

LANGTRY, TEXAS

neregistrovaná komunita v okrese Val Verde, kde platily zákony soudce (smírčího soudce a veřejného notáře) Roy Beana: "Právo na západ od Pecos", nachází se blízko dálnice US 90.

PECOS - řeka na jihozápadě USA ve státech Nové Mexiko a Texas, největší přítok Rio Grande, proslavený v románech Karla Maye a díky soudci Royi Beanovi.

1882

Místo vzniklo u železnice Southern Pacific Railroad jako třídící tábor Eagle Nest pro čínské dělníky, správce George Langtry, inženýr a mistr dohlížející na stavbu železnice.

Soudce Roy Bean se usídlil na tomto místě brzo po dostavbě železnice ve svém stanu.

Zahájen výkon advokacie. Ustaven "Zákon na západ od Pecos".

Obdivoval anglickou operní divu Lilly Langtry (shoda jmen s dohlížejícím inženýrem na stavbě železnice Langtrym). Nechal ji postavit operní dům. Pozval ji do Langtry, přijela, ale až po soudcově smrti. Je možné, ale neprokázané, že ji viděl při jejím představení v San Antoniu.

1884

Povolena pošta.

1892

Zřízen obchod a dva salony.

1903

Roy Bean umírá.

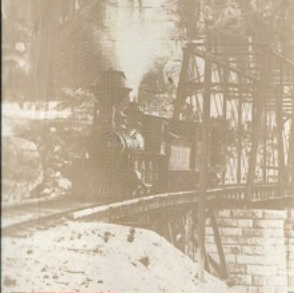

20. léta 20. století

Místo upadá.

Současnost

Místo drží nad vodou turistický ruch.

JUDGE ROY BEAN
THE LAW
West of the Pecos

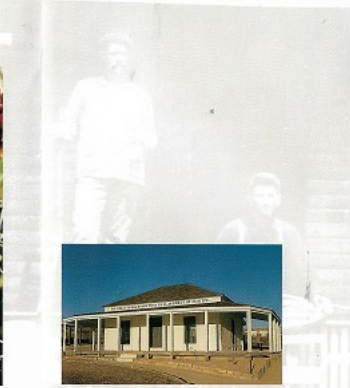



LANGRIT, TEXAS

JUDGE ROY BEAN'S ESTABLISHMENT



ROY BEAN'S OPERA HOUSE & TOWN HALL



"I'M FINING YOU \$45 and a round of drinks for the jury, and that's my ruling!" The gavel smacked the bar of the Jersey Lilly saloon, and another case was settled according to the "Law West of the Pecos."

JUDGE ROY BEAN of Langtry was the law west of the Pecos. The West's most colorful justice of the peace, he ruled America's last frontier in the last decades of the 19th Century. He ruled with his own brand of justice, and set his indelible stamp on the rugged Texas land west of the Pecos River.

Vologues have been written about his unconventional code and the strange but often expeditious decisions pronounced in

the combination saloon, billiard hall and courtroom that Judge Bean called the "Jersey Lilly."

Tales about the Judge multiplied until he became a legend—even in his own time. Many are undoubtedly pure fiction, but some of the most colorful stories are historical fact—like Bean's successful promotion of the Maher-Pittsimmus prize fight in February 1890, staged in defiance of U.S., Mexico, and Texas Ranger authority.

TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD



THE JUDGE IS GONE, but the legends abound and the Jersey Lilly still stands in Langtry. The Texas Department of Transportation has preserved and maintained the original saloon-courtroom, adding a cactus garden and Visitor Center. The Judge's "Opera House," which was actually his home, was donated by the Val Verde County Historical Commission in 1994. It is a place where travelers can pause to relive an era of the Great American West.

It was near Langtry at Dead Man's Gulch, that a silver spike joined the transcontinental tracks of Southern Pacific's Sunset Route on January 12, 1883. The tracks stretched all the way from New Orleans to San Francisco, conquering

ROY BEAN'S PET BEAR, BRUNO



the steep canyon walls tracing the Pecos River near Langtry. Ordinarily Langtry would be remembered only for that reference point in history. But over the years, that historic item has been overshadowed by one man's personality and the stories that grew about him.

IT WAS AN EVENTFUL TIME, those last decades of the 1800s, when distant sections of the country were being stitched together by steel rails. New towns and tent camps of construction gangs sprang up. They were wild, lawless places, crowded with railroad workers and those who preyed upon them—thieves, card sharks and painted women.

EARLY LANGRISH POST OFFICE



By 1882 the situation was so bad that the railroad asked help from the Texas Rangers. With the closest legal authority in Fort Stockton, more than 100 miles away, both the Rangers and the railroad urged appointment of a Justice of the Peace.

Roy Bean was proprietor of a "store" in Vinogradov, a tent-topped construction camp named after whip-tailed scorpions that infested the area. He became the first Justice of the Peace for Pecos County (now Val Verde County) on August 2, 1882. The situation was so desperate for legal authority that Bean, never one to stand on ceremony, tried his first case the week before.

The next year Roy Bean moved his court to the new

CACTUS GARDEN INTERPRETIVE TRAIL



railroad-sponsored town of Langtry. There, with the railroad and Texas Rangers to back him up, he established a colorful brand of justice that made him the "Law West of the Pecos."

JUSTICE WAS SWIFT in his court. When an accused was brought in, Judge Bean removed his traveling apron, hauled out his law book and rotary seal, and called a jury from among his customers. Occasionally he based a ruling on his single law book, the 1879 Revised Statutes of Texas. More often he applied his own sense of frontier justice, backed up by the six-shooter on the table beside him.

Some legends cite Bean as a hanging judge, but there is no

LILLIE LANGRISH, "THE JERSEY LILY"

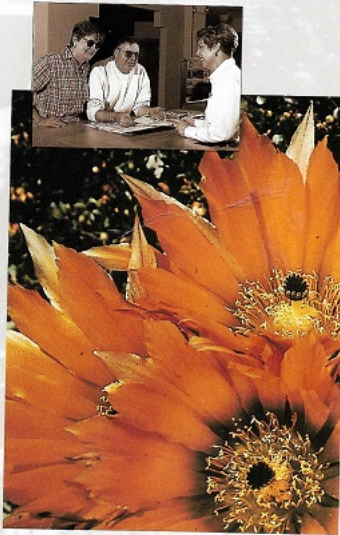


record that he ever sentenced a man to be hanged. Rather, one of the harshest sentences in this wilderness outpost was expulsion. In the case of a horse thief, Judge Bean was wont to fine him of every cent and valuable, including gun, then expel him from Langtry under threat of a noose if he ever appeared again. The hazards of getting to another place of "civilization," albeit with no money or gun, were enough to convince the toughest character the error of his ways.

MANY ROY BEAN TALES center around his fascination for the famous English actress Lillie Langtry, internationally known as "The Jersey Lily." So great was his admiration

POPULAR TRANSPORTATION IN 1880s

VISITOR CENTER



that he named his establishment after her. An itinerant sign painter commissioned (for food and drink) to letter Bean's sign misspelled "Lily" and the ancient sign still proclaims "The Jersey Lilly."

Roy Bean never met his idol, though he may have seen her perform in San Antonio. He nailed a sign on his home declaring it "Opera House, Town Hall and Seat of Justice," hoping the actress would perform there someday. He wrote her numerous letters, which she apparently did not acknowledge until Bean wrote that he had named the town for her. She finally accepted his invitation to visit "her" town, but that visit did not take place until 1904, several months after the Judge died. Railroad

historians claim Langtry was named for one of their construction foremen, but no one told Miss Langtry that.

The Jersey Lilly still stands as it did when Roy Bean presided here. Dioramas in the modern Visitor Center portray Bean's career. Specimens of Southwestern flora characterize a primitive land where nature ruled harshly, and only the hardiest survived.

The Texas Department of Transportation has preserved a page of colorful history so that we can view the setting where grew the legend of Judge Roy Bean, the "Law West of the Pecos."