



What's Christmas Without a Boom!

By Brenda Lincke Fisseler

Early on...

In December 1898, Lee Salazar, a laborer on the courthouse, was soliciting money for a fund to be used in giving a grand display of fireworks on Christmas Eve. Salazar said the design was unique and was comprised of several thousand lights and explosions. Salazar then rented the A. Schwartz building and was at work on his big Christmas fireworks display. On Christmas Eve, a large crowd assembled on the public square to see Salazar's display of fireworks that included explosions of many and varied colored lights.

Just one year earlier, the local newspaper carried a fireworks notice from the mayor that the shooting of fireworks on the square or within one block of the square was prohibited and the ordinance would be rigidly enforced.

*Observation: While it is obvious that the mayor wanted to make **certain** that the courthouse and the business district did not burn to the ground, if you or your property was outside that one block radius, best of luck, you were strictly on your own!*

In 1916, in the fireworks notice in the local newspaper by the City Marshal, it was stated that "It shall be unlawful for any person to discharge any fire cracker, roman candle, sky rocket or fireworks of any description with the limits of this city."

By 1948, the Chief of Police stated in the newspaper that "Shooting of fire works on business streets and in filling stations of Hallettsville is strictly prohibited by law, because of danger to people and property."

Observation: Really what harm could come from shooting off fire works in a GAS STATION?

By 1950, the Chief of Police in a news article had returned to prohibiting the shooting of fireworks on the public square and within one block of the square.

Observation: OK, everyone outside the one block radius stand in your front yard and man your water hoses!

In 1952, the Chief of Police reminded readers that "So remember, if you **want** to shoot fireworks in town, be sure you are one block away from the square."

Observation: You though I was kidding about the water hoses!

*Please share this newsletter
with any one who might be
interested!*

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While all of these notices were being printed during the Christmas season, the newspaper was filled with advertisements encouraging the public to visit their stores and purchase fire works of all kinds.

My favorite was an ad for H.G. Timm's store in the December 10, 1937 issue of The Tribune. Amidst the ad telling its customers that the first shipment of Christmas apples had arrived and that there was a special price on all full pound packages of Christmas candy was this statement....

"We have plenty of Fireworks, sparklers, Roman candles, torpedoes, toy pistols and ammunition."

Observation: Just remember that if you burn the town down or set off fireworks in a gas station, don't tell anyone where you shop!



Sources:

Hallettsville Herald:

December 16, 1897
December 1, 1898
December 15, 1898
December 29, 1898
December 22, 1916

Lavaca County Tribune

December 21, 1948
December 25, 1952

New Era Herald

December 12, 1950

The Tribune

December 10, 1937

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