

## A LOOK BACK IN HUTCHINSON COUNTY HISTORY



### Martial Law in Borger

In early Borger, oilmen, roughnecks, panhandlers and fortune seekers flooded the boomtown. With them came a shadier element of gamblers, drug dealers, prostitutes and bootleggers. Borger became known as "Booger Town" as it drew fugitives from the law and some of the toughest thugs in the Southwest. Town government fell under control of organized crime led by Mayor John Miller's shady associate, Richard "Two-Gun Dick" Herwig, who was under indictment for murder in Oklahoma. Herwig was made the Chief Law Officer and brought with him a number of felonious friends to help him "police" the new town. They stayed busy collecting fees from bootleggers and prostitutes. In the summer of 1926, two deputy sheriffs were shot down on a Borger street by one of Herwig's boys. This double murder went unpunished and caused a crackdown by state and federal lawmen. In October, 1926, prohibition and narcotic agents, U.S. Marshals, and Texas Rangers came to town and imposed Martial Law. Within 90 days after they left, the criminals were back in business. John Holmes was appointed District Attorney to the area in 1928, tasked with cleaning it up. Holmes was murdered by an unknown assassin on September 13, 1929. Governor Daniel J. Moody sent the Texas Rangers and National Guard to Borger two days later and by October, their work was done. At last, Borger could settle down and become a lawful and productive community. ■

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