



Fourth of July parade in downtown Canadian shortly after World War I

It's All in the Deal

THE SEVENTEEN-MILE TRIP from the Wright ranch to Canadian, Texas was nearly impossible some days--and out of the question on others--when a thunderstorm rendered the pasture road a four-mile mud trough or when drifting snow blocked the cuts. And just north of town the 3,255-foot Canadian River Wagon Bridge was often out of commission for repairs, forcing a risky traverse of the wide, sandy flood plain.

The bridge was only one lane wide, so drivers would flash their headlights prior to proceeding onto the span to signal those approaching from the opposite side. If a truck driver, not knowing or disregarding the signal rule, drove out onto the already occupied bridge, it resulted in one or the other lanes of traffic having to back off the bridge.

Even with the potential delays and weather hazards, Davy Wright made the trek to town on a regular basis. He enjoyed the activity in town and it made good business sense. In order to put together enough loads of feeder steers, Davy had to work out cattle deals with area ranchers. The traditional place in Canadian to make the contacts and finalize the deals was the Moody Hotel on the corner of Main and Second Streets. Built by rancher and banker Robert Moody in 1910, the three-story brick Mission-style hotel was the scene for many high stakes card games, cattle deals, and wildcat oil and gas ventures.

After taking care of business at the Moody Hotel, Davy would usually head on over to Eddie Abraham's place of business to get in on a few hands of bridge or a game of gin rummy. Davy's foreman and later ranching partner, Ode Price, feared more than just

about anything coming to town with Davy and having to sit in on a bridge game. Ode said he would just as soon be dragged behind a horse rather than play bridge as serious as Davy played it.

Many of the established ranching families around Canadian had built large homes in town as their primary residences. Davy had lived in Canadian when he was growing up. As Ode took over more of the daily ranch work, Davy asked May if it would be alright for them to build a house in town, that it would sure make more sense than Davy having to drive back and forth all the time. May said it was okay with her.

So Davy hired a builder and in due time Davy had his house on a Main Street lot three blocks from downtown. He announced to May that it was time to move. May told him that she had no intention of moving to town, but he could if he wanted. Davy never moved to town. The card games did get relocated up to the new house.

*“I’ll do what’s right, but
I sure don’t want to be
Santy Claus.”*

ROCK COWAN (1890-1965) OF LIPSCOMB, TEXAS



Blue sky shows through the masonry “sunburst” arches around the top parapet wall on the Moody building in Canadian, Texas. For “It’s All in the Deal” blue beadboard is framed by a sunburst of weathered wood reclaimed from the Moore place cook shack. Moore house front room flooring now makes up the case and door frames. Only the flooring around the sheet of linoleum had the dark stain. Door pulls are made from broken screen door hinges.

Inside the piece the large mid-1940’s photo shows Davy Wright and crew after driving a herd of cattle from the Charles Wright ranch to the Canadian shipping pens. Other photos show Canadian street views and the interior of the old Moody Hotel.



*Yearling
steers*