

Cultures: Comanches, Whites Key in Area History

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Church, and bringing a third language, German, to our town.

Now, obviously, there are several other cultures represented in Seminole which contribute to the overall

Obituaries

Billy Factor, Jr.

Funeral Mass for Billy Factor, Jr., age 60 of Seminole will be celebrated at 10:00 a.m. Monday, January 7, 2013 at St. James Catholic Church with Father Paul Karieakatt officiating. Burial will follow at Gaines County Cemetery. Rosary was held Saturday, January 5, 2013 at 7 p.m. at St. James Catholic Church. All services are under the direction of Boyer Funeral Home of Seminole.

Mr. Factor passed away Saturday, December 30, 2012 at Angelo Community Medical Center in San Angelo. He was born February 8, 1952 in Eldorado to Cora (Kelly) and Billy Factor. He married Janie Valenzuela in Seminole on August 23, 2003.

Billy Factor had lived in Seminole for the past fifteen years, having moved from Eldorado. He was a very respected farmer who also enjoyed playing with his grandchildren. He was a loving husband and father and a great provider.

Mr. Factor is preceded in death by his father and one brother.

He is survived by his wife, Janie Factor of Seminole; two sons, Claudio Garcia of Seminole, Billy Factor III of Seminole; one daughter, Victoria Lee Factor of Seminole; mother, Cora Hasting and husband Josh of Eldorado; three brothers, Johnny Factor of Eldorado, Tommy Factor of Eldorado, George Factor of Bakersfield, California and two grandchildren.

Tomas A. Hernandez, Sr.

Funeral Mass was celebrated for Tomas A. Hernandez Sr., age 62 of Seminole, at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 3, 2013 at St. James Catholic Church, with Father Paul Karieakatt officiating. Rosary was held on Wednesday, January 2, 2013 at St. James Catholic Church. Burial followed at Gaines County Memorial Cemetery. All services were under the direction of Boyer Funeral Home.

Mr. Hernandez passed away Monday, December 31, 2012 at the Hospice House of Odessa following a lengthy illness. He was born January 13, 1950 in Artesia, New Mexico to Raquel (Alvarado) and Reynaldo Hernandez. He married Maria R. Alaniz in Presidio on September 29, 1968, and had lived in Seminole since 1976.

Tomas was a hard worker and a great provider. He worked in the oilfield, and was a loving person who cherished his family very much. He had a great sense of humor and enjoyed playing the guitar and drawing. Tomas is preceded in death by three sons: Tomas Hernandez III in 1969; Daniel Hernandez in 1979; and Ricardo Hernandez in 2012.

He is survived by his wife, Maria R. Hernandez of Seminole; one son, Tomas Hernandez, Jr. of Carlsbad, New Mexico; two daughters, Elizabeth Hernandez of Seminole, Laura Hernandez of Abilene; parents, Raquel and Reynaldo Hernandez of Presidio; five brothers, Reynaldo Hernandez Jr., Hector Hernandez, Jose Luis Hernandez, Pedro Hernandez, and Miguel Hernandez; two sisters, Socorro Rodriguez and Veronica Barraza and four grandchildren.

Margie Parker

Funeral services for Margie Parker, age 83 of Seminole were held Wednesday, January 2, 2013 at M.S. Doss Chapel at 2 p.m. with Pastor James Washburn officiating. Burial followed at Gaines County Cemetery. All services were under the direction of Boyer Funeral Home.

Mrs. Parker passed away Friday, December 28, 2012 at Memorial Hospital in Seminole following a lengthy illness. She was born August 5, 1929 in Ralls to Faye (Reese) and Roy Forbes. She married Roy Parker in Clovis, N.M. on October 23, 1949. Margie had lived in Seminole since 1951.

Margie was a homemaker and her family was her number one priority. She enjoyed arrowhead hunting, fishing, and cooking, and she had a great sense of humor.

Margie Parker is preceded in death by her parents and three sisters.

She is survived by her husband, Roy Parker of Seminole; one son, Robert Parker and wife Suzan of Seminole; one daughter, Leslie Bustamante and husband Eddie of Seminole; two brothers, Ocie Forbes and wife Karen of Brownwood and Don Forbes and wife Fran of Pleasanton; one sister, Patsy Huddleston of Mountain Home, Idaho; one uncle, Leslie Reese of Palo Pinto; seven grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Ben Troy Smith

Mr. Ben Troy Smith, 81 years old of Coleman passed away on Wednesday, December 26, 2012 at Hendrick Medical Center in Abilene. Mr. Smith was born June 20, 1931 in Goudbusk to Richard Ezra Smith and Mary Irene Bowen.

Being one of 13 children with two sets of twins, Ben enjoyed a big family. Ben married Jenniev Wood on April 15, 1950 in Meadow. They have shared 62 years together. He was an Air Conditioner Specialist with Carrier for years, and a farmer and rancher.

Ben is survived by his loving wife, Jen; two sons and daughter-in-law, Troy Lynn Smith of Carlsbad, N.M., Tracy Wayne and Julieanna Smith of Hewitt; three sisters, Inez, Carolyn and Jossie; two brothers, Gene and Sam Smith; five grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren; several nieces, nephews and numerous friends.

The family received friends for viewing on Saturday, December 29, 2012 from 10 until 11 a.m. at Walker Funeral Home. Funeral services were at 1 p.m. in the Walker Funeral Home Chapel with Minister Bob Martin of Elm Street Church of Christ officiating and interment followed in the Coleman City Cemetery under the direction of Walker Funeral Home.

Ratliff Funeral Homes

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Tami Tyson

PLAINS.....Graveside services for Tami Tyson, 54, of Plains, were conducted Saturday, January 5, 2013 at 2:00 p.m. in the Plains Cemetery with Reverend Patrick Hamilton officiating under the direction of Ratliff Funeral Home of Denver City. She passed away January 1, 2013 in Plains.



Tami was born on February 7, 1958 in Lameza, to Robert and Anna Freeman. She graduated high school in Loop in 1976. Tami married Cowboy Tyson on August 10, 1976 in Seagraves. Tami was an Emergency Medical Technician for Plains EMS for several years. She loved art, crafts, baking and her dogs along with her family and friends and was a member of the First Baptist Church. She was preceded in death by her father Robert Freeman in 2002 and a son Lee Tyson in 1997.

Tami is survived by her husband, Cowboy Tyson of Plains; two sons, Tyrel Tyson & his wife Donita of Brownwood, John Tyson & his wife M'Leah of Plains; her mother Anna Freeman of Loop; her brother Joe Casey Freeman & his wife Sheila of Loop; her sister Temi McKenzie & her husband Ted of Waco along with four grandsons, Tell, Omin, Ethan, and Corban Tyson along with two nieces & two nephews. Tami's laughter and smile will be greatly missed by all who loved her.

good of our community and we are grateful for their contribution. But the ones chosen represent the larger groups. And we will not be able in the space allotted to do much more than touch the surface of what these groups have contributed. Each of these peoples have had an impact on our present culture. In other words, they have had a part in making Seminole what it is, today. Lets consider them individually.

The Comanche Culture

We don't ordinarily think of the Comanche Indians as having much to do with our present lifestyle, because they were driven out of this area a hundred and fifty years ago, but they were the people who occupied this part of the world before the white people came here. They were the principle tribe which dominated this area for over a hundred fifty years.

Why did the Comanche come here? For basically the same reason the other cultures came. They came seeking a home and a way to support their livelihood. They hunted the buffalo, picked the fruits, nuts and berries; built their teepees supported their families and raised their children.

They were a war-like people even before arriving on the Llano

Death Notice

ALANIZ

Funeral Mass for Isabel Alaniz (Easy), age 77 of Graham was celebrated Saturday, January 5, 2013 at St. James Catholic Church in Seminole at 10 a.m. with Father Paul Karieakatt officiating. Burial followed at Gaines County Cemetery. Rosary was held Friday, January 4, 2013 at 7 p.m. at St. James Catholic Church. All services were under the direction of Boyer Funeral Home of Seminole. Mr. Alaniz passed away Saturday, December 30, 2012. He was born April 17, 1935 in Tyler.

HARRIDGE

Funeral services for Betty Jo Stinson Harridge were held at 2 p.m. Thursday, January 3, 2013 at the Community Church in Kemit with John Edgar Haley conducting. Interment followed at Kemit Cemetery. Arrangements were entrusted to Acres West Funeral Chapel of Odessa and Family Services Funeral Parlor of Kemit. Betty Jo was called Home to be with the Lord on Monday, December 31, 2012. She was born on July 15, 1928 in Gorman.

Estacado (the Staked Plains). They fought with their neighboring Indian tribes before the white men came. The Utes called them "Comanche," meaning "The Enemy," but they called themselves "The People." They were almost constantly at war with the white people who were infringing on what they considered their land.

They stopped the Spanish from coming north and the French from coming east prevented the Americans from occupying the midsection of the country for years after the east and west were occupied. There were constant raids and battles with violent atrocities on both sides.

Perhaps because they were looked on as enemies, and because they were removed from this area before the main stream of English speaking peoples came here, and the fact their lifestyle was considered uncivilized and primitive, their language and lifestyle was never adopted by the white people. Never-the-less they were the first culture to grace this land.

They were the ones who discovered the water sources, and established the trails which later became roads. They eked out an existence on this prairie which others considered uninhabitable. They showed us people could live and survive out here.

The Comanche were, without a doubt, the people who dug the sixty plus water holes found by Colonel William Shafter and his troop of Black Seminole Indians in the draw which was named, Seminole, after the Indian scouts who discovered it, instead of the Comanche who dug the wells. The Comanche certainly used this draw as a camping place long before the Black Seminoles with the US Army ever discovered it, but this discovery brought this area to the attention of the white settlers.

One lesson the Comanche taught our forbearers was, in order to exist on this treeless prairie, they would have to be a rugged people, and they were. The ones who weren't didn't stay here long.

Quanah Parker was made the great chief of the Comanche Nation by the White men after his people had been moved to the reservation in Indian Territory. He began campaigning for the rights of his people and actively seeking to get them to accept the White man's language and lifestyle. Quanah had a number of children from several wives, and he saw to it they all received an education. The leaders of our area have always, and still do, place a high emphasis on education.

The Comanche Indian Tribe were

one of the first people to call these plains of West Texas home, so they were the first culture in this area.

It is important to note the Comanche are living people. We tend to think of them as only occurring in the ancient past. According to Wikipedia there are 15,191 Comanche tribe members listed today, 7,763 of these live in Oklahoma in and around the Lawton, and Ft. Sill areas. They now have their own college, and their own form of government.

The colorful past of these Native Americans has found a large representation in our art, literature and entertainment fields.

The Coming of the Whites

The second wave of culture to affect this county was the English speaking, mostly European white people.

After the campaigns of Colonel MacKenzie in 1871 and 1872 and of Colonel Shafter in 1874 and 1875, had located the watering places and driven the Indians onto the reservation, the settlers began moving into this country. By 1877 a band of buffalo hunters, under the leadership of Sergeant James Harvey had almost wiped out the vast herds of buffalo which roamed the territory. This left the Comanche no reason to return to the plains.

With the buffalo gone and the Comanche Indians on the reservation, cattle would soon replace the buffalo. The way was opened for the cattlemen to move into this area. Some enterprising ranchers began buying long-homed cattle in South Texas for \$5 a head and driving them north where they sold for \$40 a head. This country all was open range and this led to some very large cattle ranches being established. Some stretched for hundreds of miles.

Some ranchers moved large herds of cattle from south Texas to this area to winter on the abundant grass. We are told at one time there were 50,000 head of long horned cattle sold out of Gaines County. After the railroad came to Seagraves in 1917 Seagraves became a very important rail hub in the cattle industry, at one point shipping more cattle than Ft. Worth or Chicago, Illinois.

Beginning in the 1860s was the age of the large cattle drives such as the Chisolm Trail, which reached from the Rio Grande or San Antonio to the railroad in Abilene, Kansas. There were many of these drives, often originating from different places and sometimes joining the other drives on the known trails. The trail was usually about a thousand miles long and they would average 10 to

15 miles a day depending on the problems encountered. The herds averaging around 3,000 or 3,500 head according to Wikipedia on line. The era of the trail drives lasted only about 20 to 25 years. Railroads were being built closer to the ranchers and more and more farmers with their fields blocking the way made the job of trailing cattle more difficult. When they began fencing in their fields, it brought the age of the cattle drives to an end.

After the Civil War ended many ex-soldiers and southern farmers began heading west.

As the settlers became more numerous the large ranches began to be broken up into smaller acreage and were bought up by farmers and local ranchers. As farmers began producing bigger and bigger crops, stores and markets were established and soon little settlements were becoming small towns. The western, cowboy culture came to the forefront.

Many of these farmers and ranchers were of European descent, and most of them were raised in the deep south, and a number came from south Texas. The culture of Gaines County took on a definite southern flavor.

In the 1930s the economy and the weather left an indelible mark on the lives of folks in all of West Texas and surrounding areas. The great depression and the Great Dust Bowl simultaneously changed the lives of our forefathers. Farms were blown out and ranchers were starved out, but for the most part the settlers showed their rugged nature and hung on to what they had. These were family folks, home bodies, concentrating on making a living and raising and educating their children.

Amid the disaster, however, in the 1930s oil was found in the county, with production getting underway in 1935. By the 1950s petroleum was becoming a major player in our economy. Currently, Gaines County has petroleum and agriculture as our primary economic engines.

As the hard working oil well crews moved into the area, many of them found permanent residents in Gaines County, thus adding to the culture already a part of our town. From cowboys and Indians to the rugged oilfield workers the exciting stories of our colorful past is told to our youngsters.

(Writer's Note: This has been a glimpse into two of the five cultures which helped form our Gaines County heritage. In our next installment we will discuss three other cultures which exert an influence on all of us.)

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