



In Search of El dorado

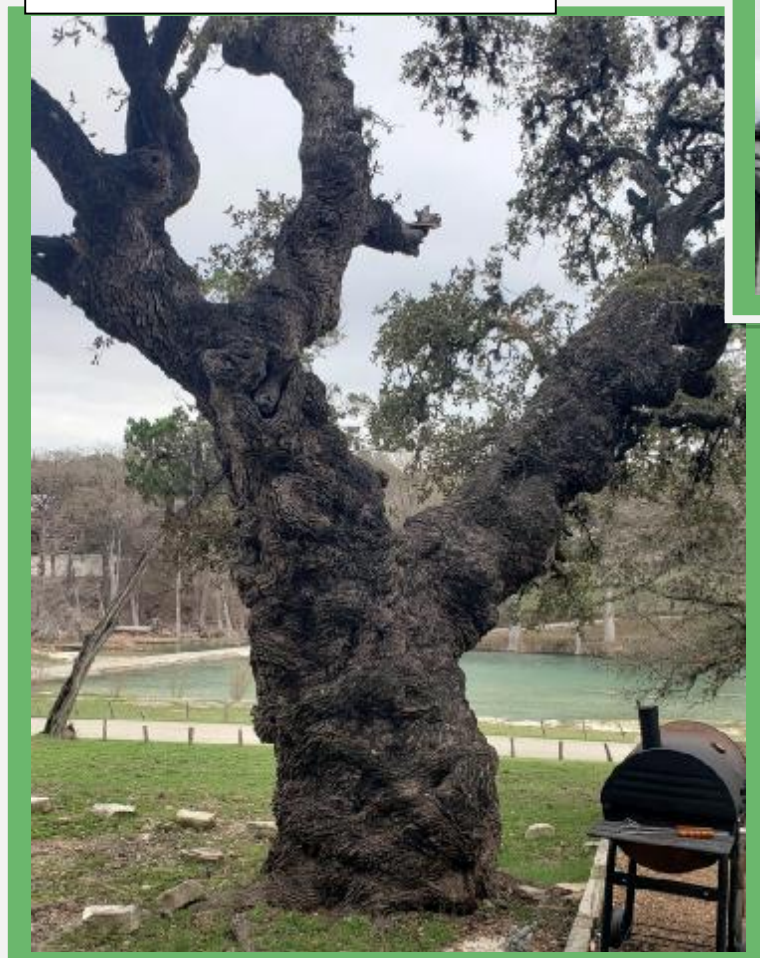
A daily journal of my travels and adventures in my.....Search for Eldorado

Hello to Family & Friends

Monday, March 1st 2021 Day 43



Above is the one lane bridge I told you about yesterday, just barely wide enough for the RV.
Below – That is one gnarly tree.



Back to Pioneer Town this morning, only to find the museum and ice cream parlor will not be open until spring break. Too bad. But I was told to feel free to wander.



The Bottle House

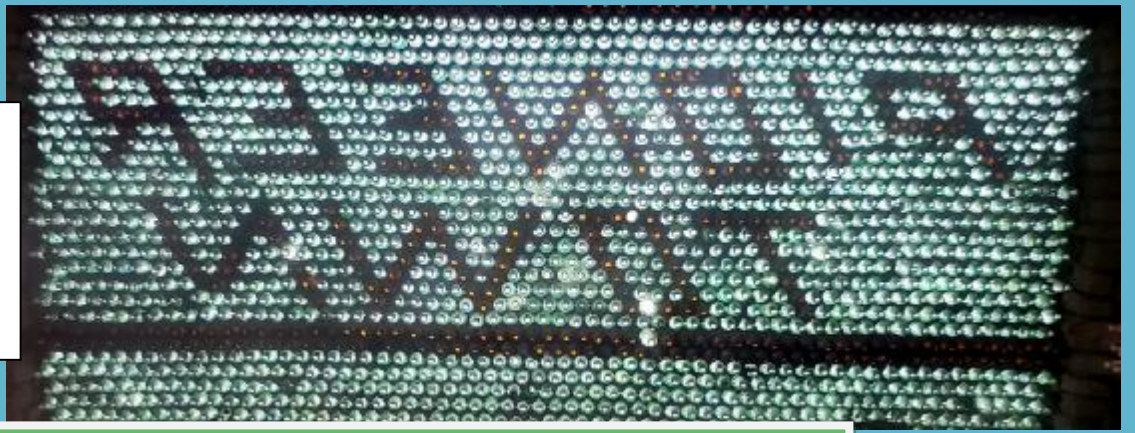
Not uncommon to some towns of the Old West was the bottle house. Usually built from beer or champagne bottles from the local saloon, these houses were a monument to the town's drinking ability and some local character willing to spend his time putting the empties into a house. Contrary to history, the Pioneer Town

Bottle House is built of soft drink bottles and has over 9,500 bottles in its walls. When lit up at night from the inside, it provides a spectacular array of colors. We have been advised by the Glass Institute of America that this is the only soft drink bottle house known to be in existence in the United States.



Can you tell what the bottles are designed to say? If not there is a better photo below, as long as you can read backwards.

Unfortunately for me, there is an N scale model train layout inside also. I'm not an N scale fan, but it looked fairly well done.



Obviously these photos are taken through the window, but you can see how all the bottles stick out inside. Should make it easy for hanging pictures.



Krause Family Log Home
This log cabin, built in 1865, once resided on the Jonas Farm, land that now is under Canyon Lake!





Awww, come on man,
somebody stole my
saddle!

This is the closed
Cowboy Museum.



OF HAND-HEWN CEDAR LOGS
CHINKED WITH CLAY. BUILT IN
COMAL COUNTY ABOUT 1850.

HOME, 1858-1951, FAMILY OF
DR. ADOLPH SCHLAMEUS, WHO
TAUGHT AREA'S FIRST SCHOOL,
NEAR FISCHER, FOR SETTLERS'
CHILDREN AND HIS OWN 12.

MOVED FROM CANYON LAKE
AREA AND RESTORED IN 1960.

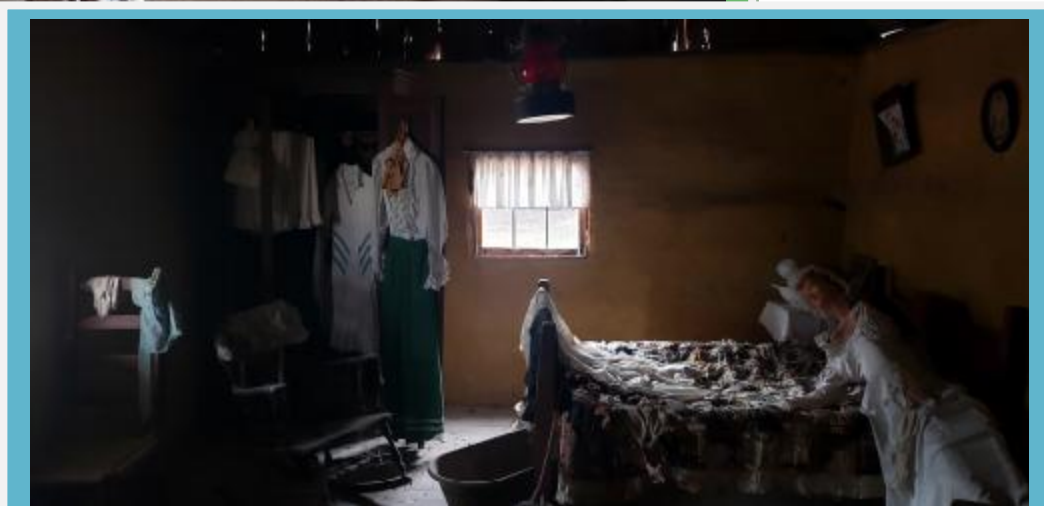
RECORDED TEXAS HISTORIC LANDMARK - 1965



The cedar logs with clay chinking.



I think they may need a little
mannequin maintenance
before spring break.





There are the air conditioners I was talking about. Why they're running I have no idea, it's only 50 degrees outside.



I hope this gambler is not left-handed, his trigger finger is missing. Best I can do when having to hold the camera flat against the window.



I drove back into Wimberley to do some food shopping and take a look at some other shops I might have an interest in. This is definitely a town devoted to women shoppers. I did almost buy a John Wayne shirt, but the image was on the back instead of the front. The sign was in the same shop.

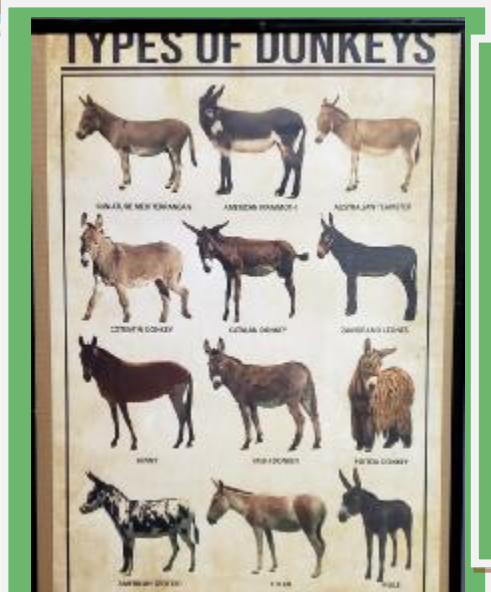
I took a road called 'The Devil's Backbone' along the ridge of the hills. This reminded me of the Blue Ridge Parkway because the trees at the scenic overlooks had not been trimmed and blocked any view of the valley there might have been. But I made it to Blanco where I ate lunch before going into the Buggy Museum.



Today must be 'visit old western towns' day.

Below Left – I was not aware that there were so many kinds of donkeys.

Below Right – You can tell Crocodile Dundee I found his knife.



This buggy came from a museum in Florida. It was manufactured by Chauncey Thomas & Co. in Boston. The lamps are also made by the same company, and it is very rare that the buggy has the original lamps. The shades on it are used for privacy. This was used in the Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter movie.

Funny story, I remember being in a movie theater when the promo for the movie above played. As it ended some guy let out a big guffaw and said "You gotta be kidding me." I could not help but agree with him.



A hearse. This place was really quite interesting. I could not believe they have over 180 buggy's and wagons in the collection.



Ahhh, the good old days.



I'm positive that this horse belongs to Jonny West, an action figure from the mid-sixties. One of the first action figure toys I believe. I passed up a photo of Chief Cherokee earlier.

The Dutch hitch wagon were farming tools. They would haul hay, tools and lumber in these. They are puzzle type wagons; in that you can change the panels to fit the needs of what you were hauling. On Sundays, families would use it as a coach. They take the common panels off and put back on the handsomely painted Dutch sides. These panels originated from the Netherlands. The Dutch hitch wagon was used a lot during the latter 1700s in America.

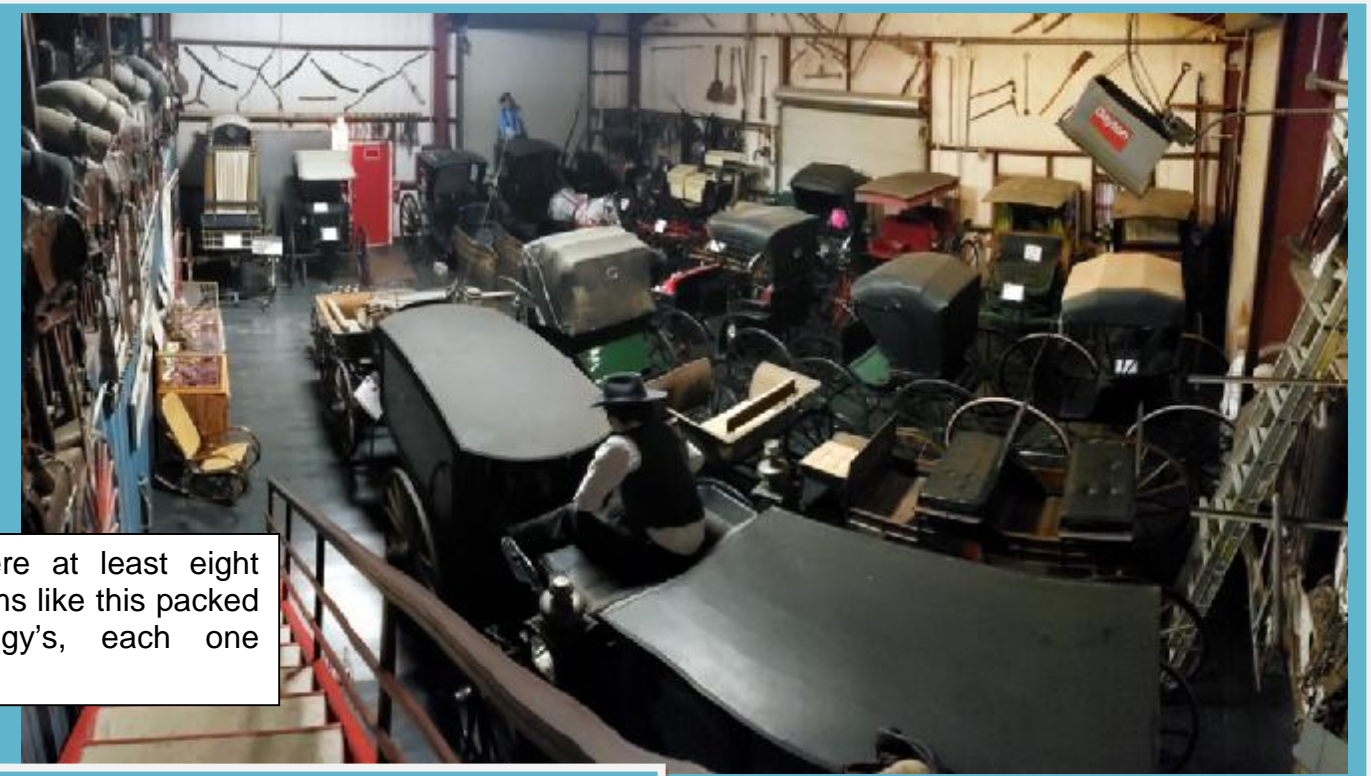
The Buggy Barn Museum bought this from an auction in Atlanta, Georgia.



Quite elaborate for a working wagon



Ahhh, the good old days.



There were at least eight large rooms like this packed with buggy's, each one labeled.



Hey look, it's a surrey with the fringe on top.



Hey look, it's a *Ben-Hur* reject.



The classic RV of the times

Ahhh, the good old days.



Just another incidence of required mannequin maintenance.



A Conestoga wannabe





The wagon of the 'traveling medicine show' con man.



Either criminals were really short when they made this jail wagon or it was just part of the punishment that the bad guys were not allowed to fully stand up.

The omnipresent chuckwagon, and the gallows. The noose was facing the wrong direction.



Can you read the sign? 'Tooth pulled 5¢'. I should show this to *my* dentist.

Yup, I know, the cars parked in front of the saloon kind of ruin the effect. I will come back to this on the next page.





The General Store was nicely appointed, but I don't think they had drop ceilings and florescent lights during this time period in history.

When I paid my fee at the door I was told a poker game was starting at 1:00 in the Saloon. I thought 'Cool. I can watch poker for awhile'. Little did I know that I could have joined the game for only a \$300 buy in. And I would have been sitting next to a fourteen year old who paid his own way in and his father who was running the game. I just watched for awhile. The conversation was mostly about the freeze a couple weeks ago and how the cattle did. It might have been an interesting afternoon, but I have been known to be 1) overzealous when gambling, and 2) easily bored by Texas Hold 'em. Yup, right here in Texas I could have been playing Texas Hold 'em with some ranchers. But I headed off to my next stop.





I took the LBJ Ranch Drive and saw a couple of these creatures in the field. I still don't know what they were. The photo sucks so I pulled out the binoculars. There were two of them, huge, white tail feathers, white head, with a dark crest. Too much white for a Bald Eagle. The closest I could come up with is a juvenile White Tailed Hawk.

Hey look, it's Norman.



Imagine a plane roaring onto a newly constructed 3,000-foot grass airstrip. It's 1953, and Senator Lyndon Johnson has arrived at the LBJ Ranch. Initially built to improve access to the ranch during floods, the small airstrip soon proved inadequate for Johnson's rising political aspirations. Within eight years it was lengthened to 6,300 feet to accommodate the increasing number and size of aircraft.

Throughout Johnson's political career the LBJ Ranch was a magnet for politicians, businessmen, and entertainers. Inviting these decision makers and prominent guests to the ranch fulfilled Lyndon Johnson's desire to talk Washington politics in a Hill Country setting. The airstrip served as the connection between the two worlds.

The expanded airstrip, however, could not support the weight of the Boeing 707 normally used as *Air Force One*. As a result, after landing at an air base in Austin or San Antonio, President Johnson boarded a smaller JetStar or a Sikorsky helicopter for the short flight home. These modern aircraft allowed him to take his official duties home with him on a scale not seen before.



Air Force "One-Half"





Cabin interior as seen today.



Low Water Crossing



For many years this low-water crossing served as the primary access to the LBJ Ranch; for non-Texans, it served as a dramatic entry into LBJ's world. The construction of this dam and crossing was the first improvement made to the ranch by Lyndon Johnson after he purchased it in 1951. In times of high water, the Johnsons had to fly out or go out the back of the ranch. The first bridge over this stretch of the Pedernales was not built until 1968.

Sam and Eliza Johnson Home



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Johnson Family Cemetery

Lyndon B. Johnson
National Historical Park



The Reconstructed Birthplace



Near this site at dawn on August 27, 1908, the future 36th President of the United States was born. He was the first child of Sam Ealy Johnson Jr.—a state legislator—and Rebekah Baines Johnson, an educator and journalist. Lyndon Baines Johnson lived here for the first five years of his life.

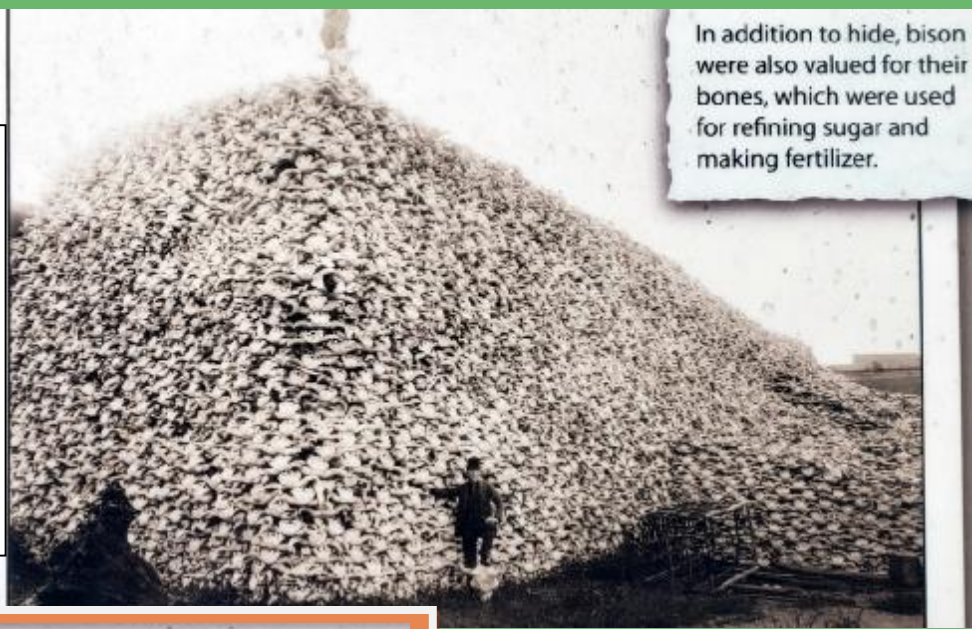
In 1964 President and Mrs. Johnson had the building in front of you constructed as a guest house for visitors to the LBJ Ranch. It stands on the site of, and closely resembles, the original home (removed in the 1930s). Though never intended as a literal reconstruction, “the birthplace” was furnished with Johnson family mementos spanning many generations.



If you cross that river above and the road beyond it you enter the State Park portion of the LBJ Historic Site. I didn't realize it, until I tried the door, that it was after 4:00 – closing time. A ranger was still there closing things up and let me look in the windows (not worth a photo), but I asked her where the buffalo were and she gave me directions.

At one point in our history, a large portion of the country was one giant bison range. It wasn't uncommon for explorers to come upon blankets of grazing bison that stretched for miles. Native Americans used just about every part of them. The bones, hide and other organs of one bison could provide clothing, shelter, tools, bowstrings, and, of course, plenty of meat. Storage and trade were limited so they rarely took more than they could carry.

This both saddens me and angers me. It makes you wish you could go back in time and do something about it. Just imagine what it would have been like to ride your horse up over a ridge and see a herd or bison so large that all you see looking right, left and ahead of you are bison, not even able to see the grass of the prairie. What a sight.



In addition to hide, bison were also valued for their bones, which were used for refining sugar and making fertilizer.

More than 30 million bison roamed the plains in the early 1500s, and newcomers to the west thought there were plenty to go around.

Professional hide hunters took advantage of the abundance. Between 1874 and 1877, a period known as "the Great Slaughter," the vast southern bison herd was nearly eliminated. In 1888, there were less than 1,000 bison left.

Yes, I know the picture sucks. You tell them to come a little closer. Ironically, as I drove back past the herd later on, they were feeding close to the road. But I had no way to stop and get a picture.



In 1878, having heard the cries of orphaned bison near their home, Mary Ann Goodnight urged her husband Charles to gather some of them to be raised on their JA ranch. This small herd of orphans grew and eventually contributed to herds being raised by conservationists across the country. The JA Ranch later donated the remaining bison to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department in 1997, forming the official Texas State Bison Herd.

I mentioned seeing a couple dozen deer the other day? There are over one hundred of them in the photo below. I don't believe I have ever seen so many deer at one time.



If you ever listen to some of the older country music you have probably heard the song of the same name.



Depending on what you read, the current population is either 13, 3 or 0. I'm sure you can find the song on the net if interested.





As I was leaving Luckenbach, Texas I passed a couple elk. What? Elk in Texas? It turns out there are elk in Texas, but only in the far west Guadalupe Mountains. You hear that Morgan? These were on a private ranch. But I had to go back for a photo. In the same pasture as I noticed these Scimitar-horned Oryx. I admit, I had to look them up. Native to Africa, and not Texas, there were about a dozen of them.





Well, overall I would call this a very successful day. A couple old western towns; a whole slew of western buggies; a president's birthplace; a president's grave; and a whole slew of animals including, Elk, cows, Longhorns, deer, eagles, Oryx and Bison.

Yesterday I mentioned better weather? I was sadly mistaken. This must be another cold front. Shorts and a polo with 78 degrees yesterday, winter coat and a stocking cap with 52 degrees and a cold wind today. Neither day had any sunshine. Only 38 tonight here in Stonewall, Texas. Austin is supposed to be in the lower 60's and sunny the next couple days, but lows still in the 30's and 40's.

I should be in Austin by tomorrow evening. Not sure where to park as it seems most of the Walmarts do not allow overnights. There are several Sam's. Harvest Hosts and Boondockers Welcome are a no-go. Morgan, you know anyone in Austin with room to park the RV?

I'm not sure how long I'll be spending in Austin, I've had my fill of museums and large cities. I want more days like today (but with warmer weather).

There were several movie references today, did you get them all? *Crocodile Dundee*; *Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter*; *Oklahoma*; *Ben-Hur*; and *City Slickers*. I could have included John Wayne but the movie on the t-shirt wasn't mentioned, so I didn't include it. By the way, it was *The Searchers*.

Time to plan my Austin adventure. I need to ask a favor, someone please call the buggy museum and ask them to let me out of the jail wagon. Thanks.

Until next time.....