

Wednesday, December 16, 2009

The Old Williamson County Jail



But for many in Georgetown between the hundred year period between 1889 and 1989, there was a place where the sun did not shine. That place, was the Williamson County Jail.

The jail was built to replace an older more insecure facility which was located right next to the courthouse. With construction finished in 1888, prisoners began inhabiting the new jail early the following year. Even today, one hundred-twenty years after it first housed prisoners, and twenty years since it closed, the building, although architecturally interesting, is a haunting place to look at from the outside. I cannot even begin to imagine the place on the inside. The old jail is historically noteworthy for a couple of reasons, beyond the fact that it is very old.

The last man hanged in Williamson County was escorted out of the jail just before his appointment with the gallows in 1906. Tom Young, a dirt poor cotton chopper, had beaten his niece to death during the previous year. In March 1906, the scales of justice weighed in, and Young was escorted out of town and hung in front of a large crowd.

Much later, in the years just before the jail closed, the facility confined the alleged serial killer, Henry Lee Lucas. Although sentenced to death for a Williamson County murder, his sentence was reduced to life in prison by the governor, given the fact that the evidence was less than reliable, as Lucas had a habit of confessing to crimes he could not have possibly committed. But, he was, of course, guilty of many heinous crimes, and died in a Texas prison in 2001.

If a drive past the old jail in Georgetown at 3rd and Main doesn't scare someone out of a life in crime, I don't know what will. While today's penal facilities are called "correctional facilities," one hundred years ago in Georgetown and for long thereafter, it was more about punishment than correction.

Posted by [Bob Glass](#) at 9:33 PM 

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3 comments:

1.



Anonymous [January 13, 2011 8:59 PM](#)

When I drive by the old jail I think of my grandfather, Tom Young. I remember his letter he wrote to his children. Remember when we speak of someone we need to validate the truth. He was anything but poor because he was loved by many. He helped a lot of people and rode a fine black horse. His loving granddaughter

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2.



[Bob Glass](#) [January 13, 2011 10:29 PM](#)

Thanks for the comment about your grandfather, Tom Young. I am glad that you were able to stop in and share with us this important historical link with the past. I agree, people who love, and are loved, are certainly not poor in the most important way. Of course, in the blog, I was speaking only of being "poor" in a

monetary sense. I'd like to hear more about your grandfather, how he helped folks, and his black horse.

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3.



Anonymous [October 31, 2011 9:09 AM](#)

Tom Young was a very evil man, yes he became religious before he was hung. Look up his story in the book Eanes portrait of a community, he was ran out of the community, he was a very hated, lazy, and evil man. What kind of sicko beats a 16 year old girl and then pours salt and vinegar in her wounds, she died a few days later (Alma was not the only girl he beat) Glad he was caught in Florence and justice was served for not just Alma but others. Bob you won't hear anything about how Tom helped folks, most Youngs are alot like Tom, liars, thieves, murderers, yes even two of Tom's sons murdered their own brothers in cold blood.

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