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## The Lone Wolf was Camera Shy

by Lewis Rigler

as told to Robert Nieman

*After a long and distinguished career as a Texas Ranger starting in 1947, Lewis Rigler served the Texas Rangers honorably and with distinction until his retirement in 1977. On Saturday, July 16, 1994, fellow historian Bill Utsman and I sat down with Lewis at his office in Gainesville, Texas. During the next three hours Lewis kept Bill and I enthroned as he described several of his cases, and some other entertaining pieces of Texas Ranger lore. Two of these non-cases are fascinating bits of Texas Ranger trivia.*



*In the first he told an interesting tidbit about Angelina County's Chief Deputy, Hardy Purvis—a future Texas Ranger Captain—and an eighteen-year-old deputy named Homer Garrison—the future Director of the Texas Department of Public Safety and the man all future Colonels who followed him would be compared to.*



**LEWIS RIGLER:** Well you see, Hardy Purvis was the Chief Deputy Sheriff at Lufkin when Homer Garrison was an eighteen-year-old deputy. Did you know that?

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** No I did not.

**LEWIS RIGLER:** All right. Homer Garrison was a deputy at the age of eighteen and Hardy Purvis was the Chief Deputy Sheriff of Angelina County. And that's where he [Colonel Garrison] and Hardy Purvis started. And of course Homer always had a soft spot in his heart

for Hardy. Hardy got to be the Captain, and you've got to understand this, Captain's way back there had a lot of power. Because they usually had politicians behind them: the Governor, a senator, and so forth. And the first thing you know they had a little kingdom. And that's the way Hardy Purvis was. He didn't believe in reports and he had several good Rangers, Johnny Klevenhagen, Eddie Oliver, Mart Jones, to name a couple.

The second concerned his first Texas Ranger Captain, the legendary Lone Wolf Gonzauillas. Bob Goss, Gonzauillas' partner in some of the wildest oil field boomtowns in the history of the United States, once said of the Lone Wolf, "The most dangerous place in Texas is between Gonzauillas and a camera." In the early 1950s Gonzauillas retired from the Rangers to go to Hollywood to act as technical advisor to the television program, *Tales of the Texas Rangers*. As Lewis explained, things didn't work out just as Gonzauillas or the producers hoped.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** He served as a director or technical director advisor?

**LEWIS RIGLER:** Gonzauillas?

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** On *Tales of the Texas Rangers*.

**LEWIS RIGLER:** He sure did.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Did he ever talk about that?

**LEWIS RIGLER:** Well I was there when it started.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Tell us about it.

**LEWIS RIGLER:** Well, he got acquainted with a guy in California, can't think of his name, his son is still active, and that's why Gonzauillas retired. He was going to develop this thing, *Tales of the Texas Rangers*, and I remember the day they brought the crew down to Dallas. And they were going to have him setting at the desk and making an opening statement. And they had the cameras set up and everything and they tried it about ten, fifteen, twenty minutes, and he couldn't get it out. He couldn't do it. He couldn't talk. Finally he said, "You'll have to do it some other way, I can't do it." So they didn't ever use him sitting there at the desk.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** A little bit camera shy.

**LEWIS RIGLER:** Oh yes.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** And that's kind of strange about Lone Wolf Gonzauillas.

**LEWIS RIGLER:** Yeah.

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