREEN, JR.
SOAH DOCKET NO. 473-10-5923
PUC DOCKET NO. 38517

1 **Q. WHAT PROPOSED ONCOR TRANSMISSION LINE LINKS MAY**
2 **CROSS YOUR PROPERTY?**

3 A. Proposed Link A5 runs along the border of the north side of the Green Family
4 Home Ranch. Proposed Link Z4 would intersect with A5 on our property.

5 **Q. WHY ARE YOU OPPOSED TO HAVING POWER LINES ALONG THE**
6 **BORDER(S) OF YOUR PROPERTY?**

7 A. High voltage transmission lines are the most damaging and intrusive of all
8 landowner easements. They are permanent, dangerous and unsightly. Proposed
9 link A5 would have a major economic impact on the Ranch and its wildlife and
10 recreational value. When one stands under these lines, a low hum can be heard -- I
11 have personally experienced this. I am concerned about the electromagnetic field
12 danger associated with 345 kV transmission lines. I am also concerned about the
13 fire risk associated with electric lines. Our area is subject to periodic droughts,
14 and grass fires are always a concern. Within the last two months one of the
15 distribution lines serving a structure on the Ranch broke and caused a major fire.
16 Finally, I'm sure that the utility will want to completely clear the right of way,
17 then periodically treat it with poisonous chemicals.
18 I am also opposed having a transmission line on our property because of the land
19 fragmentation issue and the potential for the creation of a utility corridor on our
20 property. While Link A5 would parallel a county road along the northern border
21 of our Ranch, that road has been there for years, and the effects of any road-related

DIRECT TESTIMONY OF JAMES ROBERT GREEN, JR.
SOAH DOCKET NO. 473-10-5923
PUC DOCKET NO. 38517

1 fragmentation have long since been mitigated through the passage of time. A new,
2 additional cross-cut easement would re-fragment this land. As there are
3 increasingly few large (i.e. more than 2000 acre), unspoiled ranches in Texas,
4 fragmenting our Ranch should be avoided if possible. I serve on the Texas Private
5 Land Advisory Board, which advises the Parks & Wildlife Department on private
6 lands issues, and I am aware of and have personal knowledge of the issue of land
7 fragmentation, which is a conservation issue of statewide concern. Finally, since
8 paralleling existing transmission line right-of-ways is a routing criteria set out by
9 PUC Rule, we are concerned that once we have a transmission line right-of-way
10 on our property we will become a target for future potential lines.

11 Having said this, it is better to have the lines along the perimeter rather than
12 bisecting the property, so if the Commission chooses a Route that includes Link
13 A5, we would prefer that it be built where it is proposed.

14 Monopoles are less unsightly than steel lattice towers. If the Commission chooses
15 a Route that includes Link A5, we ask that the Commission order Oncor to utilize
16 monopoles rather than steel lattice towers.

17 **Q. HAS YOUR FAMILY BEEN IMPACTED BY OTHER CREZ LINES?**

18 A. Yes. Three branches of our family -- the Green Ranches Limited Partnership (Bob
19 Green branch), the South Green Ranch (Bill Green branch) and the Musselman
20 Ranch (Mary Anna Green Musselman branch) -- were all impacted by Docket
21 38230. The Henry Family Ranch (Bill Green branch) was also impacted by

DIRECT TESTIMONY OF JAMES ROBERT GREEN, JR.
SOAH DOCKET NO. 473-10-5923
PUC DOCKET NO. 38517

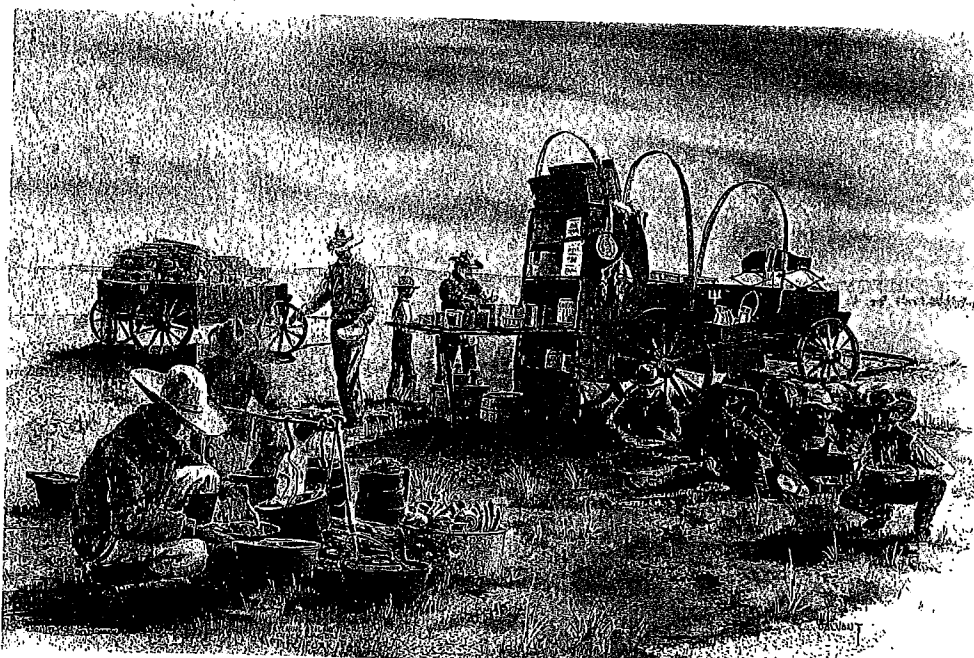
1 several CREZ dockets. James Musselman, another intervenor in this docket, is a
2 son of Mary Anna Green Musselman, who was my father Bob Green's sister. No
3 other CREZ docket to date, however, has potentially impacted the Green Family
4 Home Ranch.

5 **Q. DO YOU FEEL THAT THE PROPOSED ROUTES INCLUDING A5**
6 **FOLLOWS PUC ROUTING GUIDELINES?**

7 A. Proposed A5 completely ignores our community values, recreational and park
8 areas, historic and aesthetic values, and environmental integrity of our ranch land.
9 This route would gratuitously contaminate pristine ranch and wildlife property.

HISTORIC RANCHES OF TEXAS

Text by Lawrence Clayton Paintings by J. U. Salvant



Copyright © 1993 by the University of Texas Press

All rights reserved

Printed in Hong Kong

First paperback printing, 1997

Requests for permission to reproduce material from this work
should be sent to Permissions, University of Texas Press,
Box 7819, Austin, TX 78713-7819.

© The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements
of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence
of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1984.

The color reproductions in this book were made possible through the
generous assistance of Burnett Ranches, Inc.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Clayton, Lawrence, date
Historic ranches of Texas / text by Lawrence Clayton ;
paintings by J. U. Salvant. — 1st ed.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references [p.].

ISBN 0-292-71189-1 (pbk. : alk. paper)

1. Ranches—Texas. 2. Ranch life—Texas—History.

3. Texas—History, Local. I. Salvant, J. U. (Joan Usner), date. II. Title.

F387.C53 1993

976.4'009734—dc20

92-43918

Green Ranches

Shackelford County near Albany and Texas Panhandle near Vega

it has man-
instruction
land acqui-
s these im-
ranch to be

ons for the
ll supplied.
ing Burnett
rest horses,

Three independent spreads compose the Green ranches run by sons of William Henry Green, a pioneer rancher and live-stock trader in West Texas who descended from ancestors who came to the Lone Star State from Tennessee and Mis-souri. Two brothers named Green were in Texas by the 1830s and saw service in the war against Mexico. It is dif-ficult to be more "Texan" than that. Headquarters for two of the ranches are located in Shackelford County near Al-bany, and one is at Vega in the Texas Panhandle. Other hold-ings lie near Breckenridge, Matador, and Dalhart. Unlike many other large ranches in the state whose development was funded by outside money, these ranches resulted from shrewd trading and careful management by a close-knit ranching family that grew up in an area now covered by Hubbard Creek Lake between Albany and Breckenridge.

The story begins around 1885 when young William Henry Green left the family home near present-day Hillsboro in Hill County of Texas in search of his future. Carrying only his meager belongings in a small bag, his bridle, saddle, and blanket, Green stepped off the train in Albany to round up and sell some of the mustangs that his father, Thomas Henry Green, owned with J. J. Witty of Albany and ran on open range in that area. He found the Wittys' dugout headquar-ters and the herd and liked the country; he decided to stay with the Wittys to work alongside their son, Bert, to learn the ranching business. Green soon spotted an eight-thou-sand-acre stretch of prime open range running along Hub-bard Creek and decided that was the place for him. He sold his father's horse herd but kept back thirty geldings, which he spent one winter along Hubbard Creek breaking by him-self, a risky task that shows his confidence and fortitude. In the spring he drove the string of horses to Albany and sold them to Arthur G. Ligertwood of the Matador Ranch for thirty dollars each. The family later learned that one of the horses became a legendary outlaw that was used to test any bronc rider who showed up at the Matador for years to come.

Using the \$900.00 from the sale of the horses, Green leased the land along Hubbard Creek from Col. E. S. Gra-ham, prominent early-day land agent for the T. E. and L. Land Company of Louisville, Kentucky, and founder of the city of Graham to the north of the range. Green completed fencing the land easily because individuals holding the property on the various sides of the ranch had already fenced nearly all of it.

Green remained a bachelor for many years and camped alone in a covered wagon beneath some oak trees along Hubbard Creek, where he had his cattle pens and horse corrals. Following a serious illness during one winter, how-ever, Green wisely decided to build a house. Money was scarce in those days, so Green traded a small herd of horses to a man in East Texas for enough one-by-twelve planks to build a structure. Each board was eighteen feet long, so Green cut each one in half and raised a two-room box-and-strip house with walls nine feet high. The family recalls that he "wasted only the sawdust" from the cuts. The two-room house was incorporated into what grew to be a large, rambling ranch house along Hubbard Creek. Green spent his years traveling the ranch country buying and selling horses and cattle and building a herd of cattle.

In 1917 at age fifty, Green married Miss Willie Weaver, then a woman of thirty-four years of age. She was related to the Robertson family, still prominent ranchers in nearby Stephens County near Crystal Falls. She had been reared by the Richey family in that area after being orphaned at an early age. The couple soon had four children: Bill, Tom, Mary Anna, and Bob. Formal education was important to the Greens and still is. Before he left home, the elder Green had earned a bachelor's degree at Trinity University in Te-huacana Hills near Mexia before the school moved to its present location in San Antonio. Miss Weaver took her de-gree in 1906 at what was then North Texas State Normal School, now the University of North Texas, in Denton and

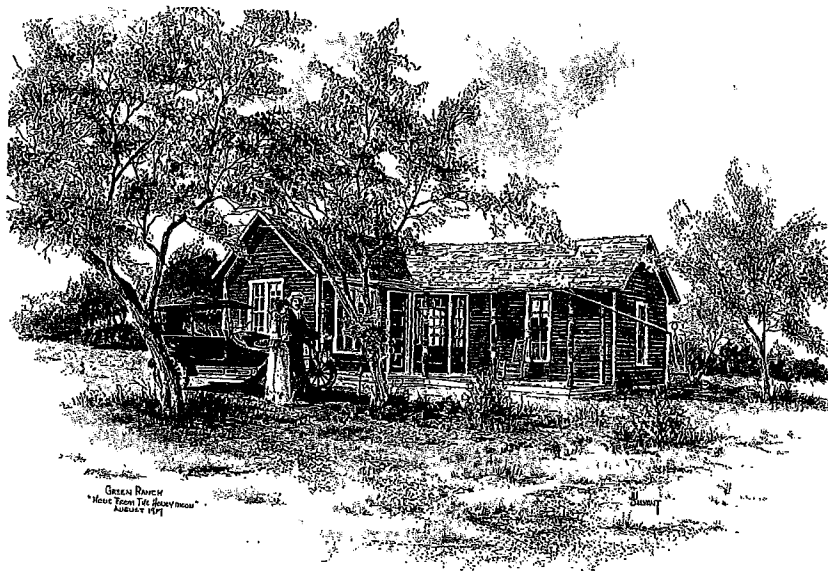


SCHOOL-CHAPEL

It was known as Squyres' Chapel and stood on the far hill when the teacher in this painting, Miss Willie Weaver, was a small schoolgirl. One day an election was held there and two families who were enemies arrived at the same time. A quarrel ensued and ended in bloodshed. Miss Weaver wrote in her memoirs that concentration on studies was difficult after that day because of the sunlight shining through the bullet holes in the walls. That summer the chapel was dismantled and carted across the valley to its new location and renamed Bethel Chapel, which means "House of God."

Another interesting story involving the history of this building concerns Miss Weaver, the teacher. She wanted to become a schoolteacher, but she

was one of many children in her family and funds were short. Myste-
lously, an envelope with her name on it appeared and in it was enough
money to finance her college education. Upon receiving her degree, she
returned to teach at Bethel Chapel, where she taught for many years. At
age 34 she married Mr. Green who was then 50 years of age. He was some-
one she had always known and admired, and she suspected him to be her
benefactor. Over the years, she asked him many times if he was the one
who financed her education. He would never admit it . . . but he never
denied it.



THE RANCH HOUSE, AUGUST 1917

Henry and Willie Green have just driven up in their Hupmobile Roadster, the first auto in the county. They are returning from their honeymoon in Denver, Colorado, and are eager to begin their new life together. The ranch house is only a three-room bungalow with no conveniences, save the cistern out back, but over the years Willie Green will make many changes and renovations as her family grows.

The house's original location is now the bottom of Lake Hubbard, and the structure was moved when work began on the dam. Now it stands at the top of the hill with a beautiful view of the lake. The family still gathers there for holidays, parties, and reunions—the children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren of that happy couple.

short. Myster-
It was enough
ier degree, she
any years. At
He was some-
him to be her
e was the one
but he never

taught in schools in the Texas Panhandle and along Hubbard Creek before she married.

The Green children were first instructed at home by their mother and later went to school in Breckenridge and then in Albany. Green bought a house in each of the towns and lived with the family there during the school term. He "commuted" to his ranch work. The family always looked forward to returning to the banks of Hubbard Creek in the summer. All these children would later attend college, primarily New Mexico Military Institute at Roswell. Tom, however, attended Texas Tech University after Green heard an impressive speech at the Boys Camp Meeting in the Davis Mountains from then-president Clifford B. Jones, the man for whom the athletic stadium at Texas Tech University is named.

Growing up along the creek was practically idyllic for the children. Isolated from the hardly accessible towns of Breckenridge and Albany, the children entertained each other with games, many of which involved horseback riding, always part of their work as well. Bob can recall when he was wrangling horses in the brushy country and had to listen intently in the predawn darkness for the bell the boys had put on the neck of one of the saddle horses before the herd was turned out to graze for the night.

Because of the older than usual age of the parents when they were born, the children all but skipped a generation. Here are second-generation ranchers who live much as others did in the 1940s and 1950s. They also recall names of families as Crudginton, Lawrence, Riley, and Hitson who worked for the ranch. Descendants of these cowhands still live in the area, and many of them still follow the cattle business.

The ranch expanded as time and resources allowed. Green gradually purchased the original 8,000 acres of leased land, mostly in plots of 320 acres, half-sections, as a nester starved out and decided to leave. Green also bought the Roe Ranch adjoining his original land and then purchased,

in 1939, 26,000 acres, part of the Landergerin Ranch near Vega in Oldham County in the Texas Panhandle. He also bought the Rockwell Ranch, 17,000 acres along the highway between Abilene and Albany. It is still designated by the name of a former owner, Rockwell and Hill, founders of a chain of lumber outlets. In addition Green leased land where he could find it to graze his herds.

The ranch operated as a family unit until 1950, when Green at age 82 was killed in an automobile accident between Lueders and Avoca as he and Mrs. Green were driving to the Vega Ranch to check on a herd of steers. Mary Anna took the Poindexter Ranch near Ibex where she and her husband, John Mussleman, had been living. Tom took the Vega Ranch, and he traded his two brothers their shares of that ranch for his share of the home ranch along Hubbard Creek. Bill and Bob continued in partnership for several more years until Bill's son, Billy, graduated from Texas Tech University and returned to enter business with his father. Bob's son moved to Dallas, so the two direct descendants of the founder dissolved the partnership. Bill assumed control of a ranch earlier purchased in Hartley and Oldham counties near Dalhart, part of which had been XIT land, and what is called the South Ranch between Albany and Baird. Bill also operates part of the Rockwell as well as the Newell Ranch south of Albany, which he has recently purchased with A. V. Jones, Jr., an Albany oil man. The Poindexter Ranch near Ibex southeast of Albany is still operated by John Mussleman, the widower of Mary Anna Green Mussleman, who died of cancer some years ago. In memory of her, the family hosts an annual benefit called Polo on the Prairie for M. D. Anderson Hospital's cancer research. Bob operates the home ranch and part of the Rockwell as well as the Merrick Davis Ranch, which he leases. The Greens are still expanding their holdings and intend to be in the ranching business for years to come.

The Greens have overcome many problems during their ranching years, but none seemed as threatening as the

nch near Vega
le also bought
; highway be-
by the name
s of a chain of
nd where he

l 1950, when
accident be-
were driving
s. Mary Anna
and her hus-
ook the Vega
horses of that
bbard Creek.
al more years
lech Univer-
father. Bob's
idents of the
l control of a
am counties
and what is
ird. Bill also
ewell Ranch
chased with
exter Ranch
ed by John
Musselman,
of her, the
e Prairie for
ob operates
well as the
ens are still
e ranching

luring their
ing as the

construction of Hubbard Creek Lake. Water authorities selected the site for a new lake despite the historical significance of the area and the fact that the Green home and headquarters were located in what would become the lake bed. There Green had rounded up his horses, set up his wagon camp, built his rambling home, and raised his four children. The children had memories of playing and working in the bottom lands and on the island in the creek. Despite efforts to stop the project, the Greens eventually accepted payment for the land and gave up their fight. The ranch house was saved by moving it from the lake bed to higher ground, where it stands today. The money paid for the land was invested in more land, included are ten thousand acres formerly owned by the Matador Ranch.

The Greens have diversified their operation. Farming on the irrigated property bordering the lake includes mostly winter wheat for grazing cattle and horses and some hay grazer in the summer. Some acres are devoted to growing coastal Bermuda grass for hay. Some of the Panhandle lands are also used to produce wheat. Brush control methods have run the general gamut of spraying, grubbing, chaining, and burning, but like other ranchers the Greens have not found the magic formula for eradicating the ranges of the parasitic brush. This is one of the reasons Tom moved to the Panhandle—no mesquite and prickly pear.

The Greens are ranchers in the traditional sense. The founder's view of horses differed from that of some older cowmen, such as Dan Waggoner and Burk Burnett, who poured millions of dollars into breeding, showing, and racing quality horse flesh. Green owed his beginning to horses, but he felt they were necessary to, not the priority ingredient of, ranch life. He preferred horses of conformation and disposition fitted to his cattle operation regardless of bloodlines. The Greens are not cattle chasing and roping cowboys, though some of their hands, especially Bob's foreman, Benny Peacock, are excellent cowboys and ropers. Green's

sons have followed their father's line of thought, although both have a hand of brood mares and quality stallions. Bill has Golden Three Bars out of the famous Hollywood Gold and Doc Bar, and Bob runs Bego Bars, another of the line of Doc Bar blood. Both herds are small, around a dozen mares, but these provide enough geldings to keep the remuda up to the necessary level and to provide replacement mares as well as a few fillies to sell. Bill's son trains and shows cutting horses but still shares his grandfather's views on cow ponies for cattle work.

Cattle have been the major thrust of the Green ranches. At first Longhorns and mixed breeds stocked the ranges as Green traded for what cattle he could find. Later the English breeds, mainly Herefords, ranged in the pastures, and now crossbreeding has taken over as it has in most ranches in the state. Bob developed an interest in Beefmaster cattle about 1975 and has kept heifers and crossbred until his herd is three-fourths Beefmaster. Now he runs Limousin bulls with the cows on the home ranch. On the Merrick Davis Ranch near his Rockwell pasture, he runs Hereford cattle. The herd contains some registered cows he purchased near Watrous, New Mexico; these registered cows are especially large, one of them recently weighing 1,750 pounds when sold. Bill began crossbreeding with Brangus stock and later introduced Charolais and Limousin blood. On the two Albany-area ranches, the Greens calve about three hundred heifers a year, though the number varies with market prices and herd needs.

The founder's philosophy still influences life on the ranch. His conservative ways and positive values have caused the children to develop a fairly simple but comfortable lifestyle. Both Bob and Tom saw service in World War II and traveled much of Europe during that time. Members of the family have cultivated polite friendships and far-reaching social circles including artists, politicians, and such writers as A. C. Greene, perhaps Texas' best-known writer. With their wives, Nancy and Elizabeth, Bob and Bill run a quality live-

stock operation and conserve wild game, especially deer, by feeding them and not allowing hunting.

Bob, an excellent family and area historian and capable writer and storyteller, has recorded a lot of the stories that he has heard from the region. Many of these were published in the *Albany News*. Bob also served as co-narrator with Marilyn Jacobs of the Fort Griffin Fandangle, an outdoor drama now over fifty years old. Begun by Robert Nail and continued after Nail's death in the late 1960s, the Fandangle has, in Bob's words, "painlessly indoctrinated several generations of youngsters" with the history of the area of the old military fort and town in northern Shackelford County.

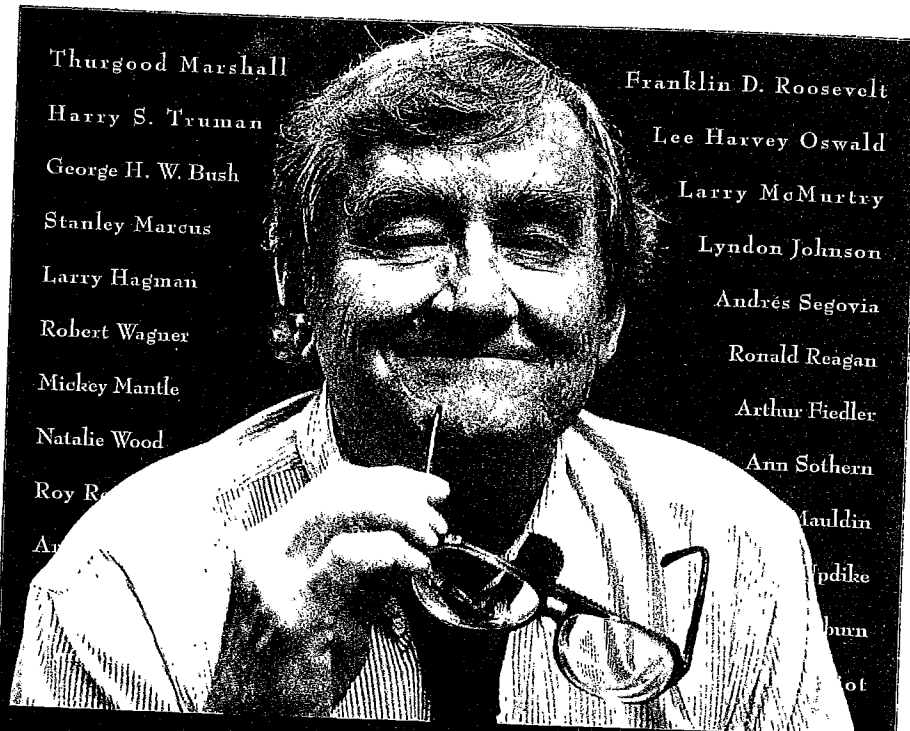
Bill has been in every Fandangle performance. He and his son, Billy, have been flag bearers in the figure-eight parade to open the show, and Bill recently portrayed Robert E. Lee, the Confederate military leader, when Lee was still a Union officer stationed at Camp Cooper on the Clear Fork of the Brazos River. Some of the Greens' cowboys also participate in the production of the drama.

Bill recalls many of his father's antics, because as a young man he became Green's driver and drove him and his friends to many stock shows, such as those in Kansas City, Denver, and Fort Worth. One of the humorous stories recalled by the Greens was the time during a severe drought that Jim Nail, the owner of a large ranch to the west of the Greens, found

that he was out of water and was forced to sell about five hundred four-year-old cows with their calves, cows that he had held back for a breeding stock when the drought broke. Once the deal was struck, Green took half the herd to his home range and discovered that his entire new herd would probably overstock the range. As luck would have it, rain fell that night over wide areas of the ranch country. By morning Nail discovered that he had caught water in most of his tanks. He called Green to try to back out of the deal. Green, though he decided that he could not handle the extra stock, played his cards wisely and ended up selling the part of the herd still on the Nail ranges back to Nail for a \$15.00 a pair profit.

The Greens have managed to put together and continue to expand an impressive ranching operation. Oil revenues have been helpful to them in their efforts and have afforded them the opportunity to construct better pens, make efforts to control brush, and keep the quality of life at a desirable level. Oil is a "bittersweet" blessing to ranching country. The practice of searching and producing damages the land, but, as Bob notes, "every rancher needs a West Texas ranch with oil on it in order to keep up his home ranch and fight the brush." The Greens are energetic and enthusiastic people who have contributed much to life in the Albany area and who display the warm hospitality of ranch culture.





CHANCE ENCOUNTERS

True Stories of Unforeseen Meetings,
with Unanticipated Results

A.C. Greene



bright sky press
Albany, Texas/New York, New York

CHANCE ENCOUNTERS
EDITED BY: Fran Vick
DESIGNED BY: Tina Taylor, T2 Design

Copyright © 2002 by A. C. Greene
Manufactured in the United States of America
All rights reserved
Printed in the United States of America
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Library of Congress Cataloging-in Publication Data

Greene, A. C., 1923- Chance encounters :
true stories of unforeseen meetings, with unanticipated results /
A.C. Greene.— 1st ed.
p. cm.
Includes index.
ISBN 0-9709987-9-1 (alk. paper)

1. Greene, A. C., 1923-
2. Greene, A. C., 1923—Friends and associates.
3. Authors, American—20th century—Biography.
4. Journalists—United States—Biography.
5. Texas—Biography. I. Title.

PS3557 R3795 Z469 2002
814'.54—dc21 2001049950

The paper used in this book meets the minimum requirements of
the American National Standard for Permanence of Paper for
Printed Library Materials, z39.48-1984.

No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any
electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and
retrieval devices or systems, without prior written permission from
the publisher, except that brief passages may be quoted for reviews.

, from similar
ined?
ed someone, a
ime I had seen
I hesitated for
couldn't bring

though I hadn't
ly Hyland."

hat to do. I had
expressed, the
l. She and her
, but after they
s' parties a few
an an advanced
ositions, which
and for two or
heart. Judy had
tion, and after
vn mother had
ut I wasn't sure
ly was a decade
her would be a
it.

y in as casual a
out had retired
here her older
hild, a little girl
nber but when
ervice. Did this
er several more
alled Ann back
hed, "I guess I
Let me see if I

ge. Ann finally

uncovered the new number and when I tried it I at least got Judy's answering machine. I left a message that I would like to hear from her; nothing romantical or hinting at things romantical. Then I waited and waited; left other messages on the machine—and waited some more. Finally I got a reply. Judy called, saying she had been in California. I asked her if she was going to move there and she said she planned to "as soon as I sell my townhouse." I asked her to go to a garden party with me, and she agreed. I found myself as excited as a high school boy at his first prom. Then, the day of the big outdoor function, the heavens opened as only the heavens can open in Texas, and the floods descended—and the party was washed out.

Judy was unable to find an open date immediately: she was going to Lubbock one week end, to Oklahoma City the next. I persisted, knowing I had to beat her California deadline. I finally pinned down a time and said I would take her to Mario Leal's Chiquita, a Mexican food place we both liked. After getting lost twice (nervous?), I found her townhouse and Judy and I talked for an hour, catching up on our lives, before we went to the restaurant.

We walked into Chiquita, and the first person we saw was Fred Smith, my Maine host. He took for granted things had already been set up with Judy when I was in Maine. He didn't realize his chance question had started the whole process.

Judy and I were married some months after that—and several wonderful years ago.

The Steam-Piano Player

The summer of 1955, when I owned a book store in Abilene, I stepped out of my little shop and was suddenly blasted by a wailing sound like a thousand bagpipes. It seemed to originate along the Wichita Valley railroad tracks. Was this the cry of a steam locomotive in its death throes?

Telling my young female assistant I would be back as soon as I discovered what was making the frightening noise, I took off in pursuit of the sound, which was progressing down Pine, the city's main busi-

ness street. When I caught up with "it" I saw "it" was a steam calliope and the "noise" was actually music . . . sort of.

This calliope was pulled by a tractor and was larger than what I could recall of circus calliopes. It was painted a bright red and gold, and given to steam hissings at all times, the way a steam locomotive pants steam even when it's not moving.

I joined the crowd following the calliope's parade, which included flag-bearing riders straight off the range, a stagecoach, a chuckwagon, and lovely ladies expertly riding side-saddle. I realized this was the announcement parade for the annual *Fort Griffin Fandangle*, the famed outdoor spectacle from Albany, Texas, a small town a few miles north of Abilene.

The *Fandangle*, I knew, was completely home-grown: the actors and singers were all from Shackelford County, of which Albany is the county seat, and the music and theatrical segments were written by



Bob Green

homemac
must the

I was c
by J. P. C
and meta
lic concer
customers
formality:
as a high
the player

Two ye
the newsp
about how
late Robe
course, th
Bob Greer
bering inci
be about t
loved histo
ingly prede
to find the
played, not
cordian, mc
four years la

Bob Nail
the Greens
pond, or tan
tables and
teaching dar
Green and
ranch with
decades sinc
God only ma

Former be
kinds of civic
to the nation
Griffin State

A.C. Greene | Chance Encounters in Love and Fate Along the Way

steam calliope

er than what I
t red and gold,
am locomotive

which included
a chuckwagon,
ad this was the
Fandangle, the
own a few miles

own: the actors
h Albany is the
ere written by



reen

homemade talent. I reasoned the calliope must be homemade, too, as must the player.

I was doubly correct. The calliope had been constructed in Albany by J. P. Crutchfield's welders and metal workers, built of various pipes and metals from oil field salvage. And for this, the calliope's first public concert, I recognized the man at the keyboard as one of my book customers, a rancher named Bob Green—or James Robert, if more formality is required. Bob, who had acted in the very first *Fandangle* as a high school student, was a narrator for the *Fandangle* as well as the player of the calliope.

Two years later when I was out of the book business and back in the newspaper business, I spent two days doing a series of stories about how the *Fandangle* was put together, helpfully guided by the late Robert Nail, producer and originator of the *Fandangle*. Of course, the first person I met was the *Fandangle's* calliope player, Bob Green. It didn't take but a few sentences for us to start remembering incidents in my bookstore. As Bob Green and I turned out to be about the same age and have about the same name, mutually loved history, books and music, our friendship was instant and seemingly predestined—we were both Presbyterians, too. And later I was to find the calliope was just the most exotic instrument Bob Green played, not the only one. He also played piano, electronic organ, accordion, mouth organ, guitar and probably a couple of others. Forty-four years later, I still haven't exhausted Bob's musical talents.

Bob Nail took me out to the Green Ranch the next night, where the Greens had invited us for swimming and picnicking at their big pond, or tank, that was fitted with dock and float for swimming, with tables and chairs for eating. After the picnic, while Bob Nail was teaching dance steps to Nancy Green and daughter Nancy Kate, Bob Green and I talked history. I came away from that evening on the ranch with a friendship which has never faltered in the nearly five decades since: Bob Green, we all realize, is the kind of a man that God only made one of.

Former board member of the Albany National Bank, active in all kinds of civic undertaking, from Albany High School football games to the nationally famed Old Jail Art Center, to the restored Fort Griffin State Park, Bob is a participant in his support, not just a con-

tributor. He has written a weekly newspaper column, contributed to several books, and always makes the more important speeches in Shackleford County celebrations. On the other hand, Bob Green has traveled extensively, usually in pursuit of some historical or cultural point in Europe—or to places like Iceland and Scotland in pursuit of salmon. His wartime experiences gave him a wide exposure to the South Pacific, the Philippines and Okinawa. He has traveled all over the west on business and has visited most of the battle sites of the Civil War, taking not just a Southerner's point of view but with an open use of history. He has had, at the ranch, several famous historians of various concepts, one or two who didn't know as much about the subject as Bob, but he never indulges in raucous debate. He is also an impartial political observer. Once, in Washington, escorting a piece of sculpture from the Old Jail Art Center for a Rose Garden exhibit, on meeting Hillary Clinton (whose husband he had not voted for), Bob said gallantly and sincerely, "You're a lot prettier than your pictures."

During their father's life, Bob, his two brothers and their sister, were part of the Green Land and Cattle Co., an enterprise which went back to 1888 with land in several locations in the West. Bob's father, Henry Green, a new graduate of Tehuacana College (now Trinity University), had come out to the Shackelford area to sell a herd of free-range horses for his dad, but he was so impressed by the grass and water of Hubbard Creek valley he decided to stay. He bought land with the horse sale money instead of taking it back to his father. After a train trip to Albany by the irate father to see where his money had gone, he had to agree it seemed like a fair investment, but as Henry, the son, took his father back to the train, the father gave him a fifty dollar gold piece and said, "When this runs out, you sell the land and come on back home." That was in 1888, and the fifty dollar gold piece, never spent, is still in the Green family. Bob's ranch includes most of the original acreage. (Henry Green died in 1952 at age eighty-four in an auto accident.)

The Green families are historically and emotionally tied to the town and the country around Albany. Albany is not a deserted relic from the frontier nor is it an artificially preserved exhibit—it is a vigorous modern town. It has two restored theaters and an acclaimed art

muse;
Green
three
ing th
the ce
But
He is
and ci
ed it.
worsh
raised
and p
his ho
Bob d
yond
Texas
land's
cloudy
"That'
how le
guess
Green
and co
the Hi
Nar
until s
wildlif
cattle :
that pe
of 300
eastern
Henry
an equ
no troi
trot. A
hunting
by the

nn, contributed to
rtant speeches in
id, Bob Green has
storical or cultural
tland in pursuit of
le exposure to the
as traveled all over
battle sites of the
view but with an
ral famous histori-
ow as much about
cous debate. He is
ington, escorting a
a Rose Garden ex-
d he had not voted
t prettier than your

ers and their sister,
n enterprise which
the West. Bob's fa-
College (now Trinity
ea to sell a herd of
ressed by the grass
to stay. He bought
it back to his father.
ee where his money
investment, but as
he father gave him a
out, you sell the land
l the fifty dollar gold
Bob's ranch includes
lied in 1952 at age

otionally tied to the
not a deserted relic
d exhibit—it is a vig-
and an acclaimed art

museum. The town delights in living with a historic past that Bob Green and his kind have helped document and save. Bob was one of three writers who helped produce a historical volume in 2001 honoring the newly renovated 1883 Shackelford County courthouse that is the center of much community life and love.

But Bob Green is more than a West Texas rancher and a historian. He is a pantheist. His pantheon is his earth and everything that walks and crawls across it or flies above it. Or has, in the past, used or visited it. Taking a tour of his ranch in a bouncing pickup is a period of worship, with Bob as priest. It is where he was born, where he was raised, where he became a cowboy and a rancher, a husband, father and philosopher—and where he will be buried. Despite the size of his home place, some thirty sections, there is scarcely a rock or a tree Bob doesn't have direct association with. And as for the animals, beyond the cattle and horses that are an understood part of a West Texas ranch, he protects the natural denizens like children—the land's children and his own. As we drove through a pasture, one cloudy afternoon, he pointed to a wooded hillock, rising on the south. "That's where the coyotes live. I call them the Hill Tribe." I asked how long the animals had nested at that site and he grinned, "Oh, I guess for a thousand years. They were there a good bit before the Greens came on the place." Doesn't he find it dangerous to run cattle and coyotes on the same ranch? "Not so far—" and we can surmise the Hill Tribe will be safe as long as Bob Green is around.

Nancy Green, a Houston beauty who had never been on a ranch until she married Bob, has never opposed Bob's care for the ranch wildlife, but she was once heard to tell a visitor, "Oh, we're not raising cattle any more. We're raising deer." As if to back up her statement, that particular visitor in one large pasture was able to count in excess of 300 deer. Driving toward Hubbard Creek Lake, which borders the eastern side of the J. R. Green ranch (and which submerged old Henry Green's original homestead when it was built in 1962), we see an equal number of wild turkeys, among the shyest of wild game. It is no trouble to spot a big tom leading his family along at a dignified trot. Antelope may be glimpsed, too, and for years Bob allowed no hunting except for some fall dove and quail shooting by friends, but by the turn of the new century, Bob, almost by ecological necessity,

leased 10,000 acres to a group of sportsmen (chosen by son Rob, a prominent Fort Worth lawyer). The hunters erected a semi-village of trailer homes, with a big cold vault, separate electrical service and a separate ranch entrance.

A modern ranch must raise cattle that will market best, and the days of only beautiful blocky Herefords are pretty well past. Herefords are Bob's favorite breed, but he now raises crossbreds, utilizing Charolais, Simmentals and Black and Red Angus or old-timey Texas Longhorn bulls for breeding, producing a faster maturing, bigger animal with more of the kind of meat America now buys—fewer prime steaks but more pounds of salable beef.

Wild hogs and boars are always on the scene (sows give birth to ten to eleven piglets at a time), although due to government packing regulations they can't be marketed. The wild hogs are probably descended from hogs introduced to West Texas by nineteenth century English ranch owners who enjoyed the sport of "pig sticking." The cowboys, with Bob's okay, sometimes trap hogs for personal consumption.

Bob raises his own feed and hay and has built several sizable tanks, or ponds—and in addition to the earthmovers the contractors use, Bob has a fleet of trucks and bulldozers and graders. And all these tractors, balers, and pickups call for someone at the wheel—not to mention someone doing such traditional jobs as grubbing out cactus and stringing fence, or laying irrigation pipe.

The cook shack, with a complete professional kitchen, is where cook Roberto keeps breakfast and lunch ready to be served to anywhere from six to two dozen "drop-ins." The cook shack is part of the complex of home for Roberto and family, which includes huge feed bins, tractor and equipment sheds, pens for horses—and home range for a dozen busy cats.

I am a city person, but nothing can compare to the distant vistas, the sounds, the smells, the sights of truly open country—the grass, whether green or brown, going off in waves at the slightest touch of the wind, the clouds moving in shadows cast right at your feet, wedges of Canadian honkers in season, the swing of hawks and vultures, one pond where a dozen dead trees are festooned with the ragged nests of cranes, the cries of scissor-tailed flycatchers, field larks, mockingbirds, killdeers, the coo of doves in the early morning

or the
night.
tempo
Bob is
actual
aspires

Bob
dry lar
the ra
kinds.
Only r
too ne
skunks
suppos
"With
the bal
coyote.
then, t

But
Green
in rain
ranch
friend
says, "ranch
started

One
dion or
ran int
weathe
the ra
clouds
that a
Bob wa
neighb
light th
was rig

A.C. Greene | Chance Encounters in Love and Fate Along the Way

by son Rob, a
a semi-village of
al service and a

st best, and the
past. Herefords
breds, utilizing
old-timey Texas
ring, bigger ani-
s—fewer prime

give birth to ten
nt packing reg-
bably descend-
century English
" The cowboys,
mption.

al sizable tanks,
contractors use,
i. And all these
wheel—not to
bing out cactus

chen, is where
served to any-
ck is part of the
udes huge feed
nd home range

e distant vistas,
try—the grass,
ghtest touch of
t at your feet,
hawks and vul-
ioned with the
ycatchers, field
early morning

or the hoot of owls at dusk along the creeks, the yip-yap of coyotes at night. And to experience such country with someone who, as he says, temporarily owns it, but regards it as part of all humanity, is inspiring. Bob is an environmentalist and an ecologist, but from the rare end: actually possessing and operating the environment and the ecology he aspires to protect.

Bob's favorite animal, if that's the word, is the old box turtle, the dry land terrapin. It pains him that some of the people he employs on the ranch (and operating a ranch is a major business involving all kinds of people) run over them with cars or trucks. Or, take snakes. Only reluctantly will Bob kill a rattlesnake, and then it will have to be too near a house or barn. One doesn't have to go exploring to find skunks, armadillos, porcupines or rabbits on the ranch. I cited the supposed danger of multiplying rabbits taking over, but Bob laughs, "With the coyotes and bobcats to keep down the varmint population, the balance is pretty well maintained." Now and then, he admits, the coyotes may kill a new calf or an injured deer—it's rare—but even then, the coyotes are worth the loss.

But the land itself, not its animal population alone, is what Bob Green loves so innately that he suffers with it in drouth and rejoices in rain. But like a venerable West Texas joke implies, an experienced rancher is pessimistic. The story tells of an old rancher who is with a friend watching a downpour. The friend turns to the rancher and says, "Well, this will take care of rainfall for this year," but the old rancher shook his head sadly. "This here's exactly how the last drouth started."

One evening, as he entertained a group of us by playing the accordion on the patio at the ranch house, Bob folded his musical box and ran into the front yard half a dozen times to get a better view of the weather. What he wanted was a good hard "turd floater" rain to fill the ranch tanks and ponds, and from the accumulation of heavy clouds and the thunder and lightning. I would have bet good money that a young flood would descend on the ranch at any moment, but Bob was pessimistic. "No, it's going to miss us," he assured a visiting neighboring landowner. When a mild sprinkle set up, I yelled in delight that Bob had been wrong, but he persisted in pessimism, and he was right. The sprinkle turned into fitful spit. "Well, that'll help the

grass," he consoled himself.

One time, some years ago, Bob told me the working cowboy was a vanishing species, but later he introduced me to Bennie Peacock, whom he called "A real cowboy." He worked for Bob as a ranch manager for many years. The first time I met Bennie, he and Bob talked a variety of ranch subjects that would have bewildered a traditional cowboy—about irrigation pumps cycling, boring and filling holes with concrete off a transit mix truck, and how many acres of oats should have been baled by 5 P.M. Bennie looks like a country and western music idol, but that undefinable love of land, of animals, of life alone and in the open, shines on his face and in his conversation.

Bob in person fits the popular image of a Texas rancher—old Stetson, worn boots, khaki pants and work shirt—but behind the feed-truck steering wheel is a natural philosopher. Bob is a graduate of the University of Texas at Austin, where he met Nancy Ebersole, of Houston, and won her hand by enrolling in some of her classes, including cooking.

His spacious home, which began as an 1894 line camp, contains an outstanding library, particularly World War II histories and rare Texana, and his role as a regional historian is substantial. He can (and does) talk literature knowledgeably with the Irish, the English—or Texans. He was a pilot for years and has had five planes for use in cattle buying—and history. He and I once flew the Butterfield Trail across Texas in preparation for a book I was to write. When published, I dedicated the book in the best way I could express my personal love and feeling for him: "To Bob Green—Brother, not of blood but of spirit."

Bob was a tank commander during World War II and won the Silver Star for bravery on Okinawa saving his tank crew by exposing himself to constant enemy fire as he opened the escape hatch for his crew to flee their stricken tank. He went into the Army from New Mexico Military Institute (Paul Horgan was one of his teachers) and was commissioned second lieutenant at age nineteen.

Until one of those coast-to-coast robbery gangs pulled a moving van to his back door and cleaned him out, some time ago, he had one of the best flint and stone implement collections in the United States, a lot of it found on his ranch. As you would expect, he is a sure quail

shot and, until age became at age th
quit riding, died

Despite his en
might be almost i
cattle. The econo
er, not the seller.
fanatical attempts

Several thousa
could be sold at
ing example of la
unbearably unco
from sale of his r

But saying it-
from Bob Green.
do it. But I can't

And situated atop
valley, is a part o
Judy and I marri
constructed "big
night at the Lake
after Nancy Gree
bliss on the ver
hours, listening t
across the horizon

On that knoll
wife of thirty-nin
works out as pla
united in the Gre
many other Gree

cowboy was a
nnie Peacock,
s a ranch man-
d Bob talked a
l a traditional
ling holes with
of oats should
y and western
s, of life alone
on.

rancher—old
ut behind the
is a graduate
y Ebersole, of
er classes, in-

amp, contains
ories and rare
l. He can (and
e English—or
for use in cat-
tterfield Trail
a. When pub-
press my per-
r, not of blood

and won the
w by exposing
a hatch for his
my from New
teachers) and

lled a moving
go, he had one
United States,
is a sure quail

shot and, until age warned him against it, a fine horseman, which he became at age three. His favorite mount, that he kept long after he quit riding, died at age thirty.

Despite his enthusiasm for his way of life, Bob admits that today, it might be almost impossible to operate any large Texas ranch solely on cattle. The economics of meat marketing are in favor of the cattle buyer, not the seller. Cattle prices have steadily declined—not to mention fanatical attempts to eliminate “red meat” from the national diet.

Several thousand of Bob’s acres touch Hubbard Creek Lake, and could be sold at premium prices, and his entire ranch is an outstanding example of land care and use. In other words, if ranching became unbearably uneconomical, there are potential millions to be made from sale of his ranch land.

But saying it—possibly even thinking it—brings fierce reaction from Bob Green. “I guess I ought to think about it, maybe I ought to do it. But I can’t sell this land. It’s me.”

And situated atop a knoll, under clumps of oak, looking down a long valley, is a part of the J. R. Green ranch that is mine. Not only were Judy and I married in 1990 in front of Bob’s big fireplace, purposely constructed “big enough to roast an ox,” but we spent our wedding night at the Lake House, on Hubbard Creek Lake, arriving there late after Nancy Green’s big party in our honor. Judy and I sat wrapped in bliss on the verandah of the Lake House until the early morning hours, listening to the coyotes yip-yipping like a thousand voices all across the horizon.

On that knoll that is my part of the ranch, is buried Betty, my late wife of thirty-nine years, at home on the ranch she loved. And if life works out as planned, someday she will be joined by Judy and me, united in the Green Family cemetery along with Bob and Nancy and many other Green family and Albany friends.

Albany's Bob Green dies at age 85 : Abilene Reporter-News

Page 1 of 3

reporternews

Your Abilene Online

Read more at reporternews.com

Albany's Bob Green dies at age 85

By CHARLES G. ANDERSON SR. Special to the Reporter-News

Wednesday, December 23, 2009

Bob Green, 85, a rancher, historian and narrator for the Albany Fandangle for 27 years, died Tuesday evening at the family's ranch home in Shackleford County near Albany after a short illness.

Green met Nancy Ebersole of Houston while they were students at the University of Texas. They married in 1948 and after a honeymoon to Havana, Cuba, they moved to the family ranch in Albany. They had three children, Rob, Nancy Kate and Mariana, and they taught their children the ranch life just as he had known growing up.

Green wrote about dugouts, Indians, buffalo hunters, ranchers, and cattle drives. He wrote about his joy of seeing a wet snow or a hard rainfall on the dry cracked Western soil after a drought and how blessed he was to live in the great outdoors. Green believed in hard work and he taught his children — and later grandchildren — the value of working and caring and respecting nature.

"We would get up at 4 a.m. in the morning and head out to work," his son, Rob, said. "We would sometimes work until dark."

He said the ranch had chickens, milk cows, lots of horses, cattle, pigs, and a garden.

"My dad had an 8-acre garden and grew cabbage, turnips, black-eyed peas, squash and all kinds of vegetables.

"He would load his pickup with vegetables and head for town," Rob said. "He didn't have anybody in mind, the people would see his pickup and know that he had vegetables to give away."

Green was known by thousands of people for his achievements in preserving the history of West Texas. He recalled the history of the West in his writing, and he loved to tell about the land and the people.

Texas Gov. Rick Perry issued a statement: "Texas lost a great man and a dear Texan with the passing of Bob Green. A consummate rancher who epitomized the essence of West Texas, Bob stood tall in his community and his industry with quiet grace and a profound respect for humanity and the environment. From his honorable military

Albany's Bob Green dies at age 85 : Abilene Reporter-News

Page 2 of 3

service to his love of history and talent for storytelling, Bob lived his life to the fullest and will be forever remembered by all who knew him.

"Shackelford County's loss is shared across Texas. Anita and I send our deepest condolences to his wife Nancy and his entire family in their time of grieving."

Green wrote stories ranging from his experiences on the ranch to those he experienced in World War II. He liked to tell others of Col. (later General) Robert E. Lee who once traveled through the Albany area in the early 1850s and stopped at Camp Cooper near present day Fort Griffin.

Green not only wrote about history, but he lived it on the ranch and in the brutal battles of the Pacific during the war. He wrote a book about his experiences in the war, and 40 years after the war, he traveled back to see Okinawa, where he had participated in the famous battle that cost thousands of lives. He was a 21-year-old platoon leader for a tank battalion that stormed the shores of Okinawa on Easter Sunday in 1945. He described the fighting that took place there as "savage." Green earned numerous medals for his service in World War II.

Green often said that he wanted the young people to know about their rich heritage and to learn how to preserve it. His achievements brought him numerous awards including the Albany Chamber of Commerce Cornerstone Award in recognition for his outstanding contribution to the cultural and economic growth in the Albany area. Green also received the Charles Goodnight award, which recognized him for his preservation of ranching heritage.

"My dad had such a respect for nature and creation," daughter Mariana Green said. "He was so kind and generous and fair to others."

Green's wife, Nancy, recalled how life was like living on a ranch in West Texas. Nancy said that she and her husband were known as a team when it came to entertaining guests at the ranch.

"I enjoyed entertaining a wide host of friends with Bob," Nancy said. "We had dinner parties, picnics, and lunch at the cook shack."

Nancy said she remembers the great food, music, and laughter that was always a part of the parties.

"I remember how much fun we had at the picnics on Hubbard Creek," said daughter Nancy Kate Hargrove. "I also remember the annual Fat Stock Show in Fort Worth."

She said her dad always had something special planned for the whole family.

Randall Palmore, president of First National Bank of Albany-Breckenridge, said everybody loved Bob Green.

Albany's Bob Green dies at age 85 : Abilene Reporter-News

Page 3 of 3

"He was such a part of everything that happened in Albany," Palmore said. "He was a good writer and he put so much into the Old Jail Art Center, Fandangle and many other projects."

Jim Cotter had known Green for many years.

"He was my best friend," Cotter said. "He was always in tune to what was happening in Albany."

He said if someone was in trouble, Green was always willing to help.

"Bob was dedicated to his family and never missed anything the kids or grandkids were doing," Cotter said. "He will be missed by everyone who knew him."

Funeral services are scheduled for 11 a.m. Saturday at the Matthews Memorial Presbyterian Church in Albany.



© 2010 Scripps Newspaper Group — Online