

Alleyton

By Rollin Baker - Chapter 17 - Seth Gets Specific Orders

Jerry winked at Seth as the former passed on over. When Seth started to follow, Clem signalled for him to join him and Lieutenant True with the Major.

"Grant," Major Beacon said as he turned to Seth, "Clem tells me that you are slightly acquainted with Herman Adley."

"That's correct, Sir," answered Seth. "He was a fellow passenger on a couple of stages which I took during the first part of my trip here. In fact, he boarded the stage in Richmond at the same time that I did. He knows me under the name of John Hyde."

"In addition," Seth continued, "I have a passing acquaintance with Jason Reddick, whom I first met on the train from Harrisburg. Lately we have been dinner partners a time or two at the hotel. He also invited me to visit his office. Incidentally, Herman Adley joined us on one occasion."

"That's good," said the Major. "You should cultivate both of them." "If I may be permitted to comment further, Sir," said Seth, getting nods from Major Beacon, Lieutenant True, and Clem. "After I learned that Reddick was a cotton buyer, I mentioned that I was in Alleyton on business having to do with metals but not doing well. He generously offered to help."

"Maybe as both a stranger and a civilian here," replied the Major, "you might be able to gain his confidence. Adley must have told him that both of you boarded the stage in Richmond."

"One other question, Sir, if I may," said a cautious Seth. The major again nodded assent.

"Thank you, Major," Seth replied. "It is about river crossings. I am wondering if the stream bed of the Colorado is like some of those in the East. A few of the latter, for example, con-

sist of a series of well-sited, deep holes interspersed by shallow areas where the flow ripples over beds of gravel or even rock ledges."

"Now if the thieves cross their bale-laden wagons at such fords," he inquired, "can wagon tracks on the adjacent banks be easily detected and must the fording be done only in times of low river flow?"

"Good questions, Grant," said Clem, after glancing at the Major for permission to answer. "To answer the first part, yes the tracks can show on the banks. However, the teamsters are generally most diligent about covering them over."

"As for the second part," Clem continued, "yes, the fording takes place when the river level is low. At this time there are several fording places both upstream and downstream from Alleyton, but we lack trusted personnel to watch every one."

"You heard what Major Beacon said about money," added Clem. "Let's face the facts. The smugglers pay their help better than we can pay ours. They can also pay our warehouse guards liberally to look the other way on occasion."

"Fine Clem," said the Major. Looking at Seth, he said, "Grant, you will continue to become better acquainted in town. Clem will make arrangements to meet with you as necessary. Only under dire circumstances should you come, in your own person."

"Seth," whispered Jerry Tomlin, "I was sure glad to see you at the meeting. Maybe between us two we can get these pesky outlaws."

"Jerry," cautioned Seth, quietly, "I too look to join you for a little action. For your own private information, I am registered at the Texas Hotel under the name of John Hyde but am called Henry Grant to this group."

"Maybe," he added, "you had better call me John for now. Anyhow, how do you fit into this investigation?"

"I do guard duty at the cotton warehouses," exclaimed Jerry, "and try my darndest to identify bale thieves and traitorous guards."

"We'll visit again at the next meeting," suggested Seth. "Meantime, my only contact for this operation is to be through Clem Ashby."

They shook hands and parted with Seth taking a round-about route to reach his hotel. The rowdy element was noisy in two corner taverns. In Richmond, he might have been interested in joining the celebrants for a few tall ones.

However, in Alleyton he felt obliged to remain inconspicuous knowing that as a stranger as well as a "draft-eligible" civilian he had probably already evoked too much snide comment.

These thoughts prompted Seth to get off the street and into the sanctity of his hotel room in short order. Even so, he felt sneaky in doing so.

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"She knows me," Seth continued, "by my real name, Seth Randolph, but has no inkling about the real reason for my being here."

"Is that so?" mullied the Major. "Thanks for telling me. I'll think about how to handle that matter. In the meantime, Karma certainly has the right to chose her friends and can join you for tea if she wants. However, for the moment at least, I don't think that you should call on her at Camp Webb."

Seth grinned with pleasure showing in his face, "Thank you for your kind consideration. Should I see her again, I will be most careful to comply with your wishes. And good night for now, gentlemen."

As he went out the door, Clem called to say that they could get together in a day or two.

Seth's eyes were just becoming adjusted to the dim light of the street when he heard a step along his side.

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Fernandez, Ortiz plan June wedding

Mr. and Mrs. Jose N. Belmares of Eagle Lake are proud to announce the engagement and approaching marriage of their daughter, Melinda Fernandez, to Abel Ortiz III, son of Mr. and Mrs. Abel Ortiz II of Rosenberg.

The bride-elect is a graduate of Rice High School and employed by Imperial Holly Corporation in Sugar Land. The prospective groom is a graduate of Lamar High School and received an associate's degree from Wharton County Junior College. He is also employed by Imperial Holly Corporation.

The couple plan to exchange wedding vows at 4 p.m. on Saturday, June 29, at Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church, Parish of the Nativity, in Eagle Lake.

The Rice Flag Corps places fifth. Nine out of 13 members of the Rice High School Raider Band Marching Auxiliary (flag corps) have been very busy since Jan. At that time they decided to venture into new and unknown territory to all of them as they formed a Winter Guard and joined the Texas Educational Colorguard Association.

Winter Guard International is committed to inspire its participants to achieve ever higher and higher standards, and TECA's emphasis is on "building better guards... building better bands."

Pledging their commitment to dedicate the time and hard work necessary for the Winter Guard program were Sunny Gertson, Rachel Mathys, Shara Glaiser, Jennifer Krenek, Marcie Till, Anna Perez, Cortney Parker, Kelli Mathys and Tiffany Wilkerson.

With a desire to advance their skills, the young ladies' recruited volunteer help from local twirling instructor Becky Moulder to provide them with guidance, supervision and choreography.

After many hours of intense practice, the local corps, known as Heavenly Army, competed in a practice meet at John Marshall High School in San Antonio on March 16.

Using the judges' evaluations and critiques from this meet, they progressed to the State Competition on March 30 at Judson High School in San Antonio.

Turning in a truly aesthetic and moving performance to the music "As I Lay Me Down", the RHS Winter Guard placed fifth in the state meet, competing against much larger schools, most of which were Class 5A.

The Heavenly Army routine received exceptionally high marks in appearance for their uniforms, flag-uniform, color effect and grooming.

Local supporters who attended the competitions as a cheering section for the RHS group said it was very gratifying to hear the complimentary remarks made by the judges, audience and other participants about the sharp, elegant appearance the locals projected as well as the praise for their accomplishments in their first year of the competition.

During the awards presentation at the conclusion of the state competition, two young ladies from the RHS corps were named to the TECA All-State Colorguard and received certificates for their exemplary dedication. They were junior Sunny Gertson and senior Rachel Mathys. Congratulations, flaggers!

Other school guards participating were: from San Antonio, East Central High School, Clark, Brackenridge, Marshall, Clemens, United South, Southwest, Roosevelt, Judson, Jay and Churchill, from Laredo, Martin High School, Nixon, San Benito and Alexander; from Corpus Christi, Cal-Allen; and the high schools from Uvalde, Bryan, Taft, Somerset, Donna, Brackett and Edinburg.

Congratulations to the newly formed Winter Guard composed of nine members of the Rice High School Raider Band Flag Corps for their outstanding performance at the State Competition in San Antonio recently. Guard members include: bottom row, from left, Marcie Till, Shara Glaiser and Cortney Parker. Standing are Anna Perez, Kelli Mathys, Jennifer Krenek, Rachel Mathys (elected to All State Colorguard), Sunny Gertson (also named All State) and Tiffany Wilkerson.

Photo Courtesy of RHS Winter Guard

SPORTS

Machac advances to tennis regionals

April 9 and 10 the District 23-AAA Tennis Tournament was held in Sealy. Machac came out on fire in the first set again, winning 6-1. "Second set blues" set in and Machac fell 6-1 to Hernandez. In the third set, Machac pulled away and won 6-2.

Since Hancher won first place, this gave Machac her shot at regional with a playoff match against Kari Kruezel of Sealy.

Machac came out determined to win; she took the first set 6-1. "We were determined that we were going to take Kruezel in two sets, and we did. Machac played great and had no "second set" let down," Coach Cowart stated.

Machac won the second set 6-3, winning second in District 23-AAA and qualifying for the regional competition in Brenham on April 22 and 23. Congratulations and good luck to you, Andrea!



Rice High School was well represented by Lori Grigar and Andrea Mahac at the district tennis competition. Photo Courtesy of Rice Athletic Dept.

Raider baseball team at 3-4 in district play

On Tuesday, March 12, the Rice Raiders faced-off against the Columbus Cardinals. Neil Mahalic started on the mound for the Raiders in the first district game. Rice lost the game 8-1.

Neil had two strikeouts and four walks. The Raiders had only one hit in the game by Lance Grigar, he was 1-3. On Tuesday, March 19, the Raiders beat Sealy by the score of 5-3.

Brandon Mathis pitched the game for the Raiders with 10 strikeouts and two walks in the game. Hitting for the Raiders were Jeremy Gohlke, 2-3; Tim Powers, 2-4; Mathis, 1-3; and Byron Black, 1-3.

On Saturday, March 23, the Rice Raiders lost to Bellville 12-2. Mahalic started the game for the Raiders and Kyle Fink came in to relieve him.

Hits for the Raiders came from the bats of Chris Gertson, 1-2; Rocky Banks, 1-2; and Lance Grigar, 1-3. On Tuesday, March 26, the Raiders beat Brookshire Royal 20-1.

Mathis was on the mound for the Raiders, pitching eight strikeouts and one walk. Hitting for the Raiders were Mathis, 4-5 with a homerun, triple and two singles; Grigar, 3-5; Gertson, 2-4; George Weller, 1-1; Brian Ford, 1-1; Black, 1-2; and Mahalic, 1-2.

Friday, March 29, Rice lost to La Grange 10-0. Fink started on the mound for the Raiders. Hits came from the bats of Fink who was 1-2; and Mathis, 1-3.

On Thursday, April 2, Mathis pitched the game for the Rice Raiders in their win against Edna 11-1. Mathis had eight strikeouts and three walks.

Hitting for the Raiders were Caesar Buitrago, 2-2 with two doubles; Fink, 2-3; and Mathis, 1-3. Saturday, April 4, Hallettsville beat Rice 16-6.

Fink was on the mound for Rice. Hitting for the Raiders were Mathis, 2-3 with a double; Buitrago, 1-3 with a double; Pete Ranget, 1-3 with a double; Fink, 1-3; Black, 1-3; and Grigar, 1-3.

The second round of district play started with the Raiders' game on April 9 against Columbus, followed by an April 16 game at Sealy.

"Cleaning your house while your kids are still growing is like shoveling the walk before it stops snowing."

—Phyllis Diller

This Week's Action!

Friday, April 19 ... Raider Varsity Baseball vs. Bellville, 7 p.m.
Monday-Friday ... Regional Golf Competition in Brenham
April 22-27 ... Regional track meet, Blinn College
Tuesday, April 23 ... Raider Varsity Baseball at Royal*, 4:30 p.m.

*District competition
"A taste of irony has kept more hearts from breaking than a sense of humor — for it takes irony to appreciate the joke which is on oneself."
— Jessamyn West

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Raiders make great showing in district track

The Raider track teams went to Edna and competed in the district meet this past Friday, April 11. With some delays because of weather, the meet was finally completed around 10 p.m.

"We had some outstanding performances by our kids in every division," stated the coach. "Our JV girls were on a mission to win the district championship and with some gutsy performances were crowned champs for 1996."

They received a team- and a 800 meter relay plaque for their first place efforts. We are very proud of these girls as well as everyone who participated in the meet.

There were many individual champions and one regional qualifier. JV girls, District Champs 3200m run: Stephanie Labay, 15:07.20, 3rd. 400m relay: Lori Cris (See Track, Page 9)

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