

AGARITA GAZETTE



A Chronicle of the Plum Creek Shooting Society



Agarita Ranch

April 2015

Lockhart, Texas

President's Word:

We had another great turnout for our shoot in April. 80 shooters came out and enjoyed good weather for 6 stages of shooting fun. Then we had a fantastic pre-Easter lunch by **Sue Freely** that really hit the spot. This was our last shoot before the State match in May, and it was a good preview.

Right now we have about 225 shooters signed up for the State match, and a few applications are still trickling in. If you are still considering whether you want to participate, your time is running out. Get going!

Some of you may not wish to, or may not have the time off to shoot in the State match, but that doesn't mean you can't be a part of the event. We expect to have nearly 20 vendors at the match, so there will be plenty of opportunities to look for additions to your shooting costume or leather or guns. You already have the Plum Creek Shooting Society Saturday on your calendar, so even if you aren't shooting come on out and see us.

Of course, we always have a need for volunteers to help us put on the match. You don't have to be a shooter to help us out.

My wife, **Barely There**, is making a rare appearance to help with the scoring. We would love to have some extra help to put on the match, and you can come enjoy the ambiance and camaraderie that always accompanies a cowboy action shoot (even more so for a big match like this). If you think you can come out to help, give **Agarita Annie** a shout. She can be reached at agarita_a@yahoo.com.



SASS Regulator, National Champion
Classic Cowboy & PCSA President
Dragon Hill Dave

We are planning a couple of weekend workdays this month for our final push to get ready for State. Saturday April 18th we will be setting up the range. We are bringing back Stages 9 and 10 from hiatus and getting all the targets set in the final configurations. We will be cleaning up the range and painting as well. We will start around 9 am and plan to finish around lunchtime. The club will feed the workers lunch too. Good opportunity to help the club and get a free look at the target setup for

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State. The second workday will be April 27th, the Sunday before the State match. This will be our final clean-up, paint and get ready work day. Hope you can make one or both of those.

Enough about work—let's talk about shooting! **Phantom** and **Joe Darter**, with some help from the **Whiskey Kid** and **Pedernales Drifter**, have set some fast and interesting stages for us to shoot at State. And the range looks a little different too. We have added some windows on Stages 2, 3 and 9. We have some silhouettes that you have to get by in order to shoot and we have a few props you have to deal with. And my new, improved mule passed its test and has qualified for inclusion in the State match! One of the things I like about Plum Creek is that we try to offer you some different shooting experiences every time you come. We will deliver on that at State.

Kudos as well to **Delta Raider** and **Sue Freely**, who continue to provide improvements to the range. Like a Western settlement that prospers, they are adding boardwalks between some buildings, a new cross-hatched canopy on the west end of the range (near 8, 9, and 10) and a walkway to the hotel and saloon. That, in addition to the sea of green grass in front of the Hotel/Saloon, are more great additions to an already entrancing venue. A big thanks to them for their continuing commitment to Cowboy Action Shooting.

See ya' at the Agarita!

FIND DELTA RAIDER



Mentioned in the dispatches for finding **Delta Raider** last month are: **El Sabre**, **Hairtrigger Hayes**, **Cowtown Scout**, **Artiman**, **Skyhawk Hans**, **Lucky Nickel**, **Boon Doggle**, **Meadow Biscuit Slim**, **Wildcat Bob**, **Delta Raider**, **Czexican Dave**, **Lefty Leo**, **Six Goin' South**, **Sole**

Proprietor, Shooting Iron Miller, John Selman and the **Manchaca Kid**. So much for thinking I had made it more difficult.

www.pccss.org

THE REAL BATTLE OF PLUM CREEK

by Long Juan



INTRODUCTION.

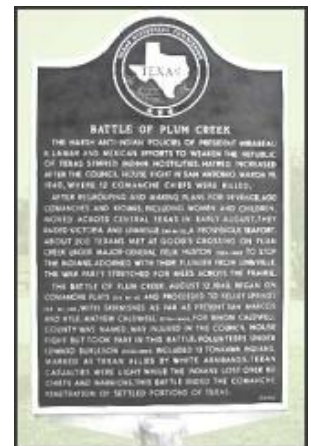
In early August of 1840, under the light of a bright full moon, referred to by early Texas settlers as a Comanche moon, a war party of more than 600 Comanche and Kiowa warriors swept out of the Comancheria and rode into the heart of the Republic of Texas. The massive raid was launched in retaliation for what the Comanche perceived to be the unprovoked killing of twelve Penateka Comanche war chiefs and many Comanche women and children at the Council House peace talks in San Antonio the preceding March.

The Battle of Plum Creek occurred just south of present-day Lockhart, along wooded banks of the creek. A small group

of volunteers, militia and Texas Rangers, aided by Tonkawa Indians, defeated the Comanche and Kiowa warriors who had participated in the Great Comanche Raid of 1840.

A Texas historical marker in Lockhart's Lions Park reads as follows:

The harsh anti-Indian policies of President Mirabeau B. Lamar and Mexican efforts to weaken the Republic of Texas stirred Indian hostilities. Hatred



Continued next page

increased after the Council House Fight in San Antonio, March 19, 1840, where 12 Comanche chiefs were killed. After regrouping and making plans for revenge, 600 Comanches and Kiowas, including women and children, moved across central Texas in early August. They raided Victoria and Linnville (120 mi. SE), a prosperous seaport. About 200 Texans met at Good's Crossing on Plum Creek under Major-General Felix Huston (1800-1857) to stop the Indians. Adorned with their plunder from Linnville, the war party stretched for miles across the prairie. The Battle of Plum Creek, August 12, 1840, began on Comanche Flats (5.5 mi. SE) and proceeded to Kelley springs (2.5 mi. SW), with skirmishes as far as present San Marcos and Kyle. Mathew Caldwell (1798-1842), for whom Caldwell County was named, was injured in the Council House fight but took part in this battle. Volunteers under Edward Burleson (1793-1851) included 13 Tonkawa Indians, marked as Texan allies by white armbands. Texan casualties were light while the Indians lost over 80 chiefs and warriors. This battle ended the Comanche penetration of settled portions of Texas.



THE COUNCIL HOUSE FIGHT

In March 1840, Texas officials and a Comanche peace delegation met under truce in an effort to negotiate peace after two years of war. The Comanche sought to obtain recognition of the Comancheria as sovereign land of the Comanche. The

Texans wanted the release of white captives held by the Comanche. The Comanche brought only two prisoners to the talks, one Mexican boy and a young white girl who had been horribly tortured and mutilated. The Texans moved to hold the chiefs hostage until the return of other prisoners held by the Indians. The Comanche attempted to escape and the result was predictable. Twelve Comanche chiefs were shot dead in the Council House. Twenty-three more Indians, including women and children, were killed in the streets of San Antonio and the remaining 30 were taken captive. Six Texans were killed and 10 more were wounded. The incident became known as the Council House Fight. It ended any chance for peace and led to years of hostility and war.

THE GREAT COMANCHE RAID OF 1840

For many months after the Council House Fight, the region around San Antonio lived in fear. Militia men stood ready to ride at the sound of the San Fernando Cathedral bell. No white traveler on roads surrounding San Antonio felt safe. The settlers expected Comanche retaliation, but no major blow fell. By midsummer, it *appeared* the Indians were gone. Wrong! The dreaded horse warriors had simply



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retired deep into Comancheria to gather forces and to plot their course of revenge. Under the Comanche moon of August 1840, Buffalo Hump, one of the few surviving



Comanche war chiefs, moved south with a massive war party.

Buffalo Hump and the Comanche passed undetected east of San Antonio, near the town of Gonzalez. They cut a swath of destruction and penetrated deep into the Guadalupe River Valley. They plundered, stole horses and killed many settlers. The war party reached Victoria late the afternoon of August 6, 1840. There, the Comanche did something completely out of character. They attacked and overran the settlement. Most of the citizens saved themselves by banding together and barricading themselves in the south part of town, but fifteen people lost their lives and their scalps. Before smoke from the fight in Victoria cleared, the Comanche were on the move southeast, driving a herd of nearly two thousand stolen horses. Proceeding down

the Guadalupe bottomlands, the unhindered Indians burned and killed as the opportunity arose. As word of the raid spread, scattered militia companies and volunteers responded. They were, however, few and far between and were not able to do much more than bury the dead.

THE SACK OF LINNVILLE

On the morning of August 8, 1840, the war party neared Linnville on Lavaca Bay about 50 miles from Victoria. Linnville, now a ghost town located about 3½ miles northeast of present-day Port Lavaca, was then a quiet little seaport town that served



as the port-of-entry for San Antonio. As Buffalo Hump formed the warriors into a huge half-moon arc around the little town, a few of the town's citizens spotted the Comanche from a distance. Unfortunately, they mistook the warriors for Mexican traders until the Indians began their screaming attack. There was little the residents of Linnville could do except to row for their lives in small boats for the safety of larger craft anchored in the Lavaca Bay. Some found refuge. Others were cut down and scalped before they reached safety. Those who managed to escape could only

Continued next page

watch as their homes and businesses were looted and burned.

While pillaging and burning Linnville, the Comanche encountered an unexpected windfall. Warehouses were packed with goods destined for shipment to San Antonio. Warriors dressed themselves in top hats and



fancy frockcoats. Others paraded with parasols, wearing women's dresses and petticoats. They braided the tails of their ponies with entire bolts of colorful cloth that streamed out behind as they galloped back and forth through town. Other warriors spent the day slaughtering the town's livestock, lancing the animals for sport and roaring with savage delight as the animals died.

One Linnville resident, Judge John Hays, was so distraught and angry over the ransacking and destruction that he grabbed an old muzzle-loading shotgun and waded ashore waving the shotgun above his head and bravely challenging the Indians to meet him in combat. The



warriors rode around him, acting as if he did not exist, sparing him probably because they thought he was crazy for facing them as he did. Judge Hays finally gave up and waded back to his boat, later discovering that he had waded ashore to face nearly a thousand Indians with an unloaded shotgun. Another resident, Major Hugh Watts, Collector of Customs, was less fortunate. He was killed between the shore and the boats. His young bride was captured. The Indians ripped off her dress, but were baffled by her sturdy whalebone corset. In frustration, they tied her on a horse in her underclothes, taking her with them as a prisoner.

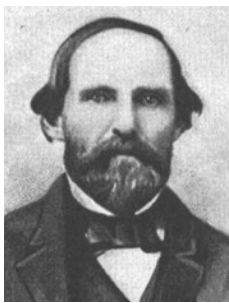
Satisfied the Comanche blood spilled at the Council House Fight had been avenged, Buffalo Hump called for a return to the high plateaus of the Comancheria. Normal practice would have been to turn and ride hard and fast for many hours, choosing a route through the least populated country, resting only when any pursuit was far outdistanced. Normal practice would also have been to split the large war party into many small bands, each taking a divergent trail to baffle and confuse their pursuers. The mule-loads of loot, many prisoners and 2,000-3,000 stolen horses, however, prevented the normal practice. The pack mules and herd were slow and unwieldy. The horses had to be driven and guarded by many warriors, spread throughout the large herd. Even with their plunder and horses, had Buffalo Hump and his band retreated to the plains by a route that passed south of San Antonio, they likely would have eluded all pursuit because most settlements in the region lay north of the Guadalupe River. But Buffalo Hump, perhaps arrogant in victory, turned north, choosing to march homeward by the most direct route. The trail would prove treacherous. As the Comanche moved slowly to the north, accompanied by towering clouds of dust from the horses' hoofs, they were headed straight into the arms of waiting Texans.

Continued next page



THE BATTLE OF PLUM CREEK

The Texans knew the Comanche were trying to avoid a fight in order to protect their plunder. No one needed a map to visualize their intended route. The Texans knew the country and knew the Indians would have to cross the Big Prairie near Plum Creek, a small tributary of the San



Marcos River. Ben McCulloch, one of the captains leading the pursuing Texans, ordered a small group of the most exhausted riders to continue following the Comanche column. He and the rest of his volunteers

rode for the settlements higher on the Colorado, racing across the coastal prairies, alerting the settlers and urging every able-bodied man to muster at Plum Creek. By nightfall on August 10th, every Texan old enough to mount a horse and wield a gun had set out from Gonzales, Victoria, Lavaca, Cuero and a score of smaller, scattered settlements in a mad dash to intercept and punish the escaping Comanche. The volunteers gathered near Good's Crossing on Plum Creek, about 5 miles southeast of present-day Lockhart, near what is now referred to as Comanche Flats. They were led by ranger and militia captains Matthew "Old Paint" Caldwell, Ed Burleson, Big Foot Wallace and others. Caldwell was nicknamed "Old Paint" because of white spots in his hair, beard and on his breast -

like a paint horse. In the four short years



since Texas independence, Old Paint and the other ranger company captains had become expert Indian fighters. They anticipated the Comanche moves and prepared for a showdown. At one point, Old Paint gave a short speech.

"Boys, the Indians number about 1,000. They have our women and children captives. We are only 87 strong, but I believe we can whip Hell out of 'em. What shall we do boys; shall we fight?"

The volunteers answered, "Yes! Yes! Fight!!"

Setting up camp near Good's Crossing on the 11th, men and horses continued to arrive. Late that afternoon, Captain Jack Hays joined the gathering volunteers with a company of Rangers from San Antonio. The presence of these hardened veterans lifted the volunteers' spirits and bolstered their confidence. General Felix Huston rode in from Austin to take command. He was virtually unknown and had little experience fighting Indians. The Texans wanted "Old Paint." He was a familiar figure on the frontier and a veteran of countless engagements with the Comanche. The Texans knew and trusted him. Caldwell nevertheless felt Huston was entitled to take

Continued next page

command. The men reluctantly accepted his decision.

Fourteen Tonkawa warriors led by Chief Placido arrived at Huston's headquarters. They had no horses. Their chests were heaving from running 30 miles to join the Texans in their fight against the hated Comanche. Huston knew the "Tonks" were superb scouts. He ordered them to tie white rags to their arms to identify themselves as allies and gave them the most arduous and dangerous task of the day - to scout the Comanche column on foot and bring him continuous reports.



The heterogeneous, buckskin-clad army had assembled none too soon. The Texans trailing the Comanche column maintained so much pressure that some of the Indian's pack-mules tired and were shot and the trail was strewn with abandoned loot. But the Comanche still clung to the bulk of their plunder and to their vast herd of stolen horses. Many warriors were scattered within the herd. Only a handful were stationed as outriders along the flanks of the Indian column, as the Comanche slowly approached Big Prairie on the morning of August 12th, trailed by a rolling cloud of



dust. Informed about enemy dispositions by

accurate reports from the inexhaustible and valiant Tonk scouts, the volunteers, militia and Rangers saddled up and forded Plum Creek at Good's crossing. More scouts were sent out. The sky in the east was beginning to pale with the coming of dawn when the scouts returned and reported the Comanche were heading northwest on a collision course with the waiting Texans. General Huston was in nominal command. Real command lay with Burleson, Caldwell and the other captains. At Old Paint's suggestion, General Huston dismounted the Texans and ordered them to take cover in the trees and heavy brush that grew along Plum Creek. The Comanche, never suspecting danger, made their appearance, driving ahead of them the huge herd of stolen horses. The Texans formed two long parallel lines that enclosed and converged on the Comanche.

When the Comanche neared the Texans' positions, Caldwell urged Huston to attack, but the General delayed, wanting to wait for McCullough and nearly a hundred more men from Bastrop. The men grumbled their displeasure, but grudgingly accepted the General's decision. By the time McCullough and his men arrived, only the rear guard of



the huge Indian war party remained opposite the Texans. Caldwell again urged General Huston to attack. The general finally agreed. The volunteers, now numbering approximately 200 men, emerged from the trees along Plum Creek

Continued next page

and struck the surprised war party. The Comanche fought a series of delaying actions until they reached Kelley Springs, west of present-day Lockhart and near the Lockhart State Park and the Agarita Ranch.

After sending the younger warriors west with the loot and stolen horses, the rest of the Comanche formed a battle line facing the Texans. The Comanche were quite a spectacle, dressed as many of them were in the fancy clothing stolen from the Linnville warehouses. The fierce horse warriors began to gallop back and forth. General Huston was content to sit and watch, but the experienced Indian fighters like Caldwell realized the Comanche were simply delaying the fight to give the younger warriors time to drive the huge herd of horses further northwest out of the Texans' reach. Caldwell insisted it was time to press the attack home. General Huston hesitated.

Then a Comanche war chief wearing a magnificent feathered head dress trotted his pony out of the ranks and challenged



leaders of the Texans to individual combat. A shot rang out. The impact of a heavy rifle ball knocked the chief off his pony. The Comanche were distressed by this sign of "bad medicine." "Now, General, now is your time to charge," Caldwell shouted. Without waiting for response from General Huston, the Texans spurred their horses forward. The Comanche battle line quickly dissolved and the Texans began to pick them off one at a time. A running fight ensued and the

day quickly became a massacre rather than a battle. Abandoning the loot that had spelled their doom, the Indians recovered as many dead and wounded warriors as possible and fled for their lives. The remainder of the battle was a hunt that eventually covered 15 miles. Before the fighting was over, more than eighty Comanche lay dead. Only one Texan was killed.

Comanche prisoners did not fare as well. As the fight dissolved into flight and pursuit, the Comanche began killing the prisoners they had tied to horses. Some of the prisoners were tied to trees and filled with arrows, either as an act of defiance or in hope of delaying pursuit. A granddaughter of Daniel Boone was killed. Only one white captive survived, Juliet Watts, the widow of Major Watts from Linnville. Her captors tied her to a tree and shot an

arrow into her breast. The same whalebone corset that had protected her chastity in Linnville blunted the arrow's force and saved her life. She was found unharmed, except for painful sunburn in places that had never before seen the sun. Mrs. Watts told



the rescuing Texans that she had been required to read books stolen in Linnville out loud to amuse Indians along the trail. There was lust for blood on both sides. One Ranger came across a wounded Comanche woman lying in the trail. He dismounted, kicked the dying woman and pinned her to the earth with a discarded Comanche lance.

After the smoke had cleared, Buffalo Hump's great war party had lost all its loot and perhaps one-quarter of its effective men. The heavy losses suffered by the Comanche severely crippled their fighting ability. The Great Raid of 1840 was the largest, but also the last great raid by the

Continued next page

Indians on white cities in the history of what is now the United States - then the Republic of Texas. Never again would the Comanche attack in such force or raid so deep into Texas territory. Never again would they attack a sizeable town. The Texans hoped the victory at Plum Creek would put a stop to Indian raids on Texas settlements. It did not. Instead, the war with the tenacious Comanche would continue for several decades, as the Comanche resumed their hit and run guerrilla tactics.

When the battle at Plum Creek ended and the loot was divided, the Texan army simply melted away. The 14 Tonkawa allies held the only victory celebration. While the moon rose over Big Prairie, they danced about their fire and boasted to each other. They closed the ceremony by roasting and ritually devouring several butchered Comanche arms and legs.



Stories from Jake (Paladin that is): Buffalo Hump

Buffalo Hump was born circa 1800. He was a war chief of the Penateka band of the Comanche Indians. His name had phallic significance and is

reported to have meant "erection that won't go down." He came to prominence after the Council House Fight when he led the

Comanche on the Great Raid of 1840. In 1846, Buffalo Hump signed a treaty with the United States at Council Springs, Texas.



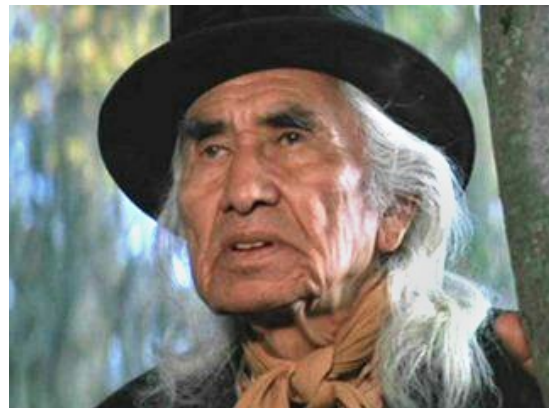
Buffalo Hump (movie style)

Ferdinand Roemer, a noted German scientist, who was traveling in America, attended the council between the chiefs and white representatives. Roemer characterized Buffalo Hump vividly as:

The pure unadulterated picture of a North American Indian, who, unlike the rest of his tribe, scorned every form of European dress. His body naked, a buffalo robe around his loins, brass rings on his arms, a string of beads around his neck, and with his long, coarse black hair hanging down, he sat there with the serious

facial expression of the North American Indian which seems to be apathetic to the European.

Buffalo Hump led the Comanche to the Brazos River reservation in 1856 and, in 1859, to the Fort Cobb reservation in Oklahoma, where he died in 1870. Before the *Lonesome Dove* series, Buffalo Hump was largely forgotten in history. The Great Raid of 1840 was remembered only in Texas history classes. Buffalo Hump was resurrected by Larry McMurtry in his books, *Dead Man's Walk* and *Comanche Moon*, the first two books in the *Lonesome Dove* series. Buffalo Hump is also mentioned in a scene



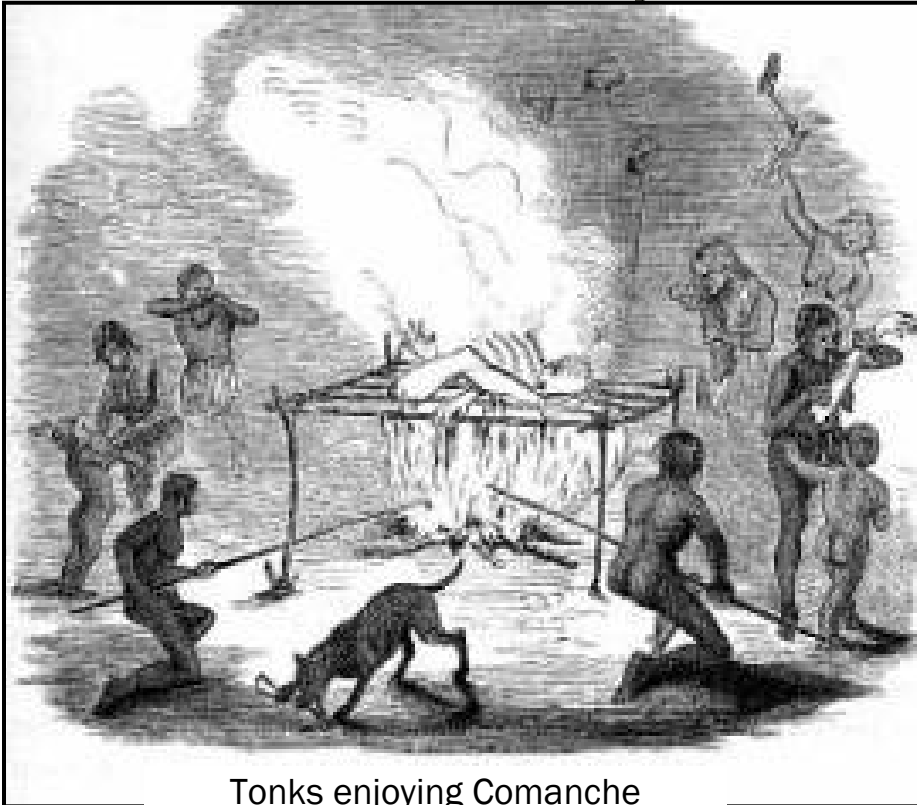
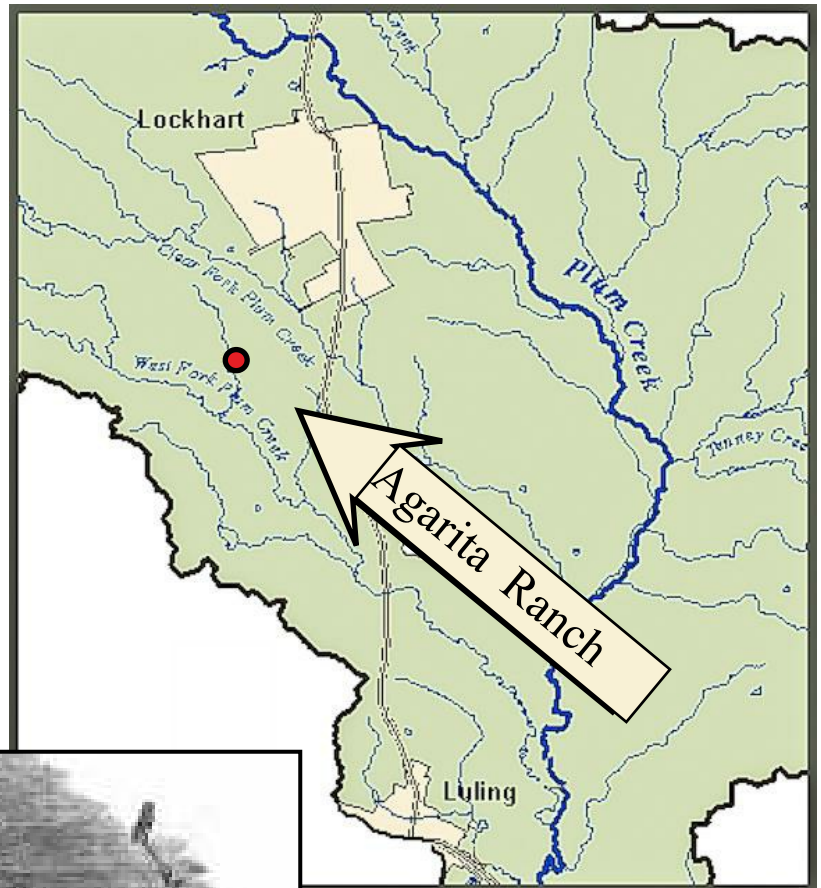
from the movie, *The Outlaw Josey Wales*, when Lone Watie (Chief Dan George) tells Josie (Clint Eastwood) that he and Buffalo Hump were among a delegation that was sent to Washington, D.C. to meet with government officials during Lincoln's administration.



Long Juan Here: What and where is Plum Creek?

Plum Creek originates in Hays County north of Kyle and runs south through Caldwell County, passing Lockhart and Luling. It eventually joins the San Marcos River where they converge at the Caldwell-Gonzales County line. The main “stem” of Plum

Creek is a 52-mile segment. It runs east of Lockhart. You cross the main “stem” of Plum Creek when driving south on 130/183 north of Lockhart. Good’s Crossing, where the Battle of Plum Creek began, is on the main “stem,” about 5 miles southeast of present-day Lockhart, in an area now appropriately referred to as Comanche Flats. Major tributaries to the main “stem” of Plum Creek include: the Clear Fork and the West Fork of Plum Creek. The Agarita Ranch lies between the West Fork and the Clear Fork of Plum Creek. Kelley Springs, now lost in history, was likely located on or near the Agarita Ranch.



Tonks enjoying Comanche “drumsticks” after the Battle of Plum Creek



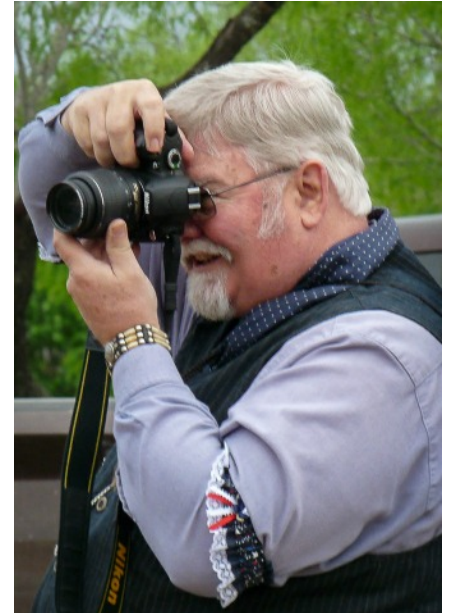
Plum Creek Shooting Society April 2015 Match Photos

Thanks to *Dutch Van Horn*, *Bolo Bob* and *Six Goin' South* for all the photos!

See our website for more photos: www.pccss.org



Ivory Venom takes dead aim



Dutch Van Horn "shooting"



Six Goin' South's monthly posse photo



The Agarita Ranch is READY for the 2015 SASS Texas State Championship



Agarita Easter Egg



Agarita Easter Tree



Agarita Blue Bonnets



Bisbee Jackson must have jacked one



Old Bull shootin' some bull



Now just how is one supposed to describe that smile, Phantom?





This month, it's Jim Two Guns, but still No Horse



Jake Jones fillin' the air with lead



Texas Sarge lookin' sad that he couldn't shoot. Hope that thumb heals soon.



What a great quilt commissioned by Diamond Kate and her Mom and being raffled to raise money for the SASS scholarship fund. If you didn't buy some tickets in April, you will have another chance at State and at End of Trail.



Nueces Ranger sure does light a spark!



Howdy Neighbor jackin' brass (above) & Dragon Hill Dave showing national championship Classic Easter Bunny form (below)



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When you can't shoot outdoors at the Agarita Ranch, try one of Red's indoor ranges. Red's North in Pflugerville (512) 251-1022 or South in Oak Hill (512) 892-4867.

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Caliber	Weight	Config.	Price/500	Price/1000
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	105	FP	33	66
	125	RNFP	35	70
	125	FP	35	70
	130	RNFP	36	72
	158	RNFP	39	77
	158	FP	39	77
	158	SWC	39	77
.380	100	RNFP	33	65
.38-55	245	RNFP	59	117
.41	215	SWC	49	98
.44	180	RNFP	41	81
	240	SWC	52	104
.44-40	200	RNFP	45	90
.45 COLT	160	RNFP	46	92
	180	RNFP	41	81
	200	RNFP	45	90
	250	RNFP	53	106
9MM	124	RN	35	70
	125	CN	35	70
40 S&W	180	FP	41	81
.45ACP	200	SWC	45	90
	200	RN	45	90
	230	RN	51	101
45-70	405	FPT	111	222

*Price increase because of higher cost of lead. Sorry for any inconvenience.