

FYI on Texas History by Bob Heinonen

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Bob Heinonen as
Charles Goodnight

TEXAS COUNCIL FOR THE SOCIAL STUDIES

I attended the **Texas Council for the Social Studies Annual Conference** in Galveston last month; this is the second year I have been there as a vendor, had a booth and had a full page ad in the program. It is also the second year I have been a presenter during the two day education event. This year my program was *The Days of Charles Goodnight* in which I did a performance of old Charlie and then discussed other aspects of his life.

The afternoon before the conference, I realized that I had left my costume cane at home. I decided the only place I had a chance of finding an old wooden cane would be at an antique store, so I headed down to The Strand in downtown Galveston. I figured the odds of finding an old cane at 4:30 on a Thursday afternoon were somewhere between zero and none, plus I didn't know where I was going.

I got to The Strand area and found nothing but empty streets; I turned onto one of them. I got to the first cross street when I looked up and noticed the sign on a corner shop - *Someplace in Time*. Deserted streets...one little shop with that name...hmmm. This was beginning to feel like I was in a *Twilight Zone* episode. I walked into this small shop with old stuff displayed everywhere...floor to ceiling. I found the sales counter toward the back and there was a nice looking white-haired lady sitting behind it.

I apologetically asked if they had any old canes and expected her to say, "We might have one around here someplace" or "No, I don't think so." Instead, she said, "Our cane display is right over there." I was in and out of *Someplace in Time* with a perfect new old cane in less than five minutes. I wonder if I tried to find that store again if it would still be there.

Oh, yes....at the conference, the reaction I got from teachers about the ability to have their students e-mail the performing character questions and get a response was incredible. The expressions on the faces were "Wow!"

LEGENDS OF TEXAS

Legend: Only one woman has been hanged in Texas

On November 13, 1863, Chipita Rodriguez was hanged for killing John Savage, a horse trader. Chipita was an old woman who lived by herself at her "inn" by the Nueces River. No direct evidence was ever found that she did the crime. At her trial, the only thing she ever said was, "Not guilty."

The body was found in the Nueces River in burlap bags with what was probably an axe wound to his head. It is assumed slept on the porch of Chipita's Inn one night. Sheriff Means found blood on the porch that Chipita said was from a chicken she had killed.

The Sheriff thought Chipita murdered Savage for the \$600 in gold the Sheriff knew Savage was carrying after selling horses to the Confederate Army in San Antonio, but two days before the trial the gold was found in Savage's saddlebags in the river.

The twelve man jury found her guilty of murder but recommended mercy because of her age. Judge Benjamin F. Neal ignored the plea for mercy and ordered Chipita be hung. She was hung from an old mesquite tree and buried under it just outside San Patricio. Chipita Rodriguez is the only woman ever hanged in Texas.

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