

THE WILD MAN OF CALHOUN COUNTY

You can find a “wild man” in many Texas towns and counties, and the stories grow in the telling. People say mothers locked their children up for protection when they heard he was around. Dads kept their shotguns loaded and handy. No one took any chances.

Such was the case with the “wild man” of Calhoun County. He was hairy as an ape, they said, and fast as greased lightning. Oscar Roemer’s father once jumped him, but his horse wasn’t fast enough to catch him. He’d been seen on blackjack Peninsula near Austwell, Lant Gaines said. Most who saw him, saw only a quick blur of movement, but many saw the large footprints he left.

It was said he’d take fish from the fishermen. Stingray—that was his favorite.

Mae Roemer said one of her brothers roped him around 1910. They brought him into the jail at Port Lavaca, but then what happened to him was a mystery. He wouldn’t eat or drink; he just faded away, starved to death, presumably. People said he must have been sick when he was caught or that Roemer boy wouldn’t have caught him in the first place.

These days, so much more is known about depression, anxiety disorders, mental illness, and mental health. Kind of makes you wonder what a psychologist could learn from interviewing a Texas “wild man.”

Wolff, Henry, Jr. “Calhoun’s Wild Man,” *The Victoria Advocate*, July 6, 1990, p. 2A. (Reprinted from March 27, 1980.)

© Institute of Texan Cultures, 2001